



Massachusetts Health Sciences Library Network

**MAHSLIN Network News**  
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**Publishing in the New Millennium:  
A Forum on Publishing in the Biosciences  
Alison Clapp**

**Harvard Medical School**  
**Friday, November 9, 2007**

Several MAHSLIN members attended this afternoon program on scholarly publishing which was sponsored by the Harvard University Biophysics Program and the Harvard Integrated Life Sciences Program. This excellent program featured a keynote address by Nobel Prize winner Harold Varmus and two panel discussions: the state of scientific publishing and publishing 2.0.

In his introduction of Dr. Varmus, Steven Hyman, Harvard University provost, noted that if something appears only in print that it effectively does not exist. Dr. Varmus is a co-founder of PLoS (Public Library of Science), and the primary focus of his presentation centered around his vision for a “public archive”. He stated that the publishers are now operating under a model which is delivering a 30% profit margin. He is looking toward creating a single digital library which includes: universal accessibility, encyclopedic content, full-search capability, high utility (meaning minimal copyright restrictions) and sustainability including secure archiving and financing. According to Dr. Varmus, PubMedCentral which some have viewed as a potential digital library right now cannot fill those requirements. Most of the journals are not included and there is poor compliance with the current NIH Public Access Policy. Use of the articles is limited by copyright and there is the delay before articles are deposited. One point of interest is that it costs \$35.00 to add an article to PMC.

Dr. Varmus supplied some interesting details regarding the PLoS journals. PLoS One is a new model for them in that they are relying on the public to effectively supply peer-review. Author costs for all of the other PLoS journals are \$3,000.00 and for PLoS One are \$1,200.00. It is an interactive way to engage readers and allow for the exchange between author and reader. They also are looking at advertising (other than from drug or technology companies) and philanthropy to help defray expenses.

Dr. Varmus ended his talk with a look at current trends and identified the following goals and factors:

- The need to secure additional support from grant funding agencies (HHMI, Wellcome Trust, Max-Planck, NIH)
- The shift of existing journals to more open access policies where they will be charging for the news items and not the articles.
- The demonstration a self-sustaining financial model
- Acceptance by the scientific community (tenure decisions based on other factors than just the journal impact factor)

And at current obstacles:

- Career-building decisions
- Loyalty to specific journals
- Concerns about appointment and promotion criteria
- Impact factor mania

The first panel included a broad variety of speakers, all addressing various aspects of the current state of publishing.

Emilie Marcus (Cell Press) – Dr. Varmus had stated that one problem was that journal back files are not electronically accessible, but Dr. Marcus noted that all Cell Press titles have back files to volume 1 and that with the exception of the most current 12 months that all Cell Press content is free. An additional 12% of the new articles are published under the author paid model and therefore also free. Note that it is not all that apparent that their content is free! Dr. Marcus emphasized that as publishers that their goal is to focus on their readers and much of her job is spent in identifying those areas which have the potential to make a real impact. She believes that peer review should remain central to the publishing process.

Stuart Shieber (Harvard faculty) – He did not have answers but discussed the differences in funding either through the author-paid or the subscription model. He also questioned how to get to the open access model without a disruption of the system.

Isaac Kohane (Countway Library Director) – Zak talked about the possibilities that a “revolution” can bring. In this instance, as a bioinformatics researcher, he can see possibilities as to how research can be furthered when you have the capability of data mining a full-text digital archive. He noted that the Harvard Library is in the early stages of creating a digital repository of publications of all Harvard faculty and one service they will be offering the researcher is to deposit their papers into PubMedCentral. He also spoke about how adding

the data associated with government funded research to [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov) could also advance research.

Robert Kiley (Wellcome Trust) – Of the total spent on funding research, open access costs between 1-2% of that amount. Once the open access fee is paid to a publisher, that publisher should deposit the article in PMC. He also spoke about data sharing and new models of peer review where perhaps peer review comments could be shared between journals.

The four members of the Publishing 2.0 panel showed some exciting new projects/products.

Moshe Pritsker is the editor of JoVE: Journal of Visualized Experiments (<http://www.jove.com/>). This is a video publication containing videos of how to perform lab experiments! There are no costs to the reader, and it was fascinating hearing about the special requirements and expertise to film this content.

John Wilbanks (Science Commons <http://sciencecommons.org/>) This is a research web resource which allows them to take open access content and discover sophisticated systems biology relationships.

Hilary Spencer (Nature Precedings <http://precedings.nature.com/>) – Please note that this is not a typo! Nature has set-up a preprint server similar to ArXiv. There are a wide-range of topics and of publication types including white papers. They will not include clinical medicine as these papers are not peer-reviewed. Every item is assigned a DOI so there should be a guarantee that the item is “findable” long-term. One use that the panelists discussed was the option of including supplementary data which is not significant enough to warrant a paper but which another researcher could potentially use. For instance null/negative data typically goes unreported and this repository encourages submission of this information. The content is screened by the editors and they are working with Google Scholar to make sure that their content is available. Authors retain their copyright.

Bora Zivkovic is the editor of PLoS One. They are averaging 20-40 new articles per week. The software they selected allows the reader both to rate an article and to add comments. So far in the past five months only 1-2 comments have had to be removed.

Submitted by Alison Clapp

## **Education Committee Update – Fall 2007**

### **Past Program:**

#### **QuickDoc: Making the Most of Your ILL Tracking Software (October 11, 2007)**

Jay Daly, QuickDoc’s creator, taught this MAHSLIN-sponsored program at Children’s Hospital, Boston.

The 14 people attending this program each received 3 MLA CE credits.

Discussion focused on advanced features and techniques for QuickDoc users, which included shortcuts to

save time and effort while entering information on QuickDoc/Docline screens. In addition to discussing some recent changes to Docline including additional security on the website, Jay showed how to deal with “Orphan Update” lists and how to do local billing. The reviews for the program were excellent.

Workshop materials can be found here:

<http://nnlm.gov/quickdoc/QDManual/IntroWorkshop.doc>

For more information on QuickDoc, you can email Jay Daly - [jay@bidmc.harvard.edu](mailto:jay@bidmc.harvard.edu)

You can also subscribe to QuickDOC-L at:

<http://list.umassmed.edu/read/about/?forum=quickdoc-l>

## **Medspeak Project Update:**

In the summer 2007 newsletter, we updated the MAHSLIN membership regarding the Medspeak revision project. Since that update, we have heard from MLA and they were very happy with MAHSLIN’s rewrite of the original Medspeak brochure. They will be printing the revised Medspeak brochure for low-literacy readers and also posting it to the MLA website. My expectation is that the brochures will be handed out at the May 2008 MLA Annual Meeting in Chicago. Congratulations to the members of the initial working group for the success of the project so far.

Given the success of the first rewrite, MLA has given the approval for MAHSLIN to work on the additional six, subject-specific brochures. These are in varying stages of completion. Currently the following state consortia are working on these brochures:

BBLC – Deciphering Breast Cancer Medspeak (Alison Clapp, coordinator)

NECHI – Deciphering Stroke Medspeak (Donna Beales, coordinator)

SEMCO – Deciphering Diabetes Medspeak (Jeanie van der Pyl, coordinator)

WHMIC – Deciphering HIV/AIDS Medspeak (Martha Prescott, coordinator)

The final two brochures are Deciphering Eye Disease Medspeak and Deciphering Heart Disease Medspeak. I need volunteers to help rewrite these in Plain Language. Please let me know if you would be willing to help with either of them OR if you would be willing to help edit any of the rewritten brochures. If you have a nurse educator who is interested in any of these topics, we would love to have him or her work with us during the editing process. While we cannot promise that everyone will be listed on the brochure, we have requested that this information be available on the web version.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time and expertise toward this project.

Finally, please let us know if you have suggestions for training opportunities, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Alison Clapp & Nathan Norris

Co-chairs, MAHSLIN Education Committee  
NAHSL 2008 CE Coordinators

## **Announcements**

Judith A. Sacknoff is the new Library Media Specialist at Littleton Middle School in Littleton, MA.