

***UT Scholarly Communications Committee  
Meeting Notes  
May 2, 2007***

Present: Teresa Berry, Micah Beck, Daniela Corbetta, Mike Guidry, Miriam Levering, Susan Martin (co-chair), Carol Parker, Linda Phillips (co-chair and recorder), Molly Royse, Jennifer Siler, Ken Stephenson

Guests: Bruce Bursten, Bob Daverman

The committee invited Bruce Bursten (Dean of Arts & Sciences and Vice-President/President-Elect of the American Chemical Society) and Bob Daverman (Professor of Mathematics and Secretary of the American Mathematical Society) to discuss economic issues confronting professional associations and possible effects on scholarly communications, such as journal pricing policies. The Committee is particularly interested in the benefits of open access publishing to advance scholarly communications, and wishes to understand the position of professional societies in disseminating scholarship.

The discussion began with consensus that “open access” describes content that is freely available on the Internet without cost to the user.

American Chemical Society

<https://portal.chemistry.org/portal/acs/corg/memberapp>

ACS Publications offers 35 prestigious journals and a weekly newsmagazine. ACS Journal Archives provides searchable access to over 130 years of original research in chemistry, including more than 750,000 articles dating to 1879. Publications are a primary source of ACS revenues. Costs of journal production and online access in recent years have reflected the need for computer specialists, although costs for people involved with production have declined. ACS editors and reviewers are compensated indirectly through their university salaries. The *ACS AuthorChoice* option establishes a fee-based mechanism (\$1,000-\$3,000 per article) for ACS authors or their respective research funding agencies to sponsor the open availability of ACS copyrighted articles on the web at the time of online publication.

American Mathematical Society

[www.ams.org](http://www.ams.org)

AMS seeks to foster research and scholarship. The society employs more than 200 staff, of whom 160 are devoted to book publishing. The society's electronic database, *MathSciNet*, contains reviews, abstracts, and bibliographic information for much of the mathematical literature dating to 1864. Links from *MathSciNet* citations to reference lists have helped to create impact factors. Publications provide approximately 80% of the AMS revenues. Electronic-only journals have not been popular among mathematicians. AMS is often approached by editors of

small journals who want to be hosted by the society. Because the mathematics literature has a long shelf life, a six-month embargo on access to current articles has not been a barrier to mathematics research.

The group discussed several issues of concern to professional societies with regard to publication and scholarship. Scholars place high value on journal prestige and integrity of content. Faculty in the scientific disciplines use citation counts to calculate impact of articles for promotion and tenure decisions. Other factors contributing to journal prestige include the reputations of editors, editorial board members, and authors. Computer science publications often begin as technical reports, followed by conference presentations. Communication is as important as a “breakthrough” for a scholar to gain recognition. Computer scientists use an open access service hosted by Penn State University, *CiteSeer* (<http://citeseer.ist.psu.edu/>) to post scholarly work. *CiteSeer* calculates an impact factor as resources are used.

Membership affects society revenue. Leaders fear that members who can access publications freely through the Internet may drop their association memberships. ACS membership grew in 2007, but some general societies, such as the American Medical Association are losing members to more specialized societies. An overarching question is who will support the costs of professional societies.

Intellectual property is of concern to researchers, societies, and academic institutions. Researchers who retain copyright may increase the use of their work by publishing in open access sources. Professional societies that depend on journal revenues for operations want exclusive copyright contracts. Universities cannot sustain subscription payments that vastly exceed the cost of living each year.

Archival responsibility is of particular concern to scholars and academic libraries, as publishers move towards electronic-only journals. Recent digital caching projects such as LOCKSS and Portico promise to serve as a back up for content that libraries are purchasing and using on publisher web sites. The shift to electronic-only journals will eliminate some production costs.

A committee member noted the relatively low costs of society journals in religious studies, bringing attention to the vastly different market values of scholarly journals.

The group agreed that today’s conversation provided an insightful exploration of scholarly publishing in a highly respected sector of the academy, the scholarly society. Publishing is a key membership service of ACS and AMS. If these societies are to provide open access to the scholarly work that they publish, new economic models will be required to sustain publication programs.