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More on the future of publishing in biogeography

A recent commentary (McGill et al., 2018) provided a review of the history and a view of the future of scholarly communications in the field of biogeography, written by the editors-in-chief of five “premium” journals in the field: *Journal of Biogeography*, *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, *Ecography*, *Diversity and Distributions*, and *Frontiers in Biogeography*. The authors provide a useful panorama of the diversity of publication models represented among those journals, and suggest that the broader community should play a central role in shaping the future of scientific publishing by means of their choices of journals to which they submit their manuscripts for publication. We agree entirely with these assertions.

The authors stated (briefly) that members of the biogeography community should “invest your time supporting responsible journals as an author, editor, reviewer.” However, we feel (strongly) that they did not make the full point clearly or emphatically enough. While it is true that the community has considerable power as *authors*, that power extends much further. That is, scholarly publishing happens because academics gift or sell their time and energy to the commercial publishing industry by being authors, it is true, but also by playing crucial roles as editors and reviewers. As a consequence, the power that we have is indeed enormous, but it goes beyond “voting” for or against journals by submitting manuscripts, to include for which journals we perform unpaid peer reviews, and to which journals we dedicate time as editors.

As such, we challenge our colleagues around the world, including the authors of the McGill *et al.* (2018) commentary, to wield that power more definitively. Let’s rethink where we invest our time and energy in the scholarly publishing enterprise. We should divest ourselves of the high-cost commercial publishers that are oriented to maximize profits for stockholders, and instead invest our time and effort in journals with publication models that do not include either high-cost institutional subscriptions or high-cost per-paper article processing charges. Although this model presents additional challenges, such as an effective business model, it can keep costs low for the entire academic research enterprise (Peterson et al., 2019), and ensure that limited financial resources can be used within the academy to maximize the benefit in terms of research and education for the broadest,

most global, and most inclusive scientific community (Bonaccorso et al., 2014).

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