

RESPONSIBLE PUBLISHING: PRESERVATION AND DIGITIZATION FOR OXFORD JOURNALS

Rachel Goode
Marketing Director, Oxford Journals, Oxford University Press

Publishers and librarians alike are conscious of the growing demand for online content in scholarly publishing, and one of the major challenges facing the industry must be to ensure that this content is not only available now, but also indefinitely.

Readers continue to migrate towards online journals, where they can benefit from a much wider range of services, including quicker and more comprehensive article searching; access to the latest research as it becomes available online through various 'publish ahead of print' models, a variety of electronic alerting services such as email tables of contents, citation tracking, and RSS feeds; links to related content; and more.

In this environment, readers expect equally comprehensive services for current and historical content, so it's important that publishers are able to provide them with what they are looking for, quickly and easily.

In April this year, Oxford Journals completed the launch of its digital archive. Over 135 years of research, and three million article pages, are now available online in the collection, which provides access to all content from volume one, issue one, for nearly 140 journals. With powerful search tools, cross-linking to similar articles, and a host of additional online material, the archive offers convenient, permanent access to a wealth of significant historical information alongside our current content.

Digitizing our archive was no mean feat – the project lasted over a year and involved operations across three continents! – but we're pleased with the end result. As part of the world's largest university press, and a department of the University of Oxford, we strive to make the highest quality research as widely available as possible. We undertook the digitization of the archive to increase the availability of important knowledge, previously hard to access, and in danger of becoming lost. Making articles dating back as far as 1849 available gives librarians and readers a much more comprehensive provision of historical content than was previously possible with printed archive collections, and, once digitized, this content can be made permanently accessible.

PROVISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

In this increasingly electronic age, it's not enough to simply make peer-reviewed research available online as quickly as possible. With both our archive, and our current journal content, we

have put strategies in place to ensure continued access for perpetuity. Library customers need guarantees from publishers that they will still be able to access the journals they paid for – even if they cancel a subscription, if a journal moves to another publisher, or in the extreme scenario that a publisher ceases to function or is affected by some unforeseen catastrophe.

For that purpose, in March, we concluded a major agreement with Portico, an electronic archiving service launched in 2005 with funding from JSTOR, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ithaka, and The Library of Congress. This is the third major archiving agreement that Oxford Journals has so far participated in, following agreements with the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), the National Library of the Netherlands in 2004, and the LOCKSS preservation initiative from Stanford University in 2005, and reflects our commitment as a scholarly publisher to offer responsible archiving solutions to our library partners.

Portico's approach to archiving means that Oxford Journals will be provided with enhanced back-up archiving and access facilities for perpetuity. They will not only preserve an exact copy of a journal for the indefinite future, but additionally ensure the usability of the archived content over time, by migrating the files to future file formats as technology evolves.

In addition to these agreements, Oxford Journals is also participating in a further three initia-

tives, all at developmental stages: CLOCKSS (Controlled LOCKSS) is a two year pilot from the LOCKSS initiative, investigating a failsafe repository to ensure delivery of content in the event of a disaster; The British Library Legal Deposit E-Journal Pilot Project is currently testing the feasibility and technical requirements needed to store e-journal content on a legal deposit basis; and Oxford Journals is also participating in the Library of Congress Pilot Testing of Voluntary Copyright Deposits project. At Oxford Journals we believe that a multi-layered strategy, where we use a variety of technologies and routes to safeguarding our online journal content, will guarantee a reliable alternative to printed archives over time.

Oxford's strategy for the future of scholarly publishing is to ensure that research from the past remains available in the future – this has been central to our mission as a publishing house since our inception over 500 years ago. We're taking a responsible approach to this, with multiple archiving agreements, to ensure that whatever the future holds, our content remains accessible for perpetuity. By digitizing our complete back archive, it's never been easier to discover important research from the past, and, unlike with print archives, this information will remain available without the worry of deterioration, or taking up library shelf space, for the foreseeable future.

