It Is An Issue Just for the Sciences

Humanities alert! Humanities alert! The scholarly publishing cost crisis has hit the science and social science areas hardest in recent years with unit costs of scholarly journals rising 600 percent between 1982 and 2002. At the same time the costs of scholarly journals in the humanities have risen nearly 250 percent. Collectively university libraries spent 44 percent of their budgets for books in 1986, but only 28 percent in 1997 because they shifted funds from books to sustain journals subscriptions. University presses, the major source for scholarly monographs, have seen their support and subsidies greatly reduced with state cutbacks in funding for higher education and shrinking private endowments. Worldwide, book production has more than doubled in the last two decades, but libraries are acquiring 26 percent fewer scholarly books. A ripple effect of these phenomena is that university presses have trimmed their lists and become more selective when selecting manuscripts for publication. The crisis in scholarly communications isn’t just a problem for the sciences anymore! For suggestions on how to deal with the overall problem of scholarly publishing in the humanities see http://www.arl.org/newsltr/228/crisis.html. And for more information on the crisis as it affects all disciplines, please explore this Web site by clicking on the icons above!

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