Against the Grain

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I Hear the Train A Comin' -- An Interview with Mary Rose Muccie, Director of JSTOR's Current Scholarship Program

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I Hear the Train A Comin' — An Interview with Mary Rose Muccie, Director of JSTOR's Current Scholarship Program

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*Column Editor's Note: Mary Rose Muccie is responsible for business development, oversight, and management of all aspects of the Current Scholarship Program at **JSTOR**, which adds current issues to the **JSTOR** platform. Prior to joining **JSTOR**, Mary Rose was Director of **Project MUSE** and Publisher at the **Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics**. I recently had the pleasure of discussing the Current Scholarship Program with her. — GT*

What is the Current Scholarship Program?

MRM: The Current Scholarship Program (CSP) makes current and historical scholarly content available on one, integrated platform and provides a single point for librarians and end users around the world to license and access this content, and to ensure this content's long-term preservation.

How did the idea come about to integrate current content with JSTOR's long-standing backfile service?

MRM: CSP grew out of a desire to improve the quality and efficiency of the researcher's experience in searching and using scholarly materials. We also hope to streamline the library's processes for acquiring important content for their patrons, and to better enable publishers to disseminate their work more broadly. We believe CSP helps the community by providing a single platform for content from a wide range of publishers that were previously siloed. It makes users more efficient by giving them easy access to more research and tools from one site they know and use rather than many. For libraries, CSP provides simplified licensing, and fair and transparent pricing — prices are set by the publishers with a view to supporting the broad dissemination of scholarship. For publishers, the program helps them better manage technology and reach a wider audience than they can alone. We are also building toward a longer-term vision by using new technologies to support scholarship across a wide range of disciplines and content types, including a range of new multimedia capabilities that are available for the first time as part of scholarly publication to many scholars in the humanities.

What is the status of the Current Scholarship Program? Who is participating?

MRM: CSP officially launched on January 1, 2011. The participating publishers who had existing online sites are redirecting all traffic to their content on **JSTOR** and all subscriber access is being delivered through the **JSTOR** platform. Full runs of all titles are available, with **JSTOR** continuing to provide our high-quality page scans for any content that was not born digital. The program launched with 175 titles from 19 publishers, and we'll continue adding publishers and titles to CSP in the coming months and years, with every intention of making CSP as robust as the **JSTOR** archival collections. The 2011 CSP publishers are all current **JSTOR** participants and include university presses, scholarly societies, and independent titles. All of our partners share a commitment to a set of principles that embody scholarly values and to the fundamental notion that we can create something better by working together.

Publisher	Titles
The University of Chicago Press	50
University of California Press	36
Indiana University Press	29
University of Illinois Press	19
Penn State University Press	13
University of Nebraska Press	8
Mathematical Association of America	4
American Society of International Law	3
Association for the Study of African American Life & History	2
Historical Society of Pennsylvania	2
Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Inc.	1
Australian & New Zealand Society for the History of Medicine	1
Central Michigan University	1
Classical Association of the Middle West & South	1
Massachusetts Historical Society	1
Trustees of Indiana University on behalf of the Department of History	1
Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture	1
Oregon Historical Society	1
Western Historical Quarterly, Utah State University	1
Total	**175**

What types of technical and operational adjustments have you had to make as a result of the decision to include current content?

MRM: On the technical side, we redesigned the platform this summer and, with the launch of CSP, have added several new features, including full-text HTML versions of some journals; embedded multimedia, including video, GIS data, and zoomable images; supplementary files such as data sets; and support for ahead-of-print and just-accepted posting of articles. We also launched an ecommerce solution for one CSP publisher, **Indiana University Press**. We are accepting both institutional and individual subscription orders for **Indiana's** titles through ecommerce, as well as processing society memberships for those societies that have affiliated journals. We hope to expand ecommerce and make it available to other CSP publishers for the 2012 subscription year. Behind the scenes, we've implemented new production and content management procedures that reflect the fact that the publishers are in charge of their current content. And because we know the integral role they play in the ordering process for current issues, we entered into agreements with subscription agents, with whom we have not traditionally worked for backfile, and are accepting CSP orders from them.

### What has the reaction been among the library community, which I assume is your primary market?

MRM: Libraries have been asking about current content on **JSTOR** for some time, and it was, in part, in response to this demand that we decided to launch CSP. What we've heard from librarians thus far has been that they appreciate the simplified licensing, and that they anticipate that having this current content accessible from a highly-used platform will help drive its discoverability and usage.

If a library is a JSTOR subscriber, how are they affected by the Current Scholarship Program?

MRM: The great news for libraries and users is that current content for a growing list of titles is now available on the same platform where users already heavily use the back issues. If a library is participating in **JSTOR** for backfiles and had been subscribing to current issues from one of the CSP publishers, they'll now have seamless access to that content on **JSTOR**. **JSTOR** is accepting all orders for electronic-only or print-plus-electronic subscriptions. (Print-only, if available, is ordered directly with the publisher.) And we want to give libraries as much choice as possible, including how they order the current issues of these titles. If the libraries want to order this content directly from **JSTOR**, just as they have ordered archival collections for the past 15 years, they have that option. If libraries want to use their subscription agent(s) to order current issues, we have business arrangements in place with agents to facilitate those choices.
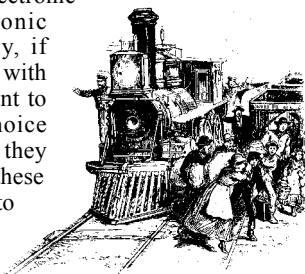
We've also streamlined the licensing process for these titles. Rather than signing 19 licenses with the CSP publishers, with potentially varying terms and conditions, CSP title licensing is handled by a simple rider to a library's **JSTOR** license agreement. Librarians have told us how much they appreciate this clear and easy approach to licensing.

Are journals available on a single title basis?

MRM: Yes, all CSP titles can be purchased as single titles, and as single titles bundled with their backfile component for a full run. Also, because libraries told us they like the option to license titles in ways that mirror their **JSTOR** backfiles, we've created collections of current titles that match our archival collections.

Does the Current Scholarship Program put JSTOR in direct competition with HighWire, Atypon, and others as an electronic publishing platform? If so, what is JSTOR's marketing pitch?

MRM: It's true that we are now offering services that others also offer; however, CSP differs from most of the other alternatives available to publishers. First, I want to make it clear that **Atypon** is our technology partner. CSP, as part of **JSTOR**, is built on **Literatum**, **Atypon's** premiere publishing technology, and they have supported our expansion into the current issues space. Second, we bring some additional things to the table compared with other solutions. In addition to robust technology, CSP publishers benefit from the knowledge and experience of the **JSTOR** Outreach team, working on their behalf to promote and sell titles to our over 6500 participants. Sales to libraries have become increasingly complex, and **JSTOR** has strong relationships with institutions worldwide. Given our deep participant base, we can expose publisher content to market segments than can be difficult to reach, including community colleges, government and nonprofit agencies, museums, secondary schools, and international audiences. Publishers retain control of their pricing and their brand, and can take advantage of tools that enable them to post journal information, marketing content, news, and announcements on **JSTOR**. Perhaps most important, what sets CSP apart is the **JSTOR** partnership itself. All CSP content benefits from the increased discovery possible on a platform already used as a starting point for research. At many institutions, **JSTOR** is among the most heavily used online resources, and current content will both benefit from and expand on that use. Everyone at **JSTOR** sees the relationships with CSP publishers as true partnerships. We learn from each other and in the end, we're all better for it.

What's next for JSTOR?

MRM: We hope many *Against the Grain* readers saw our announcement of Books at **JSTOR**, our upcoming expansion into eBooks. This is part of our ongoing work to transform **JSTOR** into a platform for research and teaching. We're continuing to grow the platform in terms of content — beyond eBooks, we're expanding the breadth and depth of journal content and primary source materials — and we continue to strive to improve the platform via new features and new partnerships, such as our pilot project with **Serial Solutions** to help make library holdings easier to discover and access from within **JSTOR**.

And I had to identify with this quirky article. Actually it's not quirky so much as it points out what I consider a real problem with the online world. Here I am on my soapbox. This article ("All Hail … Analog") by **Francis Fukuyama** (*Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 2011) talks about the contrast in quality between digital and analog music reproduction as well as photo reproduction.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703529 004576160300649048270.html

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