

BOOK REVIEW

The Future of the Academic Journal, Edited by Bill Cope and Angus Phillips, Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2014, 447p

That the academic journals are undergoing a transformation is well known. The scholarly journal as a medium of communication has a 350 years history. But phenomenal changes to the academic journals have begun to happen only in the last 15-20 years. It is common knowledge that ICT has impacted the very process of scholarly publishing in general and the academic journals in particular. Print journals have made way for e-journals, which in turn have redefined the way scholarly information is disseminated.

The book under review on the future of academic journals is a timely one. However, as someone who has not read the first edition, I would have liked if the book had a preface discussing the two editions or at least the first edition. The book has 18 chapters with the opening chapter being a short introductory one by the editors of the book who briefly touch upon the online journal, open access and scholarly communication. Chapters two through six discuss about the transformation, future, growth and models related to journal publishing. The first four chapters do not have any tables or figures and a table appears in the 5th Chapter on business models of scholarly publishing. The 6th Chapter on growth of journal publishing by Carol Tenopir and Donald W King has a number of tables and figures. However, figures 6.1 to 6.4 that are to depict numbers and growth rate of periodicals do not convey these. It seems that the figures are wrong!

Open access has been a major area of focus in the book with five chapters devoted to it. Chapter 7 by Stevan Harnad discusses about open access journals. Chapter 8 has John Willinsky and Laura Moorhead discussing about how the rise of open access is altering journal publishing. Chapter 9 is on gold open access as the future of the academic journal. The involvement of various stake holders is discussed and the authors (Rhodri Jackson & Martin Richardson) conclude that OA is the future for academic journals but it is important that the process is managed. The other two chapters that also discuss open access are Chapters 12 and 14. Chapter 12 is on the role of repositories in the future of the journal. The current repository landscape in the context of open access and the impact of repositories on data are discussed. Chapter 14 focuses on the successful

open access journal *Open Medicine*. The circumstances leading to the creation of the *Open Medicine* and its journey since its formation are narrated.

Copyright and journal rankings are important topics when discussing about academic journals. The editors have included one chapter each on these two important topics. Chapter 10 by Joss Saunders on the future of copyright gives an overview of copyright in the context of changing conditions in the journal publishing industry. Chapter 11 investigates measures of journal performance and ranking. Several indicators are discussed and different ranking systems are compared. Claire Creaser in Chapter 13 discusses the role of the academic library in dealing with the changes in subscription models, access to journals and changing user expectations. It discusses how open access may affect libraries of the future and concludes that there is a need for academic libraries to act as intermediaries in the provisioning of scholarly content to users, although mechanism may be subject to change in the future.

Journal articles are set to undergo changes and Chapter 15 on the Elsevier Article of the Future project shares the experience of the authors who worked with more than 150 people in the scientific community to come up with the article prototypes for the simple-to-read online design. The last three chapters are on region specific journals that include Latin America, Africa and China.

Every chapter ends with a good list of references that will be useful to anyone who wants to read in greater detail about aspects discussed.

In all, the editors have put together a good collection of works by experts on various topics concerning the future of academic journals. However, I am of the view that two more chapters could have been included, one on predatory open access journals and another on the emergence of the visual journal. A downside of open access has been the growing breed of predatory open access journals that are preying on unsuspecting authors to make easy money. And as for visual journals, they have a passing mention in one of the chapters but in my view merits greater attention. So, one chapter each on predatory open access journals and on the potential and future of visual journals would have been welcome additions.