



PRESS RELEASE

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The Canadian Research Knowledge Network Launches Advocacy Toolkit to Expand Canada's Information Economy

Scholarly research is a public investment, and preserving access to this research should be a public goal.

Ottawa, ON (27 January 2016) – Access to scholarly research is essential in ensuring Canada's success in the global information economy and the current commercial publishing model is placing that access at risk. Today, the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN), a national consortium of 75 universities, represented by their libraries, has launched its Institutional Mobilization Toolkit, a collection of documents and tools to support librarians in communicating challenges of sustainability within the current model to researchers, faculty members and administrators.

In an ecosystem where university libraries have continuously been asked to do more with less, the industry has found itself at a junction where the external and internal funding challenges, as well as an overall lack of understanding of the environment in which libraries must operate, are negatively impacting Canada's ability to ensure our students and researchers have sustainable access to the information required to advance our knowledge economy. The Toolkit acts as a first step by investigating the complexity of the issues from all angles and providing the background necessary for the library community to collaborate with researchers and university administrators on the creation of sustainable, long-term solutions.

"Commercial publishers expect annual increases to their subscription revenue of 5-7% and although CRKN and other consortia are somewhat able to mitigate that impact through consortial licenses, the weakening Canadian dollar continues to threaten the affordability of library resources," says Clare Appavoo, Executive Director of the CRKN. "We've heard it time and time again, the model under which we create, share and access our knowledge economy is broken and the solution lies in working together to create a more sustainable system."

The Toolkit identifies that commercial publishers have a unified and consistent approach to control the market while the academy has no such unified response. The Toolkit is a call to action for the various constituencies to engage in dialogue and discussion, to leverage Canada's collective purchasing power, and to better inform the main actors who have the ability to influence change.

The main challenges the Toolkit addresses include:

- The oligopoly of commercial publishers;
- Promotion and tenure criteria within universities;

- The need for better awareness of publishing alternatives;
- How to ensure democratization of knowledge;
- Focused versus divergent approaches to publishing.

The Institutional Mobilization Toolkit was created by a task group made up of Canadian libraries, with the purpose of raising awareness of and support for a national approach to the challenges of the current scholarly communications model.

The Toolkit is now available, in English and French, to help librarians communicate with researchers, faculty members and administrators about how their publishing choices, and promotions and tenure decisions, impact the larger academic enterprise. To access the toolkit, please visit www.crkn.ca/imgt.

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About the Canadian Research Knowledge Network

The Canadian Research Knowledge Network is a national consortium of 75 Canadian universities, represented by their libraries, which licenses electronic content with traditional commercial and alternative publishers to support research and teaching. For more information, please visit www.crkn.ca.