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Professional/
Scholarly
Publishing
Bulletin

PSP 2013: The Battle Over Peer Review _____

by **Myer Kutz**

The issue that got my attention at this year's PSP Annual Conference (Washington, DC, Wednesday, February 6 to Friday, February 8) had to do with peer review, or peer review as we've known it in the past and new visions of peer review, specifically peer review post-article-publication. I'll talk about such visions in a minute. First let me take you to a Thursday afternoon session, moderated by the ACS's Susan King, which featured Howard Bauchner, *JAMA* Editor-in-Chief; Katrina Kelner, an Editor at AAAS; and Randy Schekman, Editor-in-Chief of *eLife* and a UC Berkeley professor. He touted a new peer-review system in which a publically identified lead reviewer will consolidate comments from other publically identified reviewers and issue instructions to a paper's author. This system will guarantee article publication 60 days after submission, Schekman asserted, to which Bauchner harrumphed that *JAMA* takes only 50 days from article submission to acceptance.

This exchange wasn't the major kerfluffle during the session. That occurred during the Q & A, when Silverchair's Thane Kerner brought up issues, I soon learned, that Kent Anderson had raised the previous day in a lengthy post,

From the Executive Director's Desk
Whither the Annual Conference? _____

by **John Tagler**, *AAP/PSP Executive Director*

In the face of higher travel costs, webinars, time crunches, declining attendance, increased competition and shorter attention spans, one can't help but question the logic of holding annual conferences. Even so, organizations like PSP approach this time-honored tradition with optimism. For membership organizations there is a genuine commitment to delivering something useful and stimulating to the membership and those affiliated with the community. Of course, if you're a commercial conference organizer your competitive instincts – not to mention your livelihood – depend on delivering something compelling. Either way, one does not take the responsibility of conference planning lightly.

The PSP Executive Council began 2013 Annual Conference planning immediately after the close of the 2012 conference. Two objectives were identified from the outset. The first involved the level of programming, and the Council decided to recruit leaders from our member organizations as speakers. This would attract attendance from a broad spectrum of the publishing industry and

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entitled *Why Were PubMed Central and eLife Discussing PeerJ?*, on his Scholarly Kitchen blog. The blog post presented a lengthy examination of dealings through emails between PubMed Central and eLife that amounted, in Anderson's telling, to collusion, exposed PubMed as a publisher and raised questions, in his words, of "fairness and conflicts of interest and cronyism." Of more than passing additional interest are comments to the post that recommend government take over publication of articles arising out of government-funded research from traditional journal publishers – especially those who make profits from such activity.

Journal publishers, both commercial and not-for-profit, have relied on the need for traditional peer review as a vital part of their justification for being the disseminators of articles reporting on research. It doesn't come as breaking news that this system is under attack. Still, this year's Oxford Style Debate: "Resolved: Post-publication peer review will achieve better scientific results than pre-publication peer review, while reducing costs for researchers and funders," seemed timely. The two researchers speaking for the proposition were Dwight David Kravitz, a research fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health, and Nikolaus Kriegeskorte, a principal investigator at the Medical

Research Council. The Internet is a game changer, in their analysis. It no longer matters which journal publishes a paper; it's post-publication review that will determine how influential a paper is, not where it's published. Kravitz was particularly vexed by the current state of affairs in which reviewers reject papers on the grounds that they're inappropriate for a particular journal. Had he been rejected by *Science* or *Nature*? It was rude to ask. In any case, according to Kravitz, the average acceptance lag is 221 days, and researchers deal with the lag by breaking their work into multiple small papers. His debate partner, Kriegskorte, has edited a book of no less than 15 visions of post-publication review. He talked about the wisdom of the scientific crowd, which could score papers based on their public ratings.

The first speaker on the "against" side, Rubriq's Co-Founder and Managing Director, Keith Collier was candid about peer review's problems. It can be slow, biased, opaque, redundant, inconsistent and costly. Still, readers need to know when an article is published whether it's science or pseudoscience. Journalists too quick off the mark can spread misinformation. Can the public have faith in science when the system becomes publish first, filter

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related communities. Second, ennui seemed to have set in regarding the facility we have used for about a decade, the Mayflower Hotel. The consensus was that we should find a new venue.

In considering our membership and how to represent them on the 2013 program, one thread quickly emerged. What's happening in the association world is a critical part of today's scholarly publishing landscape. Most of the large commercial houses, a foundation of PSP, also do contract publishing for a significant number of associations, so the publishing fates of commercial and not-for-profits are inextricably linked. In addition, the majority of PSP members are large, medium and small professional associations. There also are about three dozen university press members with many parallels to the society publishing community.

At this time, associations face particular challenges, especially those with publishing programs. Association leadership is fraught with maintaining a delicate balance –

keeping individual members satisfied with how you represent them in public and legislative arenas. Then there's the challenge of sustaining a viable publishing program often while under pressure from members who embrace the free public access movement. Association managements are juggling these forces while trying to manage balance sheets. Harrison Coerver's recent book, *Race for Relevance* seemed to bring together many timely issues, and the prospect of his being the opening speaker made the thread on the association world seem timely and widely applicable.

In terms of meeting the second objective, the change in venue to the Ritz Carlton seems to have been a welcome move. For minimal additional cost to attendees (about $15 per hotel room per night) we had a more intimate atmosphere and well appointed and maintained facility. We were also able to accomplish this without raising conference registration rates – in fact PSP lowered the conference fee in 2010 to the price charged in 2005 in

I Don't Know What to Believe:
A Guide to Making Sense of Science Stories_____

PSP is among a dozen organizations that have sponsored the creation of a new guide to peer review that was launched at the PSP Annual Conference in February. This public service guide, *I Don't Know What to Believe*, is designed to educate a widely diverse audience about the role and importance of peer review in vetting research information. Beyond the definition of peer review, the guide explains how the process works and addresses nuances and subtleties in the process that may not be generally known or understood – even among many who work in scholarly publishing.

With so much information widely available on the Internet, it has become increasingly difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff, and this distinction is ever more critical when scientific advances as well as public safety depend on the accuracy and reliability of the information.

"In a world where unfiltered news and information are everywhere, people are seeking a roadmap to distinguish what is sound, fact-based content. This guide offers tools to help serve that need," commented Susan King, Senior Vice President, Journals Publishing Group, American Chemical Society Publications, and Chair, AAP/PSP Executive Council.

I Don't Know What to Believe offers an easy-to-follow overview of the processes that define sound scientific journal articles and how the scientific community shares research findings. It also provides insights into ways to assess media reports, press coverage and other scientific claims relative to the peer review process.

Among the interesting information you'll find in the brochure:

- Did you know? There are around 28,000 scholarly journals that use peer review. A high proportion are scientific, technical or medical journals, publishing over 1.8 million research papers each year.

- Consider…Some of the research claims you read in newspapers and magazines, find on the Internet, or hear on television and the radio have not been published in peer reviewed journals and therefore have not been checked by other researchers in the field.

- Scientists do not draw firm conclusions from just one paper or set of results. They consider the contribution it makes in the context of other work and their own experience. It usually takes more that one research paper for results to be accepted.
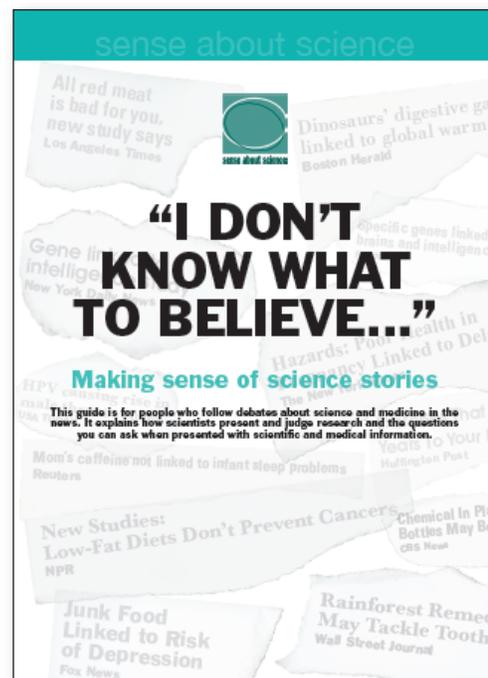
Sponsoring organizations include AAP/PSP along with five of its members – American Chemical Society Publications, American Institute of Physics, Elsevier, John Wiley & Sons and Wolters Kluwer. Other sponsoring organizations are the International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers (STM); National Press Foundation; BioMed Central; Nature Publishing Group; Public Library of Science and Taylor and Francis Group.

I Don't Know What to Believe is available to publishers in various formats. You will find a copy of the brochure via the PSP website. Free printed copies are available (up to 50) to PSP member organizations. Also, a digital copy of the brochure is available for posting on publisher websites as well as downloading for print distribution. For further information contact: John Tagler, PSP Executive Director, at *jtagler@publishers.org* or 212 255-1407.

We encourage publishers to use this guide widely and distribute it to employees, authors, editors and editorial boards as well as in outreach programs with educators, librarians, professional groups, science writers, health care workers and legislators.

The brochure was produced by Sense About Science, a not-for-profit organization based in the U.K. and dedicated to ensuring accurate public discourse of science.

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(Continued from page 2)

later? Perhaps improvements can be made if reviewing becomes more standardized. Collier was measured.

Finally it was *JAMA*'s Annette Flanagin's turn to speak "against." She wasn't measured in the slightest. Kerner, in good humor, called her performance "vitriol." For my money, she was merely sharp and smart. Merely? As I saw it, she ran roughshod over her opponents' analytical pretenses. What do we know about post-publication peer review? It's untested, unproven. There's no evidence about quality or costs. When *Nature* ran a trial, it wasn't widely popular among either authors or reviewers. There's a one-percent-culture problem. Very few scientists will participate in voluntary post-publication peer review. By the end it looked like game, set and match.

The conference title was *The (R)evolution of Value: Building Collaboration, Innovation and Sustainability*. The closing session, moderated by Darrell Gunter, Gunter Media Group, featured innovators from several fledgling organizations, including VeoMed, whose activities included delivering continuing medical education more efficiently, Slicebooks, which operates a platform for slicing, remixing and customizing ebooks, and the Edanz Group, which does such things as making videos in which editors of journals discuss their Aims and Scopes to facilitate author submissions. The audience, somewhat thinned the previous evening by blizzard predictions, stayed to the end.

In an earlier session, moderated by McGraw-Hill's Scott Grillo, the question of whether the professional book, once strictly a dead-tree product but increasingly being sold in one way or another digitally, is, as the session's title had it, "past its sell-by date." The answer isn't to go ebook exclusively, according to McGraw-Hill's James Shanahan, one of the panelists, even though pedagogy and sense of authority are being translated into new media and students are getting their books electronically for the most part. *NEJM* and *JAMA* may have stopped reviewing books, but Pocket Medicine, for example, still sells 100,000 copies a year, so doctors still buy them. And books have value to authors at least; a book allows an author to develop an argument at great length, according to another panelist, Matt MacInnis of Inkling, a web-based company. Besides, as Dr. Richard Usatine, a professor of medicine at the University of Texas at San Antonio, an app developer and a book editor, put it, books are here to stay, he loves them,

and best of all the value in writing a book is that you can reach more people. (Unless you're Doctor Oz, I hasten to point out, who was lucky enough to have been launched by Oprah.) Contrary to Usatine, MacInnis said he didn't care if the book survived. But the problem for now, at least, is that no one can sell a web page – which is why Inkling sells annotated versions of books, I suppose. And you can do well with an app like Hippocrates, as Usatine pointed out, which has driven doctors to the iPhone because it's better for reading about a medical problem than the "awful" PDR.

It's key, according to MacInnis, that publishers, whose core skill is developing information, ask customers what problems they will be trying to solve. Asking such questions was relevant to Outsell's David Warlock's opening afternoon session, "The Value Proposition of Commercial Publishing: Where Will Your Business Be in 2018?" A tsunami is coming toward us, according to Warlock. Nevertheless, Steve Smith, Wiley's President and CEO, talked calmly about broadening his company's presence in the information value chain and in customers' daily work flow, providing content enabled services and going beyond publications to play a role in the career arcs of customers, both individuals and institutions. To say that I've been hearing such declarations for a good 20 years isn't to denigrate Smith, but to acknowledge how difficult it is to put them into profitable practice by making fundamental changes in such a venerable and ocean-liner-sized company as Wiley.

Commercial publishing continues to grow, although slowly, and growth is slowing, Smith admitted candidly. The three panelists in the conference's opening session, "The Future of Value in the Professional Association: What is Your Value in the Internet Age, What Services Will You Provide in 2018?" struck me as a bit more bullish than Smith. The panel was moderated by consultant and author Harrison Coerver, who had started with a talk about the challenges associations face – higher member expectations, unprecedented competition, rapid advances in technology and changing generational values. Associations are at risk; they need to adapt. The AMA was cannibalized by specialty societies. And, by the way, the ideal number of governing board members is five – a number based on the number of seats at his dining-room

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table, Coerver joked. James Pendergast, Executive Director and COO at IEEE, mused a few minutes later that a board should indeed have an odd number of members, and three is too big a number. All kidding aside, Prendergast, ACS's Executive Director & CEO, Madeline Jacobs, and AIP's Executive Director & CEO, Fred Dylla, reported that the state of their organizations is strong, despite their complexity and the large, in some cases enormous, size of their boards and committees which at the IEEE have resisted all attempts at reform. They all still manage to get things done. A governance review at AIP resulted in the spin-off of AIP Publishing LLC, ACS is managing to adapt to members' changing technological needs and IEEE is forging ahead with open access, or a hybrid thereof, and the open standards movement.

The Thursday afternoon session, "Does Social Science Research Matter?" was convened in response to the U.S. House of Representatives vote to eliminate NSF funding for political science research. Unfortunately, moderator Sage/CQ's Rolf Janke had asked his panelists – two professors, including John Sides, a political scientist whose name I recognized, and two publishers, including the estimable Lynne Rienner – to dispense with power points. I sympathized with his request, but the presentations lacked sharpness and the session didn't come to grips adequately with its central question, it seemed to me.

After a decade at the old Mayflower Hotel on Connecticut Avenue, this year's Annual Conference relocated to the Ritz-Carlton on 22nd Street. There's a warren of wood-paneled spaces when you come in, instead of the iconic block-long lobby at the Mayflower, but the service and accommodations at the new venue were beyond reproach. Curiously, the meal at the PROSE Awards luncheon seemed identical to what the Mayflower served, down to the fruit tarts. It's banquet food, of course, as comforting as the ceremony, presided over by ringmaster and PROSE chairman John Jenkins, with its blend of the spectacular and the familiar. The Hawkins Award winner this year, by the way, was Princeton University Press, for the magisterial volume, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD*, by Peter Brown, who's credited with inventing the field of study that deals with that

period in European history. The best thing about Jenkins' productions is they celebrate publishers' strutting their stuff. It's bracing. And it's needed.

Consider the environment in which PSP publishers operate nowadays, SAGE President and CEO Blaise Simqu's subject on the conference's opening afternoon. Publishers and the academic and research markets they serve have prospered in partnership, but too many publishers have been too successful financially for the tastes of critics secure in their willingness to condemn. The markets will endure, but public opinion has shifted against publishers, who are widely considered not to add value to information dissemination. Simqu put up slide after slide of pronouncements from academic publishing's righteous critics. He showed cartoons and told family anecdotes, and rather than soften his message, his humor reinforced it.

We live in a world in which people take sides. If they debate, it's healthy. If they dig in and refuse to compromise, it isn't. That was AAP President and CEO Tom Allen's subtext in his Legislators Keynote – he subbed, as he explained, for House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte, out of town because there were no votes in the House. He devoted a substantial portion of his talk to the themes in his new book, *Dangerous Convictions: What's Really Wrong with the U.S. Congress*, about the non-compromising conservatives who control the House and the damage they are creating.

When I emailed a friend asking for his reactions to the conference, part of his reply read "we are doomed!" Well, maybe. But then I thought back to some remarks about a future role for the publishing industry by the Oxford debater Nikolaus Kriegeskorte, the editor of the book with 15 versions of post-publication peer review. His vision? Publishers could provide high-production-value print, audiovisual and interactive content. In other, perhaps churlish words, provide gussied-up appendices to primary research articles. Annette Flanagin had none of it, I recalled. "If you value your jobs," she said at the end of the debate, "vote no" – against a post-publication peer review regime. As it turned out, she won the day. And so may her PSP colleagues, if they make their case with equal vigor.

From the Executive Director's Desk _____

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response to the recession and we have maintained the same rate for the past three years. This balancing act is always subject to finding facilities that can accommodate our conference logistics, are affordable and have space available when we need it. We also look for a venue that has a certain degree of intimacy and attentive service so members do not feel lost in a large, impersonal facility.

A major consideration in selecting a 2013 venue was the ability to provide wireless access in meeting and sleeping rooms at an affordable rate. This need had been expressed in evaluation forms for the past couple of years. The pricing structure at the Mayflower made it prohibitive, but the Ritz Carlton, a newer and better wired facility, had a pricing structure that was more accommodating. With help from a sponsor we were able to ensure our attendees were always well connected.

It should be emphasized that sponsorship has also become a crucial part of PSP's conference planning. For the past two years, Jack Farrell has successfully spearheaded our fundraising effort which has gone a long way to support conference activities, especially as exhibits transitioned from being a revenue source to a liability. So a very special nod of thanks is due to SPi Global who helped make the opening reception a special event, along with Aries, Atypon, Copyright Clearance Center, RSuite CMS and Jack Farrell & Associates whose sponsorships provided amenities that everyone enjoys.

Beyond the two strategic questions, there is the usual list of issues we address on a regular basis. One that is revisited annually is conference timing. There are perennial requests to reconsider it, especially because February can be a pretty cruel month for travel. Unfortunately, it appears that we have few options. Many other related groups have locked in time frames, and it is difficult to compete with a number of other organizations (the AAAS meeting usually follows PSP by one week, NFAIS is in late February, STM is in late April and SSP has staked out early June). Many of our member societies hold their annual conferences in March – May and it is difficult to overlap with them as a number of our Executive Council members have conference commitments with their own organizations during these weeks.

It is also pretty conclusive that Washington, DC, is the best location for the conference as it offers us an opportunity to draw from government agencies and the heaviest concentration of our members is in the DC metro area, which helps attendance levels. The pros and cons of the city and time of year continue to be debated, but despite our best efforts, it usually concludes with same time, next year. One appealing possibility that Washington offers is access to Members of Congress. It is a risky endeavor. Every other year brings a new Congress and securing a speaking commitment for early in the year is unlikely because the Congressional calendar is in flux for the first weeks of the new year. Even in alternate years, Members of Congress are difficult to pin down. We have had more success inviting speakers from government agencies and bureaus and myriad other organizations located in the District but the lure of a speaker from Congress continues to appeal to program planners.

This year, as planning proceeded, it seemed that there were more topics of general interest that would appeal to a wide audience. Hence we decided through process of elimination to have a total of seven plenary sessions plus the opening speaker, and only two concurrent sessions, one on Thursday morning and the second on Thursday afternoon, were scheduled. We felt that the "big" topics would warrant a wider attendance but we still sought to offer an opportunity for some more specialized groups to address issues of urgency to them.

In reading evaluations from those who are willing to take the time to prepare and submit the forms, there are always lessons to be learned. Each year's conference brings new insights and causes self-flagellation because of oversights or misjudgment. Evaluation forms are read and taken seriously. The two key decisions for 2013 – about programming and the meeting venue – were derived from feedback we received. Sometimes things can be solved from one year to the next while others (e.g., free wifi) depended on the change in venue, not to mention obtaining some very helpful sponsorship.

There will always be speakers who are popular with some attendees and less so with others. An often controversial issue is whether speakers should be asked to specifically address publishing issues or whether speakers from outside the industry should be on the program. Most attendees welcome outside perspectives and the opportunity to draw their own inferences, while others feel that all speakers need to specifically circle back to the topic of scholarly publishing. But daring and risk are part of organizing a successful conference. It is also difficult to predict how diligently speakers will stick to assigned topics and instructions, although the PSP program planning team work closely with moderators and speakers on that score. Nevertheless, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our speakers. They all gave service above and beyond the call of duty and a great deal of knowledge and inspiration was shared during the conference.

PSP Celebrates 2012 PROSE Winners at Awards Luncheon _____

The winners of 49 PROSE Awards were announced on February 7, 2013 at the 2012 PROSE Awards Luncheon during the PSP Annual Conference at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Washington, DC. Hosted by John A. Jenkins, President and Publisher Emeritus of CQ Press and PROSE Awards Chairman, the Luncheon featured the debut of a new short film and original multimedia presentations, and the much-anticipated presentation of the 2012 R.R. Hawkins Award to a capacity crowd.

The 37th annual R.R. Hawkins Award, the top PROSE prize, was presented to Princeton University Press for *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* by Peter Brown. Peter Dougherty, Director of Princeton University Press, accepted the award from AAP President and CEO Tom Allen. "We are honored that Peter Brown's book has won an award so highly coveted in the publishing industry," said Mr. Dougherty. "It is a fitting tribute not only to the book, but also to Peter himself, who worked tirelessly to create this notable work." Mr. Dougherty's acceptance speech will be published in its entirety in the next issue of the *PSP Bulletin*.

Tom Allen also presented the top five PROSE Awards for Excellence, recognizing outstanding works across the Humanities, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences & Mathematics, Biological & Life Sciences, and Reference Works to: Princeton University Press for *Through the Eye of a Needle* (Humanities); Princeton University Press for *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy* (Social Sciences); University of California Press for *Atlas of Yellowstone* (Physical Sciences & Mathematics); Harvard University Press for *Arthropod Brains: Evolution, Functional Elegance, and Historical Significance* (Biological & Life Sciences); and Cambridge University Press for The Cambridge *History of Religions in America* (Reference Works).

The Luncheon's multimedia presentations included the premiere of *The Curators*, a short film about the crucial need for editors in publishing. Directed and produced by New York filmmaker Mary Rose Synek, the film follows three works from three publishers – Cambridge University Press, American Institute of Physics, and McGraw-Hill Professional – through the publication process. The film is available online at *www.proseawards.com* and on YouTube.

The Luncheon's audio/visual was sponsored by RSuite CMS. For the second year in a row, the Awards Luncheon ceremony was webcast live on the PROSE website, drawing viewers from across the United States and Europe. For the first time in the history of the program, the PROSE Awards used Twitter to further engage the Luncheon audience. @PROSEAwards tweeted live from the Luncheon ceremony and encouraged those in attendance at the Luncheon and those viewing via webcast to do the same. The Twitter feed was shown in real time at the Awards Luncheon.

For a complete list of PROSE winners or to view *The Curators* please visit *www.proseawards.com*. Please follow @PROSEAwards on Twitter.

From the Executive Director's Desk _____

Year after year, one point echoes through the comments on the evaluation forms: the importance of networking. There is the chance to catch up with colleagues but also the opportunity to see new players in the industry. Many attendees appreciate the chance to meet and interact directly with speakers. In this world of social media and 24/7 connectivity, personal interaction is still highly valued.

As a coda on a related issue, let me step outside the PSP conference parameters to note a trend pervasive at virtually every conference. Speakers frequently look out on a sea of people absorbed in their mobile devices or laptops. Is anyone listening? Someone must be because people are tweeting about the conference, although it's sometimes not clear whether the tweeter is more concerned about sharing what the speaker is saying or about just being heard him or herself. Equally disheartening is watching speakers on a panel engaged with their devices while a co-speaker is at the podium. On a number of occasions I've heard speakers make reference to their need to compete with mobile devices – sometimes making the point sarcastically and other times apologetically. One thing's for sure, a speaker is likely to get plenty of feedback from the tweets. Let's just hope it doesn't start streaming in before the speaker is finished or perhaps speakers should start taking breaks in their presentations to check on what the tweeters are saying. Would that be constructive?

Spotlight On…

Draft Release 1 of the PIRUS Code of Practice for recording and reporting usage at the individual article level is now available for comment

The Draft Release 1 of the PIRUS (**P**ublisher and **I**nstitutional **R**epository **U**sage **S**tatistics) Code of Practice for recording and reporting usage at the individual article level is now available for comment and may be accessed on the PIRUS page of the COUNTER website at: *http://www.projectcounter.org/pirus.html*

The PIRUS Code of Practice has been established as an outcome of the JISC-funded PIRUS project, whose overall aim was to assess the feasibility of recording, reporting and consolidating usage of individual journal articles hosted by Publishers, Aggregators, Institutional Repositories and Subject Repositories.

PIRUS is consistent with the COUNTER Code of Practice, and COUNTER will be responsible for its development, ongoing management and implementation. The PIRUS Code of Practice provides a framework for the recording, exchange and interpretation of online usage statistics for individual full-text journal articles. In doing so, it covers the following areas: article types to be counted; article versions to be counted; data elements to be measured; definitions of these data elements; content and format of usage reports; requirements for data processing; requirements for auditing; guidelines to avoid duplicate counting when intermediary gateways and aggregators are used. While this Release focuses on journal articles, its principles may be applied to other categories of individual content items that are well defined, and have sufficiently robust metadata associated with them.

The Draft Release 1 of the PIRUS Code of Practice will be available for comment on the COUNTER website at: *http://www.projectcounter.org/pirus.html* **until 30 April 2013**. Comments should be sent to Peter Shepherd, COUNTER Director, at: pshepherd@projectCounter.org. Feedback received will be reviewed by the COUNTER Executive Committee and taken into account in the development of the definitive version of the PIRUS Code of Practice.

About COUNTER

COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of NeTworked Electronic Resources) is a multi-agency international initiative whose objective is to develop a set of internationally accepted, extendible Codes of Practice that allows the usage of online information products and services to be measured more consistently.

For more information, please visit the PIRUS page of the COUNTER website at: *http://www.projectcounter.org/pirus.html*.

Notes from
COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF PUBLISHING: STRATEGIES FOR A VOLATILE WORLD
PSP Pre-conference, February 6, 2013

by **Hill Slowinski**

How has the nature of business communications critically changed within, among and outside PSP organizations? What are some productive suggestions for handling messaging challenges?

Presentations dealt with communications:

- supplementary and complimentary to journal users
- between libraries and their funders
- between publishers and policy makers
- between advertisers and users
- between industry representatives and the media, and
- in the context of social media.

Messaging External to the Organization

Suppose a federal agency releases a new scientific research information policy or introduces proprietary information rights legislation, or a university issues a directive on faculty scholarly publishing activity. How does an affected professional/scholarly publisher respond? Who can you enlist to help your relationship with your customers, authors and editors?

As a result of social media, the communications environment has changed irrevocably, particularly when it involves policy issues or corporate reputations. Public policy campaigns take hold overnight on social media. Issues are magnified and conflated, resulting in confusion.

Here is some guidance garnered from experience:

- "How" you engage on social media is almost as important as "what" you engage about.
- Manage an issue as it unfolds – not an easy task.

- Know your story going in or develop it carefully – don't say anything publicly until you are sure it is unassailable.
- Don't just tell the story. Show it. Demonstrate it. Cite examples.
- Give employees stories, information and explanations about what the organization is doing, as it involves funding bodies, the public and information users.

Communicating through Advertisements

Advertising exposure has increased through smart technology proliferation. More devices provide more access to content, with users spending more time on ads. In some cases, viewing has reached more than 30 seconds per ad.

Ads now provide richer user experiences. Integrated multi-media enhance what is difficult to describe in words. Editorial video content provides more contextual information. There is increased author engagement with viewers. Online advertising is much more complex and dynamic than print, with embedded video, links, articles and connection opportunities for the user.

Society Communications

Non-for-profit societies with journal publication programs should consider looking beyond providing just content to also supporting continuing education needs and other facets of member development, such as issue advocacy, as well as delivering meetings information. Societies should consider communicating how their publishing programs support these objectives.

Notes From PSP Pre-Conference _____

**Sustainability and Access:
Library Communications**

Libraries have had to adjust their perspectives in the last few years. Funds are not going to flow like they did before 2008.

- There has been a shift in how colleges and universities speak about their libraries.

- Librarians must adjust how they engage faculty.

- Publications' usage data may be less helpful than publishers believe, as items of lower usage may be more valuable to an institution.

- There are websites that allow users to search for and then rent or buy articles without the library as intermediary.

Publishers need to better understand how faculty and students are evolving in their techniques for finding and using information they need. As a result, librarians must continue to improve and communicate their mission to users/customers and have open and clear engagement with patrons and publishers.

Communications with Policy-Makers

It is important to identify threats and opportunities and strategize about working with policymakers. Develop messages that will resonate. Create publisher partnerships with government to demonstrate the value of publications. Recognize that as an issue becomes better known, advocates' demands will become more expansive.

When it comes to influencing policymakers, it is always more persuasive for them to hear from professionals. Committees involved in research funding have to understand the long-term commitment that publishers have to disseminating information. Publishers' passion and expertise are their greatest assets.

A few key concepts to remember:

- Think about what matters to you.
- Be passionate.
- Think about what matters to others.
- Provide facts and tell the truth. Don't omit or shade details.
- Facts are helpful but emotion is compelling (e.g., finding the cure or remedy to help a sick child).

Communicating with the Press and Social Media Participants

The culture of publishing is that we work behind the curtain – are thoughtful and detailed. The culture of the 'other' side is immediacy – act first and think later. There is an attitude of "no proof, no problem." There is no accountability, few repercussions and a reluctance to get or accept feedback.

Publishers have to deal with the "smoldering crisis" syndrome. With compressed news cycles, nimble responses are needed. They have to humanize and simplify.

To make the best of opportunities, here are some helpful tips:

- Be proactive.
- Act fast.
- Target best outlets.
- Insist on having a seat at the table.
- State the industry position.
- Have good stories to tell.

Social Media Communications

Three Rules:

1. You cannot control the message in social media.
2. Use common sense.
3. Be forgiving.

PSP EVENTS OF INTEREST _____

SEMINAR SERIES ON SELECTED TOPICS
IN ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING ON ADVERTISING SALES

Spring Semester
AAP/NY Offices
71 Fifth Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003
(In Person or Via Webinar)

Advertising can be an important source of revenue in professional and scholarly publishing but the world is changing quickly. Do you know how the changing advertising market can affect your products? This series will provide our membership an introduction and overview of the shift from print to digital advertising currently underway in the PSP industry.

The three part series will look at what has worked in the past, what still works and what is likely to work in the future.

Tuesday, April 23rd – 12:00-1:30pm
How Does Advertising in the PSP Industry Work?

Thursday, June 13th – 12:00-1:30pm
*How Changes in Digital Advertising Present New Opportunities
for Professional and Scholarly Publishers*

Tuesday, July 23rd – 12:00-1:30pm
*The Opportunities of Mobile Advertising: How Can Professional and
Scholarly Publishers Take Advantage of this New Phenomenon?*

Registration Fees:
In Person/Via Webinar: $100.00 (for the three sessions)

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PROFESSIONAL, SCHOLARLY & ACADEMIC BOOKS:
THE BASIC BOOT CAMP

Friday, May 17th, 2013
9:00am-5:00pm
AAP/NY Offices
71 Fifth Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003

If you have less than three years' experience with professional, scholarly, and academic book publishing this course will provide an overview of the industry. Or, if you have spent most of your

career working in one aspect of PSP publishing and want to learn about other PSP job functions, you should attend.

This intensive daylong seminar will help professionals gain perspective on the changes sweeping the scholarly and professional publishing industry. The session will offer a comprehensive overview of the basics.

Registration Fees:
AAP Member: $150.00
Non Member: $199.00

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Brown Bag Luncheon
Sponsored by the
PSP Professional Development Committee

AN INTRODUCTION TO MARKETING FOR BOOKS & JOURNALS

Tuesday, May 14th, 2013
12:00-1:30pm
AAP/NY Offices
71 Fifth Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003
(More details to follow)

Fourteenth Biennial
PSP JOURNALS REBOOT: PROBLEM SOLVING IN AN EVOLVING JOURNALS LANDSCAPE

(formerly PSP Journals Boot Camp)
September 16-18, 2013
AGU Offices
Washington, DC
(More details to follow)

For more information on all PSP events visit *www.publishers.org* or email Sara Pinto at *spinto@publishers.org*