

Scholarly Communications: A History from Content as King to Content as Kingmaker

John J. Regazzi. *Scholarly Communications: A History from Content as King to Content as Kingmaker*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. 278 pp. \$75.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780810890879.

Scholarly Communications: A History from Content as King to Content as Kingmaker is an attempt to give a broad overview of the history of scholarly communications, focusing on the publishing industry that serves the needs of scholarly communications. While the author occasionally considers the needs of the humanities and social sciences, the work's primary audience is library and publishing industry professionals who need an overview of the history of scholarly publishing, with a focus on scholarly communication in the science, technical, and medical (STM) fields.

The book can be broken up into three major areas of concern: the histories of the scholarly journal and book, advances in information access and retrieval, and the future of scholarly communications. Many of the chapters strive to be reflective, attempting to gather together lessons learned from different eras of scholarly publishing and how they have positively or negatively affected librarians, consumers, and the publishing industry in the past or into the future.

The author, John J. Regazzi, has been an important figure in publishing over the past forty years, as he was instrumental in the development of the CD-ROM era of abstracting and indexing services, is the former CEO of Elsevier Inc., and is currently professor and director of the Scholarly Communications and Information Innovation Lab at Long Island University. While Regazzi tries to present a broad look into scholarly communications, he focuses too much attention on the formats of the twentieth century. His focus is mostly on the formats in which publishing occurs rather than on how those publishing methods support or hinder the needs of those who use scholarly communications; he sees changes in scholarly communications linked only to the formats in which materials are published.

The first half of the book is focused on the histories of book and journal publishing. These chapters are fairly entertaining, covering the 1600s to the present. He does a wonderful job of interweaving the history of publishing with the advancement of scientific methods, including using history to explain key concepts, such as the literature review and primary and secondary sources.

Regazzi's various connections to the publishing industry create a clear bias within the book. While he does devote a chapter to open access, he glosses over the major, foundational documents of the Open Access Movement, such as the Budapest Open Access Initiative (189-92), as well as major legislative concerns of open access scholarly communications movements, such as SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (Protect IP Act) (196). Regazzi seems not to understand what constitutes the core concerns of the open access movement, as he treats Google Book Search and the Open Content Alliance as elements within the open access movement, rather than as discrete but overlapping concerns around intellectual property and the dissemination of knowledge (195).

Regazzi does devote sections to the "publish or perish" nature of academia and spends some time on the scholarly communications issues of quality control, problems with peer review, and faked research. Interestingly, in his chapter on the "Traditional Economics of Academic Publishing" he offers a well-measured statement that open access journals are no more likely than traditionally published journals to publish poor scholarship that may need to later be retracted, as the growing need for retraction in all areas of publishing "indicates only that the digital age has created new risks in the scholarly communication process" (175). However, in a chapter on modern workflow systems, he negates that measured assessment by stating that "one of the consequences of open access, online publishing is a rise in the number of retractions" (230). This second observation is presented without any specific proof and shows the author's clear bias toward traditional, commercial publishing models.

Regazzi spends much of the text focusing on the formats in which publishing occurs rather than on how those publishing methods support or hinder the needs of those who use and need what can be found within scholarly communications. Only in his final chapter, on workflow systems, does he really look at how scholars are performing new methods of research and participating in open dialogues with each other before a final, published work appears. However, even in that chapter he seems to sell the reader on specific “publishing and marketing services to corporate customers...[and] professional development and education divisions” (233-34) of major publishers.

While *Scholarly Communications* is a great historical overview of the academic publishing industry, Regazzi does not devote nearly enough time to modern issues of scholarly *communications* — the *creation* and dissemination of knowledge. The book serves as a great insight into how the publishing industry perceives the history and current trends in scholarly communications and is quite useful in helping understand that mindset. However, it is not very reflective upon how new publishing models are benefiting scholarly communications through transforming the processes and dialogues scholars participate in. For these reasons, I do not recommend this book to the average librarian or students, but as a resource for those who already have knowledge of key issues in scholarly communications, such as open access, library as publisher, and the commercial publishing industry.

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