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1.0 Introduction

The Journal of the International Academy of Hospitality Research is a scholarly, refereed electronic journal, distributed via BITNET and Internet, for researchers in the academic discipline of hotel, restaurant, and institutional management and tourism. As such, it holds several distinctions: (1) it is one of the first, if not the first, among the refereed electronic journals to be marketed at a subscription price; (2) it is aimed at a small, well-structured academic market that has no particular affinity for computers and electronic communication; and (3) like a printed journal, it was planned to serve, and was marketed by direct mail advertising to all in the discipline--not just those who are computer literate and/or have access to BITNET and Internet.

As a result of its development and philosophy, the Journal has had experiences--both positive and negative--which may reflect importantly on the future of electronic journals and the directions which this movement should take in the years immediately ahead. It is the purpose of this paper to present and analyze those experiences.

2.0 Sponsorship and Purpose

JIAHR, as it is called, is sponsored by the International Academy of Hospitality Research, a relatively new organization of some twenty to thirty scholars, most of them leading faculty in schools of hotel, restaurant, and/or institutional management located in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia. It is published by the Scholarly Communications Project of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, in cooperation with the University's Department of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management (HRIM). Launched in the fall of 1990, JIAHR publishes original, refereed papers on all aspects of hospitality and tourism research and is billed as the only journal devoted exclusively to hospitality research.

JIAHR serves a second purpose in electronic communication. The Scholarly Communications Project of Virginia Tech (as the University is known popularly) agreed to publish JIAHR as a pioneer effort to explore--in a very practical way--the frontier of electronic communication of scholarly information. In that sense, the journal serves the entire academic community, not just

hospitality research. As a practical demonstration of the concept of electronic journals, JIAHR was designed in part to encourage the scholarly community to address a "real world" example of what until then had been largely a concept: electronic scholarly journals marketed and distributed via computer networks.

3.0 Background

The idea of JIAHR emerged from concurrent interests of the Scholarly Communications Project (SCP), and the University's HRIM Department. The SCP was originated in the fall of 1988 to: (1) expand the university's activity in publishing scholarly information, and (2) to provide leadership and experimentation in the use of electronic communication of scholarly information as a means of holding down the spiraling costs of scholarly journals and improving the quality of scholarly communication. The project was placed organizationally within the responsibility of Dr. Robert C. Heterick, Vice President for Information Systems, widely known in the area of electronic communication.

The first substantial step toward achieving the project's purposes was a bid in early 1989 to take over publication of a print journal. That bid, made in competition with a large, international commercial publisher of scholarly journals, was submitted to the Society for Experimental Mechanics, Inc., of Bethel, Connecticut, to publish the International Journal of Analytical and Experimental Model Analysis, a highly technical engineering journal. The Society approved the SCP's bid largely because of the university's commitment to holding down prices of scholarly journals and because of the commercial publisher's record of escalating journals prices. Effective January 1990, the SCP began publishing the journal for the society, printing it on campus and distributing it by mail. A year later SCP became its copyright owner.

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In the meantime, Dr. Michael D. Olsen, Head of the Department of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management, and the assistant department head, Dr. Mahmood Khan, contacted the project director about the possibility of launching a scholarly journal in hospitality research. Dr. Olsen was president of the International Academy of Hospitality Research, whose purpose was to promote the interests of researchers in this field. Dr. Khan was an IAHR fellow. Dr. Olsen was also associate editor of one of the leading journals in the hospitality field, and a frequent contributor to others. He and Dr. Khan had developed the concept of such a journal, organized its editorial board, and formulated its editorial policy. The project director offered the suggestion that it be launched as an electronic journal, and after much discussion that was agreed.

The decision to launch JIAHR as an electronic journal was based

on several considerations. The primary reason was economic; the cost of launching an electronic journal was minuscule when compared to that of launching a print journal. Other considerations included: (1) those in the relatively new academic field of hospitality research were more receptive to an innovative publishing approach than scholars in more classic disciplines; (2) members of the Academy welcomed the opportunity to be part of a pioneering effort in the field of scholarly communication; (3) the small size of the scholarly community--an estimated 500 persons worldwide engaged in hospitality research--was regarded favorably, as helpful in managing the journal's development and planning its future; and (4) the responsiveness of electronic communications--the speed of transmission as well as the ease of two-way communications among editors, authors, and readers--was considered an additional asset. The idea was submitted to the membership of the Academy in the April of 1990 and was soundly approved.

4.0 Planning the Journal

As president of the sponsoring Academy, Dr. Olsen appointed Dr. Khan as Editor and Dr. Eliza Tse of the HRIM faculty as managing editor. Plans for publication of the journal were announced in May. A call for papers was published that summer, and a committee was established to plan the journal's launching.

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The planning committee was composed of the managing editor and representatives of the Scholarly Communication Project and representatives from the University's computing center, library, and faculty. A Steering Committee for the entire Scholarly Communications Project, composed of the University's library director, computing center director, director of communications resources, faculty representatives, and persons representing the University's printing programs, also provided leadership for the journal, as did the Vice President for Information Systems.

In a series of about ten meetings in the spring, summer, and fall of 1990, the planning committee worked out the details of the journal's development. The following decisions were reached. Each issue of the journal would consist essentially of a single scholarly paper. The publication schedule would call for ten to twenty papers (issues) each year. Each issue (one scholarly paper) would be delivered in its entirety electronically to each subscriber as an e-mail message, and the issue would be sent out whenever it was judged suitable. The journal would be in ASCII format, and graphics would not be accepted. The journal would be marketed by a direct mail campaign. Subscriptions would be maintained on a closed list server, and issues would be sent via the list server to the BITNET and Internet addresses of subscribers. The journal, according to minutes of an early meeting, "should be of a nature that can evolve, step by step, and in step with both technological advance and current practices

of scholarly life." Another important distinction was that, to the best of the editors' ability, the journal would serve the entire field of hospitality research, not just those in the field who were sophisticated in the use of computers; subscribers unable to receive the journal electronically would be sent issues on a delayed basis either on paper or on disks.

Behind these decisions was a philosophy of trying to minimize the adjustment of traditional readers to the innovations of an electronic journal by preserving many of the "print journal" customs: charging a fee, delivering the journal to a "mailbox," offering both individual and institutional subscriptions, marketing by direct mail, and maintaining traditional copyright. Quite consciously, the committee sought to reach out to journal subscribers, authors, editors, and others "where they are," and gently lead them down the path of electronic communication. The committee thought that, to change people's habits, it helps to work with the habits that need changing. By no means did the committee feel this should be the only approach to electronic journals, or even the best approach, but it was an approach worth pursuing.

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The committee also agreed on a policy to archive past issues of the journal in the university computing center and make the archive available electronically to all current subscribers via "GET" commands to the closed list server.

The committee agreed to copyright each issue primarily as a matter of protection of the author and publisher's rights; however, as a matter of editorial policy, the editors agreed to be very liberal in granting copying privileges, until such time that a copyright problem was perceived, at which time greater restriction might be imposed. Subscribing libraries were allowed to distribute the journal to their own constituents with little restraint; however, the editors did not broadcast this policy widely until there was greater experience with it.

The journal was registered with the Copyright Clearance Center, and a notification that "Limited duplication is permitted for academic or research purposes only" was placed in the journal. An ISSN was obtained: 1052-6099.

5.0 Charging a Subscription Fee

One of the most important and controversial decisions was to offer the journal, and to market it, at a subscription price. At least one member of the committee argued that it should be made available to subscribers without cost. The public announcement of the journal with plans to charge a subscription fee received some negative comment from observers nationally, especially in the electronic media, who argued that scholarly information distributed on BITNET should be in the public domain and that

BITNET and Internet should not be used for "commercial" purposes. Despite this, the committee decided to charge \$30 per year for institutional subscriptions, \$20 for faculty/individual subscriptions, and \$10 for student subscriptions. The decision was made for several reasons.

First, the committee felt that if subscribers purchased their subscriptions, they--and all others--would take the journal--and all electronic journals--more seriously. A subscriber's investment in the journal would serve as testimony to its worth to authors, readers, libraries, and promotion and tenure committees in the universities. Moreover, libraries and others unaccustomed to electronic journals would be more inclined to make special efforts to receive and accommodate an electronic journal that they had paid for, than one they had not paid for.

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Second, marketing the journal for a fee would tend to "force the issue" of electronic scholarly journals. Librarians everywhere then were discussing the pros and cons of electronic communication of scholarly information. The committee wanted to place at least one network-based electronic journal in front of the library community in the same way a printed journal was presented--that is, through a marketing campaign and a subscription "purchase." It was a custom libraries thoroughly understood. What better way, the committee thought, to encourage libraries to move into this new age of electronic communication?

Finally, some members of the committee disagreed with the argument that BITNET and Internet should carry only material that was "free." Such a policy, it was feared, might exclude much serious scholarly work of significant value, while encouraging information of less value. Because of the non-profit nature of the journal, it is felt that JIAHR's pricing policy did not conflict with network policy prohibiting use of the networks for commercial purposes.

Financial considerations had very little weight in the decision to charge a subscription price. Income from the sale of subscriptions--amounting to less than \$1,500 in the first year--will never be more than a very small fraction of the University's and the Academy's investment of time and resources into the journal. The income does not go to the Scholarly Communications Project but is returned to the University.

6.0 Editorial Policies

Fellows of the Academy serve, ex officio, as members of the journal's Editorial Board, and they, plus other members of the Academy as well as non-members, are asked to write papers for it. Papers are submitted electronically, either as a file or on disk, and are sent to one, two, or three referees for review. If it survives this screening, the paper is given final editing and

placed as the feature item of an issue. Each paper is published with an abstract, key words, and references. In each issue will be found the list of the Editorial Board members, instructions to authors, copyright information, and other information of value to subscribers.

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The fellows of the Academy who comprise the Editorial Board, in addition to Dr. Olsen and Dr. Khan, are Jon Bareham of Brighton Polytechnic in the United Kingdom, Horace A. Divine of Pennsylvania State University, Chuck Gee of the University of Hawaii, Donald E. Hawkins of George Washington University, Michael Haywood of the University of Guelph in Canada, William Kent of Auburn University, Robert C. Lewis of the University of Guelph, Ken McCleary of Virginia Tech, Robert C. Miller of the University of Central Florida, Turgut Var of Texas A&M University, and Brian Wise of Footscray Institute of Technology in Australia.

7.0 Marketing

Marketing the journal began in September 1990, with the mailing of printed brochures and a covering letter from Dr. Olsen to a list of some 400 faculty members at 138 degree-granting hotel schools worldwide as well as to their libraries. The brochure was much like that of any printed journal, providing information about the organization, purpose, editorial policy, and subscription prices, with a special section on "the electronic part." In addition to customary information, the return subscription form requested the subscriber's e-mail address. Use of credit cards was allowed.

In addition, Paul Gherman, Director of University Libraries at Virginia Tech and a strong supporter of the Project, sent personal letters to the directors of the Association of Research Libraries calling attention to the journal as "the first journal I am aware of to be distributed solely electronically on a subscription basis." He added "I don't have to tell you the importance to libraries of successful development of this kind of journal." He also said that the journal would offer "new challenges for librarians: how to handle it within your institution; how to catalogue it; and I suspect you'll encounter problems we've not anticipated . . ."

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Returns from the mailing came in slowly. By November, when it was time to send out the first issue, there were about thirty paid subscriptions, rather evenly divided among members of the Academy, individual faculty members, and subscribing libraries. In late March 1991, the journal had 53 paid subscriptions, slightly more than anticipated in pre-publication planning. Marketing efforts were halted deliberately after the one mailing,

as the publisher wanted to work closely with those subscribers already on board. It can be noted that the success of the one mailing (nearly a ten percent return rate if one includes Academy members and a five percent return rate excluding them) indicated that further marketing would produce additional subscriptions.

8.0 The Subscribers

Most subscribers were in the United States, but there were also subscriptions from Australia, Canada, England, France, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Scotland. An analysis of those subscriptions is revealing.

Among the subscribers were approximately thirty individual faculty members, both within and outside the Academy membership, and a lone student. Of these, only a few had e-mail addresses at the time they subscribed. Six months later, approximately 25 of the 30 individual subscribers had e-mail addresses, and others were working to get them, showing the impact the journal was beginning to have on subscribers who were unsophisticated in computer use.

Nevertheless, a sizable proportion of the individual subscribers--perhaps a fifth--appeared either unable or unwilling to work out the problem of getting an e-mail address where their electronic journal could be sent. The experience with these individuals may cast light on the problems e-journals generally face in the future, and possible solutions to those problems.

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The nature of their problems was almost as varied as the individuals. Several faculty reported they did not have access to BINET or Internet. Numerous subscribers did not know that their institutions had access to BITNET and/or Internet, when in fact they did. Some did not have access to the networks in their departments. Several, after learning their institutions were on BITNET and/or Internet, still were not successful in their efforts to obtain e-mail addresses. A few faculty reported they did not have time to check their e-mail. The lone student subscriber, who successfully struggled to obtain an e-mail address solely to receive JIAHR, asked to be telephoned whenever an issue was sent out so that she would know when to check her e-mail. One faculty member thought he was subscribing to a print journal and withdrew his subscription when he learned it was electronic.

Although these numbers are small, they may be significant. They indicate that, even among interested faculty who are willing to pay for an electronic journal, it is difficult for many to work out the electronic part--to obtain and make good use of an e-mail address in receiving an electronic journal.

The remaining 23 subscribers tell a far more encouraging story,

and their story may also have significance for e-journals generally. They are, for the most part, 23 university libraries--nineteen in the United States, two in Canada, two in Europe, and two in Australia. Nearly all of them indicate they are receiving the journal and are making it available to their clientele. Many appear excited about the advent of an electronic journal. Several indicate they are adjusting their procedures to accommodate JIAHR. For some, JIAHR is serving as the prototype, the vanguard, of what they anticipate will be numerous electronic journals.

Because of the obvious implications of the Project's activities for libraries, the Scholarly Communications Project was moved organizationally on July 1, 1991 to the Virginia Tech Library, where it can work more closely with library personnel and reflect library objectives.

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9.0 Library Handling of the Journal

The Cornell School of Hotel Administration is sharing the journal with its faculty and staff via a local area network, with the enthusiastic permission of the publisher, and the innovation was greeted with considerable excitement and praise. One state university considered mounting the journal on the campus mainframe either through a conferencing facility or on its local BITNET list server. Another considered storage on a microcomputer in the main library reference area. One library asked permission to download individual issues onto a floppy disk that would be made available for patrons as well as to make an archival copy and a circulating copy. At Virginia Tech, JIAHR's home base, a library task force, after lengthy study, recommended that the library store texts of e-journals on the university mainframe for the indefinite future and provide terminals for dedicated access to those texts. Clearly, as one librarian put it, questions and reports from libraries indicated "a transition from paper to electronic mind-set."

Not all library reports were encouraging. One library subscribed without access to either BITNET or Internet. Another tried to cancel its subscription after it learned the journal was electronic (until a faculty member interceded, unasked, in the journal's behalf). Several libraries asked for second copies of issues because they had lost the first, usually through equipment failure or procedural error. Nevertheless, the tone of the reactions of libraries was clearly encouraging; most subscribing libraries indicated they are ready, willing, and eager to move ahead with electronic journals. As evidence of this, one library, Dartmouth, subscribed even though it has no hotel school. Presumably, it subscribed for the opportunity to work with an electronic journal.

Success or failure was not affected by geography. The journal was delivered successfully in such places as Australia, Europe,

Hong Kong, and New Zealand as well as throughout the United States and Canada.

The first issue of JIAHR was sent out via the list server on November 26, 1990. An indication of the problems was that, when asked, only a handful of the approximately thirty paying subscribers reported they had received it in good order on the first try. By the second issue, on February 20, 1991, it appeared that about forty or fifty subscribers, including nearly all of the libraries, received it in good order.

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10.0 Finances

Meanwhile, another significant--even if it is very obvious--aspect of the journal's operation was becoming very clear in the operations of the Scholarly Communications Project: The SCP's print journal was costing more than \$5,000 an issue for printing and distribution; the corresponding cost of the electronic journal was nearly nothing. The significance of this enormous advantage cannot be overstated.

The second issue of the Journal announced that the journal was archived electronically at Virginia Tech, and past issues were now be available electronically to subscribers. The issue also announced plans for a moderated discussion capability, which was implemented in the summer of 1991.

11.0 Other Problems

There also were additional unfavorable developments. Of most importance was a dearth of acceptable papers submitted for possible publication in JIAHR. Although the publishers had anticipated putting out ten to twenty papers, or issues, per year, only three were published in the first six months. Publication of a fourth paper had to be postponed because the paper depended so heavily on graphics as to be of little value without them. A number of other papers, submitted for publication, were rejected in the review process.

JIAHR's editors assert that the electronic nature of the journal is not a major factor in the lack of adequate papers. They point out that hospitality research is a small field, and scholarly production is correspondingly small. Print journals in the field report similar problems. The quality of papers published in JIAHR unquestionably is high. The editors believe that submissions will increase as the journal becomes better known and its quality is recognized. However, if the number of issues in the first year is significantly less than promised, the publisher will either extend subscriptions without charge or otherwise make amends.

The inability to use graphics, although initially considered only

a minor handicap, is now considered of much importance. The publisher and editors have placed increased emphasis on finding a way to use graphics in the journal, perhaps by sending it out in both ASCII and PostScript formats.

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12.0 The Future

The experiences in publishing JIAHR suggest several possible directions for scholarly communicators and libraries to consider as they plan for the future in electronic communication. Perhaps the overriding conclusion is that future success of electronic scholarly journals can be materially affected by concerted efforts of libraries. The difficulties that individuals--faculty, students, and others--have had trying to receive JIAHR indicate that many persons in the hospitality discipline--and probably others--are not fully prepared for electronic journals. Assuredly, many are ready and enthusiastic, but many are not. On the other hand, the interest, eagerness, and ability that libraries have shown in handling JIAHR suggest that the most efficacious way for electronic journals to reach the scholarly community may be through libraries. This conclusion has important ramifications.

The editors and publisher of JIAHR plan to work more closely with subscribing libraries in the future to determine the ways that they process and use JIAHR and other electronic journals. The moderated computer conference which JIAHR introduced offers opportunities for librarians to discuss among themselves and with the editors some of the more effective ways of delivering e-journals to readers. Together, they may be able to resolve the problem of sending graphics, by PostScript or other means, for maximum satisfaction.

Already, several subscribing libraries have helped individual faculty at their institutions in receiving copies of JIAHR electronically. This may suggest that electronic journals can be sent to faculty through their libraries, which can then distribute them (Cornell is doing this with JIAHR), and individual faculty subscriptions can be either eliminated or limited to those computer-literate persons who need little help. Libraries can do much to promote the success of electronic journals, and it is essential that they do so.

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If libraries and publishers can jointly work out the means of delivering electronic texts to their faculty and students in a satisfactory manner, the rewards can be enormous. It seems apparent that such means can be developed. Like those at Cornell, Virginia Tech, and many other universities, libraries should be eager to subscribe to electronic journals (most especially those that cost nothing!) and they should move vigorously in accommodating them and making them available to

their clients. To build on-campus understanding and support for e-journals, libraries can initiate special promotions for them on their campuses, such as visual displays both in and outside the library, special educational programs, faculty involvement in establishing e-journal policies and practices, and seminars and discussion groups. All involved in scholarly communication will be the beneficiaries of such action, but none will benefit more than the libraries.

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