Article

The Challenges of Journal Startup in the Digital Era

Andrew Kirby

School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ 85069-7100, USA;
E-Mail: andrew.kirby@asu.edu

Abstract: This paper aims to contribute to the evolving literature on the new landscape of scholarly journals. It builds on a series of experiences as a journal editor which span the print and digital eras, and focuses on two current activities with new journals. One was designed as a synoptic journal in a broad multidisciplinary field, supported by a commercial publisher; the other a non-revenue journal which aims to showcase the work of undergraduates in the author's institution. Despite the uniqueness of goals and delivery, some of the experiences—and challenges—have proved remarkably similar.

Keywords: journals; startup; commercial publishing; digital repository

1. Introduction

This paper is a contribution to a special issue designed to provide some insight into the contemporary challenges faced by editors developing new journals or dealing with new technologies in the production of existing titles: my Introduction to the collected papers provides a more detailed account of the other contributions (Kirby, 2015) [1]. What follows here consists of an overview of some key issues (although the assessment that is offered tends to depart from contemporary wisdom), followed by a narrative relating to two personal experiences of journal startup.

These current activities build on three decades of editing experience, although it was not experience that was consciously sought. For many years, editing was a way of facilitating research in an evolving field: it is only relatively recently that I became conscious that much of my career has been taken up with scholarly publishing in addition to my work in urban studies.

By way of a brief biography: in the late 1970s, I was the review editor of **Political Geography Quarterly**, which was developed by Butterworths in London. Then in 1983 I was asked onto the

Editorial Board of another new journal titled *Cities*, which was created by the staff of Pergamon in Oxford. In 1994, I then became its first academic editor (of what had by then become an Elsevier imprint, albeit with the same name), and I continued in that role through 2010, when I divested myself of a number of administrative tasks. However, by 2011 I had proposed a new journal, which came to be titled *Current Research on Cities*. And in 2015, I took on responsibility for a new venture in my university, namely an undergraduate research journal titled *INQUIRE*. Consequently, what began as a couple of almost random activities early in my career can now be seen as formative experiences in scholarly publishing.

In this paper, based in part on my experiences, in part on a reading of related literatures, and responses and debates relating to some of my more recent publications, I explore a simple premise, namely that creating a new journal is now a bigger challenge than it was, regardless of the emancipatory potential of digital technologies. This is a conclusion that has surprised me, and I will explore this claim at some length in the following sections.

2. Factual Issues

The past two decades have seen enormous changes in the circulation of scholarly materials. In part, this is a market shift, in part it is a technological shift, and inevitably these are linked. First, let us acknowledge that the production of knowledge has altered dramatically in recent years. There are many more producers of information, and many more consumers of information. At the very least, the full entry of China and India to the global economy has introduced hundreds of universities and institutes, and their thousands of scholars, to the global knowledge marketplace.

Further, the spread of digital technologies has utterly changed the processes of knowledge transfer. At the simplest level, we can read on numerous platforms, or we can even listen to a spoken version of an article or book. Literally thousands of classic texts can be loaded without cost on to a book reader, laptop or phone, such that a commuter can access some of the most compelling materials of this or any age while traveling across town or round the globe.

So far, so good. Yet this technical shift has inevitably changed how information diffuses through the population. It is not so long ago that consumers sought information from static holdings; working their way through card catalogues or journal indexes. While one could serendipitously stumble across new books or new journals (which were held in designated places in libraries, akin to a bookstore in an airport), it was relatively unusual for a student to simply find new materials. This reinforced the way in which disciplines operated, as mentors vouched for and provided the relevant materials to students, and it was this shared knowledge that bound scholars together.

Digital technology has destroyed this. The only echo of the earlier situation is now the text book, which transfers large chunks of information to new students so that all have the same grounding. But after that, it is increasingly common for students to read primary materials, and to be encouraged to search for information themselves. So rather than being domesticated ruminants—fed with a rich diet of conformity—they can be transformed into lean hunter-gatherers who can roam freely and take whatever takes their fancy. Indeed, it is in many ways the mark of successful students that they want to seek out their own data, while the uncommitted (or overcommitted) individual wants a

textbook or will undertake a perfunctory internet search, taking the first "hit" that appears, regardless of its age or relevance.

What this means is that individual disciplines may have little relevance in many situations. Searching for scholarly information on a topic can often reveal dozens or even hundreds of recent papers from across the spectrum of the world's labs and universities, manifested in different languages, and representing everything from anthropology to zoology. Consumers can rapidly assemble a library of papers, with a range of case studies, which suit their needs precisely.

There is no simple way in which to assess the efficacy of this new marketplace of ideas. It is clear that there are many forms of knowledge transfer from one set of researchers to another, across what were once strong boundaries between competing disciplines. For better or worse, the postmodern turn, which was first identified in the literature of poetics and then spread throughout the social sciences, even had impacts on some scientists (e.g., the Sokal hoax: see Brienza, 2015 [2]). The speed of publication has improved, and digital technologies mean that is easy to augment even mundane papers with video files in order to show experimental procedures in a lab, or a recital on a stage.

Yet for all this innovation, the assessment of digital publishing technologies within the academy is essentially negative. Each year there is a new spate of handwringing about the costs of academic publishing and the manner in which this restricts access to information that should be freely available to all. As Esposito has put it:

> "prices are rising, therefore all information must be free. Publishers can and must be disintermediated and war declared on copyright. Reform peer review! Those who liberated the institutions' administrative buildings in their youth, will now free knowledge from the grubby hands of commercial interests in their dotage" (quoted by Phillips, 2010, p. 27) [3].

This has been recast as a debate about open access to scholarly information. A representative assessment is offered by Lambert in an overview of what he terms "the 'wild west' of academic publishing". Reduced to fundamentals, he argues that monopolistic publishers (he singles out Wiley and Elsevier) are gouging the universities, and that one part of the collateral damage has been the near-collapse of the venerable university press (Lambert, 2015) [4]. The impact of what Rizor terms "whimsical hikes" in journal price [5] is now a taken-for-granted reality, although it is a disingenuous argument in several ways, to be rehearsed below. It is also factually flimsy: as Jones has shown, the implosion of press publication was well under way in the early 1990s, and can be traced back even before that (Jones, 2014) [6].

It is true that publishers now charge more for their product. Subscriptions have increased markedly in cost (Jones suggests 400% between 1986 and 2011: 2014). Yet it is also the case that a subscription to virtually any journal that one could scrutinize delivers more content today than ten or twenty years ago, when each issue was constrained to a specific number of (printed) pages. In addition, the typical paper published today is processed more quickly: peer review is faster, production is quicker (in part because there is much less copyediting, but that is a different story), and material is available on line (listed "in press") sooner. In addition, the digital material is searchable, contains hyperlinks to other sources, and can include video and audio content.

Let us be specific about the increase in content. The journal *Cities: the international journal of policy and planning* has, as mentioned, been in existence since 1983. When I become editor in 1994,

all manuscripts were submitted via the postal service; all requests for review were undertaken via letter (and, later, fax), and manuscripts were sent to reviewers (usually via international mail). When papers were revised and finally accepted, an issue was assembled and sent to the printers via courier. The entire issue was then returned (via fax) in proof form, and marked up in red ink. Author corrections were also incorporated and in due course the next issue was printed and distributed—again in the mail. The entire production process, chaotic as it appeared, was in fact run to a tight deadline, so manuscripts could miss one issue and languish for two months. A Volume of six issues contained, typically, approximately forty papers.

The situation today is different. Manuscripts are submitted online and reviewer requests distributed via email. The publisher's portal system suggests an infinite number of potential reviewers. Reviewers are given only four weeks to respond, before posting their comments on the journal's site for editors to read. Revisions are requested from authors within six weeks. When manuscripts are accepted, they go directly to the production staff in Chennai, and proofs follow within 2–3 weeks. At that point articles are listed as "in press" and can be viewed and downloaded. When an appropriate number of papers is available, they are paginated and published as a Volume; volumes and years are no longer synonymous.

While the turnaround time for manuscripts is now decidedly shorter (as is commonly noted, e.g., by Lyman, 2013) [7], it is the **quantity** of material submitted—and subsequently published—that differs most significantly. The journal currently receives approximately 60 papers per month, which is more than were submitted each year two decades ago. In 2014, approximately 200 papers were published, which also indicates that increased traffic has made the journal more competitive than before: the rate of manuscript rejection has risen in direct proportion to the volume of submissions.

So, as a basic rule of the marketplace, educational institutions could expect to pay more for their serials as they receive more in return. Commercial publishers have spent a great deal to digitize their archives and have invested in complex platforms [3]. The outcomes have been many: these changes in journal delivery have had significant impacts on end users, and longitudinal studies show that researchers now read more papers, read more widely in different journals, and even read more non-current material [8]. Yet for many within the academy, the journal itself has increasingly become viewed with suspicion. Anecdotally—as well as in print—there is a good deal of pushback against commercial publishers and the journals that they produce. This evidence of increased journal use notwithstanding, it is routinely argued that formatting text, producing professional diagrams and assembling citations in specific formats all constitute a waste of academic time and effort, while the transfer of copyright denies access to those who cannot afford to pay for information (examples of this argument are discussed in Kirby, 2012) [9].

There is no question that the Internet has changed expectations about how one can, or should be able to, access information. At the simplest level, it has been stated that as distribution costs have disappeared, the material in journals should be free—the most basic rationale for open access (OA) such as is offered by Solomon [10]. Some OA advocates have a more ideological stance, arguing for a world in which information is shared, to the benefit of all. This runs counter to the existence of paywalls erected by publishers, and it is asserted that there is a large unmet demand for scholarly material from individuals who are not linked to the free subscriptions offered by working or studying

within higher education. Indeed, that supposition underlines the new rules made by government-backed funding sources in the West for publications to be freely available.

Yet there are several concerns that are not routinely raised about these developments but which demand scrutiny. While there is nothing inherently wrong with scholarly material being made freely available, it does mean that an inordinate burden is then placed upon the consumer of that information. The details of drug trials or other empirical studies can be lost in a rush to inference, and there are several notorious instances where consumers of information have latched on to publications which have been subsequently corrected or even retracted: interestingly, studies show that however many times the inferences are challenged, this often only serves to reinforce the visibility of the original claims (Fang *et al.* 2012) [11].

Most important is the funneling of information that takes place in such contexts. Only a fraction of papers published are available as OA material, which in practice restricts the consumer to what a search engine such as Google Scholar can provide. Yet as has been pointed out, the key innovation in scholarly publication in the digital era is the liberation that is ostensibly provided to subscribers by even the simplest of search functions. Such individuals have access to literally millions of journal articles, all of which can be mined. Obviously enough, this claim is a little specious—no researcher in any field could use more than a few hundred entries for any project: but being able to move sideways from subfield to subfield, following suggestions from a proprietary search engine such as Scopus, is a fundamental change in the production and distribution of knowledge.

I have suggested elsewhere that without the sophisticated search platforms offered by large commercial publishers, the tantalizing opportunities inherent in multidisciplinary research remain unfilled (Kirby, 2012) [9]. This rests on the somewhat controversial claim that there are different kinds of user within the scholarly publishing universe, who are not created equal. There are networks of scholars, many of whom may have high profiles, part of whose success may come from working in closed intellectual spaces on highly circumscribed problems. String theorists may be used as an example. Such scholars have little interest in journals (as they are being discussed here): instead they post working papers and reprints on closed sites, with access by invitation.

In contrast are those whose work is usually more inductive in form and who are explicitly seeking to pull together information from diverse sources. Researchers who are, for instance, in what they think of as transdisciplinary fields are working amidst a plethora of sources. Scholars of sustainability, to take one example, must be able to draw on publications in water, energy, climate, geology, social affairs and planning, psychology—the list might be almost infinite.

Sustainability is a useful example of a scholarly endeavor that challenges the organization of the typical university (Crow, 2010) [12] and the stable patterns of disciplinary relationship. As studies in big data show, a researcher armed only with an internet connection and a library subscription can roam far and wide, from journal to journal, and in so doing can add to the bending of the organizational structure of the academy [13].

3. Summary

This is hardly the first summary of these changes within the realm of scholarly publishing but it diverges significantly from the usual diagnoses. First, it does not bemoan the loss of the monograph,

whose survival is so inextricably tied up with the demise of the humanities. This, I venture to suggest, has very little to do with the economics of publishing and everything to do with the academy and the demand from millennial students for a skill-based education. Second, it does not view commercial publishers as "the problem". Universities are increasingly operating as large corporations with interests in housing, food vending, energy production and sports revenues, in addition to their more usual mandate for global course delivery, and have increased their charges well ahead of inflation. For them to criticize publishers for charging more for a significantly enhanced product is hypocritical. This is especially true of private universities who have the very largest endowments but who seem the most put-upon by the digital revolution (Lambert, 2015) [4]. And third, this paper has not advocated for OA publishing as an inherent human right to information. And it is indeed interesting that informed commentary now seems to be shifting, seeing OA not as an end point but as one strand within a complex landscape of information delivery (Phillips, 2010) [3]

What this paper now attempts is a brief exploration of two forays into scholarly publishing that the author has attempted in the past five years. One is very specifically an embrace of OA; the other is totally embedded in commercial publishing. In providing a short narrative, my intention is to show that within a digital framework, there are inevitable convergences regardless of the commercial or non-commercial structure of delivery. There are also significant challenges. I will assert that these have very little to do with technology and much to do with the academic marketplace.

4. Personal Experiences I: Current Research on Cities

The impact of new technologies was for me a gradual process that made some tasks simpler (e.g., email made peer review quicker) and some tasks harder (article submission via disk placed a new burden on journal editors at the same time that it spelled the death of the professional copy editor). So it took a long time for me to have an epiphany concerning the digital era. That occurred in the 2000s when I first heard a presentation on bibliometrics at an editors' conference and belatedly realized that digital information is like any other form of big data and can be collected, categorized and analyzed.

This insight prompted me to propose a new journal to my Publishing Editor at Elsevier. I envisioned an addition to their *Current Opinion* series of journals, to be focused on urban studies. I envisioned an interactive journal that would use download and citation analyses to identify trends in research and publication within the field, and the provision of materials that would be valuable to researchers in different fields. An obvious example of the latter would be to publish work on defining neighborhoods that would assist researchers in other fields (such as public health) to create robust sampling and analytical frameworks in their work.

As an example of what I thought was possible, I undertook some work with a colleague with bibliometric skills at Elsevier, who helped me shape a small project on the content of published papers that used the phrase urban, city or cities to frame the research. Using existing ISI criteria, we compared three publication groups—urban studies journals, social science journals, and science journals with some connection to the social world (that is, excluding biology, physics and so on). The results of this simple analysis were intriguing. As we can see in Figure 1, the three groups of journals were presenting very different understandings of what constitutes urban life. Urban studies journals, surprisingly, had a very conservative focus that did not include environmental concerns, which were

however strongly manifested in science journals. By way of contrast, the journals produced within the social sciences had yet a third focus, for instance on housing, neighborhoods and metropolitan organization (Kamalski and Kirby, 2013) [14].

Rank	Sciences	Social Sciences	Urban Studies
1	Water 254	Urban Planning 156	Housing 286
2	Environment 144	US 129	US 244
3	Urban Area 143	Urban Area 127	Urban Planning 240
4	Air 93	Urban Population 126	Urban Development 221
5	Land Use 73	Human 109	Policy 215
6	Atmosphere 71	Urban Development 106	Urban Area 176
7	Human 69	History 91	Neighborhood 148
8	US 68	Female 78	Urban Population 119
9	China 63	Housing 69	Urban Economy 90
10	Urban Planning 61	China 64	Metropolitan Area 88
11	Pollution 60	Urban Policy 64	Governance 74
12	Urbanization 54	Male 61	UK 74
13	Urban Population 51	Neighborhood 61	China 68
14	Urban Development 47	Urbanization 59	Social Change 62
15	Sustainability 40	Land Use 58	Urban Renewal 60
16	Climate 38	Rural 58	Urban Society 58
17	GIS 34	Policy 56	Urban Politics 54
18	Transport 34	Planning 54	Education 48
19	Female 32	Adult 51	Urbanization 48
20	Agriculture 29	Metropolitan Area 45	Strategic Approach 48

Figure 1. Frequency of key words, taken from Scopus, for journal articles in urban studies, the social sciences and the sciences: see Kamalski and Kirby for extended explanations. Red entries are unique to that column; blue are common to all three.

I expected that this information could be used as one way to shape discussion within urban studies about what kinds of research conversations are necessary. Naively perhaps, I also expected that it might receive attention within the literature. It has however only received a handful of citations. As such, this is an exemplar of the hurdles facing the journal. In the bigger picture, the goals that were set for the journal remain on the sidelines, in large part because urban researchers are a diverse amalgam of scholars, who appear disinclined to contribute to a multidisciplinary discourse via a publishing opportunity: instead the journal remains a fairly traditional vehicle for presenting research and subsequent career development.

This is not the first time that it has been suggested that more complex publishing opportunities do not lead to more sophisticated outcomes. For instance, it has been asserted that more advanced search tools allow researchers to narrow their fields rather than enhance their reach (Evans, 2008) [15], and there is evidence that this is manifested in some citation patterns [8]. I believe that this insight is similar to the one discussed by Carpentier and colleagues in another recent evaluation of an urban studies outlet. They discuss how the first iterations of their journal were unsuccessful, as their goals were too ambitious for other academics to grasp (Carpentier *et al.* 2015) [16].

In attempting to solicit manuscripts, I have had some successes and this has resulted, I believe, in powerful papers that would not have been written in quite this way or at just this time. Yet it has also resulted in a good deal of frustration, though mostly on my part. One source of this is that the opportunity to contribute to an urban studies journal seems unattractive to scholars in fields that regard themselves as higher in the academic pecking order: economics, certainly (insofar as it has such a rigid periodic table of outlets that are acceptable in the personnel review process), but also public health and public administration. Consequently, the conversations and collaborations that were anticipated have not routinely come about.

In terms of measuring the success or failure of *CRoC*, this is hard to quantify as there were no specific benchmarks discussed as the journal was rolled out. However, we can use one measure, which was that the journal was to be nested in its parent journal *Cities* for the first two years (2012–2014). This was desirable (and several authors expressed concern for whether their paper would be visible in the most respected indexes, which of course it was due to the longevity of its parent). For the first two years, CRoC was published a supplement to *Cities* with unique pagination. However, the flow of manuscripts proved disappointing and I requested that the spin-off be delayed. In 2015, as part of an increase in the number of volumes for *Cities*, we have agreed to produce *CRoC* as one or two unique volumes, but not to move to free standing journal status. My prediction is that it may stay nested in this way indefinitely; it reassures scholars concerned about impact factors, and it may improve the IF of the parent by publishing review articles that tend to attract more citations.

As an experiment in launching a new journal, *CRoC* may be less than a success. It has a healthy queue of manuscripts but the lofty goal of creating a meta-journal, that was part of the initial design, has not come to pass. *CRoC* does not transcend the sum of its parts, however good those individual papers are. It is not yet leading debates within urban studies. It has though allowed the parent journal to extend itself, and what we might call its brand, in two specific ways. The first of these is in terms of lengthier papers. *Cities* still indicates in its "guides for authors" that papers should not exceed 6000 words. This is a holdover from print publication days, when limits were genuine restrictions. *CRoC* has no such limits, and we have handled papers that are twice that length. This is not a goal in itself, but clearly a more synoptic paper with perhaps two hundred citations cannot be successfully edited to an artificial word limit.

The second niche is with regard to Chinese authors. As can be imagined, the transformation of China to an urban society has had impacts of epic proportions. However, the impact on scholarship has been more modest. With the exception perhaps of scholars in Hong Kong, who have been closer to the tropes of research emphasized in the West, many researchers in the PRC have continued to tackle relatively small projects, such as changing urban morphology. However, some of those who have submitted papers to *Cities* have proved to be very open to discussions about their work and have been very receptive to invitations to tackle a broader topic. Indeed, this has occurred with Chinese colleagues in ways that were anticipated but have tended not to occur closer to home in the Anglophone regions. A particular benefit of these papers is that researchers have been successfully encouraged to discuss and cite material published in Chinese, which is well known to them but generally still unknown in the West.

So in summary we can see that the full potential of digital technology to create what we might characterize as an interactive journal, linking researchers within urban studies and those in other fields,

has not yet occurred. However, those successes that we have had have come about because of, and not in spite of, the commercial platform that underpins the enterprise. In passing, I should also emphasize that the existence of the commercial platform has meant that there have been no real startup costs to me in this venture: advertising and all the other incidentals that can take up so much time and effort—such as drafting a publication ethics agreement—are taken care of within "the system". This is a point I will return to again below.

CroC has managed to publish several dozen papers because researchers are reassured that their work is going to be indexed and distributed within the context of a known journal, one whose increasing Impact Factor provides some legitimacy to their work. Interestingly, we have had only one request to publish OA, which was facilitated; equally interesting is that concerns for rankings, indexing and impacts factors comes especially from Chinese colleagues, who are keen to publish only in ranked journals. It may stand as something of an irony that those who have trained in an ostensibly communist society appear to have no interest in the "shareware" ethic that underpins OA publishing, and have no qualms whatsoever about turning over their copyright to a commercial publisher based in Europe or the US. Whether that will continue to be permitted by the state remains an open question (Hout and Ghemawat, 2010) [17].

5. Personal Experiences II: INQUIRE

Through a series of seemingly random occurrences, I became involved with editing a very different journal startup enterprise in 2014. My home college at ASU has always been committed to undergraduate research, and we have generous funding for faculty and students who work together on many ambitious projects. Many of these have been published in existing journals (e.g., Halpin and Johnson, 2014) [18], but many also remain unknown. Similarly, the university Honors College requires that all graduating seniors complete a thesis, many of which are six credit hour projects, and some of which are assessed by visiting faculty. These are all placed in a digital archive, but inevitably many are never accessed. Consequently, it was felt that an undergraduate research journal could be a unique contribution to the university, its graduates and its faculty. Complex discussions among faculty have led to the compilation of the first volume of papers at the time of writing. This is a good moment to assess the project, not least as it avoids any assessment of individual papers and their contribution.

Perhaps the first point to be made about *INQUIRE* [13] is that it has not yet achieved high visibility within the university, and in large measure that relates to the potential burden on faculty and staff time which is a significant deterrent to participation. Although it is taken for granted that we now live in a blogging culture in which anyone can create opinion, relatively few choose to. At the very least, this explains why commercial publishers have not withered and died: journal startup can be a time consuming business, even when there is a commercial staff to take care of business. When one is using campus resources, the impediments are greater. For anything more complex than a Facebook page, the effort increases exponentially (Phillips, 2010, Carpentier *et al.*, 2015) [3,16].

So faculty members have been slow to participate, as have students. In part, this may reflect the closing off of academic careers, such that very few undergraduates are attracted to such a precarious path, dependent on publishing and then very likely perishing. The exceptions have been students who have worked closely with a faculty member on a sponsored project with the expectation that

publications will emerge. This was not projected when the first discussions about INQUIRE were undertaken: given the institutional culture it was assumed that papers would be the work of individual (student) authors, as for instance happens in a long-running arts magazine on campus, which is run by students who evaluate peer material. Yet, more than half the initial submissions are from first authors who are students, with faculty members as co-authors. This will appear usual to those in many fields, but unusual to others.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of developing the journal has been an evolving collaboration with the University Library, whose staff members have developed a Digital Repository which hosts numerous graduate theses but is now also hosting several journals. This is a relatively simple platform (developed within the Library using its own software) but it possesses significant advantages for a new enterprise: it promises permanence and continuity, and one other essential factor: it is costless to my college in terms of skilled technical labor, though obviously not to the Library, which is investing heavily in this new role. It is the Library that has also defined the protocols for (open) access to the completed papers.

The sustainability of any new enterprise should obviously be a key component of its planning, especially given the questions that swirl around the future of the academy and its institutions. Yet it is interesting that the same project can be viewed very differently. Carpentier and colleagues write warmly about their "financial and intellectual freedom" which comes from not being connected to a commercial publisher (2015). Charging 2 Euros per download has, they write, achieved this independence. This is in contrast to Gould's assessment of a university journal of rural studies, begun in 2006, which presents a rather different perspective; the author repeatedly asks how each aspect of the journal will be supported into the future (Gould, 2011) [19].

For the record, none of these questions was asked of INQUIRE. Perhaps this was a function of working in an institution committed to permanent organizational change (which also makes the need for archival permanence much more salient: see also [10]). Perhaps it was a function of being unaware of the myriad details that arise in a startup where there are few existing resources. This year has been a crash course in a dealing with a host of incidental details: creating instructions for the peer review process; encouraging student authors, accustomed only to praise, to revise their papers after what feels to them like withering criticism; learning how to create meta-data for published papers. I was reminded that without a publishing platform to do these tasks automatically, authors do not know that their papers have been published—unless I email them and tell them the good news.

6. Assessment

This paper is based on personal experiences with two journal startups, using an assessment of the literature to provide comparisons and structure for the information. Both of the journals have proved to be much more time consuming than I had expected, the first in terms of trying to solicit an understanding of the new journal's role, the second in terms of virtually every aspect. Used to having an abundance of submitted materials, it has proved challenging to return to soliciting manuscripts and cajoling colleagues for reviews. To some significant degree, this is, I believe, a function of the academic culture in which we find ourselves operating. While every faculty member—and every student for that matter—is familiar with the essentials of scholarly publishing, it is the case that few

are connected to the process in anything but the most tangential manner. Certainly, they exist as authors on the one hand, and consumers of published information on the other. Yet for many authors, the connection to "the journal" is increasingly remote, restricted to a corresponding author who takes on the burden of manuscript submission. And as we have seen, the users of information are today much less likely to be a subscriber to a journal and much more likely to be the owner of a collection of preprints and reprints pushed their way by the authors, colleagues and journal tracking services.

As noted earlier in the paper, the two journals have entirely different goals, organizational structures and technical bases, but they sit together closely in terms of the complexity of their role. While *CRoC* exists as a potential meta-journal, and *INQUIRE* is being developed as a student showcase, neither functions to serve a discrete network of scholars in a familiar support role. As a consequence, neither has witnessed an immediate buy-in from authors or reviewers.

7. Future

Predicting the future of scholarly publishing has become commonplace since the advent of digital technologies. Indeed, the demise of traditional journals has been predicted for twenty years now, a period during which the number of commercial startups has actually accelerated and the economic health of the major publishers has seemingly improved (e.g., Odlyzko, 1995) [20].

What these cheerful predictions do not tackle are two important realities. The first is that modern academics are under increasing pressure to act entrepreneurially, finding research grants and publishing results. Even in transdisciplinary fields, many researchers work a small patch. Their training does not emphasize the use of much of the search power at their disposal; instead they want publication venues with speed coupled with visibility.

Second, the opportunity costs involved in alternative—that is, non-commercial—publication ventures are enormous. In addition to the many details involved in journal startup, from copyright to indexing, there remains the reality that scholarly publishing is ever tighter linked to academic review of individuals and institutions. Innovative boutique journals are easy to dismiss when an academic seeks promotion and is compared to peer individuals who have published in *Nature* or *Science*.

It is clear we remain in a transitional moment. How the journals with which I work will evolve is of course unknown, and I am unsure even as to what time frame will allow me to move an assessment from "startup" to "established journal". Doubtless, hindsight will provide enlightenment.

8. Notes

The name of the journal [*INQUIRE*] was chosen following a solicitation of suggestions within the college. It builds on the research support scheme titled "New College Undergraduate Inquiry and Research Experiences" [NCUIRE], which is expected to channel research towards the journal.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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