Libraries as Publishers

Intervening in the Information Lifecycle

http://www.umich.edu/~kshawkin/talks/20050304.pdf

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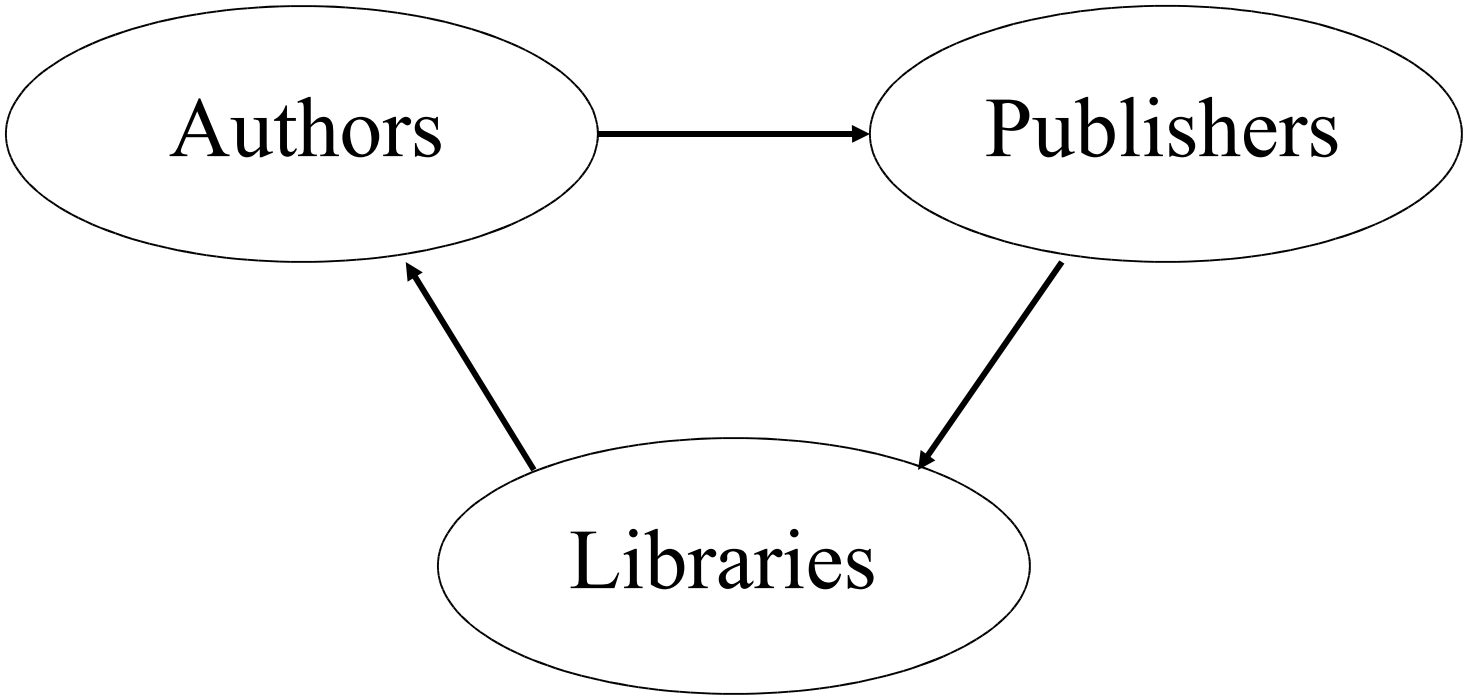
Before I begin

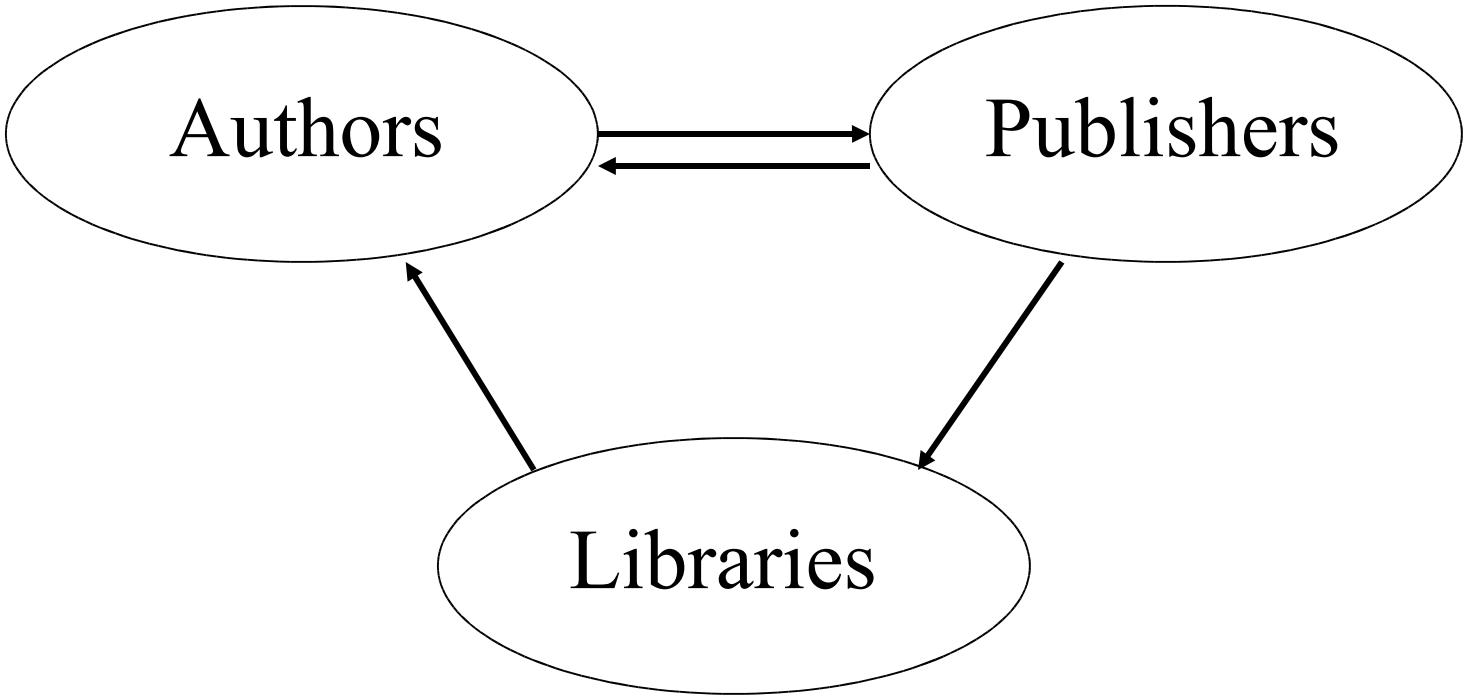
- I don’t really like PowerPoint. If you don’t either, or you’re interested in finding out why I don’t like it, read Peter Norvig, “PowerPoint: shot with its own bullets,” http://www.norvig.com/lancet.html.
- In American English, publisher = publishing house = press

Some theory from information science and economics

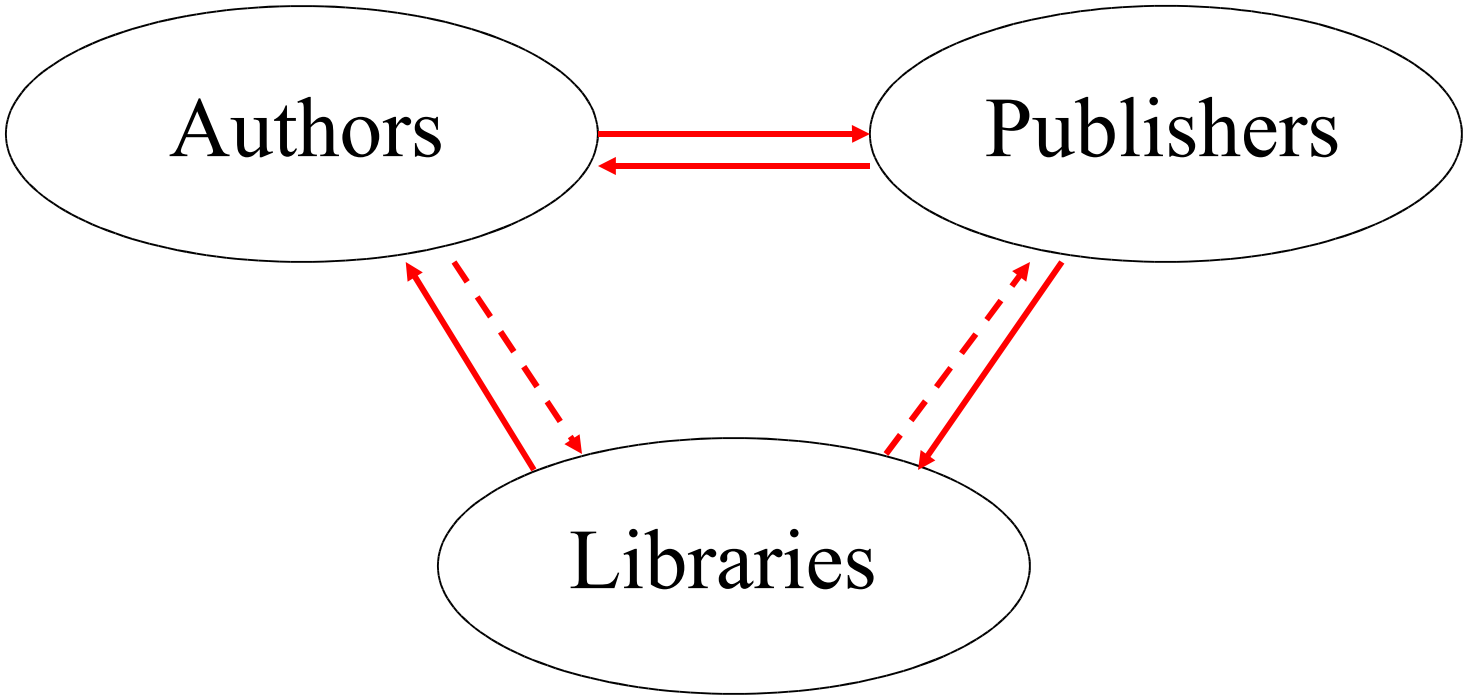
The traditional information lifecycle (simplified)



A more accurate traditional information lifecycle (simplified)

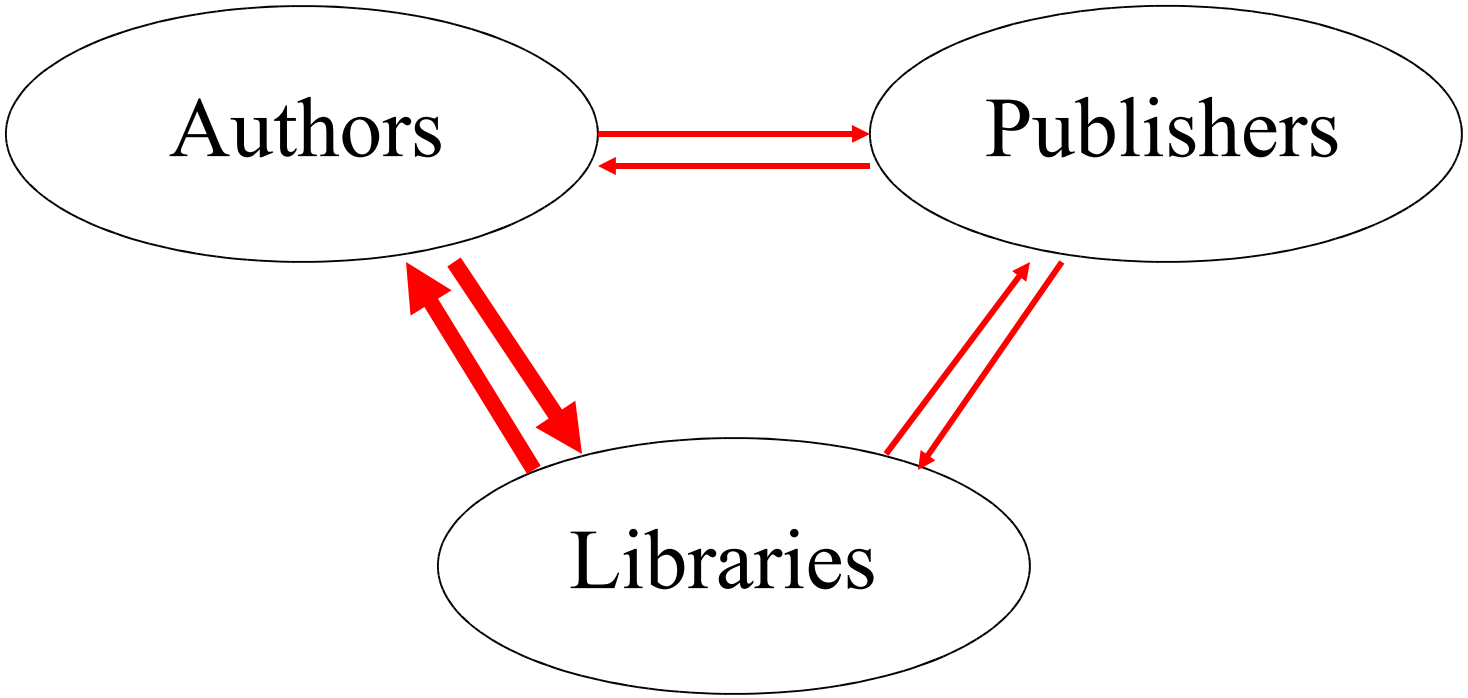


The current information lifecycle (simplified)



Digital documents

What I would like to see



Digital documents

What's the difference between a publisher and a library?

- Before the invention of printing, libraries *were* publishers.
- Some libraries today have publishing houses, just as some universities have their own presses. They produce editions that are not profitable enough for commercial presses, but they operate the same way as commercial publishers.

Why do we have publishers?

- Printing, distribution, and marketing require more resources than libraries can handle.
- Publishers *intermediate* between authors and readers:
  - Select material
  - Steer authors
  - Edit works

Why do we have libraries?

- Libraries' mission is to provide free access to information for all users.
- We do this to educate and serve users. It's a social service, not something done because it's profitable.
- It's especially important for libraries to serve those whose needs are not being met by the marketplace.

Libraries and the market

- Libraries inevitably face market pressure.
  - Competition from bookstores
  - Budget constraints
- However, libraries cannot be expected to function like other market entities.
  - You can't measure economic output (impact).
  - Information isn't a real *commodity*.

Information isn’t a commodity?

- Commodities are property that can be bought and sold: if I sell you my apple, I don’t have it any more.
- Information can be duplicated with essentially no extra cost: if I sell you this PowerPoint presentation, I can keep a copy for myself.

Almost no marginal cost for information

- In exchanging information, only the medium, or computer storage and bandwidth, cost money.
- When selling CDs, it costs a lot of money to make the first CD, but then after that they cost almost nothing.

The high market price of information

- People sell information (books, CDs, ebooks) for a consistent price because:
  - It fits the business model of information as a commodity.
  - You need to recover the fixed and initial costs.
- Once these costs are recovered, you keep selling these items for a high price because copyright gives you a monopoly on selling the item.

Copyright: what and why

- Copyright is a legal monopoly on duplication of information. It's useful because it allows creators to:
  - Control the dissemination of their work
  - Make a profit off their work
- Therefore, copyright is supposed to encourage the flow of information.

Copyright and publishers

- Authors assign copyright to publishers because
  - Publishers have the resources to pursue copyright violations.
  - Publishers usually demand it.
- Publishers' business model is based on information as a commodity, with copyright making it such.

What's wrong with scholarly publishing today?

- It has a bad business model (based on information as a commodity).
- The cost of books and journals has been increasing faster than price indexes. Why?
  - Inelastic demand and strong prestige of established brands make for a stagnant market.
  - Industry has undergone consolidation.

Scholars and commercial publishers

- Scholarly authors generally only want credit for their work, not profit. As long as they are cited and their original work is not distorted, they are happy to see others use it.
- Scholars have been relying on commercial publishers—and giving away control over their intellectual property—because:
  - Only publishers have the resources to disseminate.
  - The market relies on prestige.

Why should libraries, learned societies, institutions, and scholars get involved?

- The cost of scholarly literature continues to outpace price indexes.
- Publishers are moving slowly on adopting
  - New business models not based on copyright
  - New technology that doesn't just mimic print bibliographic structures
- New technology allows us to disseminate information more cheaply than in electronic form and in new ways that better serve users.
- *Why should universities freely give away their scholarly output and then pay to buy it back, often with limited usage rights?*

What sort of initiatives are there currently?

Many are *open access* (OA)

- General criteria
  - digital
  - online
  - free of charge
  - free of most copyright and licensing restrictions
- Some initiatives meet some but not all criteria of OA.
- Often sustained by charging author fees.

Preprint archives, *new publications*, *postprint archives*: some definitions

- *Preprint*: author's version of text submitted to a journal. Lacks final pagination, possibly final edits.
- *New publications*: "born-digital" content.
- *Postprint*: author's version of a final text as it appears in a journal. Authors sometimes secure the right to distribute these.

Examples of new initiatives

- *Commercial ventures*: Berkeley Electronic Press, BioMed Central*
- *University presses*: Electronic Imprint of the University of Virginia Press.
- *Scholarly Societies*: ACLS History E-Book Project
- *Library initiatives*: SPO, eScholarship(*), EPIC, Project Euclid, UThink
- *Government-funded projects*: PubMed Central
- *Scholar-led projects and publications*: arXiv, PLoS*, Postmodern Culture, Southern Spaces*
- *Institutional initiatives*
  - Institutional repositories (IRs), even with mandate to deposit*
  - Sakai Project
- Two *cyberinfrastructure* studies in the US.

* Open access publication

Commercial publishers respond

- *OUP*: two OA journals
- *Springer*: author fee for OA
- *Blackwell*: author fee for OA
- SHERPA/romeo latest statistics:
  - Preprint archiving allowed by *71% of publishers* so far studied.
  - Postprint archiving allowed by *65% of publishers* studied so far (including *Elsevier*)
- *Elsevier*: Scirus

Further reading

- In English
  - Bailey, Charles W., Jr. *Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography* . http://info.lib.uh.edu/sepb/sepb.html.
  - *EPrints.org: Self-Archiving and Open Access (OA) Eprint Archives* . http://www.eprints.org/.
  - Lund University Libraries. *Directory of Open Access Journals* . http://www.doaj.org/.
  - Public Library of Science (PLoS). “Open Access.” http://www.plos.org/about/openaccess.html.
  - *Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)* . http://www.arl.org/sparc/.
  - *SPARC Europe*. http://www.sparceurope.org/.
  - Suber, Peter. *The SPARC Open Access Newsletter*. http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/.
  - University of Nottingham. *Directory of Open Access Repositories* . http://www.opendoar.org/.
  - Weitzman, Jonathan B. *Open Access Now*. http://www.biomedcentral.com/openaccess/.
- In Russian
  - Open Society Institute. Будапештская Инициатива “Открытый Доступ”. http://www.soros.org/openaccess/ru/.