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Review of Irving Louis Horowitz, *Communicating Ideas: The Politics of Scholarly Publishing*

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NOTE: At the time of publication, the author Martha L. Brogan was affiliated with Yale University. Currently June 2007, she is Associate University Librarian for Collection Development and Management at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Review of Irving Louis Horowitz, *Communicating Ideas: The Politics of Scholarly Publishing*

**Abstract**

*Communicating Ideas* is the "second expanded edition," released in a paperback by Transaction Publishers, of a book first issued by Oxford University Press in 1986 under the alternate subtitle *The Crisis of Publishing in a Post-Industrial Society*. Although the subject, scholarly communication, is of interest to academic librarians, the way that the book has been assembled exemplifies some of the more troubling aspects of academic publishing today.

**Comments**

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Book Reviews

Recycling Ideas


Communicating Ideas is the "second expanded edition," released in paperback by Transaction Publishers, of a book first issued by Oxford University Press in 1986 under the alternate subtitle The Crisis of Publishing in a Post-Industrial Society. Although the subject, scholarly communication, is of interest to academic librarians, the way in which the book has been assembled exemplifies some of the more troublesome aspects of academic publishing today. The 1986 volume is poorly written, carelessly edited, and of questionable scholarship, yet it was produced by an established and prolific author, working in concert with a reputable scholarly publisher. Now, five years later, a second edition is published that not only leaves the basic errors of the first uncorrected, but also compounds them. Moreover, because Horowitz is not forthright or accurate about the origins of his essays, librarians are misled into thinking that much of the material is new, when a lot of it is quite dated.

Irving Louis Horowitz, the Hannah Arendt Professor of Political Science and Sociology at Rutgers University, is the author of numerous articles, reviews, and books on socioeconomic development, public policy, political sociology, and the sociology of knowledge. Identifying himself as "essentially an essayist rather than a writer of lengthy tomes," Horowitz has published a number of anthologies of his writings. Oxford University Press is scheduled to publish his next book, tentatively titled The Decomposition of Sociology, in 1993.1

Horowitz also enjoys considerable influence in the field of scholarly publishing. He is the president of Transaction Publishers, a social science press that publishes over one hundred titles a year and includes almost fifty periodical and serial titles in its consortium. His spouse, Mary E. Curtis, serves as publisher and senior vice-president of Transaction and has coauthored several influential essays with him. Horowitz is editor-in-chief of and a frequent contributor to Society, Transaction's flagship journal, which enjoys a circulation of 10,000 and prides itself on reaching out beyond the academy to decision makers and the informed public by presenting social science research findings in a "readable and useful manner."2 Horowitz also serves on the editorial board of and contributes articles to several other Transaction journals, including Publishing Research Quarterly and Academic Questions. Given the breadth of Horowitz's experience, it should come as no surprise that he is an active speaker on the conference circuit, appearing before such audiences as the Modern Language Association, the Society for Scholarly Publishing, and the National Information Standards Organization.

Communicating Ideas is a compilation of Horowitz's papers and speeches about scholarly communication. The book consists of twenty-four chapters, eight of which are "new" to the second edition. Horowitz considers how technology has
transformed scholarly publishing, including its impact on copyright legislation. He is concerned about the interplay between the consumer's right to information (“fair use”) versus the author's and publisher's proprietary right to economic recognition for their product (“fair return”). He also describes the major categories of publishing (trade, textbook, and professional) as well as some of the characteristics of scholarly publishing, in general, and social science publishing, in particular. He comments on the "gatekeeping functions" of academic publishers and outlines the safeguards in place "to reduce the probability of issuing fraudulent or plagiarized materials." Other chapters, particularly those added to the second edition, are narrow in focus and thin in content, and will, therefore, interest only a limited audience. They address issues such as the growth of specialist journals, publishing about philanthropy, the role of the Festschrift, and the proliferation of publishing prizes. The book closes with a startling essay about Horowitz's early publishing venture, Paine-Whitman Publishers.

Horowitz's approach to the material is at times theoretical and philosophical, and at others, particularly in the second edition, pragmatic and "nuts-and-bolts" in orientation. Because of the diversity of subjects and variation in approach, the book lacks internal coherence and does not progressively develop a thesis about scholarly communication. Moreover, serious problems arise when one attempts to reconcile Horowitz's ideas about scholarly communication with his practice, and as a result, some of his opinions seem disingenuous.

In *Communicating Ideas*, Horowitz promotes the "calibrating-effect" of social science research findings through "mediating publications." According to his ideal, social science research, originally conveyed in a scholarly form to a relatively elite audience, would reach an ever-widening circle in society as it is retransmitted via different media. Horowitz favors a "fluid notion of social science delivery systems" so that various media can be exploited. He explains: "What first appears as a magazine article may filter into the network of social science users differentially. For example, the same article may be delivered in preliminary form to a professional society, then published as a scholarly essay, then be transformed into a popular magazine, finally to be made part of an anthology." This pattern describes the progression of much of Horowitz's own work, including *Communicating Ideas*, and he is quick to point out the positive aspects of this "calibrating-effect." His philosophy is essentially linked to democratic principles that aim to disperse information, and beneficial social research findings in particular, as widely as possible. Arguing that new technologies add value to traditional forms of scholarly publishing rather than replace them, Horowitz refers to a "multi-tiered system" in which various formats (ranging from books to interactive video) coexist. He points with considerable pride to an article on the Philadelphia prison system that appeared in *Society* and subsequently formed the basis for a CBS-TV report watched "by approximately 25 million people." As a result of this exposure, a number of prison reforms were instituted. Although Horowitz acknowledges that this level of impact is rare, it is, nonetheless, the goal to which he and *Society* aspire.

Horowitz, however, seems oblivious to some of the disadvantages of "calibration." Much of his work makes more sense in its original form than it does republished in *Communicating Ideas*. For example, chapter 1, which has the opaque title, "Valuational Presuppositions of the New Technology," was more persuasive in its original form, namely, as three distinct book reviews, than it is in *Communicating Ideas*, where these reviews are pasted together with a few interpolated paragraphs. Likewise, chapter 13, "Gatekeeping Functions and Publishing Truths," is more compelling when read in its original context, with Horowitz and Curtis as a pair of respondents to a symposium essay by Richard Kluger, "On Truth in Publishing: The
Cost of Integrity," that appeared in The Nation in 1978. Chapter 16, "Experts, Audiences, and Publics," in which Horowitz articulates his notion of "calibration," is much more interesting as a 1974 report, "Mediating Journals: Reaching Out to a Public beyond the Scientific Community," where readers can benefit from the full give-and-take among symposium participants, than it is in Communicating Ideas where Horowitz simply strings together his remarks, as if they were a continuous train of thought, with no indication that he has deleted the intervening dialogue. In Horowitz's case, the "fluid delivery system" rapidly becomes—to the unsuspecting librarian—a flood of virtually identical copies of his work located in different publications. As more and more academic librarians become mindful of the costs exacted by duplication within their collections, they may be distressed to discover that because of Horowitz's practice of republishing without informing them, or of changing titles without changing content, their institutions have naively purchased five barely distinguishable versions of the second chapter of Communicating Ideas, "New Technologies, Scientific Information, and Democratic Choice."9

Although Horowitz identifies ten previously published chapters, according to my estimation another ten acknowledgments are missing entirely. In other words, at least twenty of the twenty-four chapters appear in print elsewhere, as outlined in the accompanying table. Republishing and repackaging material in new forms has become an accepted practice in academic publishing and has long been part of Horowitz's repertoire, but with it comes the obligation of forthright documentation. This is not only a matter of professional courtesy and consumer respect but also of copyright compliance. In making decisions about whether or not to add a book to their collections, librarians rely on authors and publishers to inform them honestly about its prior publication history.

Horowitz's penchant for unacknowledged republishing leaves him open to the criticism of "self-plagiarism." In a recent contribution to the electronic discussion group, HUMANIST: Humanities Computing, Irving Hexham distinguishes self-plagiarism from the legitimate recycling of a scholar's work in the following way: "Self-plagiarism occurs when no indication is given that the work is being recycled and where a clear effort has been made, through changing the paragraph breaks, capitalization, and the substitution of English with foreign terms, to cause the reader to believe they are reading something completely new."10 Hexham also distinguishes between academic and other types of writing, arguing that "if a book contains academic footnotes, is written in academic style, and is presented as a work of scholarship then it must be judged as such and measured against the accepted rules for citation...."11 It seems fair to expect Communicating Ideas to meet minimal academic standards.

Horowitz confuses not only where he has previously published his material, but also where the ideas originated. In Communicating Ideas, his pattern of inaccuracy seems to run well beyond inadvertent carelessness. Horowitz is very casual about accurately attributing coauthorship of certain chapters to his wife, Mary E. Curtis. He neglects to mention her contribution to the original article on which chapter 3, "Technological Impacts on Scholarly Publishing," is based, despite the fact that the earlier version appeared under both their names three separate times. In the case of chapter 8, "Scholarly Communication and Academic Publishing," Horowitz tells us that he "jointly authored" the original article with Curtis, when in fact it was first issued under her name alone. These seem clear-cut examples of expropriation, but since Curtis was "instrumental" in bringing Communicating Ideas to "fruition," she evidently has no objection to this misrepresentation of her work.12

In addition to reprinting material without acknowledgment, Horowitz alleges that previously published material has been "substantially rewritten, revised and expanded."13 This claim proves false. A comparison of original
journal articles and chapters in Communicating Ideas reveals that Horowitz has typically "rewritten" chapters by eliminating any clue that they have been published before; "revised" them by haphazardly or speciously updating figures, merging paragraphs, or interchanging synonyms; and "expanded" them by tacking on a couple of introductory paragraphs and a paragraph at the end.

Chapter 15, "Social Science as Scholarly Communication," serves as an example of Horowitz's procedure. Although there is no indication that this chapter has been previously published, it appeared under the title "Marketing Social Science" in 1979 in Society. The version in Communicating Ideas has two new introductory paragraphs. Most of the other changes either camouflage the article's origin, ("in the previous section" becomes "earlier in this chapter"), or make the data seem current when it appears not to have been updated. Despite a discussion of "several recent trends," a glance at the footnotes reveals that most of the information dates from the mid- to late-1970s. In the original Society article Horowitz states, without a footnote, that "overall library sales are expected to drop 28 percent between 1974 and 1981."14 In Communicating Ideas, Horowitz revises the statement to read, "overall library sales dropped 28 percent between 1974 and 1981."15 In support of this statement, he footnotes John Dessauer's Library Acquisitions: A Look into the Future—published in 1976! The attentive reader can only wonder if Dessauer's predictions proved perfectly accurate or if Horowitz is merely "confirming" them ten years later by editorial fiat. He then uses these data to buttress his argument that impoverished libraries rely increasingly on networks to obtain copies of needed material, rather than purchasing a journal outright. Again, Horowitz uses the same statements in both articles, but without footnotes in the Society version. In Communicating Ideas he notes: "For the entire state of Ohio, only one copy of a periodical is needed. Within twenty-four hours, any article can be rotated to 258 participating libraries." He concludes:

"This means that of 258 potential subscriber units 257 do not require a subscription."17 In my own perusal of Susan K. Martin's Library Networks, 1976-1977, which Horowitz cites in Communicating Ideas as the source for his statistics, I was unable to locate any such data, although my search was impeded by Horowitz's habitual citation to the entire work rather than to specific pages.18

When he "rewrites," Horowitz demonstrates the pitfalls of sloppy editorial practices. In a discussion about "intellectual property," he drops an entire paragraph from his direct quotation of Dorothy Nelkin without indicating the deletion and then continues to make use of her exact words after he has closed the quotation and provided the footnote. Nelkin's original text (minus the dropped paragraph) appears below, followed by the misappropriation of her words in Horowitz's earlier work, and the cosmetically revised version that appears in Communicating Ideas. (Changes from the original text are highlighted in bold print.)

Original text: "Intellectual Property: The Control of Scientific Information," by Dorothy Nelkin, Science 216:708 (May 14, 1982): "The ambivalence so apparent in the disputes over the control of research suggests that there have been significant changes in the social role of science and in the importance of research. Indeed, these disputes are part of a larger struggle to renegotiate relations between science and the public that were established at a time when science was a very different social enterprise."

Horowitz's text from Information Age 5:72 (Apr. 1983): "The ambivalence so apparent in the disputes over the control of research suggests that there have been significant changes in the social role of science and in the importance of research." (Nelkin)

These disputes are part of a larger struggle to renegotiate relationships between science and the public that were established at a time when science was a very different social enterprise.

Horowitz's text from Communicating Ideas (2d ed.), p. 26: "The am-
bivalence so apparent in the disputes over the control of research suggests that there have been significant changes in the social role of science and in the importance of research." (Nelkin)

These disputes are part of a larger struggle to renegotiate relations between scientist and citizen that were established at a time when science was a very different, more confined, social enterprise.

The contradictions between Horowitz's subject matter and his methods undermine his authority and make it extremely difficult to ascertain where his ideas end and someone else's begin. Paradoxically, copyright regulation, specifically the protection of intellectual property rights through enforcement of the "fair return" concept, is a subject on which Horowitz is considered an authority. For example, Horowitz is cited in the May 1992 editorial of College & Research Libraries for his views on copyright. He devotes four chapters in Communicating Ideas primarily to the discussion of copyright issues, including "The Reproduction of Knowledge and Maintenance of Property." It is a considerable irony that Horowitz gives no acknowledgment of prior publication for this chapter despite the fact that it formed the basis of a presentation at a public hearing before the Copyright Office at the Library of Congress in 1981, was adapted to an article in Scholarly Publishing, "Corporate Ghosts in the Photocopying Machine," and reprinted by permission of the author and publisher (copyright 1981 by the University of Toronto Press) in Library Lit. 12 - The Best of 1981. The article was then expanded for presentation at a 1986 conference at the Center for Book Research, before its publication in Book Research Quarterly under the title, "The Protection and Dissemination of Intellectual Property." This latter article acknowledges that Horowitz "is the author of Communicating Ideas, to be published in September 1986 by Oxford University Press." It does not state, however, that this article will appear as a chapter in the book.

While cavalier in his own practice of disclosing copyright, Horowitz argues that the 1976 copyright legislation al-

ows for too generous an interpretation of the "fair use" doctrine, and he is especially critical of academic librarians who have been its champions. He contends that technology has made it increasingly possible to violate copyright by permitting extensive photo duplication without adequate reimbursement to the author or publisher. Horowitz proposes that advanced technology could also be used to remedy these infractions through the installation of monitoring and reporting mechanisms. If authors and publishers are not compensated for their products, Horowitz believes, the wellsprings of creativity will dry up, and scholarly publishing will decline.

Our enthusiasm for Horowitz's proposals might diminish, were we to conclude that he has been overly concerned with the privileges of copyright, while neglecting its responsibilities. Because of the confluence of publication dates, he has certainly set himself a difficult task in obtaining copyright clearances. For example, chapter 2, which is not acknowledged as previously published, bears a copyright by Butterworth & Co. for the article in Information Age in April 1983; a copyright by Virginia Quarterly Review, The University of Virginia, for the article published in Autumn 1983; and a copyright by Elsevier Science for the article in Representation and Exchange of Knowledge published in 1984. Horowitz then retains copyright in 1986 for its appearance (and all other material) in the first edition of Communicating Ideas, while Transaction holds the copyright for all new material in the second edition.

Horowitz argues against more controls in the scholarly publishing industry to prevent deceptive work. He believes that "the best safeguard against fraud is a free and untrammeled publishing network. Fail-safe systems urged by those who would make the publisher a Guardian of Truth represent a cure far worse than the disease." If authors, editors, and publishers let us down, we can rely on the review process. According to Horowitz, "it should be remembered that one of the chief functions of making a work public is exactly to separate sense
from nonsense.” Yet Horowitz’s own work has slipped through this safety net. The first edition of Communicating Ideas emerged from the review process relatively unscathed. One reviewer commented that “the book is more a collection of individual essays than a comprehensive statement” (Altbach); another referred to “several wordy chapters” (Virginia Quarterly Review); a third noted the irony that a book on scholarly publishing was “riddled with typos” (Boyer); and a fourth observed that “some of it is the heavy-footed dance around the obvious” (Garrett). Each of these criticisms, however, was counterbalanced by acclamations of a “stimulating book” (Altbach) with “provocative observations” (Boyer), and an “informed and intelligent volume” (Gusfield).

In the reviewer’s opinion, were Horowitz not a major presence in the field, enjoying considerable influence, we might dismiss this book as an ill-conceived and poorly managed project. But because he is such a powerful figure—professor, writer, editor, reviewer, and publisher—what he says carries a great deal of weight. One is almost tempted to see his book as an elaborate hoax—a kind of intellectual game in which Horowitz deliberately contradicts his own tenets. However, it is not Horowitz alone who is remiss, but also the publishers and a legion of forgiving reviewers. Horowitz exhorts readers to rely on the established safeguards of author reputation, editor scrutiny, publisher validation, and reviewer legitimization to discourage, if not prohibit, marginal products—and indeed we do. However, when these “controls” prove inadequate, where do we turn? For academic librarians, our collection budgets, if not integrity, hang in the balance. If the need for the first edition of Communicating Ideas was uncertain, then the second edition is even more problematic. Should we choose to ignore the many questions raised by this book, perhaps in 1996 we will deserve to add a third expanded edition to our collections: Communicating Ideas: The Ethics of Scholarly Publishing in the Twenty-First Century.—Martha L. Brogan, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following people in either tracking down material for this review or discussing their opinions with me: Christine Boyland, James Brogan, Irving Hexham, John Kaiser, Jeffry Larson, Susanne Roberts, Cesar Rodriguez, Patricia Sabosik, Edward Shreekes, Meneca Turconi, and the good offices of Yale University Library Interlibrary Loan.
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| Chapter 4:                                  | *The Virginia Quarterly Review*  
| Chapter 5:                                  | *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*  
| Chapter 6:                                  | None  
| Chapter 7:                                  | *Scholarly Publishing*  
None found.                                                                                                                                  | Unrevised.                        |
| Chapter 8:                                  | *Journal of Information Science*, with Mary E. Curtis  
| Chapter 9:                                  | *Book Research Quarterly*  
Chapter 10:
"Scientific Access and Political Constraint to Knowledge"
None
"Scientific Access and Political Constraint to Knowledge: Revisiting the Dilemma of Rights and Obligations." Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization 7:397–405 (June 1986). Editor's Note: "This article was originally prepared as the opening presentation for the Research Access Conference held at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., on November 18, 1985, and cosponsored by the Social Science Research Council and the Smithsonian Institution."
Unrevised.

Chapter 11:
"From Means of Production to Modes of Communication"
Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization

Chapter 12:
"Advertising Ideas and Marketing Products"
The Bookseller
Expanded.

Chapter 13:
"Gatekeeping Functions and Publishing Truths"
Coauthored with Mary E. Curtis; no journal title given
Expanded.

Chapter 14:
"The Social Structure of Scholarly Communication"
None
None found.

Chapter 15:
"Social Science as Scholarly Communication"
None
Expanded; footnotes added.
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<td>Chapter 24: “Scholarly Publishing as the Word Made Flesh”</td>
<td>“Command performance” in honor of his wife, Mary E. Curtis, Oct., 1990</td>
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REFERENCES AND NOTES

4. Thanking a host of sponsoring organizations, Horowitz acknowledges that “many (if not most) of these chapters [in Communicating Ideas] had their origin in commissioned papers, addresses, and lectures. Horowitz, Communicating Ideas, p.xvii.
5. Ibid., p.167.
7. Ibid., p.208.
9. The appended table identifies the publishing chronology of each chapter to the extent that I have been able to untangle it. The first column indicates the title of the chapter in Communicating Ideas. The second column is Horowitz’s acknowledgment of the chapter’s previous incarnations. The third column gives the published sources I have identified. The fourth column identifies the variation between the article and chapter versions.
11. Ibid., p.5.
12. It is odd that Horowitz does not provide an accurate account of his prior publications, since a bibliography of his writings appeared in 1984: Bibliography of the Writings of Irving Louis Horowitz, 1951–1984 (New Brunswick, N.J.: distributed by Transaction, privately printed). The bibliography has almost 500 distinct entries, not including those for the plentiful reprints and translations.
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