

MEDIA RELEASE

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Achieving a Sustainable Canadian Publishing Model through Library-Publisher Partnership

OTTAWA - A recent white paper written on behalf of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL), *Canadian Universities and Sustainable Publishing*, provides an overview of scholarly communication in Canada from the perspective of research libraries. The Canadian Association of Learned Journals (CALJ), the national organization who represents Canadian journals and their publishers, was sent a copy of this report only after it was finalized.

The paper lists Subscription Journal Models and Costs as the number 1 issue facing scholarly communication. Citing findings of a 2015 article published by Lariviere et al., the report states that “five commercial publishers now account for more than half of today’s published journal output” and that these “Publishers package journal content into “big deals” that commit libraries to content they might otherwise not select and to annual increases that are generally higher than the cost of inflation”.

None of these five publishers is Canadian, meaning that a very high percentage of library expenditures is being allocated to acquiring American- and foreign-produced content. This problem is only exacerbated by the low Canadian dollar.

From CALJ’s perspective, this situation presents a real risk to Canadian journals, as stretched library budgets reduce the money that is available for content outside these large commercial packages.

But according to this white paper, the libraries’ reaction to this issue is to focus on bringing down publications costs in Canada and even goes so far as to recommend superseding the journal entirely.

Michel Duquet, President of CALJ, feels that the libraries should talk to the experts in journal publishing rather than tackling this situation on their own. According to Duquet, “Canadian journals are already being produced at a low cost. We have a tradition of running fiscally responsible journals, and we follow stringent editorial practices, providing a trusted framework and vehicle for research that is of importance to Canadians. We have a lot of experience in running high-quality journals on a small budget.”

He went on to say that “CALJ understands the dilemma that Canadian university libraries currently face but feels that reducing costs for Canadian-produced content duplicates what has already been accomplished and does not solve the real problem: overpriced bundles of journal titles being produced by foreign publishers.”

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Mr. Duquet added that “If libraries ignore the existing Canadian journals in seeking solutions to the current serial crisis, then Canadian journals’ very existence will be in jeopardy, as will the essential elements that Canadian journal publishers provide: high quality of service to attract the best of Canadian research as well as the verification, certification, and clarification of research outputs. We would make a natural partner with whom the libraries should make common cause to find solutions together.”

About the Canadian Association of Learned Journals:

CALJ operates as a not-for-profit association and is member-driven, identifying priorities and establishing projects and activities as the CALJ journals and other CALJ members direct. Through interaction with government agencies, the research community and other partners, CALJ works to strengthen both individual journals and the journal community as a whole. The three key functions of CALJ are to provide services to CALJ member journals, to develop industry initiatives for CALJ member journals, and to enhance the collective strengths of CALJ members and the journal community.

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