

## Enclosure and open access in communication scholarship

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### Abstract

The current state of scholarly communication is one of contest between an increasingly commercial system that is dysfunctional and incompatible with the basic aims of scholarship, and emerging alternatives, particularly open access publishing and open access archiving. Two approaches to facilitating global participation in scholarly communication are contrasted in this paper; equity is seen as a superior goal to the donor model, which requires poverty or inequity to succeed. The current state of scholarly communication within the discipline of communication is examined. Journal publishing in communication shows a greater diversity of ownership and less commercial concentration than scholarly publishing overall; this, and the at least 76 fully open access journals in this area suggest strong potential for emancipating scholarship in communication from commercial imperatives. Specific sites of struggle and actions for scholars, including developing open access journals and self-archiving, are presented.

### Introduction and literature review

The purpose of this section is to introduce the concepts of enclosure and emancipation in the context of scholarly communication, and relate these to the existing scholarly publishing system and an emerging alternative open access system. In brief, the phenomenon of enclosure with respect to scholarly communication is closely tied with the concept of toll access, in which readers have to pay a toll, whether through subscription, purchase, or pay-per-view, in order to read a scholarly work. Enclosure is closely *related to* commodification and commercialization of scholarly work, but the two concepts are not the same, nor do they necessarily correspond. For example, there are not-for-profit scholarly publishers that use dissemination methods based on enclosure (e.g. subscriptions), and there are commercial publishers that charge for the service of publishing, but disseminate on an open access basis. The key difference is the mode of dissemination. Open access is literature that is freely available to anyone, anywhere with an internet connection.

The world's first scholarly journals were published in 1665, with Denis De Sallo's *Journal des Sçavans*, followed shortly by Henry Oldenburg's *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*. From that time to the end of the Second World War, scholarly publishing was almost exclusively the domain of scholarly societies. After the Second World War, an influx of government funding for research resulted in greater demand for publishing outlets than existing scholarly societies could readily provide, creating an entry point for the commercial sector. In the decades since, the number of researchers and their publishing has increased. The commercial sector has grown in market share, and undergone consolidation through a series of mergers and acquisitions<sup>1</sup>.

The market for scholarly journals tends to be inelastic and lacking in competition; core journals are "must-haves" for university libraries. This has made it possible in recent

decades for commercial publishers to increase journal prices at far above inflation levels, resulting in the serials crisis (ARL, 1989). The university press system is in serious difficulty, if not at the point of collapse (Brown, 2007).

Currently, there are several basic types of publishing outfits involved in the publishing of about 23,000 scholarly journals<sup>ii</sup>:

- Not-for-profits, learned scholarly societies and university presses, which are responsible for approximately half of scholarly publishing (Crow, 2006)
- Private businesses, generally owned by individuals or families
- Publicly traded corporations, beholden to stockholders
- More recently, libraries have entered the scholarly publishing arena, and publishing cooperatives are beginning to appear.

The serials pricing crisis brought about high prices and produced a publishing gap that would be filled by commercial publishers, which in turn accelerated the commercialization and consolidation of the industry in the past two decades. As a result, there is little room for smaller and not-for-profit publishers, which is further exacerbated by the high cost of moving from a print basis to an online environment, particularly in the early days of that transition. Unable to compete, not-for-profits have tended to contract out publishing services to commercial firms, and smaller independent publishers have tended to sell their interests to commercial firms.

While moving to online publishing was an enormous expense and risk in the 1990s, today publishing on the web is relatively easy and cheap. For example, the Public Knowledge Project has developed free, open source software that automates much of the routine work of journal publishing, namely the Open Journal Systems (OJS). OJS is currently used by more than 5,000 journals around the world (Edgar and Willinsky, 2010). In stark contrast to the high priced journals of the commercial sector, there are now well over 6,000 fully open access (no delay), peer-reviewed scholarly journals, as listed in the vetted *Directory of Open access Journals* (DOAJ, 2011).

In addition to open access journals, scholars can make their own work freely accessible through open access archives (generally called institutional repositories), of which more than 1,500 are listed in OpenDOAR (2010). The Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, which provides a cross-search service to all of these archives (repositories), searches over 27 million free documents. Many of these archives are based at institutions such as universities or research centers, however several of the largest archives are subject-based, including PubMedCentral (medicine), arXiv (physics), and RePEC (economics).

Support for the not-for-profit sector includes library hosting, support services for journals and consulting services available through the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC). All of these factors have changed the landscape for scholarly publishers. The complete dominance of the commercial sector cannot be viewed as inevitable, however change is not easy and the high profits generated by some commercial companies mean that any move towards change has been hotly contested.

### **Critical views: a literature review and critique**

International commercial publishers derive massive profits from scholarly publishing in spite of adding little value to the publishing process (Merrett, 2006). My explanation of the relative contributions of various parties to the scholarly journal article, in brief, is as follows. Typically, the bulk of the work represented in a journal article is

the underlying research or analysis, paid for by universities through scholars' salaries, research funding agencies, or some combination of the two. The next largest share of the work involved is that of actually writing the article, which is done by the scholarly author. Along with peer review, done by scholars on a voluntary basis, this forms the substantive portion of the scholarly journal article. The publisher coordinates the process of peer review, and arranges for copyediting, layout, dissemination and marketing. One way to compare the difference in substance and importance of the different contributions is to consider what the scholarly peer reviewed journal article system would look like if there were only scholars, or only publishers. Obviously, if there were scholars but no publishers, this would be an inconvenience to scholars. However, if there were publishers but no scholars, there would be no scholarly literature at all. Other important contributions to any one journal article include all of the work of previous scholars that the author builds on, public contributions to the education of authors, reviewers' and publishers' contributions, and often the input of human subjects.

The British government initiated an informal investigation of scholarly publishing through the Office of Fair Trade (OFT). The OFT's 2002 report describes the market as inelastic and an effective monopoly. One effect of price increases for commercial "big deal" packages including essential journals, especially in the science, technology and medical (STM) areas, has been a decrease in funding available for purchase of other journals and scholarly monographs (Merrett, 2006).

Pirie (2009) affirms much of the information provided by Merrett. Pirie points out that the scholarly publishing industry can be considered a failure even in neoclassical economic terms, with operating profits of the largest commercial publishers in the range of 24-45 percent, in comparison to the average U.S. manufacturing firms' profit of 7.1 percent (Bank of Korea, 2007), reflecting a lack of competition. Pirie suggests that mainstream criticism of this situation is limited in that it does not take into account the broader political economic context. In particular, Pirie is highly critical of May (2005) who views alternative open source and open access publishing as capitalist in nature, just *differently* capitalist, combining elements of public good within a basically capitalist system. May (2010) argues that open access is not a revolution, but rather a further development of the struggle to balance public and private interests. Pirie (2009) claims that May's article is "fundamentally atheoretical, accepts some of the claims made by academic publishers uncritically, fails to engage in an in-depth analysis of the structure of the journal-industry, and makes highly suspect recommendations for reform."

Pirie's analysis is based on the UK, or more broadly the core English-speaking capitalist countries including primarily the UK and the U.S., as well as the Netherlands, a limitation that Pirie acknowledges. The UK academic journal industry is highly competitive and a net exporter, and is worth about £1 billion annually to the UK economy. Pirie discusses the need for capital to find new areas of accumulation based on intangibles rather than physical production, and the increasing marketization of the public sphere since the 1970's. Pirie questions whether approaches that seek to modify capitalism have any chance of success, predicting strong opposition from capitalism as a whole, and suggests that change needs to come through a broader movement away from capitalism to socialism. According to Pirie, there are two options for scholarly publishing: the commercial system and state support. Pirie recommends a state-supported system of open access journals.

I would argue that Pirie's analysis is excessively essentialist in nature, with a narrow focus on the benefits of the current system for capitalism but missing a very

important point: the business community is part of the public that is denied access to the results of work funded by the public under the subscriptions model. It is true that the business community can purchase access to subscription journals or articles, however, the price barrier is sufficient to discourage such access, and, since the business community contributes to the production of the information through their taxes, they should not have to pay again to read the results.

While competition is lacking *within* the scholarly publishing industry, the interests of this industry are also in conflict with the interests of other industries. If the university library is forced to pay large sums to access scholarly journals or do without, so are the pharmaceutical company, the oil company, and the entrepreneur who is looking for new environmentally friendly business ideas. In this context, contesting the commercialization of scholarly publishing does not threaten capitalism as a whole, but rather pits the interests of one small group of publishers against a great many other capitalists. Polanyi (1957, p. 132) touches on this paradox when he points out that even the organization of capitalist production needs shelter from the self-regulating market. This situation presents an opportunity to mobilize capitalist support for open access, a move that will incidentally protect and expand the public sphere.

According to Pirie, the one essential role of commercial publishers is funding the publishing process; all other functions from authoring to reviewing to editing are performed by academics. If an alternative source of funding could be found, the role of the commercial publishers could be done away with immediately. Pirie's suggested remedy is central state support through the UK research councils for scholarly journals. I would argue that another potential source of alternative funding involves redirecting funds from academic library budgets.

Analysis of numbers based on a report by the Research Information Network (RIN) (2008) indicates that of the approximately £8 billion in revenues received annually by the global scholarly publishing industry (for journals, about half the total), about 73% comes from academic library subscriptions, with another 15% coming from other subscriptions, including subscriptions from other library types as well as from individuals<sup>iii</sup>. Another way of looking at this is that it is largely academic libraries that are funding both the publishing process and publishing profits.

The RIN (2008) report illustrates the need for a political economic analysis of scholarly publishing. The report examines the current costs of scholarly publishing in the UK and projects these globally, including non-cash costs such as reading and peer review, but excluding research production. Four future scenarios are modeled. The first two, a shift to electronic-only publication for journals and a shift to author side payment for journal articles, reflect an unstated assumption of continuing high profit levels for commercial scholarly publishers. From my perspective, this assumption should be clearly stated, and challenged. The third scenario explores what happens if one aspect of the scholarly communication system, peer review, were to move from the current gift economy to a cash one. It is clear that this would result in an enormous increase in the cost of scholarly publishing. While this scenario is obviously impractical, it is interesting from a political economic perspective in that it illustrates that a shift from a gift economy to a cash economy can be disastrous, even from a classical economic point of view. Publishers could not raise prices to account for the increased costs of this system, as this would increase the prices far beyond what the market could bear.

Drahos and Braithwaite (2002) locate the present state of academic publishing within a broader context. They see the gradual enclosure of information through

intellectual property rights as part of an incomplete project of information feudalism. This enclosure project is based on the idea that private intellectual property rights are necessary to support innovation, an idea that is not supported by evidence. As Drahos and Braithwaite point out, there have been many periods of great creativity, such as the classical music period of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This was the age of, among others, Mozart and Beethoven, during which there was no copyright. Drahos and Braithwaite attribute much of the creativity of the past century to investment in public universities, and point out that three of the most consequential contributions of science (the human genome, the Internet, and the secrets of splitting the atom), were so consequential precisely because the U.S. government made them public goods. The current tendency for universities to move from the creation of public knowledge to seeking of patents will likely do more to stifle than encourage innovation.

Drahos and Braithwaite characterize knowledge as an imperfect public good. Traditional economics considers a good to be public when it is non-rivalrous and non-excludable. A good is non-rivalrous when consumption by one person does not diminish the supply for the next person. A good is non-excludable when it is very difficult or impossible to make the good available for some and not for all. Military security is one example of a nonexcludable good. If a territory is secured, it is secured for everyone in the territory. Knowledge is nonrivalrous in nature; if I know something and someone else learns it, my knowledge is not diminished at all. It is *difficult* to exclude knowledge, but the *texts* that contain knowledge *can* be excluded. Drahos and Braithwaite point out that the nonrivalrous nature of knowledge makes it extremely attractive for capitalists; the same knowledge can be sold, over and over again. As I argue above, it is more accurate to say that enclosing knowledge is extremely attractive for a *few* capitalists, at the expense of the vast majority.

Remarkably, the high prices of the commercial publishing industry are not necessarily correlated with quality in comparison with the not-for-profit sector. In fact, there is evidence that the reverse is true. Bergstrom (2001) analyses the top journals in his own field of economics, and finds that the six most-cited journals are all not-for-profit society journals, with an average subscription price of \$180; only 5 of the top 20 most-cited economics journals are commercially produced, but these have an average subscription price of \$1,660. Bergstrom recommends that faculty take action by refusing to write or peer review for such journals and recommending to librarians that they cancel subscriptions to high-cost low-quality journals.

Crow (2006) explains the importance of scholarly society publishers for a healthy scholarly publishing system, and outlines a proposal for supporting these publishers through the creation of subject-specific publishing cooperatives. By working together cooperatively, smaller publishers can overcome some of the problems of scale that otherwise make it difficult for them to compete with larger commercial publishers.

Both Merrett (2006) and Bergstrom (2001) point out the precarious situation of the commercial publisher; all that they own is the journal name. A journal's editorial board, authors, and readers are free to walk away and start their own journal. Until recently, this would have been a difficult decision. Now, however, with the ready availability of free, open source software and the ubiquitous access made possible through open access, plus the widespread availability of new hosting and support services through libraries, what was once difficult is well within the reach of a large and growing percentage of journals.

Striphas (2010) analyzes and critiques scholarly journal publishing in the field of

cultural studies. Like other academic areas, cultural studies publishing is heavily dominated by commercial players, including Sage and Taylor & Francis. The journals of these publishers can be up to 8 times more expensive than the journals of not-for-profit publishers such as Duke University Press and Wilfred Laurier University Press. Striphas highlights the contradiction between the participation by cultural studies scholars in this commercially dominated system that prioritizes profit over communication, and the basic values of cultural studies as articulated by Stuart Hall:

“Reflecting on the work of Antonio Gramsci, Hall asserts that the first task of the political intellectual is to know more than the other side. He adds that the equally important task is to communicate that knowledge widely and effectively”.

(Striphas, 2010, 4).

Yet the scholarly communication system cultural studies scholars are caught in prioritizes profit over dissemination. As Striphas points out, commercial publishers have no reason whatsoever to seek to share cultural studies scholarship with labour, environmental, or advocacy organizations if they do not have money to purchase the journals. Striphas recommends that cultural studies scholars take action, by negotiating to retain copyright, participating in open access and refusing to provide peer review for “rogue” journals.

### **Global perspectives**

The movement towards open access to scholarly information is global in scope. In Latin America, the main approach has been government-subsidized scholarly open access journals, with over 600 journals altogether, available for cross searching through a common portal, *Scientific Electronic Library Online*, Scielo. According to the *African Journals Online* (AJOL) website, AJOL, which includes over 300 journals, aims to overcome the problem of African researchers not being able to access the work of their African peers. Anunobi and Okoyi (2008) discuss the importance of the academic library to the success of the institution, using as an example their home university in Nigeria. Their library is engaged in building digital collections of local scholarship through an institutional repository. E-LIS, the Open Archive for Library and Information Science, is a service hosted by the CILEA group in Italy, and run by a group of volunteer editors from over 40 countries, supporting 22 languages. E-LIS is just one example of the global reach of the open access movement. China is one of many countries around the world that have adopted open access mandate policies, as listed in the Registry of Open access Repository Material Archiving Policies (ROARMAP), and Beijing was the site for the prestigious fall 2010 Berlin Open access Conference.

Kirsop, Arunachalam and Chan (2007) review the options for developing countries to strengthen their research capacity to meet the goal of sustainable development. Two basic approaches are compared: donor access, in which journals from commercial publishers are made available to selected researchers in selected countries on the basis of GDP (e.g. HINARI, AGORA, OARE), and open access, in which journals or articles are made openly accessible to everyone, everywhere. One of the major deficiencies of the donor program is that it depends on continuing poverty. There are countries that meet the requirements for participation on the basis of low GDP, but are excluded to protect publisher markets (e.g. India). If these programs were to succeed (by facilitating development for the countries involved), then they would fail (as countries became potential markets, publishers would withdraw). Donor access is limited to onsite

use in the library in addition to the country and institutional restrictions. In contrast, researchers can make use of open access materials from anywhere with an internet connection. More importantly, open access allows scholars in the developing world to actively contribute their own work through open access archives, develop their own publishing services, and reduce the South to North and South to South knowledge gaps.

Pirie (2009) critiques the author payment model proposed in the UK on the grounds that it would discriminate against authors without research grants and authors from developing countries. This is a western-centric view, which presupposes that a) western countries will continue to dominate scholarly publishing and b) it is in the best interests of academics in developing countries to publish in western-based journals. This bias is evident not only in the west, however, but also within the developing countries. Schiller (2003) refers to a closely related trend, a worldwide “brain drain” with scholars leaving the developing world for the developed world, where they increasingly work in corporate settings, further increasing the economic divide. The corporate research world is beginning to outsource scientific research to the developing world, following trends set in other corporate areas. This approach aims to benefit corporations in the developed world, by cutting their research costs, rather than the countries where the research is conducted. Merrett (2006) describes a double bind situation that many scholars in developing countries find themselves in. In South Africa there is a SAPSE system that “demands publication in commercially published journals: the list of subsidy-generating titles is based upon the ISI citation indexes lists...this discourages indigenous publication”.

One problem with reward systems for scholars in developing countries that depend on publication in western-based journals is that readers of these journals are not necessarily interested in topics of importance to developing countries. For example, studies on food production or food safety in the tropics, or on tropical diseases such as malaria, are not hot topics in the North. Also, relying on publishing in another country results in limited opportunities to develop publishing expertise locally. Fortunately, open source technology makes it possible to develop local publishing anywhere where computers and internet connectivity can be found. The predominant belief system that only international journals count is another matter. From my perspective, the impact of reward systems that strongly favor publishing in core, western-based journals on which topics receive the attention of researchers is a matter that merits serious study.

### **Communication as a discipline and scholarly journal publishing**

One problem confronting the communication scholar is the difficulty of defining the discipline, as noted by International Communication Association (ICA) Presidents Rice and Putnam (2007) and Poor (2009). Ulrich’s *Periodicals Directory* is generally considered the world’s most authoritative list of scholarly journals. However, under the subject heading “Communications”, there are many journals listed that are actually in technology areas relating to communication, more suitable to engineers than to critical communication scholars. Some communication journals are not listed under the subject “Communications”, for example the Canadian Journal of Communication, which is assigned the subject heading of sociology.

For political economic analysis, I selected the periodical list from EBSCO’s *Communication and Mass Media Complete*, and the Directory of Open Access Journals. While the EBSCO list is clearly problematic<sup>iv</sup>, it is the most comprehensive and

reasonably focused list available. Of the 642 titles in the EBSCO list, half (323) are listed as published by publishers with 10 or more titles in this field. All of these journals have some commercial involvement, although many are published by scholarly societies in partnership with companies. Informa is *not* included on EBSCO's list, even though it is the owner of Taylor & Francis, Routledge, and Psychology Press. With 70 journal titles, Informa is the largest publisher in communication. Informa.plc is a sizable transnational corporation, with 150 offices in 40 countries, and Informa describes itself as the world's leading organizer of conferences and courses, in addition to academic publishing. 2009 revenue was £1,221.7m and adjusted operating profit £309.5m, for an adjusted operating margin of 25.3%, up from 2008's 23.9%, according to the Informa Annual Report (2009), which paints a rosy picture for the future with "the majority of subscriptions...renewing in line with previous high rates" (Highlights, Summary and Outlook). According to Chief Executive Peter Rigby, the publishing business is doing exceptionally well, accounting for 72% of the profits (£222m).

Curiously, while Informa may be the world's largest journal publisher in the area of communication, it is very difficult to find a usable list of communication journals from the Informa website. To find the list of 70 journals, I went to the Routledge page and clicked on "special offers". Elsevier, the world's largest scholarly publisher and a highly profitable transnational corporation, publishes 19 titles in this area, including 8 titles under the Pergamon Press imprint, according to EBSCO's Communication and Mass Media Complete. Communication is not listed as a subject heading, or even as a sub-heading under Social Sciences on the Elsevier website. Similarly, Springer, the world's second-largest scholarly publisher and another transnational corporation, publishes 16 titles in this area according to the EBSCO list, but does not list communication as a discipline or sub-discipline on the Springer website. There may be Elsevier or Springer communication journal lists elsewhere that I have not found, however it is clear that these publishers are not proudly highlighting their holdings in communication journals. Why is this so? I have no way of knowing for sure, so this is pure speculation, but I wonder whether the priorities of these publishers is the highly profitable science, technology, and medicine (STM) sector, and they simply haven't bothered with developing marketing lists for the less profitable area of communication. This would be worthy of further exploration; one wonders how other areas in the social sciences and humanities fare on the websites of these publishers.

Wiley-Blackwell (2010), the last major transnational corporation on this list, includes 18 titles under *Communication & Cultural Studies* on the Wiley Interscience website. Altogether, this makes approximately 123 of the 642 journals in the field of communication, or about 20%, that are owned by transnational corporations<sup>v</sup>. This ownership situation is more complex than it at first appears. There are many journals that are published by corporations that are actually published in partnership with learned societies. Of the 18 Wiley Blackwell titles, scholarly societies hold the copyright to 11 titles, including, for example, the 5 International Communication Association Journals. The National Communication Association (2010) sponsors 10 journals, which are published by Routledge (owned by Informa). Even where the corporation "owns" the copyright to the journal, as mentioned above they do not own the academic editorial board. While they may have ownership to *previous* issues, they do not have ownership of *future* issues, an important point, as it is recent information that is lucrative in this business.

There are still several significant independent publishers in this area, including the



John Benjamins Publishing Company with 39 titles, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates with 32 titles, De Gruyter with 20 titles, and Intellect Ltd. with 13 titles (according to the EBSCO list). Sage, an independent company, publishes 37 journals in *Media and Communication Studies*, plus Communication Abstracts. According to the Sage website, Sage publishes a total of over 560 journals, of which 245 (43%) are on behalf of learned societies and institutions.

Scholarly society journals and those published by independent presses are doing very well by the standard of the traditional impact factor. It should be noted that the impact factor is problematic for many reasons, and in my opinion is overused as an estimate of journal quality. However, it may be noteworthy that the corporate sector, despite the huge profits, does not necessarily fare as well by this traditional indicator of quality as one might think. Of the top 10 journals in communication by impact factor, only one, Taylor & Francis' *Journal of Health Communication*, is fully owned by a transnational corporation. The 4 journals of the International Communication Association (published by Wiley on behalf of the association) are in the top 10. The not-for-profit Oxford publishes one title, and the remaining 3 titles are published by independent companies Sage, John Benjamins, and Mary Anne Liebert. A list of titles, publishers, and impact factor can be found in Appendix A. These findings are similar to those of Bergstrom (2001) in the area of economics. Like economics, highly profitable commercial publishers are not well represented at the top of the impact factor list. However, economics and communication are clearly different in the number of scholarly society titles outsourced to commercial publishers, and more independent commercial publishers appear high on the impact factor list in communication.

The other half of the EBSCO *Communication and Mass Media Complete* title list is composed of publishers with fewer than 10 titles in this area, 299 journals altogether. Most of these are very small publishers, with 1-3 titles each. The vast majority of these journals are in the not-for-profit sector, published by scholarly societies or associations or university presses. For example, Cambridge University Press publishes 9 titles; Oxford, 6, and the California University Press, 5. A fairly typical example is the Canadian Communication Association that publishes only one journal, the *Canadian Journal of Communication*.

Striphas (2010) analyzes a selection of journals in the area of cultural studies, and finds that the rate of increase of journal titles between 1960 and 2004 was an average 6.3 percent per year, double the overall rate of increase for all journals in this time frame. One possible explanation for this extra growth is growth in the area of cultural studies per se during the last half century.

To summarize this section, journal publishing in communication shows more diversity in ownership and less concentrated ownership by large transnational corporations than is the case in scholarly publishing overall. Even among the estimated 20% of communication journals owned by transnational corporations, there are many journals where scholarly societies still own the title. There are still independent publishers, and many not-for-profit publishers active in this area; it is these publishers who dominate the top of the traditional impact factor list. This is good news, in that it suggests a stronger than average potential for emancipation. That is, the large, highly profitable transnational corporate publishers do not have a stranglehold on communication publishing, as they do in other disciplines.

There is a large and growing body of fully open access journals in the field of communication. The Directory of Open Access Journals listed 76 titles under the subject

heading of *Media and Communication* at the time of data analysis (the total is 85 titles as of February 2011). Given the difficulty of assessing the total number of journals in communication per se, and a lack of research on the relative percentages of OA journals across disciplines, it is difficult to estimate the percentage of OA journals in communication in comparison with other disciplines. This is an area where further research would be helpful. There is some overlap between DOAJ and the EBSCO list. The vast majority of the OA journals, more than 80%, are published by the not-for-profit sector. Two-thirds, or 50 journals, are published by universities; about 15% are published by societies (11 journals); and 1 by a library. One is published by an independent publisher, and two by the for-profit corporation Hindawi publishing. The 76 journals have 74 different publishers; aside from Hindawi, the only publisher on the list with 2 journals is Queensland University.

These journals are published in 25 different countries on 5 continents (Africa is not represented, and there is only 1 journal published in Asia), and 12 languages are represented (a western-centric list of languages, with only one journal in Chinese). This list reflects a greater cultural diversity than the EBSCO Communication and Mass Media Complete, but is still lacking in non-western representation. The journals in the DOAJ Media and Communication list are mostly very new journals, based on the start date in DOAJ<sup>vi</sup>. There are 2 journals with start dates in the 1980s, 11 in the 1990s, and the remaining 61 have start dates in the 2000s. Note that the DOAJ start date is not necessarily the year of the founding of the journal, as older journals often have back issues that have not yet been digitized and placed online.

Poor (2009) conducted a citation study comparing citations of a sample of 17 open access journals in communication studies with the overall citation patterns for the field. Similar citation patterns were found, albeit with more international citations for the open access journals. Poor concludes that this is an indication of the health of the open access journals and of the field as a whole. That is, open access is very much a part of the overall conversation in the field, not a side-conversation as would be indicated by significantly different citation patterns.

### **Further emancipation and sites of struggle**

By “emancipation”, what I mean is scholarship that is as free as possible for readers, one that is designed to serve the needs of scholarly communication led by scholars themselves, and is free to prioritize advancement of knowledge rather than serve the interests of capital, as exemplified by the profit motives of commercial publishers. This is a large project, and one that this article only begins to address.

As noted above, the active involvement of scholarly societies and the limited control by the corporate sector bodes well for emancipation in the discipline of communication. However, all scholarly publishing is impacted by the control the commercial sector has over scholarly publishing overall. Library budgets are tied up in the “big deals” of the large commercial publisher, which limits the availability of funds for new open access initiatives.

Scholarly societies themselves are sometimes a part of the problem. Donsbach, speaking on behalf of the International Communication Association (ICA)’s Finance Committee, says: “Publications...yield a surplus of between \$500,000 - \$600,000 because expenses for the editors' offices stay far below the income”. Donsbach expresses concern about open access, as a perceived threat to this revenue (Donsbach, 2008). It should be

noted that ICA's surplus is on top of the profits of Wiley, the publisher of the ICA journals; Wiley is among the commercial publishers making profits in the range of 25% and up. By my estimate, the entire ICA journal publication program could be run as open access, at top quality, for about a quarter of the current ICA surplus, without even factoring in the Wiley surplus, or the current cost of production (Morrison, 2010). This example, which is not uncommon, illustrates the wide difference between journal pricing and the cost of production today.

One of the ICA journals, the *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, is open access, even though it is hosted on the Wiley server. This suggests that there is struggle within the ICA over such issues. ICA's reliance on a surplus from publishing profits is a very common experience for scholarly societies, and one of the barriers to change. In addition to concern about loss of publishing surpluses, societies worry that they will lose members without the member benefit of free or discounted access to journals. Threats to societies from loss of revenue and exclusive membership benefits to journals are not new. For most societies, the increasing share of library budgets going to commercial publishers has meant that there is less available for their journals. Library site wide subscriptions to journals in electronic form have been decreasing the value of journals as an exclusive member benefit for years. Societies with organizational models based on a world where information was disseminated in print need to rethink how their organization will work in the future. For the vast majority of scholarly societies (including ICA), a model that limits dissemination of scholarship is at odds with the basic mission of the society, which usually includes statements about disseminating knowledge as broadly as possible.

When scholarly societies outsource publishing services to the for-profit sector, there is an inherent conflict in the goals of the two parties. To return to the ICA example, ICA has outsourced journal production to Wiley, a for-profit corporation with a single overriding goal: profit to shareholders. Continuing to share surpluses with ICA is at conflict with this basic goal of Wiley's. The corporation has incentive to share profits with ICA, only as long as this is the only way to continue publishing the journals. Otherwise, it would be in the interests of Wiley shareholders if ICA were to cease to exist, as this would leave all of the profit for Wiley shareholders. This is not to say that Wiley would deliberately aim to eliminate ICA, rather that the most basic goals of the two parties in this partnership are in fundamental conflict. ICA's desire is to continue to exist and enjoy surpluses from publishing, while Wiley's commitment to shareholders is to maximize profit.

The Canadian Journal of Communication (Felczak, Smith & Lorimer, 2008) participates in the Public Knowledge Project (2010), discussed earlier, contributing to the development of the free, open source Open Journals Systems software. The journal also participates in the Canada-wide Synergies (2010) project that assists Canada's social sciences and humanities journals to publish in an online environment. The authors argue that Synergies and Open Journal Systems present academics with "strategic opportunities to define and control online scholarly publishing". The Canadian Journal of Communication, like many journals, follows a partially open access model, with new issues limited to subscribers for an embargo period of one year, followed by open access to everyone.

Scholars can aim to publish in open access journals where possible, within the context of current tenure and promotion expectations. Furthermore, scholars can choose to serve on the editorial boards of open access journals, and refuse to provide free peer

review services for the highly profitable commercial sector. Senior scholars and university administration can assess whether tenure and promotion guidelines should be updated to reflect the need for change in scholarly communication. Most open access journals do not charge publication fees. However, when they do, the library may have a fund to cover such fees, and research grants may often be used for this purpose.

Another site of resistance is self-archiving of published articles for free access. The majority of traditional publishers allow author self-archiving, as documented by the Sherpa RoMEO Publisher Copyright Policies and Self-Archiving site. For example, Sage journals permit self-archiving of preprints, and post-refereed postprints (after a 12 month embargo). Scholars can negotiate rights retention through the use of an author's addendum, such as the *SPARC Canadian Author's Addendum* (SPARC, 2010).

Finally, funding agencies, universities, and research institutions are resisting enclosure of scholarly articles by developing and implementing policies requiring open access to the research that they support. There are over 200 such policies around the world, as listed in the Registry of Open access Repository Material Archiving Policies (ROARMAP). Some policies are top-down, while others are faculty-led. From my perspective, it is in the best interests of scholars to lead in developing open access policy. The faculty-led policies of Harvard and MIT, in addition to promoting open access, also assert or reassert the rights of scholars to grant licenses for their works to the universities. This is an effective way of limiting the possibility for any broad-based commodification of scholarly knowledge.

### Conclusion

Scholarship, like other areas within the broader field of information, has in recent decades been undergoing a process of enclosure and commodification. This is an interesting area to watch from a critical perspective, as not only is the system failing even in neoclassical terms, but analysis shows the economic folly of shifting from a gift / public economy to a commodity economy. The scholarly publishing industry has benefited greatly from public investment in public universities and university-based research, as well as the gifting of scholarly articles and refereeing services by scholars. This industry could not function on the basis of cash payment for these free gifts. Enclosure here is a disservice to scholars throughout the world, and to the public at large. It is also a disservice to the vast majority of capitalists, too, illustrating Polanyi's paradox that even the organization of capitalist production needs protection from a pure self-regulating market.

The open access movement is global in scope. One of the sites of struggle is over two models for development: the donor model, as illustrated by the charity programs of HINARI, OARE, etc., and the equity model, as illustrated by open access. While the donor model is a clear improvement over no access to scholarly knowledge for the developing world, in the long term it is vastly inferior to an equity model, as it requires ongoing inequity to succeed. Current scholarly reward systems favor western-based publication, even for authors in developing countries, and discourage the development of indigenous publishing. This can be a disincentive to conducting research on topics of particular importance to the developing country, a matter that merits serious study.

The discipline of communication has not undergone as much enclosure as other disciplines. Scholarly societies maintain a large portion of the market, and even retain control of many of the journals that are in the hands of the transnational corporations, and

there are still independent publishers in the market. Hence, communication scholarship is in good shape to transition to a more scholar-friendly, open access environment. Of the 5,000 fully open access journals listed in the *Directory of Open Access Journals* at the time of data analysis, 76 are listed under *Media and Communication Studies*. Scholars or scholarly societies wishing to move into independent publishing will find that a large percentage of universities (usually through the library) can provide hosting and support services for journals. Scholars can self-archive their work in institutional or disciplinary open access archives. Funding agencies, universities and research institutions throughout the world are developing policies requiring open access to the research that they support. This is an opportune time for faculty to lead the process, and develop policies like the ones at Harvard and MIT that assert or re-assert the rights of faculty to grant rights to the university to their works.

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Appendix A  
 Communication journals by impact factor (top 10)  
 JCR Year and Edition: 2008 Social  
 Science

Impact Factor	Abbreviated Journal Title	Publisher	ISSN
2.266	J COMMUN	International Communication Association	0021-9916
2.057	J HEALTH COMMUN	Taylor & Francis	1081-0730
1.972	PUBLIC OPIN QUART	Oxford University Press	0033-362X
1.901	J COMPUT-MEDIAT COMM	International Communication Association	1083-6101
1.689	HUM COMMUN RES	International Communication Association	0360-3989
1.473	COMMUN RES	Sage	0093-6502
1.422	COMMUN THEOR	International Communication Association	1050-3293
1.359	INTERACT STUD	John Benjamins	1572-0373
1.295	CYBERPSYCHOL BEHAV	Mary Anne Liebert	1094-9313

Source: Journal Citation Reports, 2010.

Notes

<sup>i</sup> This brief overview draws primarily from *Scholarly Communication for Librarians* (Morrison, 2009), where additional references can be found.

<sup>ii</sup> From Ulrich's Periodicals Directory <http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/>. The estimate of 23,000 academic journals is likely very much an understatement. For example, according to Ding Jie, there are more than 9,000 academic publications in China alone (Jie, 2010). Science paper trade booms in china. *SciDevNet*, Feb 10 Retrieved April 23, 2010 from <http://www.scidev.net/en/news/science-paper-trade-booms-in-china-1.html>. It is likely that few of these journals are listed in Ulrich's.

<sup>iii</sup> The RIN analysis is based largely on English language journals, and likely understates total global article production.

<sup>iv</sup> The EBSCO *Communication and Mass Media Complete* list is clearly problematic for research on communication journal publishing. One problem is related to the scope of the database, e.g. including journals with only partial content in this area. For example, 79 journals are listed in this database as published by Sage publications, while the Sage



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*Media and Communication* title list includes only 39 journals. Another problem is accuracy; for example, journals of the International Communication Association are listed as published by the National Communication Association. In spite of the problems, this appears to be the most comprehensive list in this area, including 642 titles, and appears to be sufficient for a broad overview of ownership in this area. To analyze the journals listed in EBSCO's Communication and Mass Media Complete database, I downloaded the title list, and limited to academic journals identified as peer-reviewed.

If the EBSCO list is somewhat imperfect, this may reflect to some extent the dizzying speed of recent concentration in this area. EBSCO lists 10 journals published by the independent business Multimedia Matters. According to the Multimedia Matters website (2010), their journals are owned by Taylor & Francis and published under the Routledge imprint, as of April 2008. The EBSCO list includes 27 titles under Blackwell, now owned by Wiley.

<sup>v</sup> The reason this is approximate is because I am not able to verify the Elsevier or Springer title counts, and as mentioned above, the 642 titles may reflect a broader scope than just communication.

<sup>vi</sup> The DOAJ start date is not necessarily the journal start date, as older journals may not have all back issues freely available. The DOAJ start date reflects the first date for which free fulltext is available.