


Why isn't the Future More of the Same?



Drivers for Change In the Research-Communication Space

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Forces at Work, Changing Research Communication

- Societal forces and values
- Intellectual property practices
- Information-technology and information-access forces
- Hot-button issues driving legislation & practice, e.g.,
 - Medical-technology, health-care forces, etc.
 - Environmental concerns
 - Education research & practice
 - “Open meetings” & “Sunshine” laws

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BUT on the other hand...

- ❑ Globalization/homogenization forces, competitive need for economies of scale
- ❑ Intellectual property legislation
- ❑ The power of brands amid chaos
- ❑ Consolidation of power & players
- ❑ Hot-button issues driving legislation & practice, e.g.,
 - National/homeland security legislation
 - Government funding of specific research
 - Government selection/edit of research results
 - Editorial involvement of distribution media

Forces include...

- ❑ The web: enabling suppliers and consumers to communicate directly, outside “traditional” channels
- ❑ Disorganized, Balkanized, but plentiful information
- ❑ Information price, seemingly unrelated to information quality
- ❑ Resentment among academics and their institutions at paying for information they produce
- ❑ Information paradox: overwhelmed with supply, but can't find what we need

Forces include...

- ❑ Rising 'Vox Pop' as citizens expect and have access to the same information as experts, e.g., "patient power"
- ❑ Falling marginal cost of distribution of electronic information, toward zero
- ❑ Falling cost of storage of information
- ❑ Conservative establishment of publishers, tenure committees, and university libraries

Leading to...

- ❑ Dissatisfaction with the status quo, and experimentation with alternative models/channels
- ❑ New players shifting attention and value from traditional publishers
- ❑ New technical vs. traditional frameworks collide
- ❑ While at the same time established brands are gaining strength amid chaos

- ❑ ***Forces acting orthogonally are unlikely to remain in a stable balance***