

## Journals!

The name stays constant;

The meaning shifts.

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**First:**

**Voice of institutions (e.g. academies)**

**Voice of communities (societies)**

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Until WWII,

commercial journals played a small role only.

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WWII and after (the Cold War):

Research greatly accelerates

Publication needs grow rapidly

Societies and academies have trouble responding to the increased needs.

They use page charges to place limits on the output

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Also, societies' and academies' journals  
are national in scope,  
generally in the national language

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Economic, linguistic and geographic constraints provide an opportunity for commercial journals.

## Economics:

1. They remove page charges
2. They actively aim for the international markets



## Linguistics:

They focus on English and strive to reinforce its already dominant role after WWII, thus increasing the market impact of their publications.

(main resistance: the Soviet Union and France)

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## Geography:

They aim for a multinational market

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But the main shift is  
that they approach scholarly publishing  
from a market rather than a “voice” perspective

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In this mode,  
a scholarly journal becomes a commodity.

It seeks a market.

It seeks market shares.

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The complete morphing of scholarly journals  
required one further step:

The commodity value of the journal, somehow,  
had to be aligned with its intellectual “value”

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The link between the two forms of value  
(economic and intellectual)  
was made possible by a new bibliographic tool:  
The Science Citation Index  
which emerged in the 1960's (Eugene Garfield)

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The focus on citations was initially designed to offer new searching possibilities, and to carry out sociological studies of scientific research (e.g. clusters, research networks, etc).

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However, citations could also give insights into:

- Visibility
- Authority
- Prestige
- Quality
- Excellence

Note the ambiguities...



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Citations could provide a link  
between commercial value  
and intellectual “value”

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Furthermore, citations could be counted:

This led to the rankings of journals

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In this fashion, a scholarly journal  
could become a commodity.

It could seek a market.

It could seek market shares.

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At the same time, “branding”  
(cf. Naomi Klein – **No Logo!**)  
came to dominate the industrial world  
and the commercial scene:  
companies moved away  
from producing objects  
to branding them.

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Likewise, journals moved away  
from supporting communities  
and giving voice to them  
to becoming **branding instruments**:  
They began to **brand** researchers

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Moving into the Internet  
and electronic publishing,  
scholarly publishing encountered  
  
the **PORTAL**

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A portal is little more than a virtual shelf,  
or a one-stop shop.

It is not even as sophisticated as a library.

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But a portal can be greatly enriched  
with various schemes  
to help,  
direct,  
control,  
affect, influence, etc.  
a scholarly reader



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When a portal is enriched by algorithms,  
It becomes a

**PLATFORM**

(the term appears at last...)

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And platforms are extremely powerful:

Think Facebook  
Twitter  
Etc.

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Their power comes from their ability to structure and control a “triple sociology”:

- The relations of humans to documents
- The relations between documents
- The relations between humans, as affected by documents

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The debates presently surrounding Facebook point to all these three “sociologies”.

Similar forces are at work with scholarly platforms, and need to be taken into account.

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With platforms and algorithms,  
including artificial intelligence,  
You can essentially shape  
research policies

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A platform  
**is a lens**  
which modifies  
the landscape you look at

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Whoever defines  
how researchers apprehend  
the research landscape  
holds a great deal of power

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Presently,

through the development of powerful platforms,  
publishers dominate the design of platforms.

**AI changes nothing to this situation; it only  
increases the power to influence researchers.**



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In the case of commercial, publishers,  
they will constantly act to:

- Ensure the preservation of their central role;
- Privilege research programmes that respond to their economic needs

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Where are the researchers in all of this?

How can they change things?

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Researchers, presently,  
are prisoners of evaluations  
conducted on the basis  
of the branding power of  
**journals**

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Platforms tend to dilute  
the effectiveness of journals:  
articles and their relationships  
are foregrounded by platforms

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Institutions, researchers, and funding agencies  
need to work together  
to build new kinds of platforms  
that will respond to their needs,  
and not those of commercial publishers

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There, AI can become crucial.

It can because AI can be shaped by researchers  
to respond to their needs,  
And not those of commercial publishers

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A good way to proceed  
is to structure research  
around big problems

(e.g. Parkinson's disease as funded by Google's  
Sergei Brin, and led by Randy Sheckman,  
or climate change.

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**Molte grazie !**