News Notes

The Finch report

The Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings, chaired by Dame Janet Finch, co-Chair of the UK Government's Council for Science and Technology (www.bis.gov.uk/cst), published its findings in June. The group's remit was to investigate how UK-funded research findings could be made more accessible. Its report (www.researchinfonet.org/publish/finch) recommended better, faster communication of research results through open access, with the aim of benefiting public services and economic growth, as well as improved efficiency for researchers, and more opportunities for public engagement with research. The report received a large amount of attention in both mainstream and social media and was generally supported by publishers, who broadly acknowledged that some kind of open-access model was the way forward. Coming only a few months after the widespread criticism of some publishers for their support of legislation designed to prohibit open-access mandates, this seemed like a significant shift in viewpoint. Indeed, a few days before the report was published, *Nature* editor-in-chief, Philip Campbell, acknowledged that open-access was "going to happen in the long run". However, the Finch report was criticised for its strong support of 'gold' OA (publisher-led open-access) over 'green' OA (institutional repository-based access), among other concerns.

Journal naming standards

What happens when a journal changes its name? The US National Information Standards Organization (NISO) has published draft recommendations for the presentation and identification of e-journals. When a journal changes name, publishers are likely to list older articles on the newly branded journal website, with potential confusion for users and problems for librarians (the ISSN changes as well as the URL). Updates on this work will appear on a dedicated website (www.niso.org/workrooms/piej), which also provides valuable background for any editor facing or considering a journal name change.

Welcome to PeerJ

PeerJ (peerj.com) is a new publishing venture set up by Peter Binfield, previously of *PLoS ONE*, and Jason Hoyt, ex-Mendeley. *PeerJ* is a new open-access journal and pre-print service, initially limited to biomedical science, and opens for submissions in summer 2012. Like *PLoS ONE*, and the many other broad-based 'mega-journals', *PeerJ* will assess submissions for methodological rigour, not 'interest'. But what makes *PeerJ* different is its business model: *PeerJ* won't charge article processing or submission fees; its income will come from membership fees. "Pay $99, publish for life" claimed the pre-launch publicity. It's a bit more complex than that, with various levels of membership and other considerations, but the basic model is free publishing for life for a one-off fee.

Open citations

The publishers of the two biggest science journals, *Nature* and *Science*, have announced that they will make available the reference lists of those journals' articles for use in an Open Citations project (opencitations.net) developed by JISC, the organisation that promotes digital technologies in British academic institutions. Nature Publishing Group had already launched its own linked data platform (data.nature.com) and developers portal (developers.nature.com) and is the first commercial publisher to contribute to the Open Citations project. The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the publisher of *Science*, and Oxford University Press, have joined NPG in making the reference lists from a number of journals available for the project. The CrossRef Cited-By Linking service (www.crossref.org/citedby) will be used to integrate these publishers' reference lists with the existing database.

Towards open content mining

The use of technology to extract data and meaning by 'mining' journal content opens up new areas of research and new ways of answering research questions. Researchers in this emerging field have pushed for more co-operation from publishers, especially those researchers whose institutions already subscribe to journals but who aren't able to 'mine' those journals' contents due to uncertainties about copyright and licensing. The Open Knowledge Foundation (www.okfn.org) has published a draft content-mining declaration, with the three-pronged aim of educating researchers and librarians about the potential of mining, persuading publishers to make mining easier, and urging governments to promote and protect rights to mine. The declaration, published on the OKFN website in June (tinyurl.com/ease-news17), is based on three principles: right of legitimate access to mine; lightweight processing terms and conditions; and freedom to use mined information.

FundRef

FundRef is a new project that builds on a collaboration between publishers and funding agencies. The project, supported by CrossRef (www.crossref.org), aims to standardise how funding sources are reported in research articles. Funding statements in journal articles vary widely and make it difficult for funders to track the output of their funding streams. The project will explore how publishers and manuscript tracking system vendors can use standardised metadata for funding sources, based on a taxonomy developed at Elsevier.