SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

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RESEARCH LIBRARY PUBLISHING SERVICES: NEW OPTIONS FOR UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING AND NEW ROLES FOR LIBRARIES

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The electronic journal now occupies center stage in research libraries. Over the past decade, library expenditures on electronic serials have grown significantly and now exceed spending for print serial titles.[1] Along the way, a number of significant issues have emerged and been addressed, notably the use of publishers' deals for e-journal bundles[2] and negotiating for licensing terms that serve research and teaching communities.[3] The most recent trend to emerge lies in the development of library publishing service programs.[4] Just as licensing was once a novel addition to libraries' established practices of acquiring content for collections, adopting new roles in producing journals is the latest library contribution to disseminating journal articles to scholars and researchers.

To foster a deeper understanding of an emerging research library role as publishing service provider, in late 2007 ARL surveyed its membership about the publishing services they offer. The survey showed that 43% of the 80 responding ARL member libraries were delivering publishing services and another 21% were in the process of planning publishing service development. Only 36% of responding institutions were not active in this arena. The initial survey findings suggested a need to expand the survey into a broader study; consequently, publishing program managers at ten institutions were interviewed to delve more deeply into several aspects of service development: the sources and motivations for service launch, the range of publishing services, and relationships with partners.[5]

Research libraries are publishing many kinds of works, but are focusing especially on journals; 88% of publishing libraries reported publishing journals, compared to 79% that publish conference papers and proceedings, and 71% that publish monographs. Established journal titles are significant drivers of service development, although many new titles are also being produced. Collectively, the survey respondents work with 265 titles: 131 are established titles, 81 are new titles, and 53 were under development at the time of the survey. On average, each library works with 7 or 8 titles, 6 of which are currently available.

Seeking transformative approaches to scholarly publishing, research libraries' programs are intentionally exploring the boundaries of what several program managers conceptualize as a service core. Publishing services are predicated on leveraging new capabilities and new economies. The challenge is to provide the basic service suite by reallocating resources, partnering, seeking synergies with related services, and developing modest revenue streams. Libraries' aspirations to replicate traditional publishing services are modest to non-existent. Libraries are focusing on the capabilities and possibilities of new models rather than slavishly duplicating or simply automating traditional models.

Libraries' products certainly resemble many publications produced by traditional publishers, but they are largely electronic-only and basic in their design. Peer-reviewed works dominate library publishing programs, and editors or acquisitions committees typically maintain their traditional roles in identifying quality content. At the same time, libraries want to identify the most promising new kinds of services needed to support authors and editors.

Limiting services to purely electronic publications offers the advantage that costs are kept low by simplifying production and design and using open-source software. The availability of open-source software such as the Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal Systems (OJS)[6] and D-PubS[7] allows libraries to develop infrastructure to support basic journal hosting

FIGURE 1.
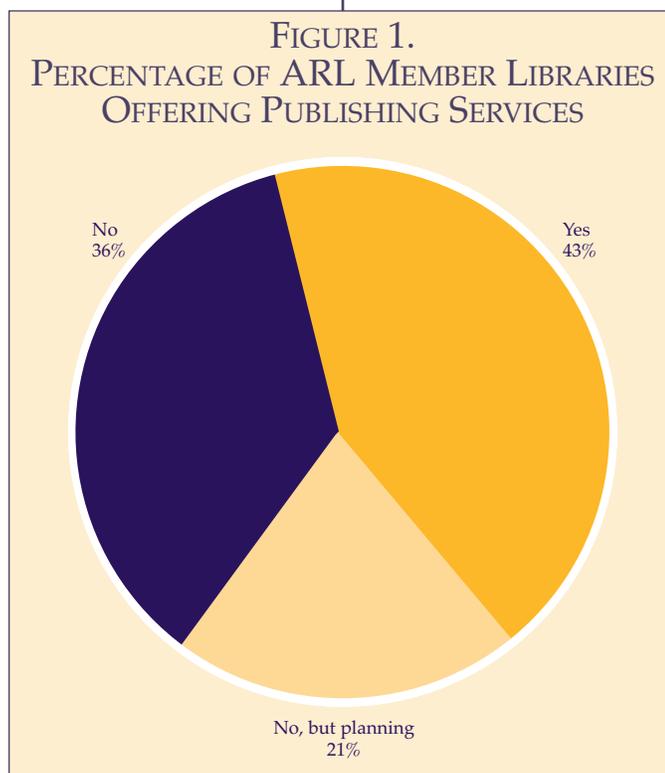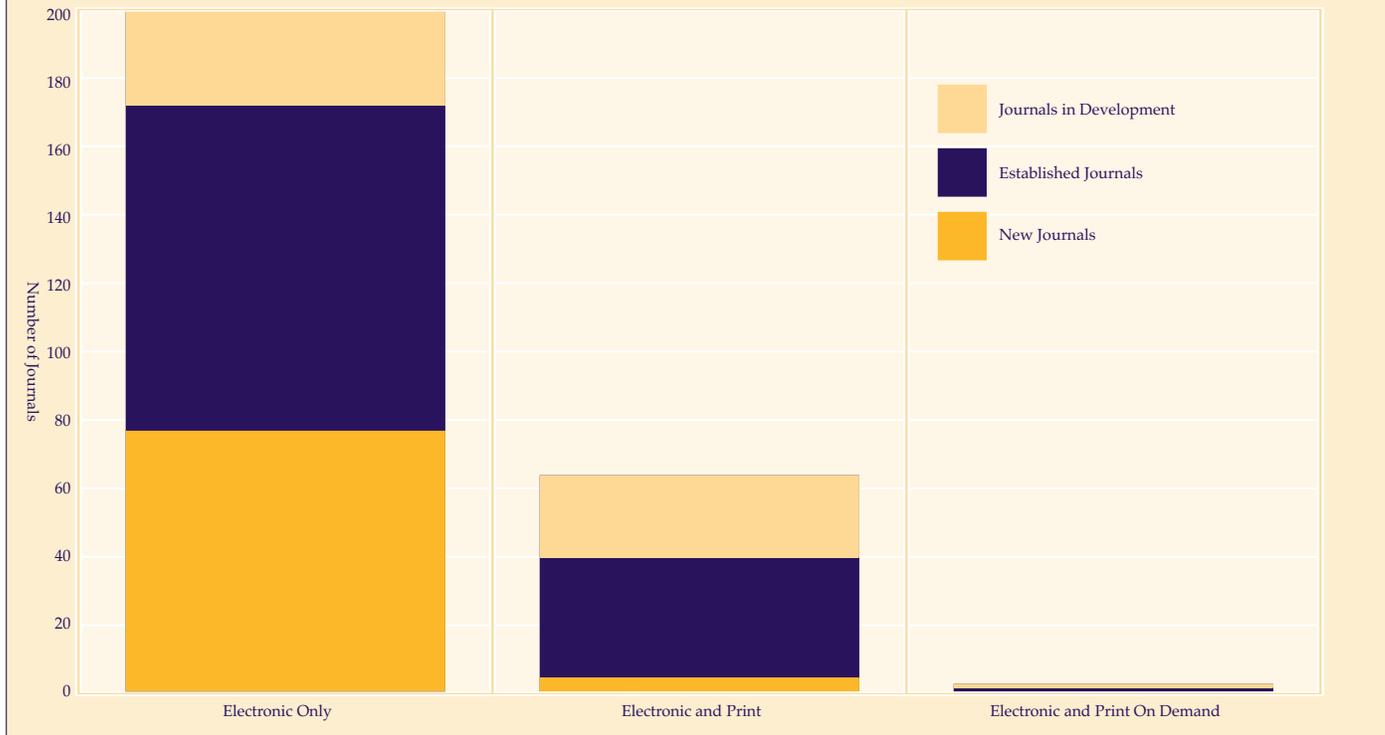PERCENTAGE OF ARL MEMBER LIBRARIES OFFERING PUBLISHING SERVICES

No 36%

Yes 43%

No, but planning 21%

Figure 2.
Types of Journals and Journal Formats Reported

Number of Journals (y-axis, 0 to 200)

Legend:
- Journals in Development
- Established Journals
- New Journals

Categories (x-axis):
- Electronic Only
- Electronic and Print
- Electronic and Print On Demand

relatively easily. Some libraries are leveraging tools bundled into digital repository services they are licensing, such as those offered by the Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress) through Digital Commons.[8]

Advice and consulting regarding a variety of publishing practices and decisions are also in high demand and make up an important component of library services. There are pressing demands for information and advice about issues such as moving print publications into electronic publishing, discontinuing print in favor of electronic alternatives, publishing works with limited revenue-generating capability, revenue generation, standards of various sorts, markup and encoding, metadata generation, preservation, contracting with service providers, and copyright management.

Library publishing services have few pretensions to produce elaborate publications and these services pursue a different economics from those of traditional publishers. Online full-text publishing enables full-text searching and discovery by a wide range of search engines, reducing the need for marketing. Workflows tend to be streamlined and almost all services are highly automated once production commences.

Business Models

For many service programs the goal is to keep publishing costs low enough to be managed as core library services. Libraries are contributing significant organizational resources to support publishing service programs, so it is not surprising that to best leverage those institutional investments a substantial portion of library publishing uses business models enabling open access or working toward such a model. Libraries are avoiding the substantial overhead involved in subscription-based business models and traditional print runs.

As with most scholarly publishing, much of the work of content recruitment and selection, and even some editing, is done by unpaid volunteers drawn from the ranks of active scholars and researchers. However reduced, of course there are still real costs to providing basic publishing services. Start-up or set-up costs for journal publishing are generally substantially higher than ongoing publishing or dissemination costs. The largest costs lie in the startup process of advising, prototyping, creating workflows, and generating whatever layout and graphic design is considered adequate.

The mechanisms for supporting a library's publishing program typically are diverse and usually diversified. Many libraries use a mixed model to manage the two types of investment, either subsidizing set-up but using other funding approaches for ongoing publishing or seeking special funds for start up and

FIGURE 3.
SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR LIBRARY PUBLISHING PROGRAMS
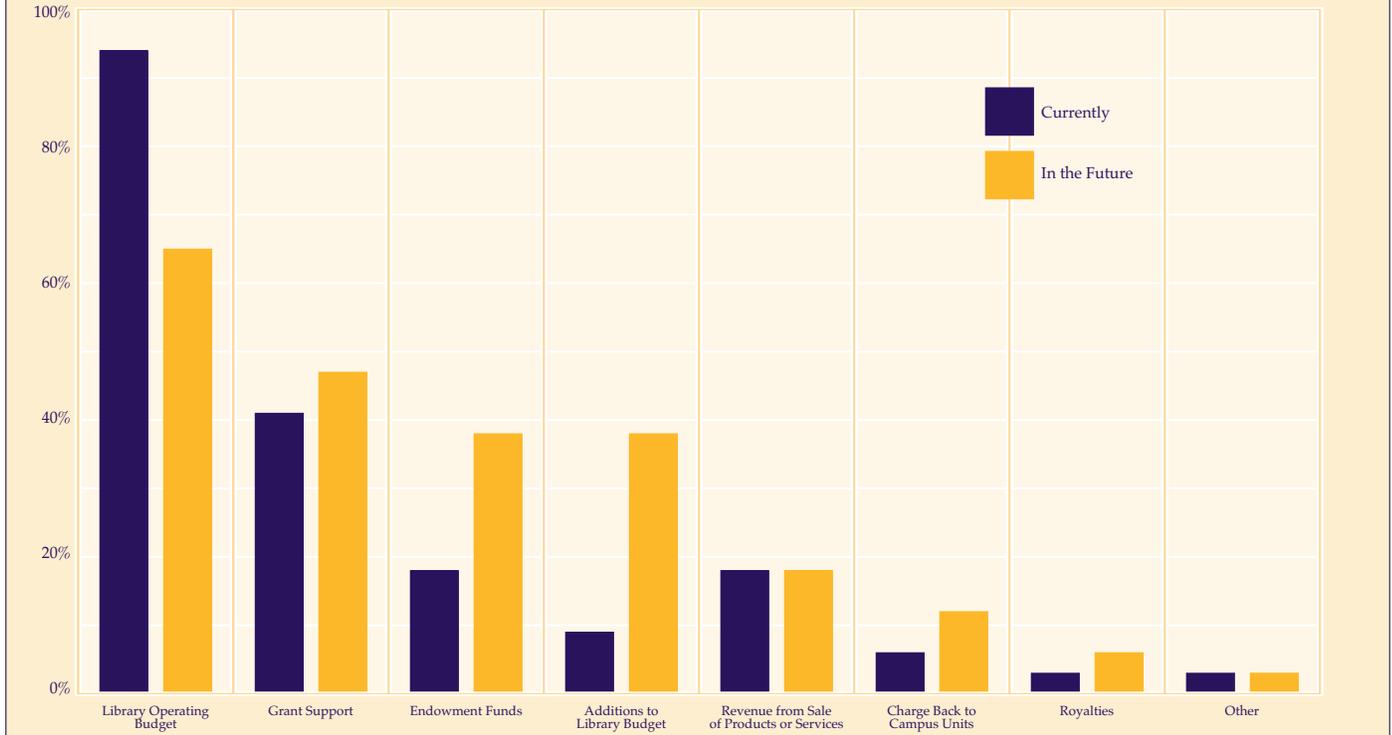
providing ongoing publishing support as a core library service.

Most respondents reported they currently rely on at least two different sources of funding (a few used many more) and have plans to diversify their funding sources further in the future. Nonetheless, almost all library publishing services have a substantial foundation in library operational support. All of the respondents who currently utilize library budget funds anticipate continuing to rely on this funding. In addition to base budget and overhead support from the library, other sources of revenue include grants, charge backs to units or organizations, royalties and licensing fees, print on demand revenue, and other forms of sales of some kind. Partnering is a consistent strategy to diversify program support, and libraries report they often work with multiple partners.

Publishing services leverage a different economics from traditional publishing as they are not usually treated as an isolated operating unit, the way a university press might be. They are typically embedded in an emerging program of related services research libraries are offering to their campuses — digital repository development, digitization programs, copyright management advising, etc. This enables both crucial synergies and important efficiencies in the launch and evolution of publishing services. The developing service suite for authors and editors complements the critical mass of content libraries are creating, connecting new content with print content converted to digital forms.

Looking Ahead

In planning for the future of publishing services, program managers have their eyes on a joint rubric of identifying resource needs for basic services and fostering scalability. Programs are working through an initial learning curve with a small number of publications and then plan to build on their experiences to scale services to support a larger range of publications.

While there is frequent disagreement about the seriousness of the challenges facing the scholarly journal and the scholarly monograph, many researchers are responding now to their perceptions of dysfunctions. Regardless of what forms of service libraries prove capable of supporting, many authors and editors are seeking more options than they feel traditional publishing offers. There is broad agreement that demand for publishing services is far from satisfied.

Library publishing services are developing in conjunction with a number of related services that are increasingly embedding library services more directly into the research process. Staff members working on library publishing are simultaneously developing digital repository, digital library, digitization, digital preservation, and metadata services. Libraries are

building expertise in licensing and copyright advisory that intersect with publishing services. Librarians are moving away from service desks and into research spaces making new service capabilities increasingly visible on campus. These trends are synergizing with the development of library publishing services, allowing efficient and responsive development of a set of related new services. Publishing services are just one part of the rapid transformation taking place in research libraries.

Publishing services will require substantial institutional support to thrive. Research libraries have the will and wherewithal to start service development, but it will require broader commitment of institutional resources, almost surely requiring new resources from institutional leadership, to build effective capacity. The time is also ripe for library leadership and increasingly for campus leadership to give thoughtful consideration to the potential, the goals, the resource needs, and the value of investing in and fostering this rapidly evolving mode of university publishing. The question is no longer whether libraries should offer publishing services, but what kinds of services will libraries offer. Consequently, leaders need to ask to what extent can the university benefit from investments in library publishing services, particularly in the context of related transformations in library services. While new investments are needed, there are both great demands for publishing services and significant benefits to be obtained from strategic investments.

1 See Martha Kyrillidou and Mark Young, comps. and eds., *ARL Statistics 2005–06* (Washington DC: ARL, 2008), 20–23, 42, 50, http://www.arl.org/stats/annualsurveys/arlstats/arlstats06.shtml.

2 See Mary M. Case, "A Snapshot in Time: ARL Libraries and Electronic Journal Resources," *ARL: A Bimonthly Report*, no. 235 (August 2004): 1–10, http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/br/br235.shtml; and Karla Hahn, "The State of the Large Publisher Bundle: Findings from an ARL Member Survey," *ARL: A Bimonthly Report*, no. 245 (April 2006): 1–6, http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/br/br245/.

3 See Karla Hahn, "Do I Have to Negotiate a License for Every E-Resource I Buy? Developing a Best Practice Option," *ARL: A Bimonthly Report*, no. 248 (October 2006): 11, http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/br/br248.shtml.

4 See special issue of *ARL: A Bimonthly Report* on university and library publishing, no. 252/253 (June/August 2007), http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/br/br252-253.shtml.

5 Karla L. Hahn, "Research Library Publishing Services: New Options for University Publishing" (Washington DC: ARL, March 2008), http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/research-library-publishing-services.pdf.

6 http://pkp.sfu.ca/

7 http://dpubs.org/

8 http://www.bepress.com/ir/

RESEARCH LIBRARY PUBLISHING SERVICES: KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ARL SURVEY

- Publishing services are rapidly becoming a norm for research libraries, particularly journal publishing services.
- Service development is being driven by campus demand, largely from authors and editors. Scholars and researchers are taking their unmet needs to the library. Those needs are not just for publishing capacity, but for expertise and advice on navigating the paradigm shift affecting publishing and scholarly communication.
- Libraries are addressing gaps in traditional publishing systems. Libraries are not replicating traditional publishing; however, they are working with a mix of existing titles and new titles. They are frequently working with publishers and editors looking for the opportunity to translate their traditionally published titles to the emerging networked environment of information exchange.
- Substantial investment in open-source applications such as Open Journal Systems (OJS), Open Conference Systems (OCS), D-Pubs, and DSpace is facilitating service development. Investments in further development continue. For instance, the Synergies project funding includes a component for OJS development.
- The numbers of titles research libraries are publishing represent a very thin slice of the scholarly publishing pie; yet, collectively research libraries are beginning to produce a substantial body of content. Publishing programs are consciously focusing on building scale within a defined body of core services.
- Library publishing services are part of a range of new kinds of services libraries have developed or are developing. There appears to be no dominant pattern of service evolution, but publishing services are co-managed and often integrated with a range of new services such as digitization initiatives, digital humanities initiatives, digital repository deployment, development of learning objects, digital preservation activities.
- Rather than building a list per se, libraries are offering services and develop publication services in ways that are consonant with research library service culture.
- The use of varied forms of revenue generation is common for publishing services, but core support comes from library resources and in some cases new campus funding. Libraries can and will redirect resources, but there is wide agreement among program managers that broader institutional investments will be required to supplement existing library budgets, at least as long as the current cost structure of established scholarly publishing persists.