

Against the Grain

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TRANSFER 2010 -- A Publisher Point of View

Alison Mitchell

Nature Publishing Group, a.mitchell@nature.com

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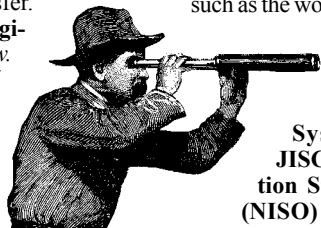
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access issues is a primary job responsibility. When an electronic journal title changes publisher, the journal URL link can break, causing problems with accessing the title. There can also be problems with incomplete subscription holdings and post-cancellation access when the title transfers. When these things happen, it can cause severe disruption to the end user and patron.

In the past there have been informal systems, such as institutional spreadsheets that are available to view on their library Website in place to track the journal transfer. An example is the **California Digital Library's** Website (<http://www.cdlib.org/services/collections/transfers.html>). However, they are just that, informal or non-official. The **California Digital Library's** information has been somewhat helpful to other institutions with similar titles being tracked, but the utility is limited since the lists are specific to the **CDL** collections.

The need for a more official code of practice or best practice guidelines in this area became increasingly apparent a few years ago with the electronic journals industry continuing to develop and intensify in its growth. It is necessary and sometimes crucial for librarians to get this information communicated to them so that they can provide essential uninterrupted access and service to their patrons. The issue of titles moving from publisher to publisher not only affects patron access to the title on the user side, but the movement of an electronic journal title



also plays a major role on the librarian and staff side. Many library departments can be affected by this move. Electronic resources, serials, acquisitions, Web librarians and their work flows are impacted by the move of a title between publishers. From the purchase, the post-cancellation access, and the linking, right down to the title listing in the catalog, elements of the electronic journal's purchase work flow may be repeated with the change in publisher. By having a way to track journal title transfers, a large portion of investigative work related to a title issue can be avoided, saving librarian and staff time.


Transfer has drawn upon previously successful initiatives in the library community, such as the work done by **JISC's Publisher and Library Solutions (PALS)** group, the **Publishers Association – Joint Information Systems Committee (PA-JISC)**, and **National Information Standards Organization's (NISO) Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources (COUNTER)**. **UKSG** Transfer is currently overseen by a Transfer Working Group comprised of representatives from the scholarly publishing, intermediary, and library communities. The Transfer Working Group also spent almost two years developing the **UKSG** Transfer Code of Practice, which included consulting all stakeholders in the community. Based upon an enthusiastic response from the library and publishing communities, to date the Working Group is continuing to oversee the Code and will review how it is working and whether any updates or changes are needed.

Of particular benefit to librarians is the Transfer Journal Notification service. Informa-

tion about a journal title transfer is provided by the publisher by filling out the Journal Transfer Notification Form located on the Transfer Website. The service then posts this information to a blog and to a **JISC** email list that anyone can sign up for to get information about title movements. This blog is ideal in that it provides current information and also keeps a dated archive. With two options in place for accessing the title transfer information, this makes it convenient for anyone who needs access to it. Only publishers who endorse the **UKSG** Transfer Code of Practice can post to the service.

Over thirty publishers in the industry endorse the Transfer Code. However, more work is needed. Publishers and libraries need to increase awareness of this service. Librarians who work with the Transfer list need to let other librarians and publishers know how well it works and how it helps with their daily work. With more information out there about how Transfer can help, more publishers will become compliant, thereby increasing access to more title transfer information.

Transfer has already affected the industry in a roundabout way. This initiative has increased awareness of the need for publishers to let libraries know how they are updating their products. Almost every major publisher that provides electronic resource content has changed or altered their online Websites and content in the past few years. Many of them have been keen enough to realize that the changes they make affect the libraries, patrons, and users in extraordinary ways. Transfer was the beginning of creating this necessity for letting consumers know that changes are on the way.

Transfer Code of Practice is available at <http://www.uksg.org/transfer>. 

TRANSFER 2010 — A Publisher Point of View

by **Alison Mitchell** (Nature Publishing Group) <a.mitchell@nature.com>

Publishing is an ever-changing business, and the movement of journals between publishers has long been the norm. As publisher portfolios evolve and change direction, publishers may seek to acquire or divest titles; newly-launched products may seek a new home for the next phase in their development; and journals owned by learned societies or other third parties may move as the owner seeks the best possible publishing environment for their intellectual property.

These moves, while desirable from a business point of view, can create significant inconvenience for all involved. And, if not handled correctly, they can have a considerable impact on the transferring and receiving publishers. Most importantly, however, are the effects of a journal transfer on its subscribers and users, who can experience a loss of access and frustration in recreating the functionality and features that they enjoyed prior to the move.

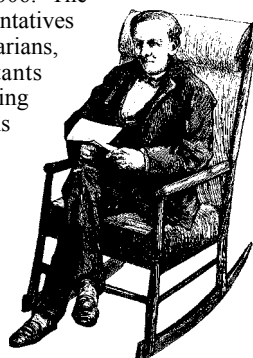
The TRANSFER Code

These were just some of the problems that the TRANSFER Working Group sought to address when it was created in 2006. The Working Group combined representatives from across the industry — librarians, publishers, agents, and consultants — and tried to balance the differing (and sometimes conflicting) needs of each constituent group to develop a robust yet workable set of principles.

These principles were translated into the TRANSFER Code of Practice, which was released in September 2008. The Code attempts to establish a set of standards for the journal-transfer process that can be used as a baseline of quality and performance. Given the increasingly digital nature of publishing, the Code focuses on the online challenges that surround a transfer,

such as the transfer of content files, customer data, access information, and URLs.

In the two years since its inception the TRANSFER Code has been adopted by over 30 publishers, who have undertaken to abide by the principles therein whenever they divest or acquire a journal. The publishers vary from large organisations that transfer tens of journals every year, to smaller groups that may transfer just a single title every couple of years. So what has been the impact of the TRANSFER Code in practice?



TRANSFER in Action

Publishers recognise that ours is a service industry. We aim to serve our authors and referees through rapid and effective peer review, along with the added value that we

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apply to articles in print and online. We aim to serve our society partners by creative and effective publishing management. And we aim to serve our subscribers and readers by offering fast and reliable access to carefully selected research. When we get all of this right our users come to rely on this information, which is why the loss of access or functionality through a poorly managed journal transfer can be so very debilitating.

Many publishers have welcomed the development of the TRANSFER Code, and interviews with some of the signatories revealed that they have tried hard to abide by it. There have nonetheless been some reported instances of difficulties experienced by the transferring or receiving publisher in dealing with the other. Some of these problems seem to have been in areas that are not dealt with explicitly by the Code, and there have been requests that the Working Group considers updating and adding to the Code.

However, we must take care. The Code is intended as a voluntary set of best practices, and it cannot be seen in any way to be

trying to supplant contractual terms, intellectual property rights, or the competitive marketplace between publishers. Some of the cited areas of conflict surround perpetual access rights, details of consortial arrangements and, more generally, the fact that many publishers operate quite different models as regards institutional access (platform versus individual titles), backfile sales, and overall access arrangements. All of these issues need to be overcome on a case-by-case basis to ensure that every existing subscriber retains their access in as seamless and simple a way as possible.

Publisher consensus seems to be that the TRANSFER initiative has had a small but important impact. Some of the larger publishers are very disparate organisations that previously had no single point of contact for journal transfer information; TRANSFER requires that they now supply a single name, and several publishers noted that they have worked to improve their internal communication procedures. The TRANSFER e-mail list now goes to over 300 recipients, and at least one publisher is considering how best to use this list to communicate a large volume of journal transfers.

What Next for TRANSFER?

At the moment the TRANSFER Code is informal and is not “enforced” in any way, although publishers may report instances of non-compliance to the Chair of the Working Group. Some societies and librarians are also starting to ask that publishers commit to being TRANSFER compliant as part of their contractual terms. From discussions with publishers there is very much a willingness to enter into the spirit of the TRANSFER Code, even if their business models and terms mean that they cannot always follow it to the letter. Most agree that the current Code is an excellent base from which to build, and many of the publishers surveyed are keen to give more detailed feedback in order to help shape any future iterations. Along with feedback from the librarian community this should help to keep the Code fresh and evolving in line with current industry practice, and to ensure the highest quality of service and access for all stakeholders involved when a journal transfer occurs. 🌱

Alison Mitchell is a Publishing Director at Nature Publishing Group and a founding member of the TRANSFER Working Group.

Rumors
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to apply for the scholarships but they need lead time to get visas, permissions, etc. So, please turn in your scholarship intentions as early as you can!

Talking about retirement and page numbers (way above) reminded me of **Fred Spilhaus** who used to be executive director of the **American Geophysical Union**. I think that **Fred** was one of the first people to talk about no need for page numbers. Yes? Anyway, I wrote **Carter Glass** at the AGU (a **Charleston Conference** attendee) and he put me in touch with **Judy Holoviak** who after 45 years retired as director of publications at the AGU in May of 2009. Anyway, **Judy** tells me that retirement isn't in her lexicon or **Fred's** either. She says that **Fred** is now in Paris to chair the publications committee of one of the international scientific unions. **Judy** and **Fred** share an office near Dupont Circle and are doing quite a bit of pro bono work for various organizations! Long live anti-retirement!

Good news and bad news. Heard recently that the strong silent **Randall Watts**, Assistant

Director of Libraries for Resources Management Services at the **Medical University of South Carolina** here in Charleston is in pretty good shape after he had what appears to be some sort of stroke. His wife made him go to the hospital. Whew!

The dapper **Mark Kendall** sends greetings from (still) wintry New Hampshire! Plus news of changes to the **YBP** sales organization. There are two new sales groups, one for digital sales and the other for library technical services. The new **YBP e-content sales team** consists of many highly experienced professionals: the awesome **Kristine Baker**, the splendid **Barbara Kawecki**, the experienced **Matt Nauman**, the volatile **Steve Sutton**, and the steady **Michael Zeoli**. The equally experienced and professional **Library Technical Services sales time**, managed by the where-does-she-get-her-smarts-and-energy **Ann-Marie Breaux**, **YBP's** Vice President of Academic Services Integration: the approval plan wizard, **Dan Miller**, New Business Development Manager-Library Technical Services (Eastern North America); and the hard-working **Sadie Williams**, New Business Development Manager-Library Technical Services

(Western North America). Congratulations to all of them!

While we are on **YBP**, **Janice Welburn**, Dean of University Libraries at Marquette University, has been named the **2011 Association of College and Research Libraries Academic/Research Librarian of the Year**. The award, sponsored by **YBP**, recognizes an outstanding member of the library profession who has made a significant national or international contribution to academic/research librarianship and library development. **Welburn** will receive her award on Wednesday, March 30th at the **ACRL 2011 Conference** opening keynote session in Philadelphia, PA.

Opened up (I guess I should say, “clicked on”) the latest posting from the **Chronicle of Higher Education** February 20 and who was smiling up at me? The bearded **David Nicholas**, director of the **Ciber research group** at **University College London**. The article by **Jennifer Howard** entitled “Social Media Lure Academics Frustrated by Journals,” focused on the second **Charleston Research Observatory survey**. This survey was conducted in 2010, focused on the use of social media by researchers in various disciplines and was underwritten by **Cambridge University Press, Emerald, Kluwer, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley**. We are excited about the impact of the **Charleston Research Observatory** and look forward to our next endeavor. <http://wiredcampus@chronicle.com>
<http://www.katina.info/conference>
And speaking of the **Charleston Conference Research Observatory**, check out an upcoming article in **The Charleston Advisor** in April. www.charlestonco.com/

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Future Dates for Charleston Conferences



	Preconferences and Vendor Showcase	Main Conference
2011 Conference	2 November	3-5 November
2012 Conference	7 November	8-10 November
2013 Conference	6 November	7-9 November
2014 Conference	5 November	6-8 November
2015 Conference	4 November	5-7 November