

Strategic Plan: Canadian Science Publishing

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Introduction

With the transition of the NRC Research Press from the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) to a fully independent and not-for-profit company, Canadian Science Publishing (CSP) is now operating in a new and much more exciting business environment. Within the Federal Government of Canada, CSP faced many operational restrictions. Though challenging, this new business environment allows for much greater flexibility and speed and opens up many new opportunities for CSP to grow its science publishing activities in Canada and abroad. This Strategic Plan embraces our new situation, explores our opportunities, and sets directions for the next 5 years.

To this end, a strategic planning workshop was conducted with the CSP Board and a cross-section of the senior management team on 31 March and 1 April 2011. Subsequent comment was solicited from CSP staff, our journal editors, and journal communities.

Our Transition

NRC Research Press, the publishing arm of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) for 85 years, transitioned in September 2010 from NRC and the Federal Government of Canada into an independent and not-for-profit organization operating under the new name Canadian Science Publishing (CSP). CSP will operate initially with the brand NRC Research Press. In due course, CSP will move to greater utilization of CSP as its major brand for publishing journals in a broad range of scientific disciplines. CSP Publishing Services supports Canadian scientific societies and other organizations requiring scientific publishing services. CSP is now managed by a Board that is made up of individuals with experience in various aspects of contemporary scientific publishing.

Our Statistics

- Publishes scientific, technical, and medical research in 15 peer-reviewed journals
- NRC Research Press journals disseminate scientific, technical, and medical (STM) research to more than 100 countries
- 6000 articles were submitted for publication from Canada and around the world in 2009
- 40% of the content originates in Canada, 20% from the USA, and 40% from abroad
- Full-text article downloads reached 5 million in 2010
- A total of 10,000 subscriptions were sold in the 2009 subscription year. US and international subscriptions account for 65% of the total revenue
- CSP Publishing Services publishes 12 additional journals on behalf of Canadian scholarly societies

Environmental Scan

New Internet Technologies — The plethora of new information services and “apps” are pushing research content to the Web. Science, technology, and medical publishers are moving from dual publishing in paper and electronic formats to only electronic Web-based services. They are also adding value to this content through numerous features like reference linking.

Researchers and their communities are increasingly exploiting the Internet and Web 2.0 social networking tools to develop new ways to enhance the scholarly communication process. Some advanced publishers such as Nature and BMJ have actively adopted these tools to develop communities and discussion forums around their content.

Changing Customer Expectations — With the move to the Internet, researchers are seeking more control over the content that they create and use. Users are empowered by technology and are looking for innovative ways to create, access, manipulate, and integrate content. They are becoming more savvy about online information and are turning to validated Web sources. Researchers are also demanding faster publication times and wider distribution of their work.

Libraries, compelled by shrinking budgets for acquisitions and pressure from users for new services, have taken a much more business approach to addressing these issues. They negotiate directly with publishers or through consortia for blocks of electronic content. They are managing their own digital assets by developing institutional repositories of, for example, university research, as well as supporting research. They are requesting standards-based user statistics from service providers to measure return on investment, and more recently, developing low-cost journal publishing platforms to provide inexpensive publishing of journals.

Many Canadian scholarly societies are under stress, with declining memberships and reduced revenues from journals. As a result, they are seeking alternative and more profitable arrangements for publishing journals.

Competitive Global Market — Scientific research information is now a competitive global industry. It is dominated by a handful of large companies located in the US and Europe. These publishers have rapidly bought out regional and national private-sector publishers and consolidated operations in the US, Europe, and the Far East. These large commercial publishers have been approaching small Canadian society publishers with attractive revenue-sharing business models. These large firms have economies of scale, reduced costs through outsourcing, and are able to start up and bring to market new more-focused journals.

New Business Models — In response to price increases and corporate control, both the library and researcher communities have been looking to other models to support scholarly communications including Open Access (OA), institutional repositories, and Creative Commons licensing. Publishers

realizing that there are pressures to change, are assessing OA journals and introducing rolling embargos, author pay, online advertising, and alternate funding arrangements.

In drafting this strategic plan, Canadian Science Publishing (CSP) must develop strategies that will negotiate these “challenges”. CSP’s new business environment allows it operate in a much more business-like fashion. The release from government rules and regulations will allow CSP to develop many new opportunities. From seeking new funding, to promoting existing journals, and developing new products and services, the flexibility and resources now afforded to CSP will greatly enhance its ability to adapt and thrive in this new world.

CSP brings to this planning process many existing strengths. Our technologies including the new Web site and submission and peer-review systems are world-class. We are noted for giving superior service to our researcher community. We have over the last several years developed a liberal regime of rights for authors and subscribers. Many Canadian researchers and scientific societies value our reputation, our not-for-profit status, and our bilingual publishing capacity.

Our Strategic Framework

Canadian Science Publishing is a not-for-profit scholarly publisher dedicated to serving the needs of researchers and their communities.

Our goal: to be an innovative leader in scholarly publishing.

Our mission: to disseminate leading-edge research globally by providing world-class scientific and technical scholarly publishing services.

Our services: focus on promoting scientific communications by acquiring, publishing (peer review, copyediting, indexing, abstracting, archiving), and distributing (sales and marketing) content for the benefit of research communities.

In meeting the publishing needs of researchers in both of Canada’s official languages, we constantly strive for:

- Innovation in scholarly publishing
- Agility, speed, and flexibility
- Excellence in peer review
- High quality in editing and production
- Continuous learning and development in our workplace

Updating our Business Model

The value proposition that we offer our clients must be the delivery of quality, highly regarded journals and other publication types that deliver relevant content worldwide using state of the art technologies. In developing our strategies to delivery this value proposition, we will need to revise our traditional view of our business model.

We have in the past seen our key partners as our researchers, libraries, our volunteer editors, and many Canadian scientific societies. Certainly these will continue; however, we must reach out to new communities such as the funding organizations both in Canada and abroad, university departments, and other international scientific institutes and societies.

We need to see our customers as leading researchers, those who are up and coming and who are developing awareness with graduate students. Canadian Societies are important, but we will need to reach out to professional societies, as well as other international societies and research institutes. As governments struggle in the next few years, they will become clients for our publishing services.

We have seen our key activities as primarily research acquisition, publishing, and dissemination; we will need to expand our activities in promoting our journals and to keep abreast of innovations in electronic scholarly publishing. We will also need to provide superior support services to researchers and to develop community recognition programs for quality research.

We have the critical expertise and resources in publishing and production. We will need to expand our knowledge and resource in marketing and sales; customer knowledge; partnering; and community support and development

Existing revenue streams such as journal subscriptions, as well as auxiliary and publishing services, need to be expanded particularly into new emerging markets. External funding options, advertising, and development of mobile apps are seen as potential sources of new revenue.

Our channels to these markets need to be strengthened and expanded. Increased attention needs to be focussed on developing library consortia worldwide and agents in emerging research.

Our top strategic objectives in the next 5 years are as follows:

1. Attract submissions from leading researchers by:

- a. Implementing a promotion program to raise awareness of our journals with leading researchers
- b. Internationalizing our editorial board composition
- c. Expanding our list of journal titles
- d. Increasing researchers' access to our content
- e. Establishing a national recognition awards program for excellence in research

2. Increase revenues by:

- a. Diversifying revenue streams
- b. Establishing competitive journal pricing
- c. Expanding to new emerging markets

3. Enhance our capacity for agility, speed, and flexibility