VCU Libraries Values in Publisher Relations

VCU Libraries centers our publisher relationships in our values and the transformational goals of Virginia Commonwealth University, a pre-eminent urban, public research university committed to equitable access to social, economic and health success. We find common cause with the values of the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA), the NERL Consortium, and academic research libraries across the world. We commit to sustainable, transparent, open, inclusive, and accountable partnerships as we invest in research for the public good.

VCU Libraries Values in Publisher Relations

Sustainability

As stewards of university funds, VCU Libraries recognizes the significant challenge of the rising cost of education, and providing affordable and reliable access to information. The current proprietary, closed, for-profit scholarly information ecosystem contributes to those rising costs. We commit to making hard choices as we continually balance researchers' needs with fiscal responsibility.

- "We work to ensure that costs to researchers and our institution are aligned with the costs of publishing." - NERL

- "We prioritize agreements that move past historical pricing models and precedent. We encourage smarter, better, and often smaller deals that do not increase cost with unrequested content while providing clear and transparent pricing models." - NERL

- We expect Publishers to "ensure the long-term digital preservation and accessibility of their content through participation in trusted [third-party] digital archives." - MIT

Transparency

The current proprietary, for-profit scholarly information ecosystem is a failed market engaging in monopolistic competition. A key to restoring market health is reducing the information imbalances. We cultivate and expect transparency in our publisher relationships.

- We refuse non-disclosure agreements. One can access the terms of our licenses by submitting a Freedom of Information Act Request.

- We expect uniform, public price per unit affixed to business costs of performed services.

- We expect that "inflationary costs link to a standard measure that fluctuates with the economy, such as a well-established cost-index." - [VIVA](#)

Openness

VCU Libraries commits to protect unrestricted access to scholarly research and seek new technologies and methods for our communities to convey their discoveries to the world.

- We prioritize agreements that do not curtail the fair use provisions allowed under US copyright law, including text and data mining (TDM).

- We prioritize open access models that recognize economic disparity and do not use Article/Author Processing Charges (APCs).

- We prioritize agreements that provide equitable access and do not embargo open access content available in its publications.

- For Publishers who use APC funding models, we expect publishers to have uniform, public APC prices and a clear, generous APC appeal process.

- "We expect a report and account of the amount of OA content available in publications, as well as the OA content submitted by VCU authors and the financial contributions for this content." - [VIVA](#)

- We expect Publishers to allow VCU authors to retain their right to deposit in institutional, funder, and disciplinary repositories.

- We encourage VCU authors to retain their copyright in the publication process through use of the [SPARC Author Addendum](#) and to reject clickthrough agreements that traditionally take all rights, including copyright of their intellectual property.

Inclusivity

VCU Libraries commits to embrace diversity and inclusion to foster excellence in the scholarly information ecosystem.

- We expect accessible platforms and content for readers with disabilities in compliance with the [Big Ten Academic Alliance Accessibility initiative](#).

- We expect clear, public accommodations for authors with disabilities seeking to submit manuscripts.

- We prioritize publishers that recognize cultural and racial disparity and show equity in editorial bodies and publishing acquisitions.

- We seek recruitment and retention reporting on diversity of Publisher employment and talent management, resulting in diversity within volunteer editorial and review boards.

- We seek bold strategies for diversifying the content pipeline and accountable reports on content acquisition (e.g. which authors were approached, which demographics chose to publish with Publisher, which did not.)

Accountability

VCU Libraries commits to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

- We prioritize publishers holding COPE Membership who apply COPE principles of publication ethics outlined in the Core Practices.

- We prioritize publishers in good standing with the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), and World Association of Medical Editors (WAME).

- We expect responsive professionalism that honors pricing, gives advance notice of business and legal changes, and eschews pressure sales tactics.

- We expect COUNTER compliant usage statistics.

- We expect commercially published content will come with standardized Publisher services; Open Metadata, Z39.5/KBART, and other discovery interoperability.

- We expect the privacy of personally identifiable information.

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