Serials Review

ISSN: 0098-7913 (Print) 1879-095X (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/usrv20

Is the “Big Deal” Dying?

Robert W. Boissy , Thomas N. Taylor , Christine M. Stamison , Kittie S. Henderson , Ann Okerson , Rob Van Rennes , Jim Dooley , Rebecca Kemp , Geoffrey Little , David C. Fowler , Kimberly Douglas , Lawrence Clemens & Alexis D. Linoski

To cite this article: Robert W. Boissy , Thomas N. Taylor , Christine M. Stamison , Kittie S. Henderson , Ann Okerson , Rob Van Rennes , Jim Dooley , Rebecca Kemp , Geoffrey Little , David C. Fowler , Kimberly Douglas , Lawrence Clemens & Alexis D. Linoski (2012) Is the “Big Deal” Dying?, Serials Review, 38:1, 36-45

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00987913.2012.10765417

Published online: 06 Dec 2013.

Serials Review 38 (2012) 36–45

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Serials Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/serrev

The Balance Point

Is the "Big Deal" Dying?

Robert W. Boissy [a], Thomas N. Taylor [b], Christine M. Stamison [c], Kittie S. Henderson [d], Ann Okerson [e], Rob Van Rennes [f], Jim Dooley [g], Rebecca Kemp [h], Geoffrey Little [i], David C. Fowler [j], Kimberly Douglas [k], Lawrence Clemens [l], Alexis D. Linoski [l], Contributors

[a] Account Development and Strategic Alliances, Springer Science+Business Media, New York, NY 10013, USA
[b] Dragonfly, Sales and Marketing Consulting, Westlake Village, CA 91361, USA
[c] Swets, Runnemede, NJ 08078, USA
[d] Academic and Law Divisions, EBSCO Information Services, Birmingham, AL 35201, USA
[e] Center for Research Libraries, Chicago, IL 60637-2885, USA
[f] University of Iowa Libraries, Acquisitions and Rapid Cataloging Department, Iowa City, IA 52242, USA
[g] University Library, University of California, Merced, Merced, CA 95343, USA
[h] Davis Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-8890, USA
[i] Concordia University Libraries, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3H 1M8
[j] Licensing, Grants Administration, and Collection Analysis, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, USA
[k] California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA 91106, USA
[l] Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD 21402, USA

Sharon Dyas-Correia, Column Editor

University of Toronto Libraries, Toronto, ON, Canada M5S 1A5

ARTICLE INFO

Available online 1 February 2012

ABSTRACT

This installment of Balance Point presents a series of written interviews with a variety of participants in the current debate over the possible death of the "big deal." The written discussions with large and small publishers, information service providers, consortia leaders, and several library stakeholders present the plethora of issues for readers. It is evident from the submissions that the idea of opting out of the "big deal," or at least the debates surrounding the discussions, is gaining momentum. The problems are important and often controversial. Most authors agree that the "big deal" is not dead yet, and some think it may never die completely.

1. Introduction

It is difficult to attend conferences, library functions or to participate in library electronic mailing lists without hearing the buzz about the possible demise of the "big deal." A recent ALCTS (American Library Association, Association for Library Collections and Technical Services) e-forum discussion on "The Future of the Big Deal" had many participants, and there are increasing numbers of conference presentations on the subject. (ALCTS e-forum, October 18-19, 2011) The possible death of the "big deal" is being discussed, and developments are carefully watched by stakeholders in several different fields. When following the discussions, one is immediately impressed by the number and variety of opinions and participants in the debates. There are almost as many different viewpoints as there are players.

The focus of this installment of Balance Point is the potential demise of the "big deal," including discussions of the issues involved; possible alternatives; and the impact and role of consortia, consortia members, publishers and subscription agents. The column editor consulted with participants at various venues and formulated questions related to the larger problem of whether or not the "big deal" is dying. Written interview-style contributions were solicited from a large variety of potential authors representing publishers (large and small), information service providers, consortia and North American academic libraries. Each of the contributors was asked to provide a written statement in response to the following questions:

- Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum?
- What are some of the major issues driving the discussions?
- Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs?
- What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?"

E-mail addresses: Robert.Boissy@springer.com (R.W. Boissy), tom.taylor@dragonflypubservices.com (T.N. Taylor), cstamison@us.swets.com (C.M. Stamison), kittieh@ebsco.com (K.S. Henderson), aokerson@crl.edu (A. Okerson), robert-van-rennes@uiowa.edu (R. Van Rennes), jdooley@ucmerced.edu (J. Dooley), rkemp@email.unc.edu (R. Kemp), geoffrey.little@concordia.ca (G. Little), dcfowler@uoregon.edu (D.C. Fowler), kdouglas@caltech.edu (K. Douglas), clemens@usna.edu (L. Clemens), linoski@usna.edu (A.D. Linoski). s.dyas.correia@utoronto.ca (S. Dyas-Correia).

0098-7913/$ – see front matter © 2012 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
doi:10.1016/j.serrev.2011.12.012

- What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping?
- What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors?
- What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive?

Several stakeholders accepted the invitation to contribute their wisdom to the discussion.

Robert W. Boissy (manager of account development and strategic alliances, Springer Science+Business Media) represents the voice of a large publisher, while Thomas N. Taylor (president, Dragonfly Sales and Marketing Consulting) presents the viewpoint of several smaller publishers. Christine M. Stamison (senior customer relations manager, Swets) and Kittie S. Henderson (director, Academic and Law Divisions, EBSCO Information Services) discuss the issues from the perspective of information service providers, and Ann Okerson (special advisor on electronic strategies, Center for Research Libraries) provides insight from the standpoint of a creator and leader of large academic library consortia. Several types and sizes of academic libraries are represented through the submissions from various North American libraries. Rob Van Rennes (acquisitions librarian, University of Iowa Libraries), Jim Dooley (head, collection services, University of California, Merced), Rebecca Kemp (e-resources acquisitions librarian, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill), Geoffrey Little (collections librarian, Concordia University Libraries), David C. Fowler (associate professor and head, Licensing, Grants Administration, and Collection Analysis, University of Oregon) and Kimberly Douglas (university librarian, California Institute of Technology) are from larger academic libraries and present many of the important issues related to the debate and the possible consequences for library users. Lawrence Clemens (head collection development, Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy) and Alexis D. Linoski (electronic access librarian, Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy) provide the perspective of a smaller, specialized academic library.

Hopefully, the submissions presented in this column will contribute to readers understanding of the issues from the various standpoints of stakeholders, and will inform everyone's decisions and discussions as the future is created and unfolds.

Publisher's Viewpoint

Robert W. Boissy (Springer Science+Business Media)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? There are an increasing number of conference presentations discussing the consequences of dropping out of comprehensive consortium deals, though it seems that there are a few more speculative talks than actual experiences. Certainly we have been hearing for some time that library budgets do not allow for even the typically small annual increases required to maintain membership in comprehensive deals. It seems that libraries are proposing a number of compromises that would allow ongoing access to the maximum amount of content they have enjoyed in their license deals. This makes some sense, since the amount of content available through licenses has been unprecedented in the history of librarianship, and many consortia have been successful in negotiating rates that are significantly below list prices. Most all libraries would stay in comprehensive deals if they could afford it, so it is really on publishers and consortia negotiators to be very creative to make it possible for great licenses to continue. It is on libraries to continue questioning why their share of the overall campus budget has been diminishing for many years.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? I think the main driver is simply the price tag. Given the amount of content available through a larger publisher comprehensive deal, and the amount of archival rights and security promised through these deals, very few library-side negotiators really want to drop back to a list price model. There have been various proposals relating to trimming out less used journal content, dividing content package offerings into smaller sub-disciplines, and basically trimming back the content offered in order to lower the license pricing. Institutional pay-per-view (PPV) models have also been proposed and offered by some publishers. When it comes to trimming packages, libraries tend to forget that the price put on their licenses in their original form rarely included any money for the additional titles offered, some of which are less used, and some of which are used more than the licensing libraries could imagine before their deal began. There is a natural inclination to trim less used content from a package, but publishers have a strong motivation to offer a comprehensive set of content to assure authors that their work is in front of a very wide audience. Publishers also prefer a stable source of income as represented by a license, as opposed to an unstable, unpredictable source of income as represented by a PPV model (or in e-book terms, a demand-driven model). Given the typical publisher's desire for stable income and the typical library's desire to maximize content availability, the discussions are really about a careful crafting of a price tag that can be managed on both sides.

Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs? Most of the "opt out fall out" situations I have seen involve a return to list price subscriptions, which can be about 20 percent higher per journal than the price libraries were spending under the terms of their consortia deals. It is certainly possible to scale back in this way, and we have seen a few academic libraries do so, though the consequent costs of interlibrary loan (ILL) are carefully being tracked by the libraries that have chosen to take this path. The comprehensive approach gives a library a chance to see exactly what is used from a publisher portfolio at their institution, so presumably this information is considered when deciding how to conduct a fall back action. The question of whether needs are being met when, for example, a library drops back from access to 1,600 or 1,700 journals to fifty or 100 journals, is a difficult one. Publishers track denials of content from their platform to give clients some insight into this. Some libraries are content to fall back on databases, even though database content comes with no archival rights and is typically embargoed at least a year. The consequences of opting out of a license for an academic library supporting significant masters and doctoral research are higher than for the typical baccalaureate institution, but of course the typical price tag for the smaller institution is less. Considering the percentage of journal content produced by the top publishers, it is reasonable to say that libraries in comprehensive licenses will not be able to meet patron expectations if they opt out. We see libraries dropping deals only *in extremis*, and this means it again falls to publishers and consortium negotiators to find a way to sustain comprehensive licenses.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?" The possibilities are limited only by the creativity of the negotiators, but generally speaking the opt-out approach requires a return to list prices for the electronic journals that are kept. Depending on the terms of the deal, archival rights to the years already published and paid by the library may continue to be available. Presumably, a library would pay for the core journals they wish to maintain and supplement this with databases and ILL. There have been cases where libraries have opted out of licenses and then opted back in. The terms under which this happens vary by publisher. No matter what approach is taken, an opt-out decision is a serious decision and requires significant management skill to conduct.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? I have heard many librarians agree that the principal reason for joining a consortium is price negotiation. If members begin to drop out, it is an indicator that the consortium is no longer effective in negotiating pricing that is compatible with member budgets. Shopping is inevitable; we are a market economy. But potential savings from shopping is unlikely to mean much change from the publisher side of the offer. It is more likely to be a choice based on "other" things the chosen consortium can include. The role of the consortium and the role of subscription agents have constantly been debated in conference presentations and library literature. Many publishers seek to remain neutral on these subjects, leaving the choices of service intermediaries to the libraries.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors? A comprehensive approach to a publisher portfolio is such a good and desirable objective that all parties should do what they can to sustain these arrangements. We hear about the impact of open access publishing on the standard subscription model, but this evolution will take time. So the work we face is managing this model change. If we take open access to the majority of the world's journal content as the collective goal, we can begin taking serious actions that will get us through the transition period from subscription to open access. It is the publishers, consortia, libraries, and service providers who fail to take this transition seriously who risk being left behind.

What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive? The future holds a new model for underwriting scholarly communication. When the costs of publishing journal articles are funded as part of the research process, all parties can continue to do the work they do best. Publishers will continue their review and distribution role. Libraries will continue their information management role. Service intermediaries will find new ways to add value. The "big deal" will go from bilateral arrangements between publishers and either consortia or individual libraries, to a much bigger "worldwide deal" where scholarship is open to all online.

Thomas N. Taylor (Dragonfly Sales and Marketing Consulting)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? First, let's define the "big deal." I would define it as a contractual relationship between a publisher with a large amount of diverse content (diverse in subject, quality and perhaps relevance) and a group of libraries. The deal is for all or most of the publisher's content. It is important to distinguish the "big deal" from other kinds of arrangements with publishers for access to their content. The idea of opting out of the "big deal" seems to be gaining momentum mainly in conversations at conferences like the Charleston Conference, the UKSG (United Kingdom Serials Group) annual conference and others. Recently there have been well publicized efforts by consortia to negotiate different, more favorable terms with publishers. The renewals between the United Kingdom Joint Information Systems Committee and a couple of very large publishers this year is one significant example. But so far I have not seen any dramatic evidence that there will be large movements away from the "big deal." That is not to say that it will not happen. It just has not happened yet.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? I am, of course, looking at it from the perspective of someone representing publishers, albeit small independent publishers and societies. From my viewpoint, it seems very simple: libraries and consortia are experiencing huge budget crunches and are trying to find ways to accommodate their budgets and serve their patrons at the same time. At least some of the publishers seem inflexible in adjusting their financial terms to meet this new economic environment, but I am saying that as someone who is not privy to the exact terms that are being discussed. The small publishers I represent are very flexible and are committed to creating deals with libraries and consortia that are mutually beneficial and serve both parties for the long term.

Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs? Once again, defining the "big deal" as I have earlier (large publishers with lots of content), the answer would appear to be yes. But that is totally dependent on the aggregate costs of journals that are truly needed to meet client needs compared to the current costs of the "big deal." The smart publisher would create a financial relationship that would make it difficult to opt out of the "big deal" in that the value proposition of the whole package is too good to not take up when compared to the alternatives. I am not sure that this is the case with some of the "big deals" presently.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?" There are a number of alternatives being suggested. For example, suggested options include creating more discipline specific collections instead of the large eclectic collections, libraries sharing content with one another, and going away from consortia deals and simply subscribing to journals on a journal by journal basis. Since I am not a librarian, I may not be aware of many of the alternatives.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? I do not believe it will happen, but the answer to your question is that consortia as "buying collectives" could go away. This would certainly change the very nature of most consortia. It would indeed be transformational. But as I have said, I do not think that will happen. At the end of the day, I think the logic of buying as consortia and the efficiencies gained through consortia purchasing are too great for consortia to disappear.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors? If the "big deal" as I have defined it were to go away, and consortia as "buying collectives" remained, then it could open up more room for small publishers with high quality content. Today small publishers have a difficult time getting on the agenda or radar of many consortia. That is why I have formed the Independent Small Publishers Group (ISPG), a consortium of small publishers. If the "big deal" were to collapse or disappear, large publishers would have to create new revenue streams fairly quickly to make up for the lost income. If the model totally reverted back to libraries subscribing to individual journals, then subscription agents would become the big winners in this scenario. I am not suggesting, however, that there is not a robust role for subscription agents in the consortium, "big deal" world.

What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive? I cannot help but think that some form of the "big deal" will survive. The logic of consortia buying content from publishers in a way that is mutually beneficial is too compelling. The key words here are "mutually beneficial." Publishers who do not adhere to that principle could end up losing but I think many, even most, publishers want to work with consortia and libraries to create terms that will result in long term relationships with long term customers. I am convinced that the historical result of going from print to digital will be the transformation of the traditional relationship between the library and the journal to one between the consortium and publisher or group of publishers. There are many implications for all parties in that historical movement that have not been played out yet, but I think the logic of the movement is too great to reverse.

Information Solution Provider's Viewpoint

Christine M. Stamison (Swets)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? In my opinion, yes, the idea of opting out of the 'big deal' is gaining momentum. Swets has been closely following the electronic mailing lists and conference presentations highlighting libraries that have opted out of the "big deal." We have also heard from some customers that are strongly considering the possibility of opting out of the "big deal." While we have heard a great deal of buzz about this, we have not seen total cancelations of these packages yet. Some government and corporate libraries in North America have begun to pare down their large publisher packages due to severe budget cuts. Both customer service managers and regional sales managers have been speaking to customers as they are renewing their "big deals" to gauge the libraries' intentions. All say that they are very carefully watching those institutions that have canceled their "big deals" and may consider doing the same in the near future. The main consideration for these libraries is ensuring that users have continued access to essential content in their subject areas.

In speaking with several consortia representatives who administer "big deals" directly, Swets has heard that there have been a few total cancelations by some member institutions to some of the "big deals." This, of course, puts the deal in a precarious situation for the consortia. Having said this, libraries and consortia are still undergoing new negotiations for four to five year agreements for "big deals." However, libraries and consortia say that publishers are building more flexibility for cancelations into these new contracts as well as some price cuts.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? The major issue driving the discussions is, of course, the economy and the severe budget cuts that libraries are facing. Many libraries have the majority of their materials budget invested in "big deals"—some as much as 80 to 90 percent. As budgets are cut, libraries are recognizing that there is little or no money to purchase other types of content. This content includes e-books and electronic content from smaller scholarly publishers that do not participate in the "big deals."

Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs? This remains to be seen as many, but not all, of the deals tend to be "all or nothing." Before considering opting out, good business sense would indicate that a library should do its due diligence and enter the process with strong usage statistics data, along with cost per use, impact factor data or other types of collection metrics. This, at least, can be a starting point for gauging the most essential titles before beginning new negotiations with publishers. Throughout the year there have been presentations made at major library conferences by libraries that have recently canceled their "big deals." However, presenters tend to only have one year of data and most libraries with which we have spoken, still feel a bit uneasy about opting out without more data to back up their decisions.

Another issue libraries face is accreditation. Depending on the accrediting body, libraries need to have specific collections, specific titles, or a specific number of holdings to retain their accreditations. Therefore, when opting out of so much content, the library will need to ensure they continue to subscribe to the proper titles to continue their accreditation to local institutional bodies or to discipline-specific bodies.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?" Our customers are starting to talk about being able to negotiate better deals with publishers and moving to a pick and choose model or subject/collection model. In these models the library would achieve a cost savings by subscribing to only essential titles or only to titles in a certain discipline or subject area. In tandem with this, libraries are considering gaining access to canceled content through ILL, electronic document delivery, pay-per-view and through open access. The good news for some information solutions providers (that is, serials agents) is that they have already begun offering electronic document delivery services in order to provide libraries with further value-added services. The revenue these new services bring in can cut down on the losses publishers and serials agents will incur if enough libraries cancel large parts or their "big deals."

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? In discussions we have had with consortia one of the reported potential impacts of members opting out of deals is the loss of shared content. If an institution that opts out of a "big deal" is the sole owner of some shared content, the rest of the consortia members will potentially lose that content. Additionally, publishers, as any commercial entities would do, have written contracts in such a way as to be able to re-negotiate price increases if there is a certain percentage of attrition from the deal. This of course means that prices could increase for the consortia if a substantial number of institutions opt out.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors? When the "big deal" started, information solution providers (ISPs) lost a good deal of business due to stipulations put on these deals that customers must go direct to the publisher. With the loss of profitability, ISPs needed to raise service charges to make up for the loss of revenue. As publishers realized how difficult it was to take on complete customer service for these accounts, they loosened restrictions and allowed ISPs to assist in invoicing and maintaining title lists. Many publishers even offered discounts to agents again for this service. From the library side, once ISPs were left out, libraries lost the option of being able to obtain EDI invoices on a title by title basis to load into their integrated library systems and to keep track of the cost by fund code for their electronic products. In the end, it was a win–win situation when ISPs could assist both the publisher and the library in managing "big deals."

From the point of view of an ISP, we have slowly begun to see the erosion of the "big deal," and it will most certainly continue in the coming years. That being said, some ISPs have been creating services to manage all or part of libraries' large publisher packages. These services include integrating a libraries "big deal" in the agent's online system, keeping the library up-to-date on titles transferring in and out of deals, tracking the total spend and usage of the package and much more. Agents know that to remain relevant they will need to move from mere subscription management to content management. These services include, but are not limited to, handling all types of electronic content and offering tools for analyzing collection decisions. With the losses of revenue from journal cancelations, any ISP failing to move beyond "subscriptions" will become irrelevant.

In the case of smaller publishers we have seen them form alliances to create their own packages and gain market share. Some good examples are the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers and the ISPG, which have both put together subject packages and collections of scholarly information from smaller society and association publishers. In this way smaller publishers can begin to compete with some of the larger publisher packages.

What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive? While it is always difficult to predict the future, I am of the opinion that the "big deal" will survive only if it can evolve and offer choices to libraries. I believe that some will choose to keep the "big deals" while others will demand deals customized for their needs, whether it is subject or collection packages, or pick and choose. In the end, it will all depend on the libraries' budget situation and whether the publisher can offer the compelling content libraries require.

Kittie S. Henderson (EBSCO Information Services)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? There is momentum for change. It is important to keep in mind that the generic "big deal" (all or most of the content produced by a specific publisher within a defined time period with pricing based upon the cost of the subscriptions ordered at the time plus a percentage upcharge) is a business model that emerged to offer access to a larger collection of content at, what was viewed at the time, a minimal price increase. The contract escalation clauses offered publishers a steady source of revenue and what librarians perceived as more price stability than could be realized by individual subscriptions. While librarians such as Kenneth Frazier of the University of Wisconsin voiced concerns about the sustainability of the big deal model in 2001, the number of publishers offering "deals" and the number of libraries subscribing to them grew. (Frazier, 2001) The economic downturn and resulting library budget decreases brought a sense of urgency to the debate as the percentage of library budgets consumed by the "big deals" increased each year. In surveys of academic libraries conducted by EBSCO in February 2010, nearly 68 percent of respondents indicated that they were likely to renegotiate multiyear e-package agreements for lower prices or price caps; in 2011, that number increased to more than 71 percent. In the same surveys, 58 percent in 2010 and 62 percent in 2011 responded that they were likely to break up e-packages or renew only the most used e-journals in a package. (EBSCO Information Services, 2011)

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? The most commonly cited reason for wanting to exit a big deal is cost, which is usually coupled with a discussion of the value of the content in the package to the institution. In a recent ALCTS e-forum on the Future of the Big Deal, Ivy Anderson of the California Digital Library and Tim Jewell of the University of Washington discussed the methods they use to evaluate e-journal package content. (ALCTS e-forum, 2011) While the specifics of the metrics may vary among institutions, low usage, resulting in high cost per use, usually triggers cancelation or contract renegotiation conversations.

Is it possible to opt out of the “big deal” and still meet client needs? I think it depends upon the institution. Representatives of libraries that have moved away from “big deal” packages write and speak about the alternatives, including obtaining individual subscriptions to the most-used individual titles in the former package or moving to open access sources, ILL, or PPV. Some appear to be able to offer the content their users want, while others report returning to a modified “smaller deal.”

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the “big deal?” Opting for smaller bundles of content, obtaining individual subscriptions to the most frequently used titles, and moving to open access sources, ILL, or PPV are the most frequently mentioned alternatives. Some libraries also report replacing low-use titles with access via aggregated full-text databases.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? The “big deals” offered by most consortia are contingent upon all or a certain percentage of the members participating to achieve the desired economy of scale. A number of libraries belong to more than one consortium and are able to compare publisher offerings. In some cases, the publisher's offer to each buying group is the same; in others, it is different (usually length of contract or price escalation clauses). Librarians who shop for deals report that shopping offers them the opportunity to select the combination of content, terms, and conditions that best fit their individual circumstances. The impact of deal shopping upon the consortia will depend upon why the consortium was created, the services provided, and the underlying cost structure for membership and participation in offerings. Comparable to retail shopping, as members of multiple consortia shift “big deals” from one group to another, the amount of revenue realized by each consortium will reflect the change.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the “big deal” on large and small publishers and vendors? Publishers and vendors are well aware of the state of library budgets, and they closely monitor discussions of changes to the model. In a survey of publishers conducted by EBSCO in February 2011, half of those responding indicated that they might offer small or subject subsets of large e-journal packages as well as initiate or engage in a change in pricing models within the year. In that same survey, 80 percent responded that they would likely increase prices. (EBSCO Information Services, 2011) For publishers that offer big deals, the stakes are high. For example, Elsevier stated in 2009 that ScienceDirect accounted for 90 percent of its journal revenue. (Van Boetzelaer, 2008) All agree that pricing models based upon the print holdings of a decade or more ago is not desirable but consensus on the best new model during these tough economic times remains elusive.

While library budgets determine the amount of content that may be purchased, the quality and perceived value of the content within the context of the individual institutional needs still drives what ultimately will be purchased by whatever means—license, traditional subscription, pay-per-view, etc. For vendors, the world started to change in 1996 with the creation of Academic Press Ideal, and it hasn't stopped. (Poynder, 2011) In addition to what now seem to be straightforward print subscriptions, vendors handle e-journals and e-journal packages. As intermediaries, vendor services have evolved with needs of libraries. At EBSCO, for instance, more than 70 percent of our business is now in electronic format.

What does the future hold and will the “big deal” survive? When viewed in a library context, the “big deal” evolved very quickly. As in any evolutionary process, it contained vestiges of the original model (historical spend based pricing, for example). I think that elements of the “big deal,” such as access to what is perceived by a library as critical mass of content, will remain. The business model for that content is changing, however, be it tiered pricing based upon institutional size or use, article-based pricing, diverting funds formerly used for traditional subscriptions to open access, or a new variable that we have not seen yet.

Consortia Viewpoint

Ann Okerson (Center for Research Libraries)

Is the idea of opting out of the “big deal” gaining momentum? If one goes by the discussions at conferences and in online forums of various sorts, it appears that the idea of opting out of the “big deal” has gained momentum. Whether the opt-out itself is happening and to what extent, is much harder to gauge. One hears little concrete information about what actually happens; there are a couple of case studies of consortia such as the CDL (California Digital Library) downsizing their big deals, though still remaining in some kind of a scaled-up arrangement.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? With the big deal, there are many benefits. Readers (and librarians) can be pretty much assured of getting all the content of a given publisher (once the exceptions are clarified, of course, and usually there are some, for various reasons such as transfers or blue-ribbon titles that command a premium and are sold separately). The “big deal” means one can easily subscribe to supporting services (such as discovery, access, MARC records, usage), and that backroom office work is reliably reduced. “Big deal” pricing is usually accompanied by ownership or a perpetual license, so longer term access is assured. With long-term, large contracts, one can get the best possible terms. The survival of these journals, important outlets for research publication, is more easily assured. In fact, the “big deal” has almost everything going for it except price. And that drives the discussion, as it must. The “big deals” are, well…big. They cover many journals and thus are very expensive, in total dollars paid even if not per article use. At a time when libraries are struggling to maintain budgets, let alone to see any increases, we rightly point out that no matter what the value added and use are, we simply are not funded to sustain even 3 to 5 percent increases for such a high proportion of our collections, nor to have those “big deals” put the squeeze on our discretionary purchases. And, of course, if one looks at the spreadsheets for usage of “big deal” journals, one sees rapid fall-off in access, as a very small percentage of journals accounts for a majority of uses. In the “biggest deals” it is not uncommon for a library to observe that half the journals have zero to one or two uses per year.

Is it possible to opt out of the “big deal” and still meet client needs? I think it is. There are examples of highly ambitious university libraries, such as Stanford University, which have mostly avoided such deals and yet maintained an enviable quality of user services in demanding research settings. It might be worth asking them what combination of ILL, document delivery, PPV, substitution, user education, and the like has assured their success.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the “big deal?” One would need a carefully considered, strategically applied bag of tricks, which might include consortial borrowing arrangements, key lending partners, business relationships with publishers and article vendors, short-term lease, repositories—and to make such arrangements as simple as possible, since technical and reader services staffing is, by and large, not growing (and even shrinking) in academia.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? My background has been with the Northeast Research Libraries consortium, whose members can pick and choose the consortia databases they subscribe to, and the deals that they join. Members take a mix of “big deal” offerings or none, as they wish. So in that case, when a subscriber leaves a “big deal,” there is no penalty for the ones who stay in. Though if enough drop out, it may be harder to negotiate as favorable pricing terms in the next renewal period, than if more subscribers are added. My guess is that we will see more nuanced “big deals,” which can include a publisher's entire journals list or a chosen list plus “tokens” for supplementary articles or subset subject collections.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the “big deal” on big and small publishers and vendors? I don't know. It depends on whether that demise happens and, if so, what it looks like. If the “big deal” truly shrinks a lot, then my guess is that the least consulted journals will have to fold and disappear. Will there then be library funds left over for the smaller players? So many have taken a hit already with cancelations, but will this stop the erosion? Or have we run out of time? It certainly is true that the current budget climate helps academic readers to understand our constrained financial circumstances and gives us leeway to act in more careful ways. It may be that a loss of revenue by publishers will cause them to raise their prices more rapidly.

What does the future hold and will the “big deal” survive? The “all deal” (all of a publisher's offerings and a much more accurate term than “big deal”) stays available, but uptake shrinks. The “big deal” remains in various possible configurations, even as journal article offerings become far more diverse, with a lot more article delivery through various arrangements and prices with subject and institutional repositories ever on the rise. And we can expect to see a further uptake on the publishers' side of the *PLoS One* model including rapid peer review without judging importance, fast publication times, open access, cheap author-pay fees, and broad disciplinary coverage. We already see varied offerings by publishers such as British Medical Journal, Nature Publishing Group, SAGE Publications, Royal Society, etc. It will be a diverse and much more interesting future, which will challenge publishers to transparent pricing and visible value adding and libraries to shrewd business modeling and strategic user services.

Libraries' Viewpoint

Rob Van Rennes (University of Iowa)

Is the idea of opting out of the “big deal” gaining momentum? Yes, I think there is no question that opting out of the “big deal” is becoming more of an issue within the library community. Opting out of the “big deal” is a frequent topic of conversation among librarians at conferences and in online discussions. We are also seeing announcements from associations such as the Research Libraries UK (RLUK) who recently proclaimed that they will no longer sign the status quo large package agreements. (RLUK Calls for Journal Pricing Restraint., 2010)

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? Undoubtedly, budget constraints are the main motivation for libraries to re-examine their “big deals” at this point in time. Being locked into an expensive multi-year package is not a position that many libraries can sustain when funding levels are decreasing. The other issue is the loss of control over individual collections due to restrictive licenses. There is a frustration among librarians in not being able to tailor their collections by making cuts to low use materials in “big deals” and then applying those funds to other more useful publications.

Is it possible to opt out of the “big deal” and still meet client needs? There is often a perception that ending a “big deal” will have a severe impact on the end users in terms of lost content. However, a careful analysis of usage data will often reveal that there are many journals in large publisher packages that have very low use or no use at all. If the collections staff can identify the most suitable publications for their user community, leaving a “big deal” should have minimal effects.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the “big deal?” ILL is still a very important service that libraries provide, and it will continue to be instrumental in procuring information, especially for content that is dropped as a result of the cancelation of a “big deal.” Technology and workflows have improved the speed and accessibility of ILL transactions to the point where users can expect very timely delivery. Another option that may be beneficial to some libraries is PPV services offered by publishers. Various models exist, but since the results have been mixed, libraries should thoroughly investigate these programs before proceeding with full implementation.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? Since the actions of one library in a consortium may have an impact on all of the other members, it is vital that individual decisions are communicated to all concerned. A library may be compelled to discontinue their current agreements, but they also have a responsibility to keep their fellow members apprised of any changes so they can plan accordingly. In any event, library consortia will remain vibrant as there are many other beneficial opportunities for collaboration beyond the large publisher packages.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the “big deal” on big and small publishers and vendors? In some cases, low use journals that have been subsidized by large publisher packages may disappear, but at the same time, some smaller publishers may experience an increase in new subscriptions to journals by libraries using funds that were previously locked up in “big deals.” Large publishers will likely need to develop new revenue models that tap into a broader base of support, as there is some belief that many of the larger institutions are bearing too much of the financial burden.

What does the future hold and will the “big deal” survive? Speculating too far into the future is always risky, but there is a growing belief that “big deals” in their current form will decrease substantially or end completely in the coming years. A little further down the line, I suspect that articles, rather than journals, will become the main unit of information commerce, and new models will be based upon that development.

Jim Dooley (University of California, Merced)

Is the idea of opting out of the “big deal” gaining momentum? Serious attempts to negotiate reductions in the base price of “big deals,” even at the cost of the loss of access to significant amounts of content, are gaining momentum. I am less sure about the option of completely breaking up a journal package and ordering a small number of journals at list price. I think libraries will try hard to avoid this scenario, unless there are only a small number of high-value journals in the package.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? The primary driver is escalating costs for “big deals” in an environment of static or declining library budgets. The continuous creation of new journals in order to justify price increases is problematic. Large journal packages are consuming an ever increasing share of collection budgets at the expense of print monographs and the output of small publishers. While there are many economies of scale with the “big deal,” many libraries feel that their backs are to the wall and they must do something.

Is it possible to opt out of the “big deal” and still meet client needs? Most, if not all, “big deals” demonstrate the “long tail” phenomenon: there are varying proportions of high-value, medium-value, low-value and very low-value journals in the package. If the library can subscribe to the high-value and many of the medium-value journals, and use ILL appropriately, then most user needs can hopefully be met. Realistically, some user needs will likely not be met in this scenario. At the same time, the library is presumably opting out of the “big deal” because it feels that it has no financial alternative.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the “big deal?” As I said earlier, one alternative is to individually subscribe, at list price, to as many journals that are in the package as possible while still meeting cost reduction targets. Another alternative is to use PPV for less heavily used journals. I can see both of these alternatives being used together.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? If consortia members opt out, it could well increase costs for the remaining members, not to mention the effects on trust and good will. Presumably the consortia will attempt to negotiate a reduction in the total cost of the package so that the remaining members will not see price increases. I do not know how successful such attempts have been or will be.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the “big deal” on big and small publishers and vendors? The major impact will be felt at the individual journal level. If many libraries opt out of the “big deal” to save money, then they will subscribe to significantly fewer journals. To the extent that publishers, both big and small, derive revenue from the number of journals published, declining library subscriptions will impact the publishers' bottom lines. I would expect these effects to be more strongly felt by small publishers.

What does the future hold and will the “big deal” survive? I am not sure if the “big deal” will survive. Libraries are being forced to look at the real costs of providing “just in case” access to ever increasing numbers of journals. The increasing disaggregation of journal content down to the article level argues against continuation of “big deals.” The increasing availability of PPV options also argues against continuation. Many libraries are developing sophisticated metrics beyond usage to evaluate the true value of individual journals. At the same time, the “big deal” continues to make sense for a variety of reasons, both administrative and economic. If the “big deal” is to survive, libraries and publishers will need to work together to contain cost increases. Otherwise, regardless of efficiencies, increasing numbers of libraries will find the “big deal” financially unsustainable.

Rebecca Kemp (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill)

Is the idea of opting out of the “big deal” gaining momentum? I believe that interest in moving away from “big deals” is increasing. Whether that translates to libraries actually moving away is a different issue; libraries may find that, at the moment, the benefits of retaining the packages still outweigh the costs. As a result of the recent recession and the attendant budget cuts to libraries, library administrations have charged librarians with looking harder at the largest expenditures and seeing whether we are, in fact, getting the best value for our dollars with “big deals.” The presence of this topic on professional development programs is an indication that this is a hot-button issue. A session on moving away from the “big deal” was popular at the 2010 North American Serials Interest Group conference. In October 2011, the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services sponsored a well-attended e-forum on the topic, and programming on this topic is planned for both upcoming midwinter and annual American Library Association conferences. (ALCTS e-forum, 2011)

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? As collection budgets decrease and journal inflation rises, libraries must weigh the amount of money they are spending on “big deals” against the amount they are spending on other resources. Collection development librarians must then answer the following question: do libraries want all of their money tied up with a few, very large publishers causing their collections not to include valuable titles published by smaller presses? Another question for libraries to consider is this: how high is the usage of “big deal” titles? Do the usage statistics and cost per use of journals justify the high expenditure compared with cost per use of other titles? Is it possible to modify “big deals” so that libraries feel they are sustainable? Other questions that librarians must consider include the following: what are the alternatives to the “big deal?” What are the effects on consortia partners if libraries leave deals? Do libraries have a responsibility to retain their deals if the net negative effect on consortia is too great? Perhaps the biggest philosophical issues underlying these questions relate to collecting practices. Is a just-in-case collection model coming to an end with the proliferation of journal titles and the inability of libraries, even those with large collection budgets, to collect them all? Will all collection purchasing soon need to be justified by high usage statistics in order for libraries to retain funding from their parent institutions and state or local legislatures?

Is it possible to opt out of the “big deal” and still meet client needs? Some libraries have found that they are able to walk away from “big deals” and still meet patron needs through a combination of individual title (a la carte) subscriptions, PPV, and a strong ILL service. A few success stories include those from University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of Alabama at Birmingham's Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences, and Lafayette College. They have achieved savings on journal expenditures by dismantling “big deals” while still preserving service levels. However, a few factors are worth considering: when a library returns to list pricing, the pricing will be much higher per title than it was in the “big deal,” and fewer titles can be purchased with the same amount of money. Additionally, some libraries have found that PPV was not a resounding success; in the recent e-forum, both University of Oregon and Old Dominion University reported that their PPV programs were discontinued, as they used up their allotted PPV funding too quickly. (ALCTS e-forum, 2011) Also, if enough libraries cancel their “big deals,” publishers may decide to raise PPV article prices to make up lost revenue, and libraries may still have to pay more than they can afford for the content that they want. Finally, if libraries continue to cancel subscriptions, it may be harder and harder to find a library that holds the requested title and can supply it in an ILL transaction.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the “big deal?” There can be a combination of possible approaches: “a la carte” list pricing for a much smaller list of offerings; using a PPV model of acquisition rather than a subscription model; and ILL for titles no longer held. As mentioned above, there are potential drawbacks to each.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? An extreme potential impact is that deal negotiations may fall apart, and individual consortium members may have to negotiate with the publisher individually. If the deal does survive, however, a certain number of libraries may leave the deal resulting in less favorable terms for remaining libraries. This happened in the case of the Orbis Cascade Alliance as reported in the ALCTS e-forum. (ALCTS e-forum, 2011) Since a number of libraries dropped out of a particular deal, the consortium had to renegotiate a different deal with access to fewer titles.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the “big deal” on big and small publishers and vendors? Big publishers may lose revenue if libraries walk away from their “big deals.” However, big publishers may also start offering PPV programs universally, and regain some revenue from them. I am not sure that small publishers will gain any of the dollars lost by the big publishers; I predict that small publishers will not see much change in their revenue. It may be that the libraries canceling their “big deals” are doing so because money has been taken away from libraries by parent institutions and state or local legislatures. It is possible that if libraries cancel more titles from the big publishers, they will not have to cancel as many from the small publishers. Small publishers may not see an increase in revenue, but they may be spared additional cancelations.

What does the future hold and will the “big deal” survive? “Big deals” will survive as long as it is cost-effective for some libraries to keep them. If publishers determine that there is enough dissatisfaction with the "big deal" model, they may decide that they should create smaller, perhaps subject-based deals that include fewer titles in each, or they may increase cancelation allowances on existing "big deals" as an incentive for libraries to keep them. Another option would be for publishers to revise the pricing and discount structure of their deals so that bulk buying of titles is rewarded with a higher discount rate per title, the more titles a library buys.

However, an underlying problem for libraries is the trend of rising journal prices in general and the lack of an accompanying increase in library budgets. Librarians for years have been lamenting the scholarly communications or serials pricing crises. Now more than ever, we are seeing actual cancelations of journals that are important to our patrons. What is a sustainable publishing and dissemination model for libraries and publishers? I think that we have yet to see it.

Geoffrey Little (Concordia University)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? Absolutely, people have been talking about it for a while, but I think the tipping point occurred in 2010 when the University of California system threatened to cancel their Nature Publishing Group titles. (U of California Tries Just Saying No to Rising Journals Costs, June 8, 2010) That same year, the University of Oregon broke up their Elsevier "big deal." (Libraries Abandon Expensive 'Big Deal' Subscription Packages to Multiple Journals, July 17, 2011) From that point on, I think it has become more a question of "when" some institutions were going to break with the "big deal," rather than "if." In 2010, Research Libraries UK (RLUK) also announced that it was not going to renew deals with Wiley and Elsevier unless the costs of those packages were substantially lowered. (RLUK press release, 2011)

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? You name it: pricing models, annual increases out of proportion to shrinking library budgets, the growth of open access publishing and open access mandates, and a new sense that libraries should not (and also now cannot) pay for content that they do not want or need (or rather that their users do not use). I am also sensing some resentment within the profession that a relatively small handful of large publishers "own" the scholarly journal market.

Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs? I think many librarians (including those at the University of Oregon) would say that it is possible, but it may be too soon to tell. Where does a library start if it is opting out of a "big deal?" Does it simply take out new subscriptions to the 200, 500, or 1,000 most used titles from the old package, or does it ask liaisons to pick titles based on what their departments are teaching? Title-by-title journal selection may appeal to some bibliographers, but it is time consuming and inefficient. Also, how do libraries break it to faculty that the number of journals to which they have access has now greatly decreased?

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?" I think we will see a variety of access models including a return to title-by-title e-journal subscriptions, a move to per article access fees, or something approaching a "smaller deal" where libraries simply pay less for a smaller package of journals provided by their former "big deal" publishers.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? This question is difficult to answer. On the one hand, consortia bargaining strength will likely be affected if many members opt out of deals or "go rogue" and negotiate arrangements outside of the consortia. On the other hand, locally or regionally based consortia may be the best way for libraries that opt out to maximize and coordinate collaborative collecting and enhanced ILL. Consortia politics could also become much more difficult given that members may have different opinions of the "big deal." Some may be strongly against, while others might be big supporters.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors? Small publishers and vendors may be the least affected given economies of scale. A publisher like Elsevier would likely take much more of a hit if the "big deal" dies than smaller publishers. In many ways most of the big publisher's eggs are in one "big deal" basket.

What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive? To quote the Magic Eight Ball, "cannot predict now." The "big deal" could very well survive, especially at research intensive institutions, or within large consortia, where having access to specialized or technical titles is greatly valued. Some smaller institutions may be stuck with the "big deal" as serials departments as we used to know them are no more. Many libraries may only have one librarian to handle their electronic resources, in which case going back to the management of licenses, access, and troubleshooting for individual electronic journal titles or a plethora of smaller packaged bundles would be a nightmare. Another thing to remember is that the "big deal" was and still is a boon to many libraries in that these deals dramatically increased the size of journal collections. The "big deal" really leveled the playing field in terms of serials collections and access, especially within consortia. Some institutions (and their faculty) will be reluctant to give up that access; consequently, the "big deal" may live to see yet another day.

David C. Fowler (University of Oregon)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? I think it is, but it is not a fast process. This is partly because inertia is a powerful force to overcome in almost any institution (making a big change is by definition hard), but also because it is difficult for librarians to give up any access, even access that they do not necessarily want or need. I understand the desire to collect as many journal titles as possible to provide to patrons; in a perfect world it would be great to be able to provide patrons access to full runs of every title that exists. However, usage statistics show that the majority of these titles are getting little or no use, and when budgets are stressed, library professionals are obligated to make hard choices about easy access versus shrinking budgets. It is my impression that more and more librarians are seeking a new solution for their budgetary woes. They are now thinking more about ceasing or modifying their existing "big deals" (and not contracting for new ones) so that they can downsize mass purchases to more reasonably sized and priced collections. Downsizing collections would enable budget targets to be reached via cancelations and would also have the added benefit of swinging the responsibility of actually selecting titles back to librarians, who know their clientele far better than a faceless publisher.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? The issues driving the debate are materials budget reductions, partly driven by the recession; everyday serials inflation rates that increase relentlessly whether justified or not and that essentially dictate a cancelation project about every five years; and also a loss of control of the titles that we provide access to.

Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs? Yes, but librarians do their patrons a disservice if they do not do their homework first. This means doing an exhaustive cost-per-use analysis of serials titles in collections and deciding what percentage of used titles to retain. Libraries also need buy-in by faculty; keeping them in the communications loop is essential. Giving faculty or library representatives veto power over the cancelation of a lesser-used title but one which may be vital to a smaller program is important. Finally, analyzing Eigenfactors and journal impact factors as well as knowing where faculty of a particular library edit and publish is also politically important.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?" Libraries could certainly try to downsize their mega-packages into something more affordable. For research institutions, targeted packages that contain titles that address a particular school's research requirements, or packages that addresses particular needs of a subject area might make more sense.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? Potentially, the impact could be less access to content overall for consortia members, as subscriptions from a withdrawn participant are removed from the deal, and higher prices, if there is a fixed consortia price that needs to be re-distributed over a now-smaller group of libraries. Also, remaining libraries may have to subscribe to popular titles previously accessed for no cost via shared collections, adding more stress to library budgets.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors? Already, bigger publishers who have relied almost exclusively on the "big deal" to make their profit are having their long-term viability questioned by financial analysts. These analysts seem to be leaning towards the likelihood that in order to remain profitable and financially sound in the future, publishers need to diversify their product lines and pricing models. With respect to the long-simmering tensions between large publishers and libraries over issues like the big deal, one analyst remarked to me that he had "never seen so much hostility" between a customer group and their product providers as he has seen between libraries and publishers. Publishers would do well to work with libraries to find mutually profitable solutions.

What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive? I suspect "big deals" will survive for a while in smaller numbers. These big deals may eventually morph into arrangements in which small and medium deals become the norm, and librarians wrest back control of collection development responsibilities from publishers. I also note that e-books are already being marketed by publishers in pseudo "big deals," so it will be interesting to see if libraries regard these as viable arrangements, just as they start divesting themselves of such journal schemes.

Kimberly Douglas (California Institute of Technology)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? The discussion of pulling out of these so-called "big deals" or institution wide site licenses to a publisher's content is surfacing to public discourse due to the hard choices libraries must make in this climate of limited financial resources.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? For libraries, one issue is price per use instead of the more commonly phrased cost per use. For librarians, it is all about publisher pricing. Library staffs are actively gathering data on the use of the whole package and also by individual title and then analyzing this data to the extent possible to quantify value. Various methods have been developed (CDL and North Carolina State University Libraries come to mind) to normalize for quality and discipline anomalies. This activity helps to identify titles with the potential greatest return for dollars spent at a specific institution. Library staffs are seeking the most efficient and effective methods for such analysis in order to present the most affordable and appropriate options to their constituency.

Another concern is the unsustainability of the ever larger, more encompassing higher priced institutional site license. More content is, in theory, better. Unfortunately, not all papers or all journals are of equal quality. More in itself is not enough to justify higher prices. Librarians would do well to revisit the 2004 Bergstrom and Bergstrom paper in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* on the costs and benefits of library site licenses. The authors clearly lay out how the scholarly community loses when publishers design their license pricing to maximize profits, an objective that publicly held companies whose shares are traded on the stock market are obligated to make a priority. (Bergstrom & Bergstrom, 2004)

Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs? The salient issue is how the library establishes what meets client needs. It is entirely possible to position alternate information delivery mechanisms to meet client needs in a variety of cost effective ways for the library and its' institution. The client, however, has to participate in bearing some cost in price, time or inconvenience. This is a necessary economic reality. However, let us not forget that patrons may experience these inconveniences on a daily basis.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?" Numerous alternatives to subscriptions or site license agreements exist on the Web. If user expectations are refined to more realistic and achievable levels, it is possible to redesign acquisition models, especially for very expensive resources, and to still meet client needs.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? The consequences for a consortium will differ depending on its makeup. There are consortia that act as a single unit when making purchases—all members must participate in the deal. Those consortia have the greatest likelihood of exerting negotiating leverage. Other consortia offer opt-in options for their members. These consortia probably face difficult situations if their site-license or consortium-wide deals with the big publishers are based on consistently high spends from anchor institutions. When these schools determine that they can no longer carry nor justify their historical spend and opt out of a deal, then the publisher and the consortium will have to explore a different approach to maintain the relationship.

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors? In economic terms the big publishers may lose at least some of their market dominance. It is hard to predict; big publishers have the resources to be agile, but they are beholden to their share-holders, a straightjacket of sorts when it comes to potentially risky, creative and new solutions. If the break-up of site-licenses shakes up the industry, smaller publishers may reap some benefit. However, the problem remains that there is no new money and different approaches for scholarly publishing must come. The current 'reader pays' model is broken. I am reminded of the King Midas fable in which the golden goose was killed.

What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive? The future will be more volatile. It is going to feel like chaos—a completely out of control situation in which traditional library processes are ill-equipped. However, scholarly communication is evolving. New generations of scholars savvy in new technologies are coming of age. I would expect each discipline with the various communication formats (movie, sound, animation, etc.) and vehicles (blogs, tweets, and social websites) to create a highly differentiated and rich sharing environment. It is possible that the scholarly paper will be relegated to the single role of historical record. How many copies of that will be needed?

Lawrence Clemens and Alexis D. Linoski (U.S. Naval Academy)

Is the idea of opting out of the "big deal" gaining momentum? In our area the idea of opting out of the "big deal" is gaining momentum. At the United States Naval Academy, we did not have a real choice. We were facing a budget cut and had to cancel titles from several publishers that were part of consortium membership deals. We retained subscriptions with these publishers but were not able to maintain our previous spend level. Consequently, we lost membership in the consortium deal. At the time, several other consortium members were facing the same issue and did the same thing.

What are some of the major issues driving the discussions? Some of the major issues driving the discussions for us were as follows:

- the budget;
- the director saw the mission of an undergraduate library as providing books and limited research journals; and
- all of our direct subscriptions had been carefully vetted. The titles we got via consortia access were not closely reviewed (hence not as "important") although usage figures conflicted with this "vetting" issue.

Is it possible to opt out of the "big deal" and still meet client needs? Yes, but there is more heavy reliance on ILL and PPV programs. Not an undue burden at this time, but we have seen some increases in the use of these services since we have left certain "big deals." We were fortunate that some of the consortia deals that we were a part of provided "permanent access" to the back files for those years we participated in the consortia deal. This access has also helped us meet client needs to this point.

What are the possible alternatives for libraries opting out of the "big deal?" In addition to traditional ILL, the publishers we used seem to offer good article delivery programs, either on a per article basis or on a package deal (i.e., tokens via Wiley). While we have not yet participated in these programs, it is something we keep in mind for the future. Some government research and development libraries have canceled all of their subscriptions and moved to the article delivery model exclusively.

What are the potential impacts on consortia of members opting out of deals and/or deal shopping? The impact in our case was that some of the "richness" of the shared collection was degraded when members left the consortium deal. That is, fewer titles were available to those remaining in the consortium. We all benefitted from accessing subscriptions that were paid for by other members and that were available to us at a much reduced rate. There is also a danger to the consortium of loss of the membership itself. If a library cannot keep spend levels where needed to take advantage of the consortium deals, why remain in the consortium?

What are the potential impacts of the demise of the "big deal" on big and small publishers and vendors? In our case, we were involved in two publisher's deals, Elsevier and Wiley. To remain in the consortium and continue with the benefits, we were required to maintain our spend. We were also required to accept some changes in the discount of the renewal cost and to the shared access collection license (most importantly changing the shared access collection from permanent access to a leased model). In the end cost increases, declining budget, and lack of use of some titles made it impossible for us to maintain our spend, so we canceled titles and paid a higher inflation rate on the titles we renewed. We think more libraries are being driven away from "big deals," but this works for publishers who are happy to charge end users or libraries \$35 to \$60 per article. Small publishers can take over some of this business by offering fair prices and providing good titles.

What does the future hold and will the "big deal" survive? The strength of libraries is to provide the materials that the curriculum and researchers at their institutions need. Only in rare instances does any one institution need everything. While it may be easier to provide everything, it is also expensive. Dollars can be better spent on staff understanding the needs of the organization, choosing subscriptions to address these needs, and making improvements in speed and efficiency to provide access to non-owned content via ILL or vendor article delivery options.

2. Conclusion

It is evident from the submissions that the discussions of opting out of the "big deal" are gaining momentum. Most of the authors agree that multiple economic issues are definitely contributing to the need for libraries to find alternative solutions to the "big deal." Writers point to a variety of other issues driving discussions as well. Most say that opting out is possible, but there are several different opinions on the desirability and ease of extricating a library from a "big deal." Contributors suggest a combination of ILL, PPV, smaller or subject-specific deals, the use of material from smaller publishers, and single subscriptions as potential replacements for the big deal. There is a diversity of opinions on the futures of consortia, publishers, information service providers, and libraries without the "big deal." However, most contributors agree that although the "big deal" may be struggling, it is not dead yet. In fact, several contributors suggest it may never die completely.

References

American Library Association. (2011). ALCTS E-Forum: The Future of the Big Deal. *ALA Connect. Retrieved from* http://connect.ala.org/node/154709

Bergstrom, C. T., & Bergstrom, T. C. (2004). The costs and benefits of library site licenses to academic journals. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *101*(3), 897–902.

EBSCO Information Services. (2010, February). 2010 Library Trends Survey.

EBSCO Information Services. (2011, February). 2011 Library Trends Survey.

EBSCO Information Services. (2011, February). 2011 Publisher Trends Survey.

Frazier, K. (2001, March 1). The librarians dilemma. *D-Lib Magazine, 7(3)*. Retrieved from http://www.dlib.org/dlib/march01/frazier/03frazier.html

Libraries abandon expensive 'big deal' subscription packages to multiple journals. (2011, July 17). *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/Libraries-Abandon-Expensive/128220/

Poynder, R. (2011, September). The Big Deal: Not price but cost. *Information Today*. Retrieved from http://www.infotoday.com/it/sep11/The-Big-Deal-Not-Price-But-Cost.shtml

RLUK. (2010, November 25). RLUK calls for journal pricing restraint [press release]. Retrieved from http://www.rluk.ac.uk/content/rluk-calls-journal-pricing-restraint

RLUK press release. 2011.

U. of California tries to just say no to rising journal costs. (2010, June 8). *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://chronicle.com/article/U-of-California-Tries-Just/65823/

Van Boetzelaer, A. (2009, July). Reconsidering journal pricing in an electronic environment. Retrieved from http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journalpricing.cws_home/reconsidering_journal_pricing