

## Report of the Task Force on the *Journal of East Asian Libraries*

November 1, 2013

At the 2013 meeting of the CEAL Executive Board, the Task Force on the *Journal of East Asian Libraries* was established and later given the following charge by President Peter Zhou:

Task Force on JEAL

Chair: Gail King, JEAL Editor

Task Force Members:

Hee-Sook Shin (CEAL Treasurer), Vickie Doll (CEAL Statistics), Chengzhi Wang (past JEAL contributor), Joy Kim (Past CEAL President and JEAL contributor), Ellen Hammond (President-Elect), Peter Zhou (CEAL President and ex officio)

The Charge:

The Task Force on the Journal of East Asian Libraries is charged to investigate both sides of the question of a change in the current publishing format of JEAL from print for current issue with a complete digital archive to online only (for both current and archival issues), and present their findings to the Executive Board, who will make a recommendation.

In particular, the Task Force will examine the following questions:

- Might we want to cease publishing paper copies and make JEAL an entirely electronic journal? Printing JEAL is not inexpensive, costing CEAL at least over \$6,000 a year for printing two issues per year. Plus each issue costs about \$575 to mail, bringing the total cost of the journal to \$7,000-\$8,000 a year.
- What are the benefits and drawbacks for JEAL to become an online-only journal?
- If this change is institutionalized, should the CEAL Bylaws be revised?

[CEAL Bylaws Article III. Members and Fees

D. "Members receive issues of the Journal of East Asian Libraries (JEAL) corresponding to the membership period."

E. "Non-CEAL members and organizations may subscribe to JEAL by paying subscription fees determined by the Board." ]

- Is the online-only version of JEAL sufficient or do we still need to print limited print journals for institutional subscribers? If so, what is cost for doing that?
- Will the probable loss of institutional subscribers be a factor in preventing us from making JEAL an online-only journal?
- Do we need to survey CEAL members to gather ideas and opinions about the change before a general vote ? [note: Do we need to survey CEAL members to gather ideas and opinions about the change before a general vote ?

Timeline:

- Task Force completes work and presents their report to EB – November 1, 2013.
- EB discusses issue by email – November 15, 2013 – February 15, 2014.
- EB makes recommendation – EB Board meeting March 2014 meeting
- Recommendation presented at the Plenary Session of the 2014 CEAL Annual Meeting
- Membership vote – April 2014

Peter Zhou

President, Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL)

In accordance with this charge, the *JEAL* Task Force presents their report to the CEAL Executive Board. Mindful of the charge “to investigate both sides of the question” of whether we should change to an online only format for the *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, the Task Force presents ideas, information, and possibilities but makes no recommendation, as that responsibility is the province of the Executive Board, who by the charge will discuss the issue November 15, 2013-February 15, 2014 following receipt of our report.

#### **1. Benefits of changing to online-only format for *JEAL*:**

- We would save the cost of printing and mailing 2 issues of *JEAL* per year. (See attached compilation of these costs), thus saving paper and postage and promoting a green earth.
- Libraries would save binding cost, staff time, shelving space, and preservation costs. Future extra print issues of *JEAL* will no longer need to be stored by the Editor or other designated person to fill claims and new subscription requests.

- Access, being electronic, will be facilitated. In addition to being able to search our archive and current issues on the JEAL website, searchers can discover contents of issues since 2011 when searching EBSCO databases.
- The time from completion of the editing and compiling process to receipt of the issue by subscribers and CEAL members should be shortened, since there will be no period of time when the issue is being printed and mailed.
- It is in line with our advocacy of open access.

## 2. Drawbacks of changing to online-only format for *JEAL*:

- Probable loss of revenue from cancellation of institutional subscriptions
- Sustainability of the electronic archive: will BYU commit to continued support?
- Some CEAL members and readers prefer print issues, or certain issues in print.
- CEAL Bylaws would need to be changed.

From the Bylaws:

CEAL Bylaws Article III. Members and Fees

D. "Members receive issues of the *Journal of East Asian Libraries (JEAL)* corresponding to the membership period."

E. "Non-CEAL members and organizations may subscribe to JEAL by paying subscription fees determined by the Board."

[Vickie notes: Bylaws change is not necessarily required. Now members receive print issues; in the future, they would "receive" the electronic issue. And organizations and individuals could continue to subscribe, though it isn't likely they would.]

## Aspects to consider

### 1. Would we still need to print a limited run?

I investigated this question with BYU Print Services, who print the issues of *JEAL*, in June 2013. I learned the following:

#### BYU Print & Mail On-Demand Print Service

BYU Print & Mail offers a print on demand service in which they handle all interactions with customers. In the case of *JEAL*, these would probably be CEAL members desiring a printed copy of a particular issue, CEAL institutional subscribers, or the odd visitor to our website who desires a printed copy of a particular issue. To set up the service, Print Services would link to our online site (<https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/JEAL/>) and set up a storefront link on the website through which customers would order the printed issue of *JEAL* that they want.

Customers would pay Print Services, which would also take care of mailing the issue to the customer. Payment would be by credit card to BYU Print & Mail Services. CEAL would not be involved in the ordering, printing, or mailing process for any individual print-on-demand issues ordered.

### Some Questions

1. What would the cost of a printed issue be?

On-demand costs are a bit higher than the unit cost when we do a regular print run of the *Journal*, but they are still reasonable. The cost depends on the number of pages in the issue and how many pages are printed in black and white and how many in color. Black and white pages cost about 3½¢ per page; pages with color on them cost 24¢ per page. I assume there is also a charge for the cover.

2. What about customers who want a standing order for print issues (like institutional subscribers to *JEAL* who still want a print copy in addition to the online one)?

Print & Mail does not presently offer a subscription service for its On-Demand Print Service, but this could be set up.

3. Are reports available?

They could provide reports about how many issues have been ordered.

4. Could issues besides the current one be ordered?

Yes, once the link is established with our *JEAL* website and the full-issue PDFs of issues of *JEAL* available there, any issue could be produced as an on-demand print volume.

### **2. Loss of revenue from decline in institutional subscribers:**

We presently have 12 institutional subscribers. Even if all of them cancel their subscriptions, it would not offset the savings we would realize by not printing issues of *JEAL*.

### **3. What have other scholarly journals done:**

Cheng-zhi Wang investigated this question and submitted the following report:

I did some survey on a few peer or related journals in the late summer and early fall, to see what significant changes those journals are making or will make. Those journals may not be "scientifically" representative, I copy and paste their major points below. Excuse me for this long e-mail of putting them together.

First, JAS, our parent organization journal, to remain print (and digitally accessible through proprietary databases):

"... There may be folks in the association who can provide a fuller answer than I can, but as I understand it, there is a significant portion of readership that is not interested in the idea, and also folks in the association with the authority to decide (not me) who are reluctant for their own reasons. From my perspective, I am very glad the journal has an online presence (we worked hard for that). I could see the concern of an entirely online existence being long-term

accessibility as software, programming, and formatting change. I'm guessing as a librarian, those are precisely the issues that trouble you. I'm not entirely sure retaining paper gets around that problem or is the only answer to longevity concerns--it seems that if longevity is the primary concern, copies would be immediately transferred to microfiche/film. I think a really good argument could be made (but JAS is not there yet) that a very limited print run might be a useful idea...most academics really don't want to have the paper copies piling up. I think a number of libraries are facing the same issues of space. I suppose reduced print runs (or eliminating them altogether) could save some costs. I think it might be awhile, though, before JAS takes that route. I think there might also be a consideration, from the viewpoint of publishers, of journal branding. If there is no integral copy, what carries the brand? I think that is also a potential issue that can be solved. Especially now that e-readers of various kinds are quite popular, journals that have apps that replicate paper pages will be a smart move. I think if nothing else, what keeps JAS and other journals in paper is that many different voices are coming together with no definite hierarchy to institute that sort of change. JAS is the flagship journal of the association. We at the editorial office are at liberty to make editorial decisions, and have participated in deciding on a publisher. But the contract for producing the journal is worked out between the publisher and the board of the association. Some of those members are a permanent part of the association, others are faculty who cycle on and off the board. So you can see where that structure would challenge such a large shift. There would have to be members of the board who are passionate about the idea and who find ways to convince others of its worth.

My two cents, for what it is worth.

Best,

Jennifer

Jennifer Munger, Ph.D. Anthropology

Managing Editor, Journal of Asian Studies"

Second, C&RL, the ACRL journal with solid traditional metrics, to discontinue print and go digital, and also target alt-metrics:

"In making the decision to go online-only, ACRL took a very deliberate track, including:

- 1) member surveys regarding perceived benefits of print vs. online
- 2) analyses of advertising revenues and likely losses in ending print
- 3) analyses of print costs and savings that would accrue as the result of eliminating print
- 4) analyses of individual and institutional subscriptions and losses that would accrue from eliminating print

The gist of those studies was that advertising revenue had dropped so sharply since 2007 (see also the recent discussion of the state of advertising revenues in ALA Publishing, more broadly) that the benefit to maintaining the traditional model no longer balanced out the cost.

Keep in mind, too, that C&RL is provided as a member benefit, and thus the number of individual subscriptions was limited. ACRL's other journal, RBM, requires an individual subscription and, at least so far, continues as a print publication.

Second, ACRL approached this change within the broader context of the debate over open access and the evolution of scholarly communication. As an organization that has staked out certain principles in this arena, it was important for us to "put our money where our mouth was" and to pursue an approach that would allow us to speak with principle and authority regarding open access, especially when faculty colleagues asked us how to proceed in a similar situation. In support of open access in recent years, ACRL has:

- 1) made pre-prints openly accessible; then
- 2) made all current content openly accessible; then
- 3) completed digitization of the entire backfile (1939- ) and made that content openly accessible

Third, we have focused this year in doing more member engagement around the transition in order to determine what concerns and opportunities our readers see in the change. Among the major concerns is the need to ensure continued, high-quality of the journal's content and "brand."

Among the major opportunities is the ability to publish a wider range of materials and to integrate C&RL content with content produced elsewhere in ACRL ("amplifying" the journal content). Among the major challenges, the need to move quickly into new assessment models for authors, e.g, alt-metrics. We have used this feedback to work with Highwire Press, our site provider, in terms of how our current site can be enhanced, and to prioritize the appointment this summer of a Social Media Editor for the journal, who will help to guide our social media strategy.

Scott Walter, M.L.S., Ph.D.  
University Librarian  
DePaul University  
Editor-in-Chief, College & Research Libraries"

Third and lastly, MELA Notes, The Journal of the Middle East Librarians Association, to retain both print and digital:

"We have never yet discussed going digital only. But I think that this may be the trend of the future."

"You will be happy to know that MELA Notes is published electronically, but also still appears in print.

Marlis J. Saleh  
Editor, MELA Notes  
University of Chicago Library".

Gail notes: It seems to me that the situation at JAS differs from ours on several points. In the first place, the *Journal of Asian Studies* is published by a commercial publisher. It has an electronic archive available to some but not all researchers, since access is controlled by subscription. Are "branding" and "flagship journal" issues we should think about? I'm not sure if they apply. *College & Research Libraries* is also a much larger, commercially-produced journal. I have come to regard our rejection by Maney Publishers as a blessing. We have much more

control and freedom in regard to *JEAL* since we are not under contract with them as our commercial publisher. *MELA Notes* is probably more comparable to *JEAL*.

#### **4. Additional thoughts:**

From Vickie Doll:

(1) If *JEAL* becomes an e-journal only publication, then it really doesn't have to be bound by a journal format. Would we consider publishing at the article level? Publish anytime when articles are ready? This would ease the editor's load, and we wouldn't have to worry about pagination, enough articles for an issue. (We need OJS to provide article usage statistics) Gail: I inquired about this, and OJS does provide article-level statistics and also counts abstract views.

Gail notes: I think these are good questions. They don't really relate to our present discussion, though. They only come into consideration if the decision is made to go to online-only format. But they are things we could think about to implement at the same time if that decision is made.

(2) Someone on the Technical Processing Committee needs to change the OCLC record for *JEAL* to point to our online archive. Gail: Good idea!

#### **5. Do we need to survey CEAL members to gather ideas and opinions about the change before a general vote ?**

Gail notes: The Timeline given as part of our Charge seems to indicate that the only vote is the one that will be taken on the recommendation of the Executive Board. In fact, if the Executive Board recommends that *JEAL* remain a print journal with an electronic archive, no vote of the CEAL membership will be needed, since that would be to continue present practice with no change. The only scenario under which a vote of the general CEAL membership is necessary is if a recommendation to change to an online-only format for *JEAL* is made by the CEAL Executive Board. At this point, there is no time to survey CEAL members about a possible change to online format for *JEAL* before our Task Force report to the EB is due.

**The Task Force urges the Executive Board to conduct a survey of the CEAL membership early in their deliberation process, so that the ideas and opinions of CEAL members will be considered in whatever recommendation the EB makes. We suggest allowing a 3-4 week response time, mid-November through mid-December.**

#### **ADDENDUM from Gail:**

**October 31, 2013**

The minutes of the BYU library Administrative Council meeting held October 28, 2013 were distributed today, October 31. The minutes recorded the attendance at the meeting of

Elizabeth Smart, our library Scholarly Communications Manager, who proposed that the library purchase a license to Digital Commons institutional repository software as a platform for our library ScholarsArchive. ScholarsArchive also includes the HBL Scholarly Journals website, which presently uses Open Journal System (OJS) software. Ms. Smart recommended to the Administrative Council that the library retain OJS for now for its digital journal software, while planning to migrate this function to Digital Commons over the next five years. I realized when I read this that this development will affect *JEAL*, and I spent some time this afternoon talking about it with Ms. Smart. In our discussions I learned that the annual cost for Digital Commons is \$46,680, and the library is considering a cost-recovery model for helping fund this. Such a model would include its hosting of journals in the future. The amount of the annual charge would vary depending on the size of the journal and the number of issues per year. Elizabeth told me that Digital Commons has a one-time editorial setup fee of \$1500 for journals on Digital Commons; this would be due at the time of migration of *JEAL* to the new software. Plus she anticipates an annual maintenance fee of about \$500.

The move to Digital Commons is still in the proposal stage, but it is moving forward, and I think it is likely that the software will be adopted by the library, since it provides easier management and statistics for items in the digital repository. The move from OJS to Digital Commons would not be immediate; it would probably begin about two years from now and be completed by five years from now. The change of software is not directly related to the question of whether *JEAL* should become a fully online journal or not. These costs will happen whether *JEAL* becomes a fully online journal or whether we continue to be both print and digital. But this likely software transition and future costs related to our online journal and its archive are issues that I believe we need to be aware of as we consider the future of *JEAL*.

Submitted to the CEAL Executive Board November 1, 2013

Gail King, Task Force Chair  
Hee-Sook Shin  
Vickie Doll  
Chengzhi Wang  
Joy Kim  
Ellen Hammond  
Peter Zhou (CEAL President and ex officio)