

Editorial

Change is the Only Constant

Over a year ago, I announced in this column the upcoming change in format for *School Libraries Worldwide*. Many have said "Change is the only constant," but the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus (540-480 BC) may have said it first when he declared "Nothing endures but change."

The decision to make the format change did not come easily to the Executive Board of the Association or to the Editorial Board of *School Libraries Worldwide*. Many concerns were raised about access to the journal for students in school library education; about services to members, especially those not currently enjoying inexpensive high-speed Internet services; and about the financial implications of open access. As an Association and as an Editorial Board, we are making the change to an online format in a slow and careful way. Many of our changes have involved compromises. The journal will be available only online and only to members and subscribers, but one feature article from each issue will be available online as open access (free to all; no password required). The Association already makes adjustments in its membership rates and, through this, in the cost of the journal, which is a membership benefit.

Although our format change seems a major one to all of us involved in producing *School Libraries Worldwide*, it does not seem so radical when put in the context of other academic publications and current academic journal publishing trends. A 2005 survey (Cox & Cox, 2006) of 400 academic journal publishers from around the world found that significant changes in publishing policy and practice have been made since an earlier survey was undertaken just two years before in 2003. The 2005 survey participants included publishers of both not-for-profit and commercial journals drawn from the membership of several major publishing associations. The survey response rate was 55% of the 400 publishers surveyed: 40% of the publishers were based in the United Kingdom, 39% in the United States, 10% in mainland Europe, and 11% elsewhere. The study, sponsored by the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, found the following trends.

Online availability. In 2005, 90% of the journals were available online, an increase of 15% since 2003; 84% of journals in the humanities and social sciences were available in online versions.

Open access journals. Twenty percent of the publishers were experimenting with open access journals, but funding for such journals remained a significant issue.

Access to back issues. Ninety-one percent of publishers made back volumes available online, an increase of 5% since 2005; 20% charged for access to back volumes.

Long-term preservation. Forty-two percent of publishers had established formal arrangements for the long-term preservation of their journals.

E-journal licensing terms. Most publishers, both not-for-profit and commercial, were providing “library-friendly” rights that allowed the use of online journal articles for course packs, electronic reserve, or interlibrary loan.

Special arrangements for less-developed countries. Large publishers (with 100+ journal titles) were most likely to offer special arrangements, either institution-specific (41%) or nation-wide (45%). These arrangements included special subscription rates and also alternatives to online access in case of telecommunications difficulties.

Authors' rights. Eighty-three percent of the publishers surveyed required authors to transfer copyright in their articles to the publisher, but more publishers were willing in 2005 than in 2003 to consider alternative arrangements such as a license to publish. Most publishers allowed authors to reuse their own materials in their own institutions or in their own publications (with acknowledgment of the journal and publisher).

All in all, Cox and Cox (2006) conclude that the market for online journals is still in the process of development. The market for online journals is really only about 10 years old, and publishers large and small are still experimenting with varying approaches to online publishing. IASL is a very small publisher (1-5 titles), as defined by Cox and Cox, and just beginning to experiment with online publishing.

A 2002 study by Swan and Brown, also sponsored by the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, examined what authors think (as authors of academic articles and as readers of academic articles) about online publications. Swan and Brown surveyed over 14,500 authors and received responses from 1,246; the response rate of only 9% may have been partly due to their use of a long questionnaire that could only be completed online. Online questionnaires usually result in much lower response rates than do print questionnaires.

The results of Swan and Brown's (2002) study showed that authors who publish in academic journals particularly value the role of publishers: for peer review; for selection of relevant and quality-controlled content; for gathering articles together in ways that enable browsing of content; and for content editing and improvement of articles. These services of publishers (and their editors) were important to the respondents both as authors and as readers. Most respondents to the survey (91%) stated that it was important that journals be disseminated in both traditional print and electronic formats; only 49% preferred new forms of electronic-only journals. Most of the respondents wanted electronic journals to be free in future; few seemed to be clear about who would pay for this, but the largest group favored payment by the library in some way.

Both as authors and as readers, the respondents to the Swan and Brown (2002) survey were concerned that there would be long-term preservation

of and access to journal content, and they wanted to be able to reuse their own work for teaching and to mount on their own Web sites. They preferred to identify articles to read either by searching or by browsing. When they found an article to read, they preferred to print the article and then store it in paper files rather than in electronic files. The preference for printing out articles is not surprising as reading an article on line takes approximately 25% longer than reading it from a print copy.

These two studies (Cox & Cox, 2006; Swan & Brown, 2002) have given me as Editor much to reflect upon. The Executive Board of the Association and the Editorial Board of *School Libraries Worldwide* will be interested in your feedback, both as authors and as readers.

Issue Focus: The Role of the Principal in the School Library Program

The articles in this issue of *School Libraries Worldwide* focus on the role of the principal in school library program, an area of interest and of ongoing research for me personally. In the opening article, a team of researchers from two universities in the UK—Richard Turner, Linda Ashcroft, and Janet Farrow from Liverpool John Moores University and Graham Matthews from Loughborough University—examine the relationships between senior management and school library managers in independent schools in England and Wales. The findings from the surveys of these two groups show that school library managers understand the importance of the role of senior management in the success of their work and that senior management is beginning to understand the importance of the library for improving the success of teachers and students.

In the Theme Section, Guest Editor Betty J. Morris brings together three articles on the theme of Principal Support for Collaboration. Ken Haycock analyzes and synthesizes a broad range of research related to the factors that provide the context for successful collaboration and its effect on student learning. Lesley Farmer presents the role of the principal as a key player in the successful work of their schools and suggests that teacher-librarians need to work closely with their principals, aligning their efforts with the school's mission and the principal's vision. The research study by Betty J. Morris and Abbot Packard examines how principals support collaboration in exemplary media program schools in Georgia from the viewpoints of media specialists, classroom teachers, and principals. The study was based on the results of questionnaires mailed to principals, teachers, and media specialists in 12 schools designated by the Georgia State Department of Education as having exemplary school library media programs. The study found that principals in schools with exemplary media programs did provide support for collaboration for classroom teachers and media specialists. The authors conclude their article with suggestions related to how principals can improve their support of collaboration.

Thank you to the authors and to Guest Editor Betty J. Morris for bringing new perspectives to our understanding of the role of the principal in relation to the school library program.

References

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