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10-2013

# Heard on the Net: It's a Small World After All: Traveling Beyond the viewpoint of American Exceptionalism To the Rise of the Author

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## Citation Details

Emery, Jill (2012). Heard on the Net: It's a Small World After All: Traveling Beyond the viewpoint of American Exceptionalism To the Rise of the Author. *The Charleston Advisor*. 15 (2), 67-68.

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## ADVISOR REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

## Heard on the Net

### It's a Small World After All: Traveling Beyond the Viewpoint of American Exceptionalism To the Rise of the Author

doi:10.5260/chara.15.2.67

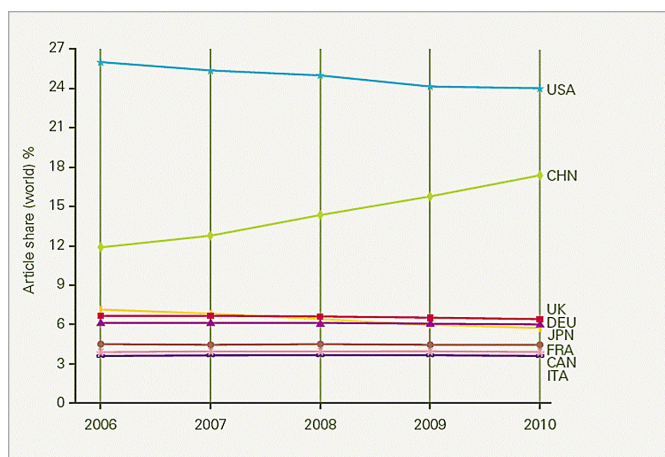
By Jill Emery (Collection Development Librarian, Portland State University)

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Throughout this past year there have been many reactions to Jeffrey Beall being named in lawsuits by publishers for his inclusion of their names on his “Beall’s List: Potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly Open Access publishers.” Some in libraryland have sided with Beall at least in regards to the publisher OMICS Publishing Group and upheld that Mr. Beall is being wrongly accused of malfeasance with his blog and listing of proposed predatory publishers such as this post on the Scholarly Kitchen Blog: <<http://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2013/05/20/high-noon-a-publisher-threatens-to-lunch-a-criminal-case-against-librarian-critic/#comment-97118>>. Others, however, have felt that Mr. Beall’s list and blog are guilty of primarily being anti-Open Access in general. Here are two examples of the concerns of preference for standard publishing as opposed to Open Access publishing. One post is from a publisher appearing on the list: <<http://editorjccr.wordpress.com/2012/12/17/open-access-publishing-usd-5000-is-enough-to-remove-your-publishers-name-from-bealls-list/>> and on the Sauropod Vertebrae blog: <<http://svpow.com/2013/05/08/of-course-the-serials-crisis-is-not-over-what-the-heck-are-you-talking-about/>>. Then there are blog posts such as this one <<http://everydayeconomies.net/blog/bealls-list-predatory-publishers>> by Sandy Ross, an early career economic sociologist, who also depicts the unease researchers feel with Beall’s List and the targets made of publishers who are non-Western. One of the best analyses to read on the subject of Beall’s list and the potential for cultural bias, was written by Karen Coyle in her 4 April 2013 article in Library Journal: “Predatory Publishers | Peer to Peer Review” <[\[lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/04/opinion/peer-to-peer-review/predatory-publishers-peer-to-peer-review/\]\(http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/04/opinion/peer-to-peer-review/predatory-publishers-peer-to-peer-review/\)>. Delving into Open Access publishing, we do need to be careful to avoid casting what Karen Coyle refers to as our “First World Assumptions,” when we \(the U.S.A.\) in fact are producing an increasingly shrinking segment of the world’s scholarly output with the majority of that scholarship residing behind paywalls \(Figure 1\).](http://</a></p>
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Dale Askey, another librarian who has been threatened with recent lawsuits from the publisher Edwin Mellen <<http://chronicle.com/article/Librarians-Rally-Behind/137329/>>, wrote on July 24, 2013 as a reply to a Taiga Forum Blog Post entitled: How Global is Your Library <<http://taiga-forum.org/how-global-is-your-library/>>, “...there are really only two spheres when it comes to higher education and research libraries: the United States and the ‘world.’ Us and them, in other words.” With the advent of developing scholarship, academic opportunities, and Open Access publishing in rapidly developing economies such as Brazil, India, and China, there is a vital shift beginning which can be seen to be the decline of the academic scholarly dominance of the United States of America. This year at both SSP’s (Society of Scholarly Publishing) Annual Conference and at the ALA (American Library Association) Annual Conference, there were programs offered on international Open Access publishing and how this is changing the production and dissemination of scholarship throughout the world.

At the ALA Annual Conference, Judy Luther from Informed Strategies, in conversation with me, brought up an intriguing idea that this decade of the 21st century is rapidly become the “Age of the Author.” Publisher services and other scholarly services are all developing around what could be called the “Cult of the Scholarly Author”—from Kudos (which provides services aimed at the exploitation of social media to raise the prominence of authors and their works, <<http://newsbreaks.infotoday.com/Digest/New-Initiative-to-Help-Authors-Increase-Research-Impact-89928.asp>>), to FigShare (which allows authors to readily share research <<http://figshare.com/>>), to Plum Analytics (which measures a single author’s influence <<http://www.plumanalytics.com/>>). In addition, do a quick Google search for “services to authors” and it is amazing that all of the major publishers now have Web pages dedicated to “author services” relating to how to submit for publication along with what production values are sought. This is a very astute observation by Judy. It may also explain part of the business practice engaged in by certain Open Access publishers that many academics find annoying, predatory, and others describe as spam: the direct e-mail solicitation for content and/or editorial participation. Here’s a plea from the Sauropod Vertebrae blog for a legitimate OA Publisher to stop their spam technique: <<http://svpow.com/2013/06/04/dear-legitimate-open-access-publishers-stop-spamming/>>. Part of me wonders however, is this practice really spamming



**FIGURE 1** Share of World Articles for U.K. and comparators, 2006–2010

Source: International Comparative Performance of the UK ResearchBase—2011. Prepared by Elsevier for BIS.

or is it potentially a cultural shift that the scholarly academic author may need to learn to live with in the future? This is not at all how the western academic world works in regards to publishing and solicitation and/or content submission but this could very well be a mechanism that is popular and expected in other parts of the world. Most Western publishers expect authors to seek them out and then take advantage of their author services which they outline. Is a practice like article solicitation a sign of the cultural shift currently playing out in academic scholarly publishing? Perhaps we are viewing this very practice through our First World Assumption lens. Perhaps, just perhaps, we need to take a step back and consider what are the best practices for scholarly content solicitation in the twenty-first century for a new or upstart journal? Perhaps the e-mail solicitation is a valid avenue for new journals in the marketplace, especially Open Access ones. Lastly, perhaps this is just the practice of a start-up and once established, then the publisher of an Open Access journal no longer needs to rely on e-mail solicitation for authors as a practice. Which is not to say that every e-mail solicitation for Open Access publishing that is made is valid and/or non-predatory. As with every free market there are individuals and groups looking to taking advantage of

new business models. This post in *Scientific American* by Bonnie Swoger provides a role for librarians to play in determining the validity and quality of a new and up-and-coming journal outside of the concern of article solicitation: <[http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/information-culture/2013/05/24/its-not-about-predators-its-about-journal-quality/?utm\\_source=buffer&utm\\_medium=twitter&utm\\_campaign=Buffer&utm\\_content=buffer1a76](http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/information-culture/2013/05/24/its-not-about-predators-its-about-journal-quality/?utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer&utm_content=buffer1a76)>. More and more academic libraries are directing their local research community to work with them via their scholarly communications librarians and/or scholarly communications program when determining the validity of publisher solicitation. However, librarians are not the only ones doing so as can be seen from this Web site from Elsevier B.V.: <<http://www.biggerbrains.com/introduction-to-scholarly-publishing-Webcasts>>.

The world of scholarly publishing is changing and becoming a more international marketplace filled with both new opportunities and new pitfalls. It is a small publication world and the focus is shifting from the high-impact, premier journal to that of the author/researcher. The full impacts of globalization on scholarly publishing and the focus shift to the authors is one worth watching in the next few years. ■



#### ▼ FROM YOUR MANAGING EDITOR, *continued from page 3*

line with the creation a few years ago of Data.gov, an open data platform for government information, the order intensified the administration's push for transparency in federal agencies. It also went further, requiring that data generated by the agencies "be made available in open, machine-readable formats and that Government information shall be managed as an asset throughout its life cycle to promote interoperability and openness, and, wherever possible and legally permissible, to ensure that data are released to the public in ways that make the data easy to find, accessible, and usable while appropriately safeguarding privacy, confidentiality, and security." The language of the Executive Order suggests that the open formats provision is intended to promote private-sector creation of new applications, uses, and data products, and possibly new jobs in the process. The Executive Order, then, could well be a boon to the electronic publishing industry. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/09/executive-order-making-open-and-machine-readable-new-default-government>>

#### **Best New Mobile App**

**GoodReader** is a robust PDF reader for mobile Apple devices (iPAD, iPhone, iTouch) which allows readers to read and annotate PDFs from their mobile devices. It is one of the best in class apps for annotating PDFs and an enterprise version is available which supports added security for corporate or government users. It is available from iTunes but it is too bad that there is not an Android version. <<http://www.goodiware.com/goodreader.html>>

#### **Best Contract Options**

**GSE Research Sustainable Organization Library** is a reasonably priced online collection of over 400 books from Governance Sustainability Environment (GSE) covering the key areas of governance, sustainability, and environmental management. Improvements continue to be made to the interface to enhance searchability and they are will-

ing to work with a library to make sure needs are met. All monographs are DRM free for downloading onto any type of reading device and they are using SERU guidelines for their contract. <<http://www.gsepublishing.com/>>

#### **Best Customer Support**

**Ex Libris USA** has exhibited outstanding customer support for libraries moving to the Alma next generation library system. Its implementation of Alma for the Orbis Cascade Alliance has been particularly exemplary with the company having timely responses for issues and a willingness to listen. <<http://www.exlibrisgroup.com/>>

#### **Best Effort**

**Browse** is a free iOS and Android app that allows simple browsing and reading of a library's journals in a tablet. The app is somewhat controversial in the library community in that it has limitations (e.g., does not include all subscriptions, has some authentication issues, does not provide deep searching, etc.) but overall it meets a need for casual browsing and reading for which many other library interfaces are not optimized. Users may now easily stay current with journals in their field through browsing their favorite titles. Libraries must work with Browse to make local subscriptions available. <<http://third-iron.com/browse/>>

**Newspapers.com** offers over 1,700 newspapers (with over 50 million pages) from around the U.S. from the 1700s to the 2000s. An excellent full-text search and users can view, print, save, and share articles. The service is reasonably priced. <<http://www.newspapers.com/>>

#### **Best Rescue (Special One Time)**

**ProQuest Statistical Abstract of the United States** ProQuest took over Statistical Abstract of the U.S. after the government said they

*Text continues on page 71.*