

RESEARCH INFORMATION COSTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

John Unsworth and Brandon Butler
University of Virginia Library
Presented to the University Library Committee
October 30th, 2018

The Big Deal

- Through mergers, acquisitions, and growth in new journal titles, **a few global publishing conglomerates now control the majority of academic journal literature**
- They sell this literature in multi-title bundles referred to colloquially as “**Big Deals**”
- The **original Big Deal value proposition** was electronic access to a publisher's entire catalog at the price previously paid for a portion, with commitments to a steady rate of price increase.
- Big Deal **price growth quickly outstripped both inflation and library budget** growth, leading to reduced investments in every other part of library collections.

2

Publisher Profit Margins* Rival Apple, Big Pharma

Pfizer: 42%	Springer-Nature: 35%
Elsevier: 39%	Bank of China: 29%
Apple: 37%	Wiley: 28%
Taylor & Francis: 36%	Hyundai: 10%

* From Larivière V, Haustein S, Mongeon P (2015) The Oligopoly of Academic Publishers in the Digital Era. PLoS ONE 10(6): e0127502. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0127502

3

Your Help Is Needed

- We would benefit from **a resolution by the Faculty Senate** endorsing our approach to this problem, once we've discussed that in detail. Having such a resolution **will significantly strengthen our bargaining position**.
- We need faculty **allies and champions not only at UVA but at VCU, Virginia Tech, George Mason, William and Mary, James Madison, Old Dominion**. Please talk to your colleagues there.
- We need **specific feedback from faculty about what journal titles** from Elsevier, Wiley, Sage, or Springer **are important to your research**. Later this semester, we'll be sharing data about the journals you cite in your own publications, and where you publish.

4

The Cost of Information at UVA

- **Electronic resources consume 85%** of the state funds we spend each year on collections.
- **Four publishers** (Elsevier, Wiley, Sage, and Springer-Nature) **consume 47% of our state funding for collections**.
- Their slice of our collections budget has **more than doubled** in less than a decade – from 21% in 2009.

5

Cost Increases at UVA

- The cost increases for Big Deal packages have pushed much of our purchasing of other resources onto endowment income, especially in non-STEM areas of our collections.
- This includes print monographs, musical scores, film, and non-English materials. Smaller publishers are at a disadvantage in this situation, as are smaller disciplines. We need to rebalance our collecting.
- Ultimately, we may need to spend more (VCU spends more than we do on collections), but first we need to be in control of our spending—which we are not, at the moment.

6

Who Pays?

Universities **pay three times** for research. We pay

- **authors** to conduct research and draft papers, which they transfer *gratis* to publishers
- **faculty** who volunteer their time to peer-review and edit journal submissions
- **publishers** for access to the final, published articles, written and edited by our faculty

As a result:

- the amount of Elsevier's profit that is **attributable to UVA** authors is **equivalent to the \$2.5M/year we pay** them for their journals—so they really make **\$5M/year** from us.

7

Unsustainable Growth

- From **2017-2021**
 - E-licensing costs projected to grow **33%** overall—and there are important research resources that we don't have access to, already
 - On autopilot, total spend on e-resources would grow **from ~\$8mil to ~\$10.7mil** (more than our total FY19 collections budget, crowding out all other collections investments).
 - Elsevier deal alone **grows 16%** over this time—a contractual commitment we cannot change, but also cannot repeat.
- At this rate, collection spending will be **\$14.25mil by 2025, \$19mil by 2029** (more than doubling over ten years).

8

Disclosing costs

- Starting November 1, the UVA Library's web site will begin **disclosing our costs for the big four publishers** and soon thereafter the other 6 Virginia research libraries with whom we negotiate those four contracts will also disclose their costs. **An example of the kind of information we will disclose is on the following slide.**
- Not long after November 1, **we will further break down those disclosures to the title level**, so faculty and others can see the cost per use per title. This is not the whole story, of course, but it is a starting point for a conversation between the library and the faculty about the **value of what we buy**, what we should be buying that we're not, and other related topics.

9

Elsevier Costs UVA...

Vendor: Elsevier
Package name: ScienceDirect Freedom Collection

	2016	2017	2018	2025 (est.)
No. of journals	3,177	3,290	3,354	-
Cost	\$1,716,597.56	\$1,769,462.07	\$1,834,266.26	\$2,480,259.73
Rate of Increase	9%	3%	3.6%	4.3%
Increase (actual)	\$142,310.20	\$52,864.51	\$64,804.19	\$645,993.47
% Collections budget	19.6%	19.5%	19.3%	22.7%
No. of low use titles	0 use: 300 1-11 uses: 743 12-51 uses: 648 52+ uses: 1,486	0 use: 215 1-11 uses: 848 12-51 uses: 690 52+ uses: 1,567	0 use: 277 1-11 uses: 828 12-51 uses: 729 52+ uses: 1,522	-

Historical cost share:
75% University of Virginia Library/25% Claude Moore Health Sciences Library

10

What does all this mean for your research?

- You will need to use services **the library already provides, such as interlibrary loan or purchase on demand**, to obtain some journal articles. We can deliver documents of this sort in one to two business days.
- We will have **a journal collection that more specifically reflects the research interests** of our faculty, rather than having lots of just-in-case titles (which, usage suggests, is about 2/3 of the titles to which we now subscribe).
- To maintain this match between titles and interests, the Library and the faculty will need to **develop a culture of ongoing consultation**.

11

Library Systems and Services

- We recognize that **the Library will need to up its game** on interlibrary loan, article-purchasing on demand, and LEO as part of this change, **and we'll need more dedicated serials support on library staff**.
- We also recognize that **our several current online interfaces for article-level interlibrary loan don't work very well**, don't inherit information from one another, and don't work the same from one to the next. These issues are being **addressed in the next major release of Virgo** (planned for Spring 2020) which will resolve many long-standing issues and should streamline this process and many others.

12