

Book Reviews

General Editor, G E Gorman. International Yearbook of Library and Information Management, 2004 – 2005: Scholarly publishing in an electronic era. London: Facet Publishing, November 2004; 240pp; hardback; ISBN 1-85604-536-6; £60

This year's volume is devoted to a broad range of aspects of scholarly publishing, consisting of four parts:

- Overview of scholarly publishing in the 21st century
- Institutional perspectives on scholarly publishing
- Access and preservation initiatives in scholarly publishing
- Models and economics of scholarly publishing

There are ten chapters in this volume.

As the introduction indicates, this year's volume examines the scholarly publishing process which could be said to underpin the themes of earlier volumes such as collection management, electronic information services, digitisation and metadata.

Part one, Overview of Scholarly Publishing in the 21st Century, contains two overview papers that establish the context for both current issues and future challenges facing information professionals making use of, or creating, metadata. "It seems to me that librarians and publishers have more in common with one another, and more to gain from collaboratively addressing shared challenges, than attempting to do one another out of existence." So states Alicia Wise in the second paper; and this volume does provide points of view from both.

Part two, Institutional Perspectives on Scholarly Publishing, contains two papers presenting the perspectives of the library and the publisher respectively. The first paper, from Colin Steele, examines the impact of the rise of digital publishing and of open access initiatives on libraries' role in the creation, retention, distribution of scholarly publishing. The second paper, from John Cox, provides a global overview of the scholarly publishing situation in the 21st century, and how we got there. Again, the impact of open access initiatives on publishers is examined.

Part three, Access and Preservation Initiatives in Scholarly Publishing, contains three papers covering a variety of perspectives. The first paper, Access and Usability Issues of Scholarly Electronic Publications, shows the various channels through which a user can access these publications, then identifies some important parameters for measuring the usability of information access systems, and finally looks at the major problems that face users trying to gain access via hybrid libraries. The second paper, The Next Information Revolution: How Open Access will transform Scholarly Communications, examines the serials crisis, the foundation of SPARC and its development as an organisation linking broad advocacy of change with real world demonstrations of how new methods of scholarly communications might actually work. The final paper, Self-archiving Publications, analyses the ways in which self-archiving has developed so far, examining the possible benefits and drawbacks of self-archiving, and outlines the potential impact of the practice on scholarly communications.

Part four, Models and Economics of Scholarly Publishing, is the final part and contains three chapters. The first paper, Electronic books, presents an overview of where technology might take our relationship with the book, and what the new 'model' for the book might encompass. The second paper, Economics of Publishing and the Future of Scholarly Communication, offers a rigorous analysis of the economics of scientific and professional publishing. In the final chapter of the volume, Usage Statistics – Achieving Credibility, Consistency and Compatibility, Dr Peter Shepherd from Project COUNTER addresses this thorny issue. It discusses the COUNTER Code of Practice, focusing on journals and databases.

There is a clear and comprehensive index and the references given for each paper will enable further study of particular themes.

One area that is not covered at all is copyright, mainly because it varies so much from country to country. The General Editor acknowledges that this subject is so complex and so significant that it warrants a yearbook of its own, and this is promised for the future.

This is a surprisingly wide-ranging volume providing interesting background to trends, whose development will undoubtedly affect many of us over the coming years and will undoubtedly find a place with those who have an interest in scholarly publishing, open access initiatives and institutional repositories.

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