

# The Big Deal, Sustainable Scholarship, and Virginia Research Libraries

Council of Deans

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Teresa L. Knott

Interim Dean of Libraries and University Librarian



**VCU** Libraries

# Publishing Big Deals

Comprehensive licensing agreement in which a library or library consortium agrees to buy electronic access to all or a large portion of a publisher's journals for a cost based on expenditures for journals already subscribed to by the institution(s) plus an access fee.

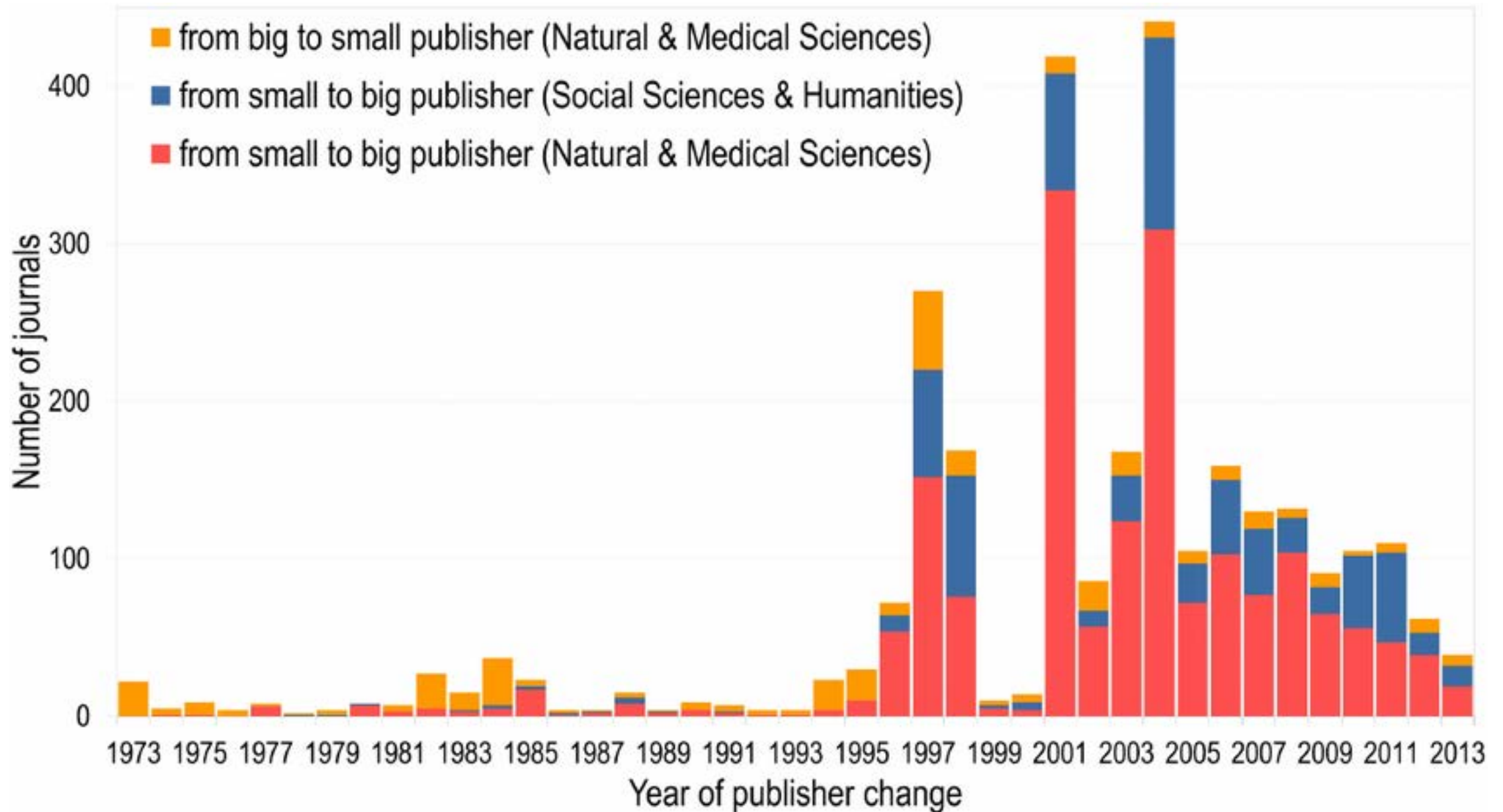


# Market Consolidation



**SPRINGER NATURE**





ScienceDirect

ClinicalKey®

Scopus®



Evolve®

Knovel®

RELX™



Elsevier Brands

SciVal

Digital Commons™

Pure

NNNConsult

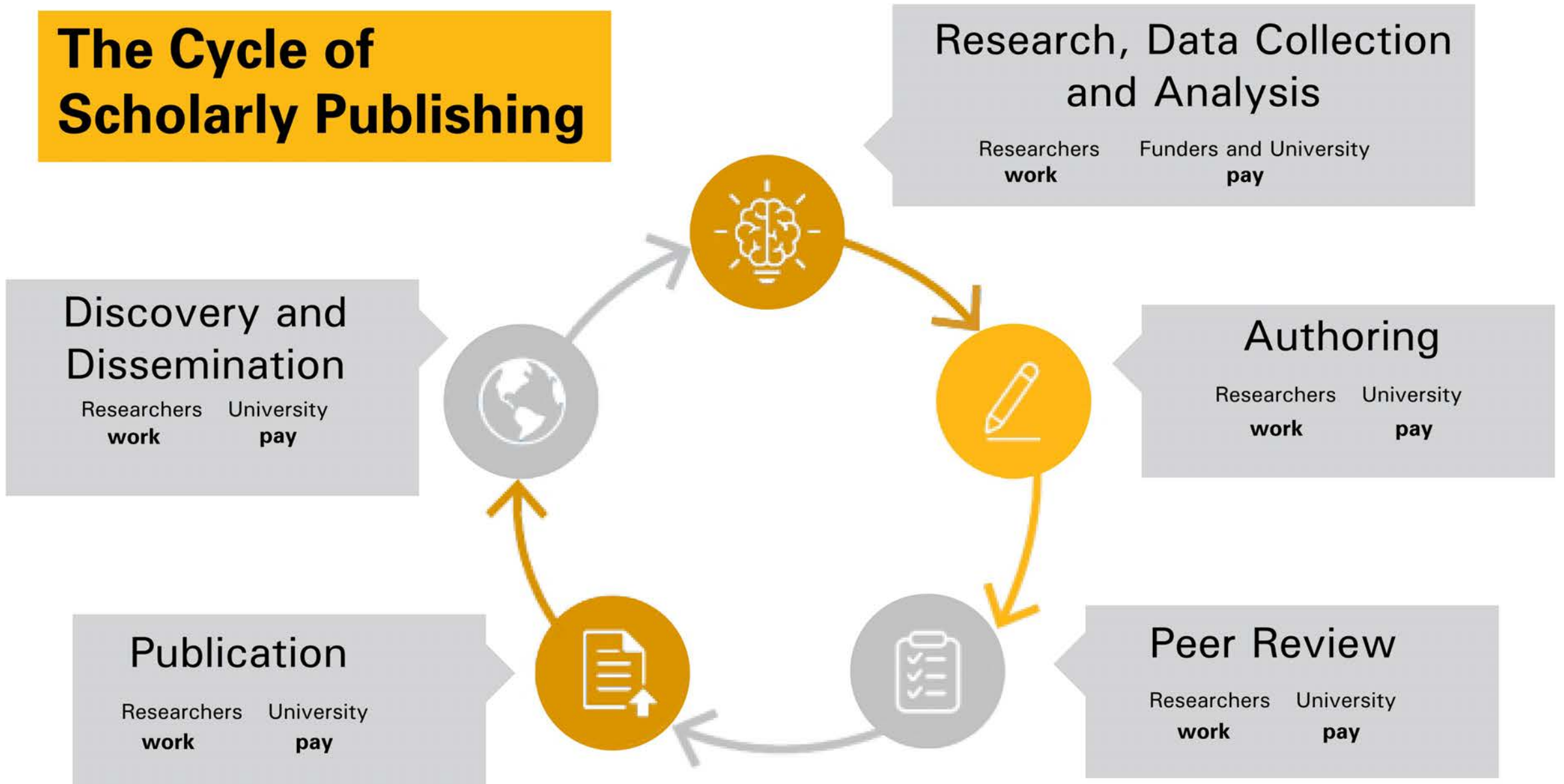


Embase®

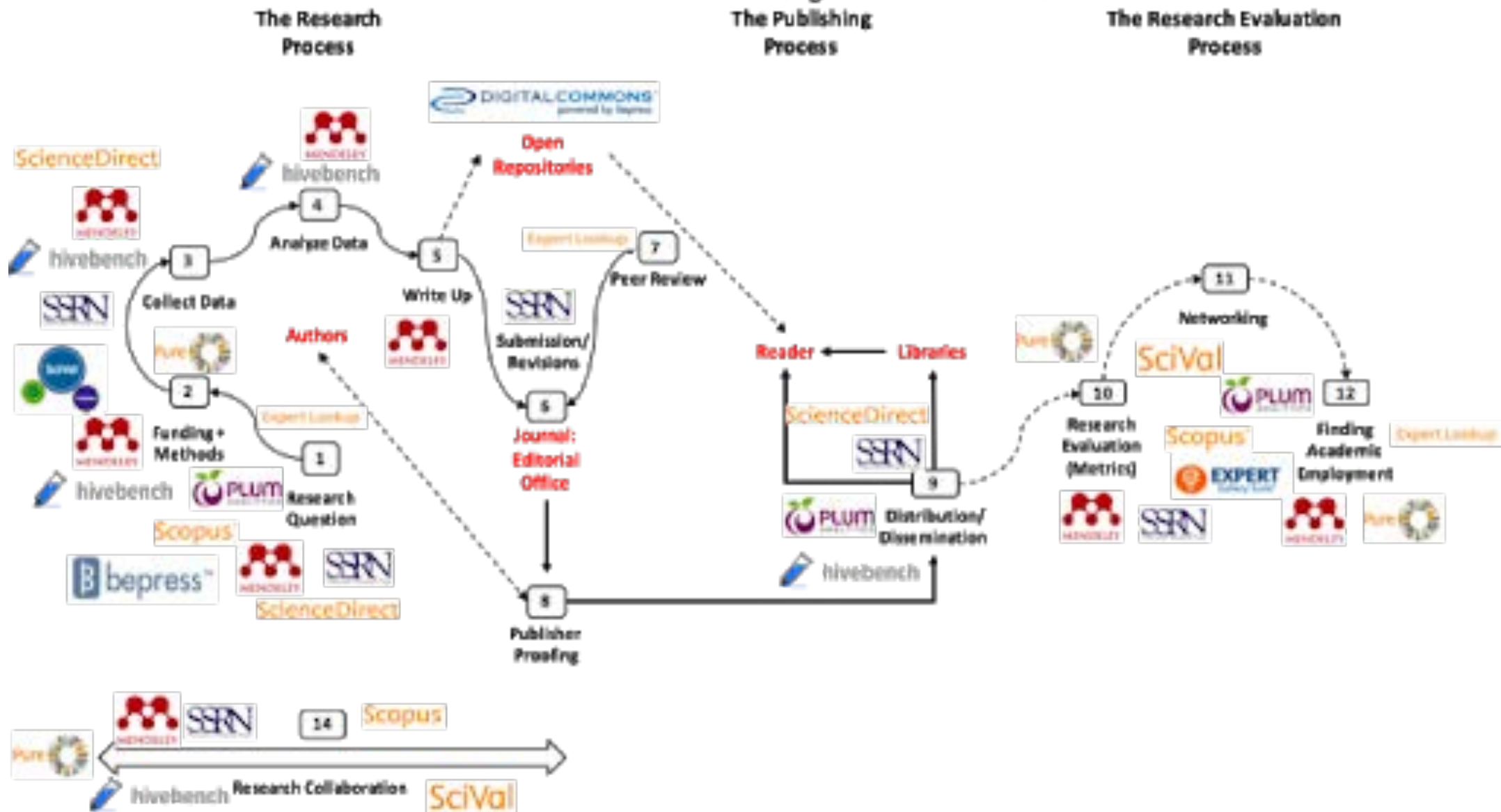
Elsevier  
eLibrary



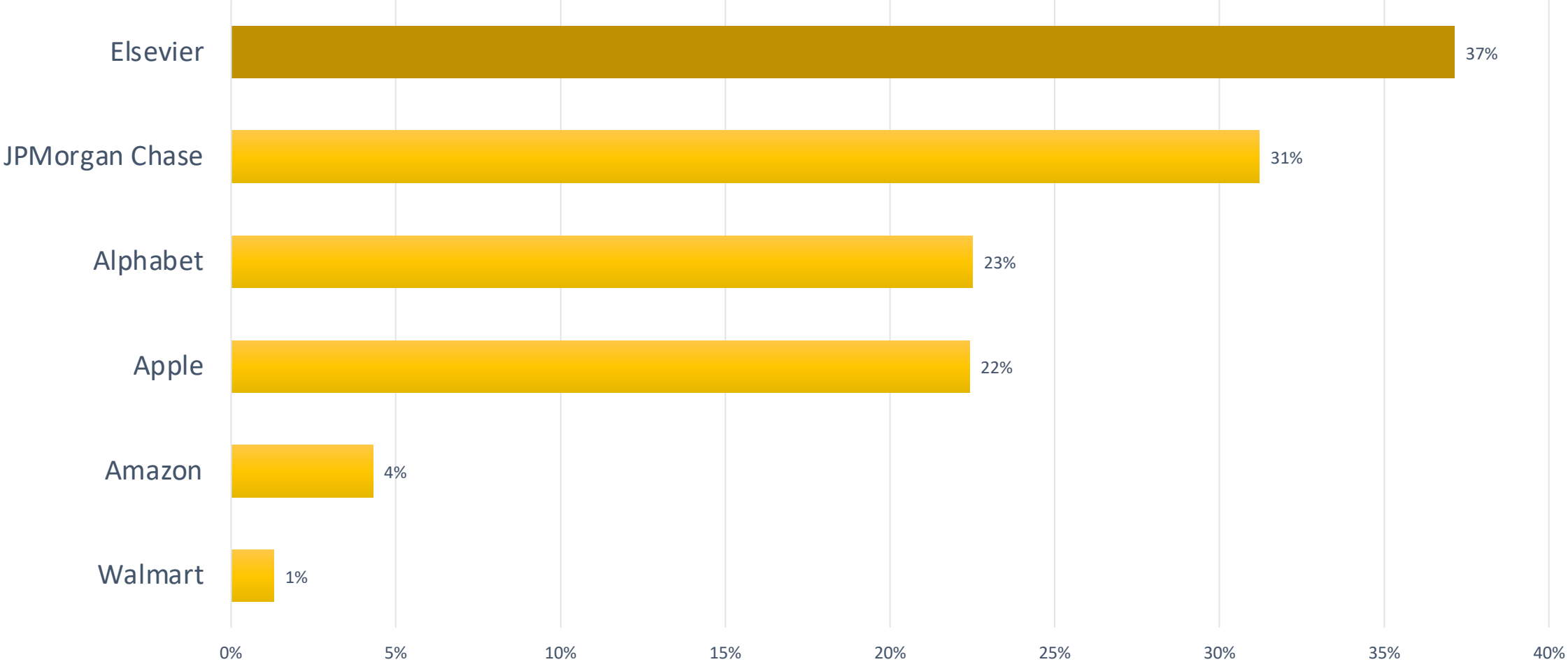
# The Cycle of Scholarly Publishing



# The Academic Knowledge Production Process



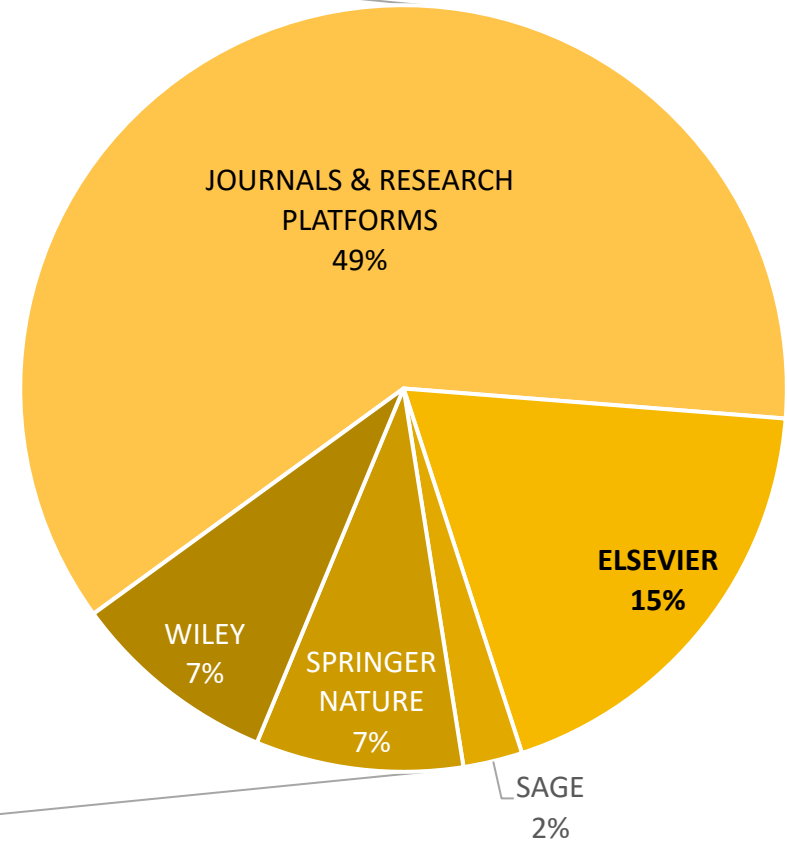
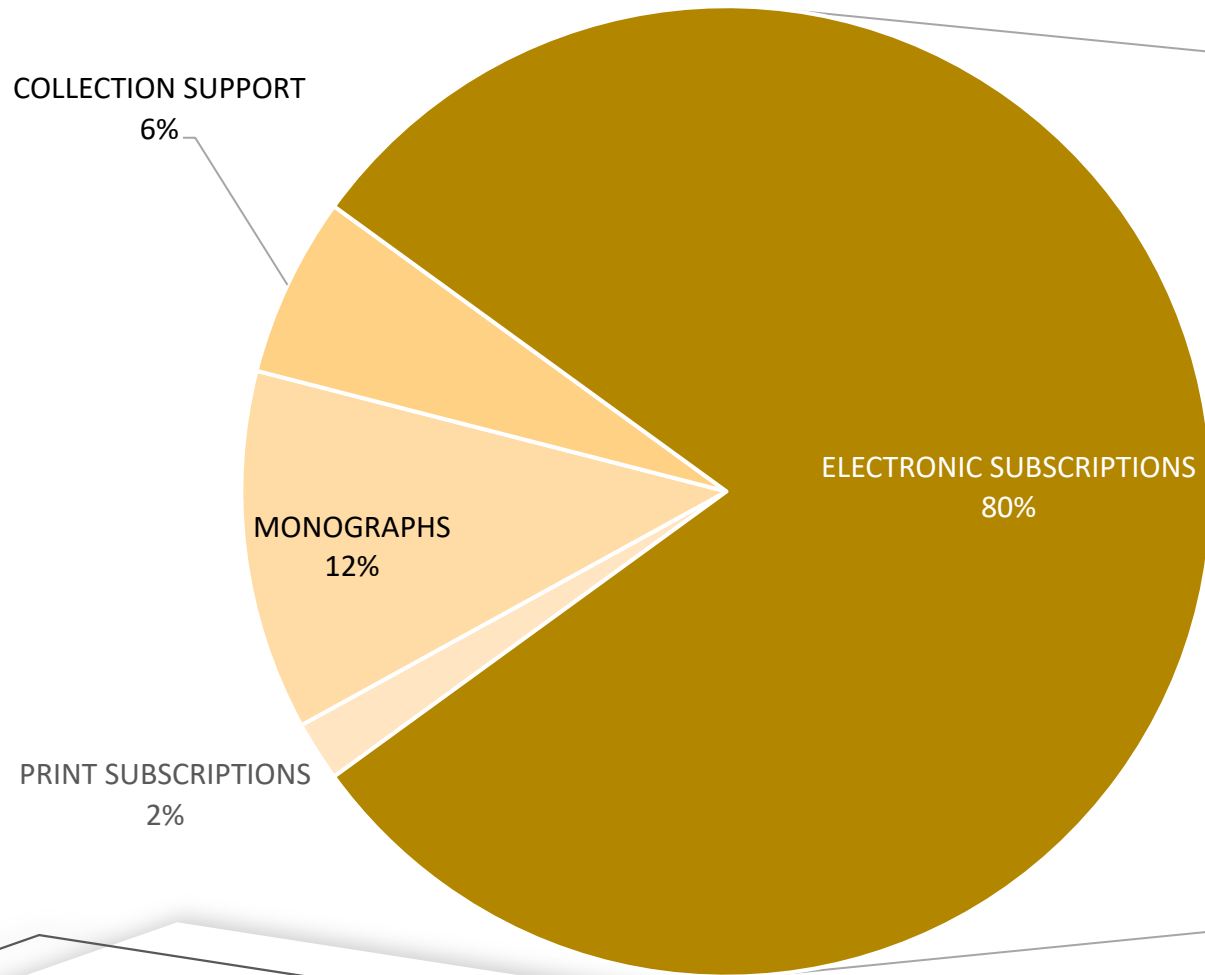
# Net Profit Margin FY2018



Source: Elsevier Annual Report and Standard & Poor Netadvantage database



# 2020 Collections Expenditures



# 2020 Elsevier Invoice: \$1,993,176

ScienceDirect	\$1,885,589
Freedom Collection	\$29,223
Lancet specialty titles	\$8,531
Cell Press	\$29,285
Elsevier book series	\$34,105
Masson Collection	\$1,883

**2021 Contract**

**\$2,066,600**

# Other Elsevier Subscribed Products – 2020\*

ClinicalKey	\$163,573
Digital Commons	\$54,763
Knovel Ebooks	\$45,091
Reaxys	\$29,600
RMC	\$8,497
<i>Other Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$301,524</i>
<i>ScienceDirect Invoice Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$1,993,176</i>
<b><i>TOTAL Elsevier Expenditure</i></b>	<b><i>\$2,294,700</i></b>

\* Individual prices rounded

# Virginia Research Libraries



# Virginia Research Libraries Elsevier Contract

- Initiated in 2001
  - Annual increases ranged from 6-15% prior to 2009
- Current 5-year contract expires December 2021
  - Year 1-2: 3.5% annual increases
  - Year 3-5: 4% annual increases
- Increase from 2017-2020: 16%

# Current VRL Commitment

Institution	Allocation	2020	2021
University of Virginia	27.11%	\$2,634,700	\$2,740,100
Virginia Tech University	22.48%	\$2,184,900	\$2,272,300
Virginia Commonwealth University	20.44%	\$1,987,200	\$2,066,600
George Mason University	11.78%	\$1,141,400	\$1,187,000
Old Dominion University	8.39%	\$815,800	\$848,400
William & Mary	5.03%	\$489,000	\$508,500
James Madison University	4.77%	\$463,200	\$481,800
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$9,716,200</b>	<b>\$10,104,700</b>

# VRL Decisions Pending

- Balance of 2021 contract:
  - Negotiate reduction – discussions range from 0% to 30%
  - Consider exercising early termination clause
- New contract
  - Reduce spend by 50% by reducing subscribed content
  - Tie year-to-year increases to Higher Education Price Index
  - Multiple years (2-3)
  - Institutions that will participate

# Cancellations on the Rise



MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT



**ICOLC**  
International Coalition  
of Library Consortia



# What a Subscription Buys



Backfiles and early years;  
often already owned by  
library and available in  
perpetuity

Recent years; estimated 45% of  
recent articles compliant with  
Federal open access mandate and  
available free of charge; 28% of  
articles overall

Current year – paywalled,  
subscription access only plus  
in some cases, open access  
funded by APC, about 7% of  
articles

# Striving for Sustainable Scholarship

- Break “big deals”
  - Diversify collections
  - Support new collection areas more robustly
- Walk away from unsustainable deals
- Expedite document delivery
- Invest in open access

# Methods of Finding Research Articles



## Install browser plug-ins

- Open Access Button
- Unpaywall



## Search for open access copies

- Google Scholar
- PubMed Central



## Get it from the library\*

- Expedited Document Delivery
- Contact your librarian



## Use your network

- Contact the author
- ResearchGate

# From the Council of Deans

- Contact me if Elsevier reaches out to you
- Recommendations on how to best communicate with your faculty
- Reassess promotion and tenure requirements that focus on impact factors
- Consider where your professional societies publish their journals and if they come up for negotiations, consider a non-profit publisher
- Support open access and retaining author's rights

## Commitment

The VCU Libraries will always get you the journal articles you need to do your work using a combination of subscriptions, interlibrary loan, and other document delivery options free of charge.



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Questions?



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# Acknowledgements

## *Content*

- Frazier K. What's the Big Deal? *The Serials Librarian*. 2005. 48:1-2, 49-59. DOI:10.1300/J123v48n01\_06
- Larivière V., Haustein S., Mongeon P. The Oligopoly of Academic Publishers in the Digital Era. *PLoS ONE*. 2015. 10. e0127502. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0127502
- VCU Libraries faculty and staff: Karen Cary, Amanda Echterling, and Caslin Applewhite

## *Images*

- Presentations by John E. Ulmschneider (VCU), Tyler Walters (VTech), and Elaine Westbrook (UNC)
- Posada A., Chen G. Inequality in Knowledge Production: The Integration of Academic Infrastructure by Big Publishers. Leslie Chan; Pierre Mounier. *ELPUB 2018*, Jun 2018, Toronto, Canada. [hal-01816707](https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01816707)
- Icons from The Noun Project

