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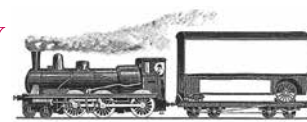
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I Hear the Train A Comin' — An Interview with Bill Park, CEO DeepDyve



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William (“Bill”) Park is the CEO of **DeepDyve**. He previously served at **Axiom Corporation** (NSDQ: ACXM) where he led the company’s Data, Digital, and Direct Marketing Services Organization. Mr. Park joined **Axiom** in 2005 thru its acquisition of **Digital Impact** (NSDQ: DIGI), an online marketing services and technology company, where he served as founder, chairman, and CEO since 1997. (Columnist’s Note: I serve as an advisor to **DeepDyve**.)

What is DeepDyve?

BP: **DeepDyve** is an online rental service for scientific and scholarly research articles. Our service is designed for the millions of so-called “unaffiliated” users who no longer have convenient and affordable access to authoritative research, such as scientists in small to mid-size biopharma companies, independent researchers, and even employees in departments of Fortune 500 companies who lack subscription access to long-tail content.

What do you mean by “rental service”?

BP: “Renting” enables a user to gain read-only access to the full text of an article via their browser or mobile device. Through our cloud-based service, users are able to view an article for a certain duration of time, but they are unable to print, copy, or download the article. By reducing their access, **DeepDyve** and our publisher partners are able to offer our users a substantially reduced price compared to purchasing the PDF. Users can either sign up for our Freelancer prepaid package (\$20 for 5 rentals), or our Professional plan (\$40/month for 40 rentals).

What is the company’s history?

BP: **DeepDyve** is a technology startup based in Silicon Valley. We launched a beta version of our rental service in 2010 with just a handful of titles to assess the viability of this new form of access and business model. Since then, we have added over 100 publishers to our rental program representing over 2,000 journals

and seven million articles. In addition, we also include millions of free papers from open-access sources such as PLoS, ArXiv, PMC, and more.

Which publishers are participating in the article rental service?

BP: We work with over 100 publishers that range from leading commercial publishers, such as **Springer** and **Wiley**, to society publishers, such as **IEEE**, **ACM**, **AIP**, **APS**, and more. Our content includes STM as well as social sciences. We’re pleased to report that no publisher has ever left our service.

Why do you think publishers are participating?

BP: We believe publishers are participating for several reasons. First, **DeepDyve** helps support their mission of disseminating their content as widely as possible in a format that is affordable and convenient. Second, publishers have routinely reported that 50% or more of their Website traffic comes from unaffiliated, or so-called “Google,” visitors with less than 0.1% ever converting into a PPV or subscription sale. Clearly, there are many frustrated site visitors. Publishers are responding by offering **DeepDyve** as an alternative access model that both builds goodwill and does not compete with their existing products and services. Third, serving this market would be challenging for publishers to do on their own. Because these unaffiliated users do not have the budget or resources of traditional institutional users, they require the convenience and affordability of a monthly “one-stop-shop” subscription as opposed to signing up for separate plans across many different publishers. And finally, there is a business opportunity. With tens of millions of unaffiliated users worldwide, a figure that is growing rapidly with the emergence of developing countries, we believe **DeepDyve** provides a channel to an untapped market of new users.

Aren’t there concerns among content providers that their participation in DeepDyve will erode library subscriptions and pay-per-view sales?

host told us. “We have our own educational system.” The very creation of the United Kingdom, he said, was only so that England could protect its northern border. It all sounded very much like a 2014 vote of Yes. For me it was an on-the-fly tutorial on Scottish home rule, delivered with authority and conviction, passion even, with a warmth to counter the outside Glasgow air.

And it was a reminder of a lesson that every vendor needs reinforced periodically, that despite what on some days can seem a sameness from one call to another, when a library says they are different, they are. 🌱

BP: Yes, this is clearly the top concern of publishers, which is why **DeepDyve** was careful in creating a service that has markedly different levels of access versus subscriptions and PPV, targeting a distinctly different market of unaffiliated users compared to the publishers’ traditional institutional focus. As we’ve grown, we’ve been able to further validate this distinction through numerous tests we’ve conducted with our partners — and to date, we have yet to see any evidence of cannibalization, which is also why no publisher has ever left our service.

DeepDyve came into the market as “iTunes for academic articles,” with 99-cent rentals. How has the sales model evolved, and why?

BP: When we first launched our service, we told to our partners that we wanted to price rentals at \$0.99 to leverage the iTunes “brand” and automatically convey to users the essence of our service. Later, we tested a variety of other price points ranging from \$0.99 - \$4.99 to find the optimal price, and since then have settled on \$4. In addition, we experimented with several monthly plans which utilized so-called “freemium” models where users could sign up for a free trial. Again, we tested a variety of prices points starting at \$5/month and have settled on more of an “all-you-can-read” plan of \$40/month.

As someone who is relatively new to the scholarly communication space, what strikes you as interesting about this industry?

BP: The industry is at an intersection of several macro trends which have significant implications on the future of scholarly publishing:

- 1) Open Access. What impact will OA have on journal pricing? On research quality?
- 2) Google (Amazon, Apple, Twitter, LinkedIn...): What role will these technology giants have on how users search and access scholarly content? How they conduct research? How can publishers differentiate their offerings or at what level of technology can they compete?

- 3) Customer-centric: We are witnessing a shift from a vendor-centric to a customer-centric world. We actively determine what we watch, when we watch, and our choices are virtually limitless — (ditto of course for news, music, etc). We have more access and controls on our services, and our decisions are derived less and less from “authoritative” sources (the disc jockey on Z100 or the programming chief at **NBC**) to people within our circle of family, friends, and colleagues. To what extent will these types of changes in our consumer life bleed into our scholarly life? 🌱

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knew our system as well as I did and quickly showed me the strong points — thank goodness he’d liked it. We went on to other points of business, and he knew them all cold as well.

We had some small talk beyond the weather. At each stop across our two days, in fact, we’d asked librarians about the impending referendum, but nobody had seemed too engaged with that and if anything, raising the topic seemed to make people mildly uncomfortable. Not this time. “We have our own health system,” our