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What's in a Container? The Future of the Scholarly Journal

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Against the Grain

“Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians”

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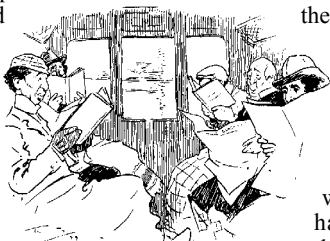
What’s In a Container? The Future of the Scholarly Journal

by **Andrew Wesolek** (Head of Digital Scholarship, Clemson University) <awesole@clemson.edu>

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As we concluded work on our book, *Making Institutional Repositories Work*, it became clear that much remained to be said. In our discussions, we often wondered how the rise of institutional repositories was impacting and would continue to impact the role of the traditional journal as a container for scholarship. More broadly, as authors continue to take on some of the work of disseminating their individual articles online, impact metrics become more granular, and open access megajournals shift focus from content type to sound science, it would appear that we may be nearing the end of the era of the “traditional” scholarly journal.



publishers, offer insights not only into the future of the journal as a container of scholarship, but into the future of scholarly communication. And yes, the irony inherent in guest editing an issue of a journal that questions the future of that medium was not lost on us. Although it is in virtually all respects a “traditional,” subscription-based periodical, we think that the uniquely diverse audience of *Against the Grain* coupled with the fact that the magazine has never shied from honest analysis and reflection on the world of scholarly communication makes it an appropriate venue for this discussion.

In our first contribution, “Academic Publishing Traditions,” **Myers and Wright** provide context for the issue, by focusing on two challenges facing the traditional journal: new article-level metrics and author copyrights. First, the authors provide a background for the factors and philosophies that have given

rise to article level metrics and show how these new measures, or altmetrics, are having an impact on decisions scholars are making in terms of where they choose to publish. Second, authors explore the role of author copyrights in scholarly publishing, and how the traditional approach impacts scholarly communication and library budgets.

Delving deeper into the themes identified by **Myers and Wright**, **Collister and Deliyannides** make the case for the inclusion of Altmetrics, as an additional and complementary component along the continuum of scholarly impact metric components. These new metrics are especially important in an environment of emerging dissemination models and new ways to measure promotion, tenure, and impact.

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If Rumors Were Horses

Yet more consolidation! YBP has purchased Ambassador Book Services. YBP and Ambassador Book Services are working closely together to transition Ambassador customers over to YBP’s systems and services. To avoid any interruption of service, YBP representatives will be in touch shortly to assist with the transition of Ambassador accounts to YBP.

<https://www.ebsco.com/promo/ambassador-book-services>



Oh! How great that we have two ads back to back at the front of this

February issue of *ATG* — one from YBP and the other from Ambassador!

Have you kept up with all that’s happening with the Librarian of Congress (LnOC) position? **James Billington** was appointed by **Ronald Reagan** in 1987 and has retired/resigned. **David S. Mao** became Acting Librarian of Congress Oct. 1, 2015. **Nancy Herther** has written a two-part article on the *ATG NewsChannel* about the issues surrounding this important appointment including **Billington’s** accomplishments, and the need for vision and oversight of the **Library of Congress** position. There are countless questions and countless opinions on the next steps and what should be done. **Peter Brantley** (Director

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Bet You Missed It

Press Clippings — In the News — Carefully Selected by Your Crack Staff of News Sleuths

Column Editor: **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Editor's Note: Hey, are y'all reading this? If you know of an article that should be called to *Against the Grain's* attention ... send an email to <kstrauch@comcast.net>. We're listening! — **KS**

BOOKSTORE MAGIC

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Rick Bass writes a paean to **Square Books** in Oxford, Mississippi. Says it has not lost its soul and succumbed to the temptation to become a bakery, a video rental, or quilting salon. Owners **Richard** and **Lisa Howorth** taught him to write by handing him books to read. At the time, **Eudora Welty** was still alive. Local firefighter **Larry Brown** was about to hit it. **John Grisham** had his first book out.

Now there's a children's book store, **Square Books, Jr.** And another book store **Off Square Books** where a weekly variety show *Thacker Mountain Radio* is broadcast.

See — **Rick Bass**, "Square Roots," *Garden & Gun*, June, July, 2014, p.117.

UNROLLING THE SCROLLS

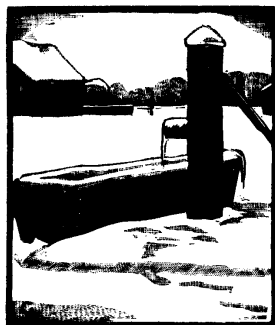
by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

In 1752, 800 papyrus scrolls were uncovered from a lava buried villa in Herculaneum. It's a seriously big ancient library, and the academic world assumed they'd find vanished classics. Only one **Sappho** poem remains, yet we know there were nine volumes. Thirty-five **Livy** volumes out of 142. **Suetonius'** missing "Lives of Famous Whores."

But every time they'd try to unroll one, it would turn to dust. The application of modern chemicals was equally disastrous.

Now, computer-science whiz **Brent Seales** of the **University of Kentucky** is trying to "virtually unwrap" scrolls using molecular-level X-ray technology and spectral imaging techniques.

See — **John Seabrook**, "The Invisible Library," *The New Yorker*, Nov. 16, 2015, p.62.



THOSE OBSCENELY LUCRATIVE APPS

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Iranian immigrant **Farhad Mohit** (UCLA, MBA Wharton) created Flipagram, now the No.1 iPhone download in 87 countries. It lets you make "Flips" — mashups of videos, photos, text, and 30-second cuts of hit songs.

Which is to say, it's Instagram with music. And I guess their big innovation is licensing a searchable catalog of millions of tunes.

Music stars like **Garth Brooks** and **Britney Spears** are posting videos on it and getting thousands of likes. And of course you get teenagers dancing in their rooms and dog and cat films.

Michael Moritz' **Sequoia Capital** has shoved \$70 million at him, wanting in on the next social media monster.

See — **Kathleen Chaykowski**, "Flipagram's A Big Deal, How Big? The last startup that had **Michael Moritz** and **John Doerr** on the same board was **Google**," *Forbes*, Dec. 14, 2015, p.66.

FINANCIAL RUIN AS COMEDY

by **Bruce Strauch** (The Citadel)

Finance writer wunderkind **Michael Lewis** (*Liar's Poker*, *Flash Boys*, *Moneyball*, *The Blind Side*) has had *The Big Short* made into a movie. Fifteen neophytes bet against the subprime mortgage market and became billionaires.

His big challenge for a movie? How do you make a mass audience interested in mortgage default swaps? How do you show a Wall Street where you can't tell where stupidity ended and corruption began. "Treat your audiences like poets and geniuses and that's what they'll become."

And the stars have to be in alignment. **Lewis** realized *Moneyball* was going to be a movie when his publisher called and said, "You bastard, **Brad Pitt** is on his way to my house. The babysitter showed up wearing a dress, and my wife is putting on makeup."

See — **Michael Lewis**, "Big Short, Big Screen," *Vanity Fair*, Holiday, 2015-2016, p. 112.

What's In a Container? from page 1

In "Publishers and Institutional Repositories: Forging a future that facilitates green open access for researchers, funders and institutions," **Mullen** and **Ross** explore the issue of author copyrights within a rapidly changing open access landscape, and the tensions inherent in the motivations and economic realities of university faculty, publishers, funding agencies, and librarians. Far from confrontational, the authors, a librarian and a publisher, seek common ground while identifying pathways forward for mutually beneficial success.

Our final three contributions look slightly further afield, with focuses on emerging trends in scholarly publishing, and the adaptations of established publishers. First, **Jones** and **Hahnel** make a clear and straightforward case for libraries to take a lead in the curation and dissemination of data in "How and Why Data Repositories are Changing Academia." Although there are real and seemingly imposing issues associated with data such as copyright, context, file types, etc., the authors show how these perceived obstacles can and should be overcome.

Hoyt and **Binfield** then describe how the era of the internet has given rise to scholarly communication assets like OA and mega-journals. While many questions are still left

unanswered and strategies have yet to be developed, the authors call for new and diverse sets of solutions that won't be solved merely by advances in technology.

Finally, in "Adaptations of Established Publishers," a librarian, **Farrell**, and a publisher, **Wise**, come together to discuss new collaborative tools designed to help researchers share and publicize their work as well as discuss ways that these tools can help reframe and potentially repair what has often become a contentious relationship between publishers and libraries. Frank and honest financial realities are put in the context of repositories, embargoes, and efforts to standardize new tools for dissemination of scholarship. 🐼