Tuesday Oct. 19th, 11:00am-12:30pm ET/4pm-5:30pm BST/5-6:30pm CET

Fixing the Information Supply Chain for Scholarly ebooks - Benefits, Challenges, and Best Practices
Crossref Books Group

Where do identifiers and metadata drop in and drop out of the ebook supply chain and why?

Title management systems, for example, though a key part of the scholarly ebooks supply chain for many, are not well integrated into some of the standing community groups and many of the discussions around related issues. Downstream tools and services that use ebook information, often after several changes, reflect gaps and inconsistencies that highlight the need to identify what the benefits, challenges and opportunities are for the various stakeholders involved.

This 90 minute session aims to bring together a variety of stakeholders, beyond the Crossref Books Group, to outline and understand through presentation and Chatham house rule group discussion:
- the increasing importance of ebook identifiers and metadata to scholarly credit and discovery
- how information moves through the current supply chain and why it is sometimes lost or changed
- opportunities for and benefits of stakeholder-specific best practices

Stakeholder Perspectives ~15 minutes each: Benefits, Challenges & Recommendations
1. Publishers & The System(s) They Rely on: Ashley Postlethwaite, Business Systems Manager, Duke University Press
2. Playing Telephone in the Supply Chain aka How Information Drops In & Out: Jeff Edmunds, Penn State University Libraries
3. The Need for Book Metadata in RIM/CRIS Systems: Rebecca Bryant, OCLC Research

Registration for this meeting is required.
A short survey is open to gather input ahead of the session. Please reply by Friday October 1st.
Here are the slides

Discussion Notes

- There is growing consolidation in library metadata supply. On the other hand, there is an opportunity to bring metadata from distributed repositories allows increase in the diversity of books to enter into the supply chain, e.g., CLACSO for Latin America. Requires extra work by libraries.
- Disconnects between identity management silos leads to credit not being given where credit is due. ORCID vs. LCAF vs. VIAF. Important also to capture is the role that the individual plays in the creation of the work, e.g., confusion between Author and Editor.
- Two kinds of URLs -- ones that ARE broken and ones that WILL be broken -- according to speaker Jeff Edmunds. Can't rely on URLs for persistence.

- The risks of bad metadata for libraries -- (a) duplication that wastes time and money; (b) invisibility, with promotion and tenure implications; (c) discoverability (can't find = don't have is an assumption that patrons make); (d) no metrics to inform practice.
- Chapter metadata is fairly new to libraries. So recording all the contributions in the whole work metadata helps librarians to catalog the work as a whole. The more comprehensive the list of names the better. The MARC 505 field provides a space to list authors and chapters. The challenge is an Oompa Loompa problem -- not enough resources to address the issue.
- There was a discussion of whether other LOC standards like MODS or MADS would help with chapter metadata. But because these get crosswalked to MARC, the MARC record quality is only as good as the quality of the crosswalked.
- There is a challenge for libraries, which is how to balance the needs for patron privacy between the metrics to inform practice.
- For CRIS/RIM systems, faculty activity reporting and public portal are dominant use cases, but compliance monitoring more common. Emerging uses are strategic reporting and decision support, metadata reuse, and open access workflow (e.g., at CDL and Penn State). Capturing humanities content is a pain point in RIM systems worldwide, and manual labor is the only real option -- means libraries like Penn State offering a CV-harvesting system. Labor intensive and almost instantly out of date. Humanists don't understand why they are being underserved again compared to STEM faculty.
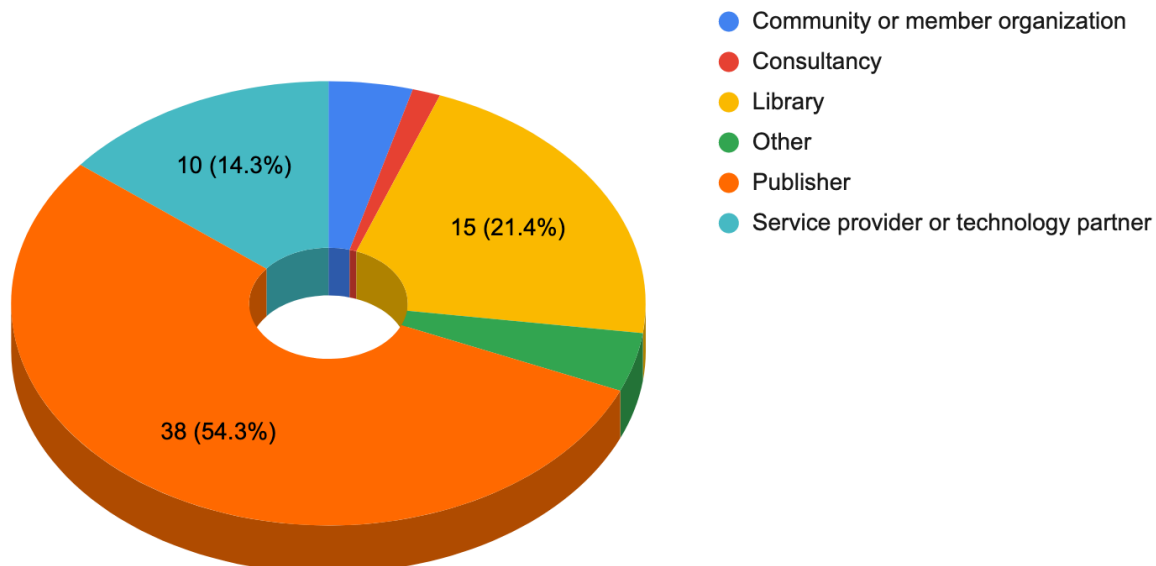
Q&A
- Why isn't this problem discussed more?
  - Academia has become hyper-specialized. And information supply chain has become specialized too.
  - Publisher book software providers tend to focus on trade market, and identifiers for ebooks are less high on the radar. But publishers in the trade space have similar concerns too -- the demand has outstripped the supply chain's ability to deliver reliable results.
  - Humanists are worried about metricization. And see ORCID as potentially institutional surveillance. Not without reason, because of unintended consequences on scholarly freedom and political targeting. Fear of being commoditized and reduced.
  - Authors are caught up in two different regimes: One of knowledge, one of management. Residence to forms of research management has a spillover in the knowledge infrastructure.
  - Bringing the disparate stakeholders is a challenge. There are so many partners and they have a mismatch between the stakeholder demands.
- What do we do about the problem?
  - A shortlist of key metadata elements that all information standard providers commit to recommending. E.g., ORCID, ROR. So there are fields for ONIX, Crosref, MARC that are clearly understood.
  - Investing in Bibliovault and Coresource that have a disproportionately important role in the books ecosystem, but are poorly understood.
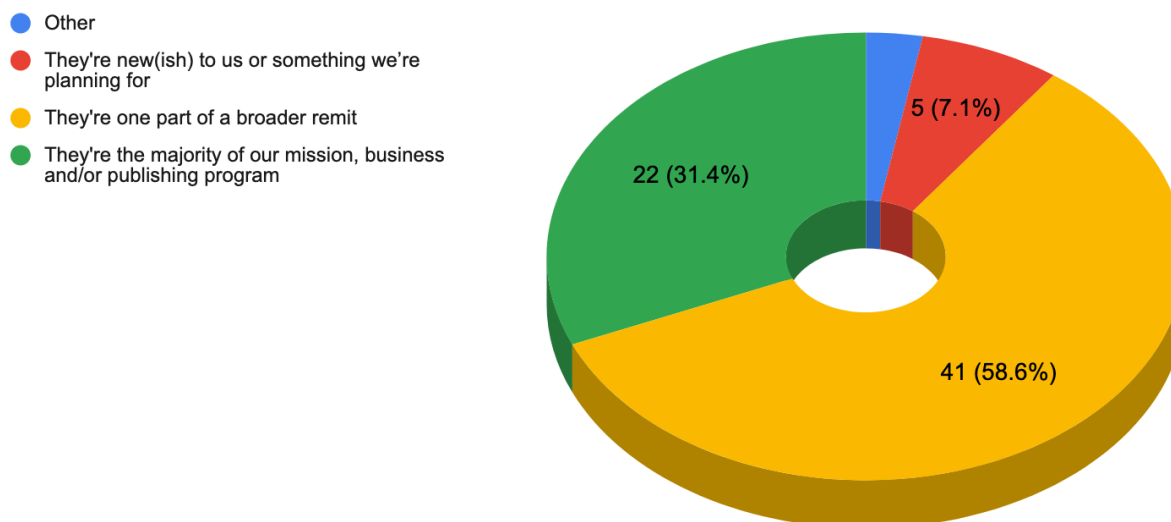
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Zoom poll results

Which best describes your employer?

- ● Community or member organization
- ● Consultancy
- ● Library
- ● Other
- ● Publisher
- ● Service provider or technology partner

10 (14.3%)

15 (21.4%)

38 (54.3%)

How much of your organization's work focuses on scholarly ebooks?

- ● Other
- ● They're new(ish) to us or something we're planning for
- ● They're one part of a broader remit
- ● They're the majority of our mission, business and/or publishing program

5 (7.1%)

22 (31.4%)

41 (58.6%)

Which of the following are you likely to do going forward? (choose all that apply)

- Document our workflows
- Encourage vendors/colleagues to add in fields/options to capture missing information
- Lead or participate in educational efforts on these issues
- Need more information/discussion on how to best to follow up
- Other
- Talk with other stakeholders more often

22 (21.2%)
24 (23.1%)
17 (16.3%)
14 (13.5%)
25 (24.0%)