

Two-Way Scholarly Communication Between the United States and China

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Global scholarly communication is transforming with the rapid expansion of the Internet. International access to academic resources has become a routine practice to scholars in most academic fields. How does the global scholarly communication affect our services in the academic libraries, and how do we respond to? This is a challenge, as well as an opportunity, to all of us.

Choosing the scholarly communication between the United States and China as example, my research is to discover related emerging issues through online surveys and face-to-face interviews, and to further explore the possible solutions to the issues raised thereafter. In this presentation, my focus is given to the survey and interview discoveries.

I. Fundamental Changes in Global Scholarly Communication

As network based information technology became available to academic researchers, scholarly communication was fundamentally changed since then. My survey and interview results showed that researchers in different countries may access to the current and updated resources at the same time. Furthermore, in comparing with the pre-Internet period, the most significant change of the global scholarly communication is transforming from one-way to two-way, and even to multi-directional traffic, which includes both formal and informal avenues. The development of information technology certainly makes researchers in all international study fields rely more on the global scholarly communication.

II. Key Issues Affecting Global Scholarly Communication

According to the surveys and interviews, the scholars in international studies of the United States and China widely accept some new concepts of the global scholarly communication, such as international publishing, borderless service, cyberianship, etc. Scholars support the concept of open access, a key element of scholarly communication, as well. However, there are a few concerns over the actual practice, such as concerns over the tenure/promotion of faculty status and the role of professional associations, which are main issues we have to consider in promoting global scholarly communication.

III. Commons and Differences towards Global Scholarly Communication

The surveys and interviews discovered that the Internet and related information technology make scholars in international studies share many common thoughts; however, notable differences still exist. It seems that Chinese researchers are more actively favor of global scholarly communication than American scholars; on the other hand, American librarians are aware of global scholarly communication more than Chinese counterparts. To explain such phenomenon, different social and cultural environment might be a key factor.

This research/survey project got 80 full replies from the scholars in the United States and 134 full replies from China. In general, scholars from both countries are more or less aware of the changes in scholarly communication. Through the online surveys and face-to-face interviews, I have a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that academic libraries and information specialists are facing. In the rapid transformation of information technology and scholarly communication, we are expecting new kind of academic libraries which offer information services much different from a decade ago.