

## The Role of Publishing : support for action research

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Education must become a universal activity for each individual from birth until death. To achieve this, education-related publishing must thrive at all levels from in-house presentations to books. Publishers have the knowledge and expertise to support people to produce (and continuously revise and update) the essential content required, and publishers can provide services to individuals and organizations to ensure that the widest possible inclusion and diversity are achieved and sustained.

A ladder of publishing (Lockwood, 2003) must be nurtured throughout society, and each step on the ladder must have diverse and wide range of publishing options to suit the various contexts and community needs. Government regulation should be avoided, while national and transnational policies should be formulated to develop enterprise and synergy from the grassroots. Different business models should be offered at every level for cost-recovery of for-profit, as well as culturally sensitive support services to authors. A key and target population for publishing services must be pre-service and in-service teachers. They should be reached and offered incentives to engage action research and publishing.

The publishing industry is currently in the midst of a financial crisis. Libraries at most universities cannot afford to keep up the very high subscriptions to thousands of serial journals. One issue costing \$50 for three articles in the issue is very expensive – amounting to one quarter the annual salary for a professor in Vietnam or more in other countries. The business model therefore must evolve – perhaps dramatically. Certainly pay-per-view would mean that unused journals can lead to saved costs. But how would this impact scholarship? It is well recognized that young researchers browse journals in the library and reflect deeply on what they read. There are several distinct stages in doing research ;- first with reflection to own experience, to frame an area and review previous research ; second to identify some gap or inconsistency ; then, third to occupy this gap with research designed to gather data and fill the perceived gap. While this is a simplification, it does illustrate the usefulness of reading widely in the initial stage. Indeed, researchers are well advised to continue reading widely across their own field and if time can allow across other disciplines too. We need to encourage business model experimentation for publishers, because there are no clear ways forward at present. Publishers are trying free online access for one month, followed then by email to encourage expensive subscription. This could be likened to drug dealers giving the first few fixes free to hook users. Others may put abstracts only into the public domain. The only model endorsed by this author is the

new business model of free content online and asking universities to donate cash to support free-access online journals recommended by their senior faculty.

That said, universities themselves should post up online their own journals with free access. As Lockwood (2003) has suggested, in-house publishing provides a starting point for young researchers onto the lower rungs of the ladder of publication.

Conference organizers already do deliver free access online. However this appears not unrelated to the assessment of conference presentation now reduced to zero value. Some papers presented at conferences are cutting edge and very high quality. So there are various forces to be factored in here. Most conferences publish previous years proceedings online to encourage researchers to participate next year. And conferences have in turn become very expensive for participants. Not only in conference fees, society membership fees and airfares, but in carbon costs. We must address carbon costs if we are to develop a viable and accessible model.

While we could take a backseat and see what new business models the academic publishing houses bring out, perhaps universities should partner more actively with them to develop practical models valued by the universities. A two-way interaction and conversation will be fruitful for everyone : publishers can get cited and survive, universities can learn what journals their faculty want and save money on unnecessary journals, and publishing companies can help young researchers through providing publishing support, guidance and scaffolding to authors. Accordingly, publishing consortia should be inaugurated with ten or twenty universities and one publishing house.

#### REFERENCES :

Lockwood, F. (2003). A ladder of publication : Scaffolding for emergent authors. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 1 (1), 5-11. Retrieved December 4, 2009, from <http://www.AsianJDE.org/2003v1.1.Lockwood.pdf>