Why isn’t the Future More of the Same?

Drivers for Change
In the Research-Communication Space

John Sack
Director, HighWire Press
Stanford University
sack@stanford.edu
Forces at Work,
Changing Research Communication

- Societal forces and values
- Intellectual property practices
- Information-technology and information-access forces
- Hot-button issues driving legislation & practice, e.g.,
  - Medical-technology, health-care forces, etc.
  - Environmental concerns
  - Education research & practice
  - “Open meetings” & “Sunshine” laws
Forces at Work,
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**BUT on the other hand...**

- Globalization/homogenization forces, competitive need for economies of scale
- Intellectual property legislation
- The power of brands amid chaos
- Consolidation of power & players
- Hot-button issues driving legislation & practice, e.g.,
  - National/homeland security legislation
  - Government funding of specific research
  - Government selection/edit of research results
  - Editorial involvement of distribution media
Forces include...

- The web: enabling suppliers and consumers to communicate directly, outside “traditional” channels
- Disorganized, Balkanized, but plentiful information
- Information price, seemingly unrelated to information quality
- Resentment among academics and their institutions at paying for information they produce
- Information paradox: overwhelmed with supply, but can’t find what we need
Forces include…

- Rising ‘Vox Pop’ as citizens expect and have access to the same information as experts, e.g., “patient power”
- Falling marginal cost of distribution of electronic information, toward zero
- Falling cost of storage of information
- Conservative establishment of publishers, tenure committees, and university libraries
Leading to…

- Dissatisfaction with the status quo, and experimentation with alternative models/channels
- New players shifting attention and value from traditional publishers
- New technical vs. traditional frameworks collide
- While at the same time established brands are gaining strength amid chaos

- Forces acting orthogonally are unlikely to remain in a stable balance