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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ask the Editors: Assessing the Publishing Needs of Faculty Editors

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This article reports results from a survey of faculty members with editorial responsibilities. The survey explored what publishing services and platform functionalities respondents found most valuable in their work as editors, how satisfied they were with the services provided by commercial publishers, and to what extent they were aware of alternative publishing practices.

Method: The authors used data collected from a survey instrument that was distributed to a sample ($n = 515$) of faculty members with editorial responsibilities at their institution.

Results: Collected data suggest that faculty editors value specific publishing services (e.g., coordination of peer review and copyediting) and platform functionality (e.g., submission and peer-review management) more than others, recognize several challenges facing academic publishing in their disciplines (including the transition to open access publishing models), and are mostly aware of common forms of open access research dissemination such as open access journals and institutional repositories.

Discussion: The survey results may be helpful to library publishers in making decisions about what publishing services and platform functionalities to prioritize in the development of their publishing programs. In addition to utilizing the survey data to assess the needs of editors, the authors also identified a number of expanded uses of the survey related to marketing and outreach.

Conclusion: Insofar as faculty editors are key stakeholders that library publishers seek to build partnerships with, it is important to understand their needs and preferences as editors. This article provides some insight into these questions that may prove helpful to library publishers.

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Keywords: library publishing, publishing services, publishing platforms, editors, editorial board members, open access, faculty assessment, expansive/media-rich publishing

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The results from this survey highlight that there is an underaddressed need for library publishing services that support scholarly editorship, including the following:

- Supporting administrative/coordination work for peer review and copyediting;
- Assessing and providing expanded publication platform features to meet emerging publishing needs; and
- Leveraging editors' knowledge of the changing landscape of scholarship such as the transition to open and models for funding scholarly publishing, to generate meaningful partnerships to increase support mechanisms within the library.

The literature review highlights that there is a lack of research on the needs of faculty editors, rather than authors, more broadly.

INTRODUCTION

As the field of scholarly communication continues to evolve, many academic libraries are seeking to adapt to and even shape this changing environment to better collaborate with and advocate for researchers at their institutions. Of the more than 100 library publishing operations included in the 2017 Library Publishing Directory, an overwhelming 93% reported partnering with individual faculty members to assist them in meeting their scholarly communication needs, with 78% reporting the same in 2019 and 85% in 2020 (Kirschner et al. 2020, p. vii.; Schlosser et al., 2018, p. vii; Skinner et al., 2017, p. vii). In order to better anticipate and address the many diverse publishing needs of researchers, a number of academic libraries and invested stakeholder organizations have conducted faculty publishing needs assessments. These assessments have taken many forms, including online surveys, one-to-one interviews, and focus groups. Such needs assessments have proven to be valuable tools that enable academic librarians to better understand past, present, and future publishing practices and needs of their faculty partners. As Lippincott (2017) suggests, the conversations born of needs analyses “help establish a rationale for the university to support publishing and may help library publishers identify the specific particular services, tools, or platforms they should support” (p. 25). The results of such studies can likewise be used for the evidence-based development of library-led publishing services that help members of institutional research communities better navigate all aspects of the scholarly publishing process.

To this end, the current study shares findings from a survey of faculty members engaged in editorial tasks ($n = 44$) conducted at the Florida State University (FSU) Libraries in the spring semester of 2018. Key findings from the survey include a moderate awareness of library publishing initiatives, a good awareness of future challenges in academic publishing (such as the transition to open access), an appreciation of various services provided by commercial publishers, and insight into desired features for publishing platforms. In addition to providing data that informed the development of our services, the survey also served as a valuable marketing device to promote existing services and begin building relationships with supportive faculty members. Our team used the results of this survey to inform the development of a library publishing strategic plan, a series of forums for faculty editors, the adoption of a new digital publication platform, and a number of publishing projects, including two open textbooks and two new journal publications.

The research questions that we sought to answer included the perceived value of commercial publishing services and publishing platform functionality as well as faculty awareness of the open access publishing initiatives present on our campus and others more broadly. The primary research questions that we intended to answer were as follows:

- What publishing services are most valuable to faculty editors?
- What publishing platform functionalities are most valuable to faculty editors?
- How satisfied are faculty editors with the services provided by commercial publishers?
- To what extent are faculty editors aware of and willing to engage in alternative publishing practices outside the scope of traditional commercial publishing models?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Investigating faculty needs in an evolving scholarly publishing landscape

Key findings of previous faculty publishing needs assessments

Aligning with the postulation that dissatisfaction with current publishers and publication models is a key motivational factor for faculty members who seek publishing services from libraries (Walters, 2012), a number of prior faculty publishing needs assessments asked respondents to indicate areas of concern with current publishing trends and practices. Studies have shown that faculty from multiple institutions are particularly dissatisfied with the speed of traditional publication processes (Harley et al., 2010; Walters, 2012; TBI Communications, 2014; Fenlon et al., 2016; Senseney et al., 2019). Specifically, faculty seek to improve the speed of communication between themselves and publishers and

are dissatisfied with the overall efficiency of the peer-review process (TBI Communications, 2014). As evidenced by the report from Harley et al. (2010), faculty members—especially those in the hard sciences, technology, engineering, and math fields—are actively pursuing preprint services in order to more quickly share their scholarship. About half of the participants in the 2018 Ithaka S+R US Faculty Study reported that they often or occasionally use working papers or preprints to share findings from their scholarly research (Blankstein & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2019). Similarly, as reported by Fenlon et al. (2016), the majority of participants in that study seek ways to publish or otherwise share intermittent research results via venues outside the scope of traditional scholarly avenues of publication, such as blogs. It is possible that publishing research findings and datasets via social media and preprints will also become an increasingly popular practice, particularly given the extremely visible pressure that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on the scientific community to share knowledge about the disease as widely and quickly as possible (Vlasschaert et al., 2020). These findings coincide with an overarching and pressing concern with the dissemination and accessibility of research (Craigle et al., 2013; Riddle, 2015; Fenlon et al., 2016). Additionally, over one-third of participants in a recent national survey of humanities scholars ranked available digital archiving and preservation measures and the processes for navigating third-party permissions offered by publishers as inadequate (Fenlon et al., 2019).

Assessments have likewise revealed that faculty members from multiple disciplines and institutions are concerned with—or are seeking improvements to—the quality of editorial services and peer-review processes (Harley et al., 2010; TBI Communications, 2014). A quarter of respondents in the Oberlin Group faculty needs assessment listed quality of editorial support as the single most important factor when selecting a publisher (TBI Communications, 2014), whereas participants in a joint study conducted by Publishing Without Walls and the University of Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities ranked getting adequate editorial support as the greatest challenge to digital publishing, followed closely by getting adequate technical and financial support (Senseney et al., 2019). Perceived prestige of medium/reputation of venue was also a key factor in deciding where to publish for faculty members involved in a number of studies (Harley et al., 2010; TBI Communications, 2014; Fenlon et al., 2016, 2019; Blankstein & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2019; Niles et al., 2020).

Craigle et al. (2013) state that 42% of their respondents expressed interest in making their work available on the web, and 30% indicated that they would be interested in taking advantage of the technology platforms and web-based publishing services offered by the university library. Similarly, Riddle (2015) reports that 76% of respondents in her study support hosting and services for online publications, and in the Oberlin study, “around 50% of respondents were either positive or strongly positive about newer publishing initiatives” (TBI Communications, 2014, p. 33). Clearly, “the need for publication of alternative formats is an emerging trend, and

libraries are well positioned to fill this need” (Bruxvoort & Fruin, 2014, p. 5). However, more recent studies also show that there is often a marked discrepancy between faculty attitudes toward nontraditional publishing practices/platforms and their actual publishing behaviors. For instance, although nearly 64% of the 10,919 faculty participants in the 2018 Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey “indicated they would be happy to see the traditional subscription-based publication model replaced entirely by an open access system” (Blankstein & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2019, p. 40) and about 60% indicated that maximizing readership is key to optimizing the impact of research, respondents still generally view research products published outside of traditional academic publication venues as being less worthy of recognition and having less value in promotion-related decisions. Numerous studies indicate that faculty publishing practices are mainly driven by traditional scholarly reward systems that are tied to peer-review practices and adhere to conventional models based on the perceived quality and prestige of publication venues (University of California Office of Scholarly Communication, 2007; Harley et al., 2010; Blankstein & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2019; Niles et al., 2020).

Looking at faculty responses to questions regarding author rights and faculty behaviors regarding copyright, it is apparent that greater assistance and education is required surrounding the negotiation of author rights with publishers. For instance, Dawson’s (2014) study revealed that 99% of faculty sign copyright agreements as-is, and 79% indicated that they lacked the time, interest, and/or perceived expertise required to negotiate copyright terms. Digital archiving and preservation of research, including that of diverse scholarly materials, is yet another service that environmental scans indicate is needed (Harley et al., 2010; Riddle, 2015; Fenlon et al., 2016). As suggested by Riddle (2015), such findings are indicative of the need for a culture of scholarly support in the form of specialized services that move beyond basic hosting and access services for previously published content.

Gaps in the literature

The aforementioned studies are devoted to investigating the publishing needs of faculty in their roles as researchers and authors, and studies such as Keller’s (2015) investigate the pressing concerns of journal editors and how they view the role of libraries in promoting open access publishing. However, at the time this study was conducted, we were unable to find studies that explored the publishing support needs of faculty in their roles as editors and members of editorial boards. This lack of information about what faculty require in publishing platforms and services as they fulfill editorial engagements is what prompted our investigation. To fill this research gap, better understand potential editorial partners, and inform our future publishing initiatives, we designed a survey instrument specifically to identify the needs of faculty editors and gauge their knowledge of and interest in alternative publishing services.

METHODS

Selecting our sample

Following institutional review board approval, we generated a list of potential participants from our institution's Faculty Expertise and Advancement System (FEAS). This tool provides a centralized interface for faculty to organize curriculum vitae data in order to streamline the promotion process through a consistent vita layout. It also provides data query features to facilitate institutional research on faculty activity and foster interdisciplinary research collaboration. To generate our participant list, we crafted a series of queries that would return a list of faculty with editorial duties. These duties included monograph, book series, journal, textbook, guest, or invited editorship, as well as many types of peer review. It was our intention to build a pool of potential respondents who contributed to the scholarly publishing process with any role defined in FEAS beyond "author." Data generated from the survey were intended to inform our institution's library publishing services and identify gaps in the services and platform functionality provided by commercial publishers.

After generating the initial sample of faculty editors from FEAS, we decided to omit faculty members whose editorial experience was limited to peer review, because their insights were not essential to our research questions. We also found that the representation of faculty experience in the FEAS database at that time was incomplete. Data entry into the tool was only mandated for tenure and promotion consideration as of the early 2010s, so only those faculty who were pre-tenure or who had gone up for promotion in the years after this requirement went into effect were included in our sample.

Obstacles to data collection

During the course of identifying our sample, we discovered a policy that mandated the use of a university-level queue for surveys intended for mass distribution to faculty. When using this procedure, there was no way to determine how many emails would be queued in front of ours nor when our email would be distributed. This policy would be in effect for any mass distribution to 400 or more faculty. Entering our survey into this queue would negatively impact the timeline for completion of our larger assessment and planning process, which included distributing the survey to potential participants before the 2017 winter break, sending reminders sometime early in the Spring 2018 semester, and then analyzing responses and drafting a final report by the end of the Spring semester. This timeline was constructed with a close eye toward the availability of our 2017/2018 academic-year intern, who would be performing a large portion of the data analysis as part of their final project.

Adapting our strategy

In light of the aforementioned considerations, the team formulated a new strategy that would allow for distribution, analysis, and reporting within the appropriate time frame. This resulted in the use of a reported FEAS list of faculty who were more judiciously selected for editorial roles that we deemed most representative of editorial activities. Our revised sample included potential respondents with experience in only three FEAS-supplied categories: “monograph editor,” “editorial board membership,” and “editor for refereed journals.” We also restricted results to only those faculty with active appointments between the years 2014 and 2017. This new set of facets resulted in a total pool of 535 potential distribution candidates. To remain under the 400-person limit for mass email communications, we then individually distributed the survey to contacts on the list to whom there was already some history of professional contact ($n = 116$). We then cut the remaining list by 20, to the 399 candidates that we felt were broadly representative (though not statistically so). These reductions yielded a final distribution list of 515 candidates.

RESULTS

Of the 515 editors invited to take the survey, we received 44 responses (8.5% response rate). What follows is an overview of the key findings from the survey. Given the relatively small sample of respondents, the non-statistically representative sampling selection, and localization within a specific institution, it is important to note that these findings do not generalize to broader populations of faculty editors across different disciplines or kinds of institutions. Nonetheless, these findings speak to (1) the variety of editorial roles performed by our faculty, (2) the publishing services and platform features most important to our faculty, (3) faculty awareness of different forms of scholarly publishing, and (4) faculty interest in library-led publishing services at our institution.

Editorial experience

We asked our respondents about their editorial backgrounds, the importance of specific publishing services and platform features, and their knowledge of our institutional open access policy. Of respondents, 68% were professors or associate professors, and the remaining respondents were assistant professors or specialized faculty. Over half of the editors were from the Colleges of Arts & Sciences ($n = 11$), Education ($n = 8$), and Fine Arts ($n = 5$). The remaining respondents were from the Colleges of Social Work ($n = 4$), Communication and Information ($n = 4$), Business ($n = 3$), Medicine ($n = 2$), Music ($n = 2$), Nursing ($n = 1$), Motion Picture Arts ($n = 1$), Social Sciences and Public Policy ($n = 1$), and Applied Studies ($n = 1$). One respondent declined to provide their college.

In terms of extent of experience, 5–10 years was most common, with 45% of respondents selecting this option. Of respondents, 37% had fewer than 5 years of experience, and 17% had more than 10 years of experience. Journal editors made up 95%, whereas only 5% served on monograph series editorial boards. Though these roles are not exclusive, respondents could only select one primary editorial role in our survey, so data about editors with experience on journals *and* book series boards were not collected. The two respondents who indicated that they edited monograph series alone were from the Colleges of Motion Picture Arts and Arts and Sciences.

There was a mix of faculty ranks among those with 5–10 years’ experience in editorial appointments, which included both assistant professors and specialized faculty. Contrary to our expectation that associate or full professors (i.e., those with tenure) would tend to have more years of experience, there were several respondents with the rank of full professor who only had 1–2 years of experience in those same types of appointments. This could be attributed to different practices by discipline or department.

Faculty were asked about their familiarity and experience with different types of publishers. Of the respondents, 94% were familiar with or had direct experience working on journals published by commercial academic publishers. Of respondents, 84% had familiarity or direct experience with works published by scholarly associations. Faculty editors were more unfamiliar with volunteer-run publications and those published by university presses. Respondents were most unfamiliar with library publishers, as shown in Figure 1.

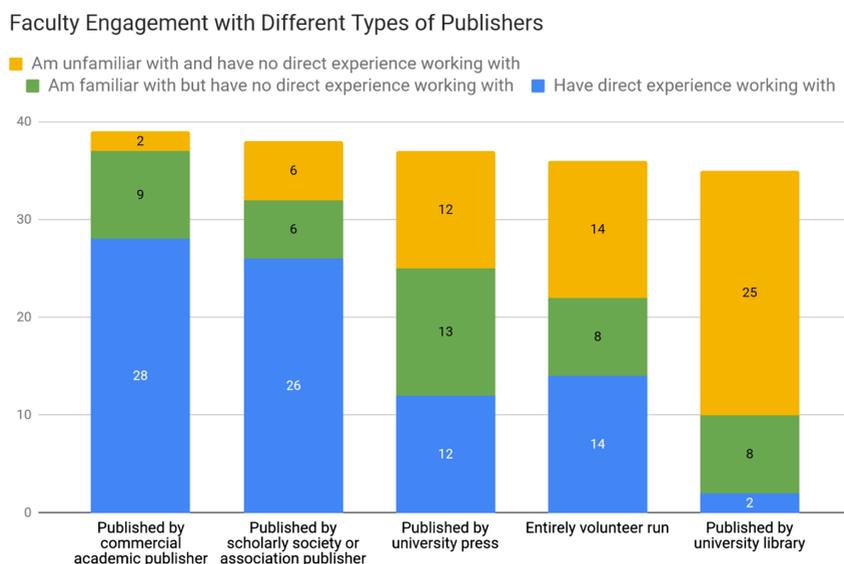


Figure 1. Faculty engagement with different types of publishers.

Editorial needs: Services and platforms

We asked faculty editors to rank which publishing services were most important to them (Figure 2). The top responses were coordination of peer review, copyediting, abstracting and indexing, and author rights. Editors ranked printing/print-on-demand, format conversion, graphic design, and marketing and promotion as the least important services for publications.

The importance of the top publishing services (workflow management, copyediting, distribution) was reflected in responses about preferred publishing platform features. Submission workflow and peer-review management were considered the most important features, along with digital archiving and preservation. Editors ranked features such as post-publication peer review and reader comment functions as the least important features of publishing platforms (Figure 3). Of respondents, 28% answered “Not sure” on the importance of tools for altmetrics. The perceived importance of peer-review processes is in keeping with previous findings wherein faculty authors rank peer-review coordination as the most highly desired publishing service (Fenlon et al, 2016) and high-quality peer review as a very important feature of publication venues (TBI Communications, 2014).

Our respondents were largely satisfied with the services provided by commercial publishers. As shown in Figure 4, 66.7% of respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with these services, whereas only 17.9% were dissatisfied. A minority of respondents (15.4%) chose not to select a singular level of satisfaction, instead specifying in free-response

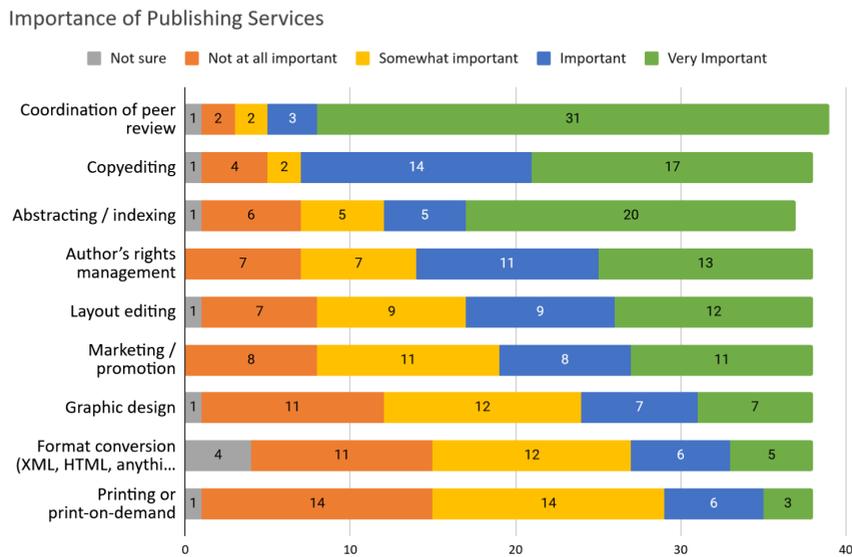


Figure 2. Importance of publishing services to faculty editors.

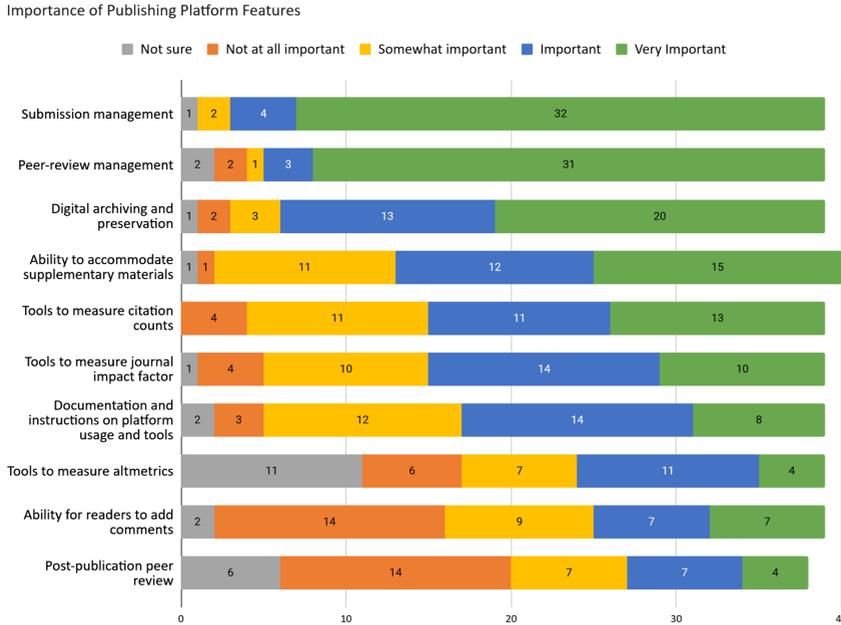


Figure 3. Importance of publishing platform features.

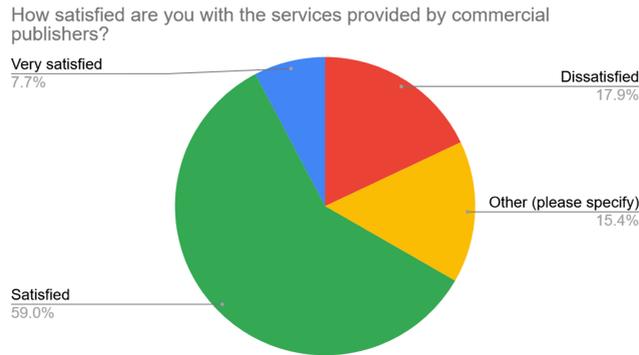


Figure 4. Faculty editor satisfaction with commercial publishing services.

comments that their level of satisfaction varied depending on the publisher, the format of the works published (e.g., articles vs. books), and the capacity in which they were answering (e.g., editors vs. authors).

Editorial challenges

Our respondents identified several issues that they see as the biggest challenges facing academic publishing in their disciplines over the next ten years. We decided to make this an

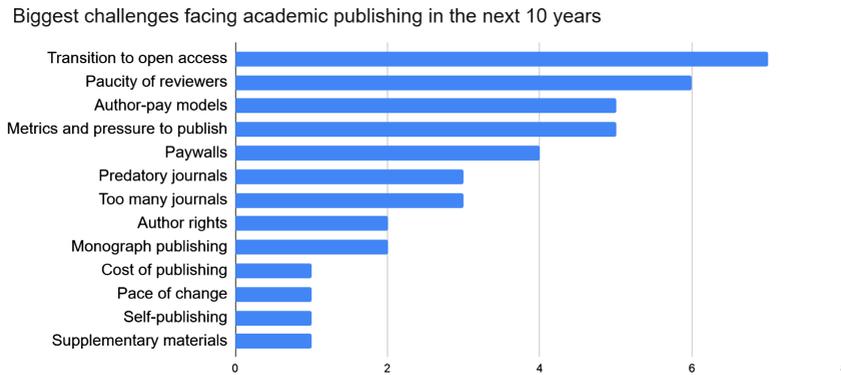


Figure 5. Challenges facing academic publishing according to faculty editors.

open-ended, qualitative question to preclude influencing the results by making initial assumptions about the challenges facing scholarly editors. We coded the data after the fact to identify common themes. The list of resultant themes is given in Figure 5.

The biggest challenge identified by our respondents concerned transitioning from legacy, subscription-based publishing models to open access publishing models. It is important to note that comments about this transition mostly described it as a positive and desirable thing but simultaneously anticipated that the transition will be difficult. For instance, many respondents indicated that transitioning to open access models will be difficult for editors who already have limited bandwidth to focus on their regular editorial work.

The next biggest challenge identified by respondents was a perceived paucity of peer reviewers. For many respondents, this challenge was connected to growth in the number of journals and article submissions in their disciplines, a trend that they felt has spread the pool of available reviewers too thin. With respect to author-pay models, many respondents recognized the inequities that this model introduces for authors and pointed to open questions about the sustainability of these models in the context of continuing and ever-increasing subscription costs that may compromise the ability of academic institutions to defray the cost of author-side publishing fees.

Comments regarding impact metrics were also noteworthy, as many respondents complained about the pernicious influence of the journal impact factor and, more specifically, the use of this proprietary metric as a proxy for article quality by promotion and tenure committees. In many cases, respondents indicated that this practice not only limits author choice but also makes it difficult for new and established journals within a given discipline, since many authors are pressured into publishing in venues outside their discipline in an effort to chase higher impact factors. This finding aligns well with extensive literature that cites the

prevalence of the journal impact factor as an important metric in review, promotion, and tenure procedures in the U.S. (McKiernan et al., 2019; Gadd, 2020; Penfold & Polka, 2020; Vlasschaert et al., 2020).

To explore these qualitative responses in full, please consult the full survey data at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13373429.v1>.

Awareness of open access

The final section of our survey sought to gauge our respondents' awareness of open access dissemination models. We opened this section with a broad question, asking respondents to rate their level of familiarity with various forms of open access research dissemination. The majority of respondents indicated that they either were familiar with or had direct experience with disseminating research via open access journals (82%) and blogs, wikis, and departmental websites (72%). As shown in Figure 6, respondents indicated a decreasing level of familiarity with the other forms of dissemination, with institutional repositories taking third position (64%), followed by disciplinary repositories (44%), funder repositories (26%), and preprint servers (26%). It should be noted that, since the time this survey was conducted in 2017, it is probable that faculty awareness of preprint servers has increased at least partially because of the prevalent use of preprints to rapidly share information related to the COVID-19 pandemic (Vlasschaert et al., 2020). The lack of familiarity with platforms like disciplinary repositories is similar to other survey findings (University of California Office of Scholarly Communication, 2007; Dawson, 2014).

What is your level of knowledge about the following forms of scholarly dissemination?

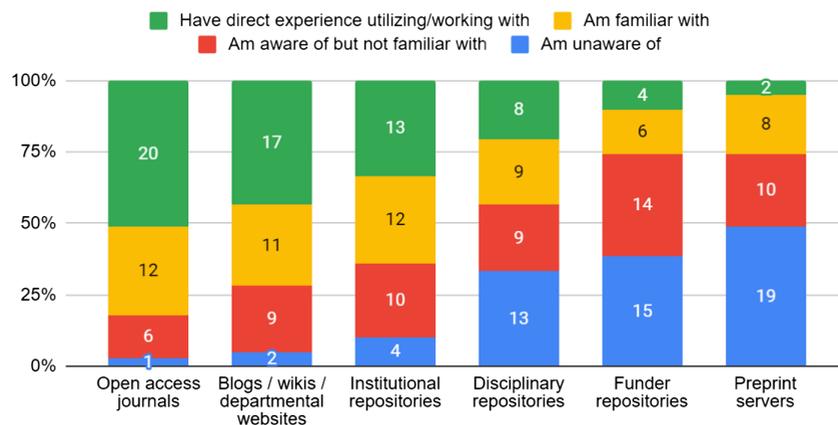


Figure 6. Faculty editors' awareness of various forms of scholarly dissemination.

We asked respondents to indicate how many of the publishers they work with engage in open access publishing practices. Approximately 28% responded with “most” or “all,” whereas 59% responded with “some” or “few” (Figure 7). Given that Piwowar et al. (2018) found that 19 of the top 20 journal publishers by article volume engage in some form of open access publishing (e.g., gold, hybrid, or bronze) from 2009 to 2015, these responses may at first seem somewhat surprising. That said, it is entirely possible that our respondents’ editorial experience pertains to smaller publishers that do not engage in any form of open access publishing or that our respondents answered based on a narrow understanding of open access publishing that excludes popular forms such as hybrid open access. Indeed, because “open access publishing practices” is such a broad term, it would have been interesting to ask a follow-up question to solicit specific examples of the open access publishing practices that the respondents had in mind.

We also asked how likely our respondents would be to utilize an open access publishing platform and technical support services offered by FSU Libraries (Figure 8). Of respondents, 62% answered “likely” or “very likely,” and only 13% indicated that they would be “unlikely” to use our services. Interestingly, the responses to this question were noticeably more positive than those received in surveys with similar questions, such as the study conducted by Craige et al. (2013), in which only 32% of faculty authors reported that they would absolutely or probably utilize library publishing services. It is unclear what the significance of this finding is, as it may be attributable to increasing openness to library publishing partnerships on the part of researchers generally since 2013. Alternatively, researchers at our institution could be more open to this sort of partnership than those surveyed by Craige et al. (2013).

These results were very encouraging to our small, nascent library publishing team and provided evidence that editors at our institution were, at least in principle, interested in utilizing

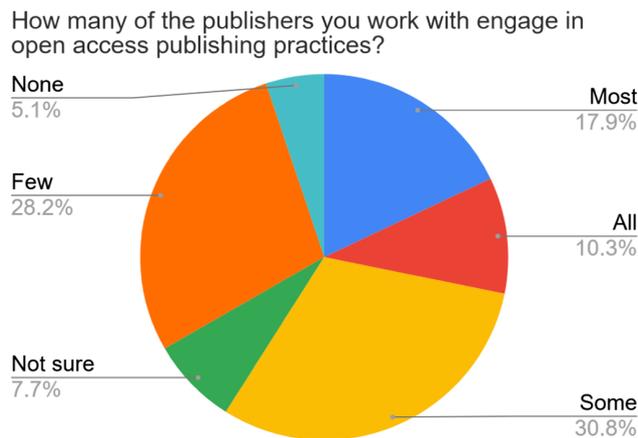


Figure 7. Faculty editor engagement with open-access publishing.

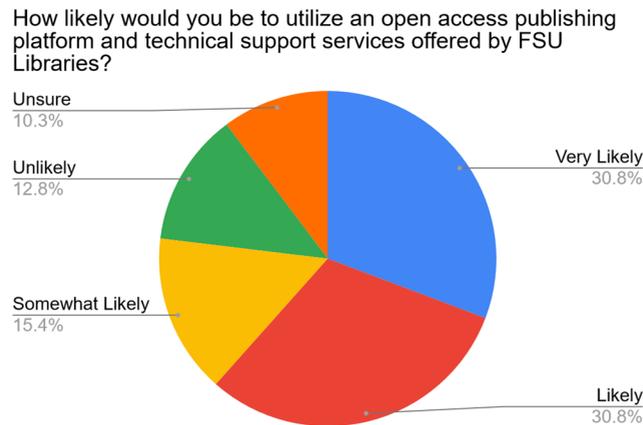


Figure 8. Likelihood of faculty use of library publishing services.

open access publishing services provided by our Libraries. On reflection, it would have been interesting to ask an open-ended follow-up question to those in the “unlikely” category to try to gain an understanding of their concerns or hesitations as well as attitudes toward open access more generally.

Finally, we also asked whether our respondents were aware of the Faculty Senate Open Access Policy that was adopted at our institution approximately two years before the survey was distributed.

Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they were aware of the policy. This was a higher rate than we had hypothesized, especially given the limited outreach efforts that our Libraries had conducted following the adoption of the policy. Respondents who answered affirmatively were then prompted to give any thoughts on how this policy has affected our faculty, positively or negatively. Many of the responses indicated a fundamental lack of understanding of the purpose and main elements of the policy itself. Specifically, many of the responses incorrectly assumed that the policy applied to publishing in gold open-access journals, as opposed to self-archiving in the repository, and thus commented on unrelated topics such as personal experiences with or opinions about open-access journals. It is also worth noting that many of the respondents felt that most of their colleagues were unaware of the policy.

DISCUSSION

This survey sought first to explore the extent to which faculty editors value different publishing services and publishing platform functionalities. In addition to providing some indication of editors’ preferences on these fronts, the survey results may help to inform decision-making

on the part of library publishers. Given that most respondents identified peer-review coordination, copyediting, abstracting and indexing, and author rights as valuable publishing services, it would behoove library publishers to consider whether and how they may be able to provide services in these areas. Similarly, most respondents identified submission workflow, peer-review management, and digital archiving and preservation as important publishing platform functionalities, and these preferences might help to inform the decisions of library publishers with respect to platform selection. Equally significant, of course, are the publishing services and platform functionalities that editors indicated were less important than those mentioned earlier—again, these findings may help to inform library publishers' decision-making about services and platforms.

This survey also sought to explore how satisfied faculty editors are with the services provided by commercial publishers, as well as the extent to which they are aware of and willing to engage in alternative publishing practices outside the scope of traditional commercial publishing models. With respect to the former question, editors on our campus by and large expressed satisfaction with traditional commercial publishers. This finding is in contrast to previously conducted studies wherein a majority of faculty authors characterize the general health of scholarly communication systems as needing both minor and major changes ([University of California Office of Scholarly Communication, 2007](#)) and authors express dissatisfaction with different aspects of current publishing practices ([TBI Communications, 2014](#)).

Furthermore, respondents reported a high level of familiarity with common forms of open access research dissemination, such as open access journals and institutional repositories, as well as an encouraging level of interest in utilizing publishing services offered by the university library. However, editors also saw transitioning to open access as the biggest challenge facing academic publishing in their disciplines over the next ten years. Respondents expressed a lack of awareness or experience with library publishing, volunteer-run publications, and nontraditional processes. The responses on our campus show a discrepancy between needed changes that were identified by faculty authors more widely (as evidenced by the studies cited in our literature review) and the current expertise and needs of editors.

In the course of conducting this survey, we realized that using the survey solely as a needs assessment would have, in fact, become a limitation for the development of future services. It was clear that, while our editor-respondents expressed needs based on their experience with legacy publishing, there was an opportunity to address their receptivity to emerging practices by becoming a trusted source of support. We decided to leverage insights from the survey to highlight the libraries' publishing services in outreach and marketing, improve services, and strategically offer an alternative publishing experience. It also allowed us to expand publishing services toward innovative practices in the library publishing field that support new practices

and modes of scholarship. The survey encouraged faculty to see the library as a publishing resource and allowed us to highlight services and platform features that faculty identified as important.

Beyond informing the development of our publishing support services, we were also able to utilize the survey to build community in other ways. For example, we were able to reach out to previous collaborators from our email list and follow up on or initiate conversations about publishing projects. Finally, the survey gave us an opportunity to gauge faculty awareness of the campus Open Access Policy at the same time as advertising that policy to those who were unaware. The majority of respondents had already heard of the Open Access Policy; for those who had not, this question hopefully inspired them to investigate further.

Informed in part by the results of this survey, we developed a strategic plan for library publishing that included support for journals, repository outreach, and expanded service offerings. In the 2019–2020 academic year, we began to hire student workers and outsource copyediting work to vendors to support current and forthcoming publishing projects. We sought to marry the quality associated with prestigious publications with the growing need for alternative formats and expertise in emerging areas. The survey questions about desired platform features and publishing services were key in planning future library publishing services. From the data, we were also able to target outreach based on existing strengths and implement new services based on campus needs. Moreover, identifying faculty needs regarding platform features informed our search for a library-supported publishing platform that would have broad applications for monographs, open educational resources, and expansive digital publishing projects.

Finally, we began hosting events that would highlight the libraries' publishing efforts, offer collaborative expertise, and build a community of practice. The respondents were able to voluntarily include email addresses for follow-up conversations and information about publishing services. We view those respondents who provided their contact information as champions of library publishing; they are the first people we contact about new events and services. We were also able to reuse the original survey distribution list to advertise our first Editor's Forum event in 2018 and later events that focused on academic publishing. Since the survey, we have pulled new data from the institutional reporting portal to keep up to date with new faculty editors.

Limitations

In an effort to increase the likelihood that faculty editors would take our survey, we made the decision to pare down the instrument to 17 questions. This decision may have increased our

response rate, but it also led to a less comprehensive survey. And although our survey effectively measured faculty editors' current publishing practices, it was incapable of gauging editors' specific publishing needs and attitudes toward particular publishing practices. For instance, although we had a question that gauged participants' knowledge of and experience with forms of scholarly dissemination outside of the commercial publishing industry, we did not include a question that gauged their attitudes toward these alternative publishing channels.

Aside from the limitations imposed by the survey instrument itself, having to limit the breadth of our initial dissemination strategy made it so that our study did not reach as many potential participants as we would have hoped. This led to a relatively small sample size and a disciplinary representation that skewed toward overrepresentation of Arts and Sciences and Education. Furthermore, the infrastructural limitations of the FEAS not including all campus faculty limited our initial pool of candidates. In conjunction, these factors make it difficult to assess whether these survey results are truly representative of the general needs and opinions of the majority of FSU's faculty editors, much less a broader population of editors outside of our institution.

Future studies

Aside from gauging faculty editors' knowledge of various publishing practices and collecting information about their current practices, future studies might consider more thoroughly investigating editors' attitudes toward scholarly communication trends and how they envision the future of scholarly publishing in their fields. This would allow libraries to better articulate how they can collaborate with researchers to positively shape the future of scholarly communication within their disciplines. Additionally, gaining a more solid understanding of how faculty editors are measuring the success of published research as well as how they are gauging the quality of publishers and editorial services would better enable libraries to understand and respond to the discipline-specific attitudes, workflows, motivations, and needs of the research communities they partner with. For example, do faculty editors have different attitudes toward the journal impact factor than faculty authors? If so, how do their attitudes differ? What are the implications of these differences for editors' publishing needs and decisions about publishing partnerships, e.g., with commercial publishers versus academic libraries? Future studies may also consider more thoroughly investigating whether faculty would be interested in learning more about the conventions of alternate publishing outlets (such as funder repositories, disciplinary repositories, and preprint servers). In addition to using surveys to gather these data, future researchers may benefit from employing follow-up focus groups or one-on-one interviews with faculty editors to gain more in-depth information.

CONCLUSION

Results from this survey provide a promising glimpse that faculty on our campus are aware of broader developments in scholarly publishing and are actively engaging with emerging publishing practices. Comparing the gaps between what services and assistance our respondents most desired and what commercial publishers' services can provide gave us insight into where our nascent library publishing program could grow to meet unmet needs. Based on survey results, areas for potential growth at our institution included assistance with managing the publishing process, especially in terms of coordinating peer review and providing for more interactive or expansive publishing methods such as interactive and media-rich content. Providing these services without the same resources as larger commercial publishers will be a challenge, but it is a key area to explore alternative support models to ensure meaningful and impactful service to our publishing stakeholders.

Though the findings of this survey are not broadly generalizable even across our own campus, the dissemination of this survey still benefited our publishing team and provided future directions for others to potentially follow. First, we learned more about some of the unmet needs of some of our faculty editors, and second, we increased awareness of our library publishing initiatives. In our experience, this needs assessment survey was valuable not only because of the insight it provided into our research questions but also because it allowed us to communicate and build trust with editorial partners. We feel that this growth in trust was accomplished through our knowledgeable investigation of future-facing publishing challenges and will continue to grow because of our own continued expansion of publishing services based on the results of this survey.

It is important to understand not only the needs of faculty authors, which have already been investigated through many previous surveys, but also the needs of other communities engaged in scholarly publishing such as editors and editorial members. The needs of these communities—e.g., transitioning journals to open access, coordinating peer review, and managing labor for copy- and layout editing—are unique needs that are not well represented in previous literature. The findings of this survey will hopefully serve as a call to action to future researchers to better address the needs of these stakeholders. Far more data are required to make any far-reaching recommendations, but—based on our initial findings—promising opportunities exist for library-based support of faculty editors.

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