

QUASI Seminar Series: November 12, 2021, Chat Transcript

Topic: **Does the Business Model for Academic Publishing Promote Scholarly Progress?**

Yes: Lisa Hinchliffe & Jasmin Lange; No: Steffen Boehm & Bruce Barry; In Practice: Ziyad Marar

- 11:36:32 From Mike Barnett to Everyone: Welcome to everyone! Please post any comments and questions here.
- 11:48:22 From Anke de Looper (John Benjamins Publ.) to Everyone: Correct, the service of publishing is not paid for as part of paying the research.
- 11:48:38 From Charles H. Cho to Everyone: In simpler image/terms:
https://twitter.com/ned_potter/status/1217819041496227840
- 11:50:15 From Cynthia Clark to Everyone: Academic research is not also written in a way that connects with practitioners.
- 11:54:51 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Or, just get the free copy here?
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233833220> [The poverty of journal publishing](#)
- 11:58:57 From Charles H. Cho to Everyone: Open Access fee = 2000-5000 USD or EUR ... per paper.
- 11:59:17 From Giulia Solinas to Everyone: In other disciplines (econ, biology, physics), people have started advertising pre-prints (final version) just when they get their papers accepted into the main journal to diffuse their research and avoid the pay-wall backfire.
- 12:00:08 From Mike Barnett to Everyone: <https://thewire.in/the-sciences/elsevier-forces-isp-to-block-access-to-sci-hub-isp-blocks-elsevier-as-well>
- 12:01:37 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: <https://torrentfreak.com/isp-faces-net-neutrality-investigation-for-pirate-site-blocking-retaliation-181217/>
- 12:01:54 From Mike Barnett to Everyone: <https://www.statnews.com/2019/07/10/university-of-california-loses-access-to-new-journal-articles-published-by-elsevier-after-research-access-fight/>
- 12:04:04 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Of course UC now has a contract that potentially pays ELS more over time.
<https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2021/03/16/the-biggest-big-deal/>
- 12:04:15 From Irene Henriques to Everyone: Open access fees take public money away from hiring students (PhD, Masters, undergrad) - the vital role in maintaining interest in the research ecosystem
- 12:06:38 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Irene ... you mean if researchers have to pay them? There's a significant number of libraries that are now paying the OA fees (through what are known as "transformative" or "read and publish" agreements).

- 12:08:17 From Charles H. Cho to Everyone: @Lisa - true but these are very VERY limited... in general, these fees are so cost prohibitive that researchers don't even bother. These amounts are ridiculous, TBH.
- 12:08:45 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Charles — I think it depends where you work
- 12:09:22 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: University of Malawi?
- 12:10:14 From Charles H. Cho to Everyone: Yes, so there is a bias. Not everyone works at Harvard.
- 12:10:29 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Definitely not at the U of Malawi. (Or Harvard for that matter FWIW)
- 12:10:41 From Mike Barnett to Everyone: Even Harvard has faced trouble meeting the rising costs
- 12:11:16 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: My university, which is not a poor one, cannot subscribe to all the journals that I need for my research.
- 12:12:17 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: It's been decades since any university could subscribe to everything. But, libraries don't only use one approach (subscribing) to provisioning access.
- 12:12:55 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: And it has a very limited pot of funding for APC open access charges - And that's a top 10 university in one of the richest countries of the world.
- 12:13:55 From Charles H. Cho to Everyone: Confession from someone who previously worked at an academic publisher: "this whole thing is a scam"...
- 12:14:30 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Question we should discuss ... who is the "customer" of academic publishing?
- 12:14:33 From Keyvan Maleki to Everyone: What is the true relation between academic publication rate and economic growth rate ? - [excluding moonshot efforts e.g. covid vaccine)
- 12:15:26 From Charles H. Cho to Everyone: from the tweet above, in case could not open: "Explain academic publishing to me like I am Five. Cows make milk. They milk themselves. Other cows check the milk (for free). Cows - get this - PAY THE FARMER to take the milk away. Then the farmer (you won't believe this, honestly) sells the milk *back to the cows.* #academicpublishing.
https://twitter.com/ned_potter/status/1217819041496227840
- 12:16:09 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Question to ponder ... should the cow just distribute the milk herself?
- 12:16:38 From Charles H. Cho to Everyone: Maybe?

- 12:16:51 From Mike Barnett to Everyone: I think there's an interesting distinction to be made between those journals that societies own (and so can hire out their chosen publisher to distribute), versus those that the publishers own (and so the labor is effectively volunteered for their benefit)
- 12:16:51 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Is the cow the customer?
- 12:16:53 From Sandra Waddock (she/her) to Everyone: Well, the real purpose of cow milk is to feed calves not humans...
- 12:17:20 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: A cooperative of farmers would do a pretty good job distributing the milk, rather than depending on big supermarkets who pay below cost price for the milk.
- 12:17:39 From Anke de Looper (John Benjamins Publ.) to Everyone: Then why are there supermarkets?
- 12:18:03 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: This analogy will break down but ... great question ... tho, why should the farmers be involved at all?
- 12:22:07 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Steffen — I want to be fair to your argument ... what data source are you relying on for the claim that the majority of climate change literature isn't open? My quick search in Dimensions on "climate change" found that in 2020 87% is available OA. But, is there a more definitely analysis rather than my quick keyword search?
- 12:28:15 From Bruce Barry to Everyone: Is further consolidation likely? At what point will we open the business section of the paper to find that Springer has acquired Sage?
- 12:29:23 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: The consolidation is more the small and medium publishers into the top 5 or 10 not mergers among the top.
- 12:30:37 From Bruce Barry to Everyone: Thanks Lisa and I agree though I wonder if that "not" might be a "not yet." We have seen consolidation among the biggest players in textbook publishing, so who not scholarly?
- 12:31:42 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Hard to know when textbooks are more national and academic publishing more global
- 12:31:55 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: Clearly, Sage and Brill are not the same as SpringerNature and Elsevier. There is a scale issue, but in terms of values/ ethics, there is a difference too.
- 12:32:44 From Anke de Looper (John Benjamins Publ.) to Everyone: If no one should be 'paying for publishing', what you should worry about is the business model becoming 'data', and then ending up with Elsevier being bought by Facebook and Clarivate by Google.
- 12:34:27 From Sandra Waddock (she/her) to Everyone: We are also 'paying' Facebook with data about ourselves that we barely know they are collecting (according to Shoshana Zuboff).

- 12:37:23 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: Lisa - I'm happy to put my hands up and say that my point on climate change was more rhetorical than based on actual numbers. But my point still holds, as climate change is of course is not the only grand challenge we are working on. But I'm intrigued to find out now, how many percent of climate research is open access. I don't know about Dimensions - please tell us more.
- 12:40:08 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Dimensions.ai is a search tool ... like EBSCO, Google Scholar, etc. For every search, I can then turn on the OA facets and see the percent OA. I can screen share if it is of interest.
- 12:41:04 From Keyvan Maleki to Everyone: Conferences business model and the registration fees, travel costs (airline, hotels, catering etc...) pose challenge to accessing content?
- 12:41:09 From Sandra Waddock (she/her) to Everyone: Why don't we just publish online? Probably for many reasons, but some of that has to do with what Bruce talked about-- the status/privilege associated with particular journals impact factors, and the way that promotion/tenure procedures rely on things like that, including citation counts. The system makes it difficult to get legitimacy/credibility if you were to publish online independently.
- 12:41:49 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: The Chairman of Elsevier said that the Achilles heel is scholars/univs deciding to abandon the reward system.
- 12:42:13 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: 'Reward system#? What do you refer to here?
- 12:42:29 From Irene Henriques to Everyone: Universities and funding agencies will put pressure on this business
- 12:42:39 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: Tenure, promotion, univ rankings
- 12:43:18 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: Lisa - oh, yes, this is the big one. Without that we don't need top journals, nor big APC charges etc.
- 12:43:59 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone:
<https://twitter.com/rschon/status/1068175254969872384>
- 12:44:42 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: well, precisely, it's all about competition. I guess that's in the DNA of the system
- 12:45:30 From Scott Seibert to Everyone: Note that the work of copy editing is increasingly being outsourced by the publishers.
- 12:46:06 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: I guess what many non-profits have in their DNA - including SCIELO (the Latin American platform I mentioned - is the idea of the commons, based on cooperation and knowledge for the wider, public good (societal progress).
- 12:46:58 From Anke de Looper (John Benjamins Publ.) to Everyone: Paying for publishing solves that problem: if Publisher (= provider of publishing service) is paid up front, they do not

have the risk of being able to recover the costs over some (significant) period of time. In that case, having the ownership/right is less important. But as long as a Publisher carries that risk, it is not unreasonable that they want a long term agreement to be able to recover those costs.

- 12:47:21 From Bruce Barry to Everyone: @Scott Seibert Yes quite right Scott and as editor it was for me at times a source of great angst when a less than very good copyeditor was not accountable to the publisher as an employee. Yes accountable as a contractor but not the same thing.
- 12:48:17 From Michael Grothe-Hammer to Everyone: Regarding the distinction between publisher and publishing service, you have, e.g., companies that do both. For example, De Gruyter publishes journals as a publisher, but also owns Sciendo that is basically a publishing service for societies. Other example would be MDPI as a publisher and JAMS (<https://jams.pub/journals>) as a publishing service owned by MDPI (sciendo.com).
- 12:53:41 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: (I have to say that I am trying hard to stay "in character" for the role Mike assigned me. 😊 My own views are much more nuanced!)
- 12:53:52 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: I'm afraid I've got to run to catch a train in 5 min. It's rather late here....
- 12:55:18 From Bruce Barry to Everyone: Same is true for me Lisa.
- 12:57:33 From Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe (she/her) to Everyone: OA publishing models concentrate costs on authors/journal sponsors
- 12:59:08 From Steffen Boehm (Exeter, UK) to Everyone: Thanks, Mike, for organising. Good discussion. I'm pleased to be able to share my views; and very much appreciate everybody's positions. Logging off now, I'm afraid.
- 13:00:48 From Deborah Flamengo to Everyone: <https://ricsi.business.rutgers.edu>
- 13:00:51 From Bryan Husted to Everyone: Thanks, Mike!
- 13:01:27 From Michael Grothe-Hammer to Everyone: Thanks a lot.
- 13:01:55 From Irene Henriques to Everyone: Thanks to everyone - great session - another meeting!
- 13:01:58 From Anke de Looper (John Benjamins Publ.) to Everyone: Thanks very much!
- 13:12:33 From Bruce Barry to Everyone: I have to hop at 15 after the hour. Thanks Mike and everyone!
- 13:16:58 From Giulia Solinas to Everyone: Thanks for the great session