



Presentation of Karin Wittenborg

DC Principles
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I am delighted to be here this morning to give you my perspective as a librarian and provider of information to faculty and students.

There is a tendency for the general public and the press to group all scholarly publishers together. In fact, commercial and not-for-profit publishers are significantly different. In addition, even within the not-for-profit sector there is much variation.

There is general agreement among librarians and many faculty that the traditional model of scholarly publishing in the **commercial** sector is dysfunctional. These publishers generate huge profits that are not reinvested in scholarship and access to their literature is limited to institutions and individuals with deep pockets.

The press has often focused commercial publishers and new open access initiatives. Yet the scholarly societies represented here today have spent decades working together to improve access to and affordability of their scholarly output.

The DC Principles recognize and advance the important role of scholarly societies. They reflect an economically viable model that provides good value for investment. They facilitate publication of the best scholars regardless of their access to funding, and they work within the existing and critical academic culture of promotion and tenure. Some other models either ignore the importance of promotion and tenure or assume that it will change radically in the next few years. These societies also simplify the process of publication and dissemination for authors, individual readers, and libraries. They also archive their material, an important issue for librarians.

Scholarly publishing is clearly in a transitional or shake down period. Several publishing models can and should co-exist. The successful ones will survive and will deliver high quality content in a sustainable and affordable manner. They will also advance research and higher education.

Many people have high hopes for new models such as open access for the scientific literature. These efforts are important, but they do not yet have a track record. In our eagerness to find a solution to the scholarly publishing problem, let's not forget the fundamentals. Will low costs today be low costs tomorrow? Are current P & T

processes disincentives for the best new scholars to publish their work in open access systems? Is academia ready to change so quickly? Are publishing costs merely being shifted within the university? Are the author fees (and author subsidies) further complicating a system that needs to be simplified? I heed the consumer's caveat. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

The signatories to the DC Principles already have a track record. Without any fanfare, these societies have transformed traditional print journals into electronic versions and improved them in the process. They are using a sound business model and are still able to make their output widely available immediately or shortly after publication. The costs of their journals are predictable and reasonable and they reinvest in the advancement of research and scholarship.

In my opinion, these scholarly societies are the “good guys” of scholarly publishing.

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