

Review 4 (spring 2001). Accessed Dec 31, 2004, www.uwe.ac.uk/bbs/trr/ISSUE4/Is4-1_1.htm.

This article was later found in an Emerald journal with no acknowledgement of the original publication:

———. “Looking for Good Research in Management—A Publisher’s Case Study.” *Management Decision* 37, no. 7 (2001): 594–98.

What is also clear is that the owners did not follow the guidelines for their own journal, which clearly states in its notes for contributors that, “articles submitted to the journal should be original contributions and should not be under consideration for any other publication at the same time.”⁷

Implications for Scholarly Communication

At a time when academics have expressed great fears that commercial publishers are exploiting the scholarly publishing process, these Emerald/MCB findings study suggest that the trust between the academy and a commercial publisher may have been broken. To summarize the implications for the academy:

1. Academic institutions have discovered that they have been unknowingly purchasing duplicate material for nearly thirty years.
2. Multiple copies of academic articles have disrupted the record of publication, and confusion in the literature has arisen on which copy to cite. The duplication of articles may have also artificially increased the impact factor (and thus the prestige) of these journals.
3. The peer review process, which is at the heart of scholarly communication, has been cast into doubt. Furthermore, conflicts of interest when individuals serve as owners, managers, editors, and authors of academic journals lead us to question whether these individuals may not have been acting in the best interest of scholarly communication. Commercial interests have outweighed editorial independence.

Questions to Emerald

Emerald’s first public response did not adequately address the most important issue: What specific changes has the company made to address these problems and to ensure that they will not reoccur?⁸

When academic publishing strives for transparency, why has it been so difficult to obtain information on the functions of Emerald/MCB directors? Does the company believe

that these findings suggest conflict of interest, and if not, why not? Answering these questions might help Emerald regain the trust of the academic community.—*Philip M. Davis* (pmd8@cornell.edu), *Life Sciences Librarian, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York*

References

1. Philip Davis, “The Ethics of Republishing: A Case Study of Emerald/MCB University Press Journals,” *Library Resources & Technical Services* 49, no. 2 (spring 2005): [I’ll insert pages].
2. Scott Carlson, “Publisher Ran Identical Articles in Multiple Journals without Acknowledgment, Librarian Finds,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Nov. 22, 2004. Accessed Dec. 8, 2004, <http://chronicle.com/free/2004/11/2004112205n.htm>.
3. Gillian Crawford, “Dual Publication: Emerald’s Response (Press Announcement),” Nov 2004. Accessed Dec. 8, 2004, <http://ariel.emeraldinsight.com/vl=3959651/cl=108/nw=1/rpsv/news/press/dual.htm>.
4. MCB UP Limited, “Directors and Officials,” Dec 31, 2001. Accessed Dec. 8, 2004, <http://people.cornell.edu/pages/pmd8/MCB.tif>; Emerald Group Publishing Limited (formally MCB UP Limited), “Directors and Officials,” Dec 31, 2003. Accessed Dec. 8, 2005, <http://people.cornell.edu/pages/pmd8/EGP.pdf>.
5. Carlson, “Publisher Ran Identical Articles in Multiple Journals without Acknowledgment, Librarian Finds.”
6. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, “Directors and Officials,” Dec 31, 2003.
7. Emerald, *Management Decision*, “Notes for Contributors.” Accessed May 1, 2005, <http://thesis.emeraldinsight.com/vl=2042105/cl=35/nw=1/rpsv/journals/md/notes.htm>.
8. MCB UP Limited, “Directors and Officials,” Dec 31, 2001.

(Written in response to “The Ethics of Republishing: A Case Study of Emerald/MCB University Press Journals,” by Philip M. Davis [49, no. 2], and his letter to the editor in this issue.)

February 1, 2005

My first reaction to Mr. Davis’s article was to doubt that this was a major issue and to shelter behind the view that “would anyone in their right mind believe that Emerald would knowingly support a practice that would undermine its standing in the library community?”

If there had been *but one complaint from a customer concerning republication* during the decades prior to Mr. Davis taking an interest in Emerald, we would have reacted accordingly. Mr. Davis’s subsequent activities and research—notably the letter referred to above and his presence at ALA Midwinter 2005—quickly disabused senior colleagues at Emerald of this notion.

It is evident that the press announcement “Dual Publication: Emerald’s Response” made in November 2004 gave insufficient satisfaction in some quarters—though we would argue that it did go some way to claiming that the

magnitude of the problem had been overstated, and that it did indeed address the fact that we had acknowledged and accepted the problem, taken steps to address it by tagging affected papers on our database, and unambiguously clarifying our procedures at our November 2004 board meeting.

In this note two issues are addressed:

- Emerald's origins—and the bearing that these had on the generation of knowledge from the field of management (which was not for dissemination to the academic community exclusively).
- The action proposed in an attempt to ameliorate the library/LIS community specifically.

There will be no attempt in this response to justify republication, though it is felt that there is some purpose in a measure of explanation as to *why* it occurred. As Mr. Davis has referred to *caveat emptor*, I will simply add a qualified *mea culpa*.

Emerald's Origins

Of considerable significance from our perspective is the fact that Emerald was rooted in research and writing, not publishing. In 1969, forty-eight members of the academic staff at the University of Bradford Management Centre, plus Dr. Barrie Pettman of the University of Hull, plus one non-academic who was associated with Dr. Pettman in the Institute of Scientific Business, became equal shareholders in a company named Management Consultants Bradford Limited (MCB).

Consulting work (not publishing) undertaken by the fifty shareholders was the purpose in forming MCB. Bradford Management Centre, one of the top three business schools in the UK at the time, was known, colloquially, as the "Businessman's Business School." This particular fact had a major impact on the nature of MCB's and, subsequently, Emerald's, publishing strategy to this day—the association between theory and practice.

Management Decision, owned by the major British publishing company IPC Ltd., was adopted by the Institute of Scientific Business as its house journal. *Management Decision* was very quickly sold to several shareholders of MCB, who established a separate company MCB (Management Decision) Ltd.

This was followed by the launch and acquisition of a number of other titles in different functional areas of management, with the result that toward the end of the 1970s groups of MCB Ltd shareholders owned MCB (Physical Distribution Management) Ltd., MCB (European Journal of Marketing) Ltd., MCB (European Training) Ltd., MCB (Social Economics) Ltd., and so on. In addition to journals

primarily targeted at the academic community, the individual companies sought to satisfy demands (arising, particularly, from the corporate sector) for publications and resources in fields such as training and development. Subject matter specialists thus acquired their own journals, which were, generally, edited by one of the shareholders of the single journal companies. Editors drew upon their subject matter networks for the generation of copy.

I was surprised, incidentally, that Mr. Davis, as a librarian, viewed "management" in his article as an area of "similar subject scope." If so there must be an awful lot of duplication of ideas (if not word-for-word text) in the thousand plus journals published in the management field!

To be absolutely clear—MCB journal companies were commercial in their formation. Investment, losses, profits were down to the owners. At one time during the early 1980s we had to enter into guarantees secured against our own properties to ensure that MCB remained in business. This was entirely consistent with the view that we had of ourselves as entrepreneurial business school academics.

As far as the journals were concerned, the aim was to despatch issues on time. Overlapping ownership of the range of journal companies probably led to what was felt to be appropriate republication to satisfy the needs of distinctly different communities; for example, an article from the *European Journal of Marketing* could well have been included also in *Physical Distribution Management*.

From about 1980 the separate journal companies were merged into a single company, MCB Publications Ltd., subsequently MCB University Press Ltd., subsequently Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.

One matter that has intrigued Mr. Davis is Barmarick Publications. Dr. Pettman's interest in publishing journals preceded the formation of MCB Limited. At the time of merging the MCB journal companies at the end of the 1970s the decision was taken not to include the Barmarick titles. MCB/Emerald has, nevertheless, continued to take responsibility (at a charge) for providing subscription management services for Barmarick publications.

As some of Barmarick's titles were located in areas that it was felt would add to the breadth of MCB's portfolio, they were included in the Emerald full-text, on-line database, first launched in 1996. The decision was taken some time ago to drop them from the Emerald full-text database in 2006.

Reverting to the origins of MCB, in addition to editing, we had absolutely no qualms in publishing accounts of our research findings in the journals owned by MCB companies. Being members of one of the leading British business schools we had confidence in the quality of research we undertook. At the personal level I was chairman of the largest, and most successful, doctoral program in management in Europe from 1978 to 1982. I co-authored

with my deputy chairman John Sharp a highly regarded book, *The Management of a Student Research Project*, 1st ed. (Alershot, England: Gower Pr., 1983 [1st ed.], 1996 [2nd ed.], 2002 [3rd ed.]). Now in my seventies it is unlikely that there will be a fourth edition to which my name will be attached! I also have experience of editing *The International Journal of Operations and Production Management* from 1981 until it was handed over to an editorial team at UMIST Manchester in 1995, and which is, so I am advised, highly regarded in North America, and is listed by ISI. Of the hundreds of papers published during my editorship there is (possibly) one instance of republication following dual submission.

What Action Do We Propose?

We are satisfied that having taken the necessary steps to address the specific problems identified by Mr. Davis that our processes of control should match those of any publishing company of standing. Our systems will stand scrutiny. I make that claim in the knowledge that some readers of this note may not be prepared to accept reassurance proffered in this way. So:

- An invitation is extended to up to five directors of ARL (Association of Research Libraries) libraries (or their designated substitutes) to spend up to one week at Emerald in Bradford, England, (at our expense) to review our processes.
- We will endorse research to address issues of significance to the librarian/LIS community, in a manner to be agreed with the American Library Association.
- In instances where customers have suffered from significant and unambiguous republication—for example, in the unusual case of journals with different titles carrying substantially the same content (a consequence of acquisition)—we will ensure that these customers receive compensation.

For further information on these please contact Gillian Crawford, our head of corporate communications, at gcrawford@emeraldinsight.com.

Even-Handedness of Mr. Davis's Study

The editorial department at Emerald has been giving detailed consideration to the instances of republication cited by Mr. Davis. A conclusion they have reached is as follows:

We would like to share our findings from our own survey of Emerald journal content. We have undertaken an analysis of the database and found that 560 original papers

have been republished without proper attribution. This represents about 1.1 percent of the total database content.

Mr. Davis has correctly identified republished articles in an issue of *Career Development International* early in 2001, and a paper republished in *Equal Opportunities International* (a journal for which Emerald does not have editorial control) in 2003. These aside, there have been no instances of deliberate republication by Emerald (with the exception of anniversary issues, which are fully attributed, and a small number of book reviews) since 2001. This includes all journal articles that are contained in the ASLIB journals that were acquired by Emerald in 2001. Any example of article republication that has occurred after this date has been due to author or administrative error (this occurred three times in 2003; we have reviewed our processes to mitigate against this happening in the future).

Figure 1 shows that this is largely a historic problem. Cumulatively, 87 percent of republication took place in or prior to 1999, and more than two thirds in or prior to 1997.

It should also be pointed out that attributions were provided in some of the cases that Mr. Davis highlights. For example, figure 2 of his article refers to a paper that was republished in the *European Journal of Marketing*. Acknowledgement was made in the editorial to this journal issue. In some other cases, attributions appeared in print issues of a journal, and therefore are shown on the PDF versions on our online database.

We are in the process of updating the database to ensure all attributions are fully visible. This includes notification of subsequent publication as well as first publication.

Mr. Davis has, for reasons that are unclear to us, expressed interest in MCB/Barmarick/Emerald ownership. I trust that his suspicions have been clarified by what is written above.

He appears to accept without question that the other publishers he cites are virtually “whiter than white” in the matter of republication. It would seem, therefore, that

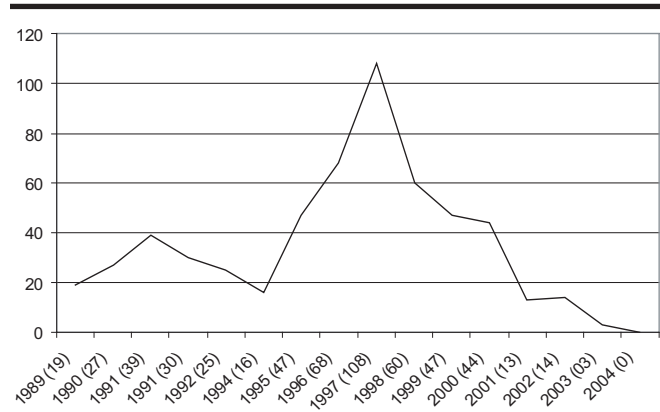


Figure 1. Instances of duplicate republication.

his somewhat gratuitous aim of “educating the publishing industry” is rather unnecessary, which causes me to reflect again on what his aims might be.

Is Mr. Davis in a position to guarantee that other publishers satisfy expected standards in the matter of republication? If he cannot offer such a guarantee, should he not

extend his study to include a number of these in order that he may reach a conclusion that is generalizable? Or is potential bias acceptable in a study of this nature?—*Dr. Keith Howard, Chairman, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bradford, England*