

## ◆ Building New Business Models

Moderator:

**Carter Glass**  
American Geophysical Union  
Washington, DC

Panelists:

**Crispin Taylor**  
*Science's Next Wave*  
Washington, DC

**Michael Jon Jensen**  
National Academy Press  
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*Molecular Endocrinology*  
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This session presented three professionals faced with the challenges of new ventures in online publishing.

Crispin Taylor is managing editor of *Science's Next Wave* ([www.nextwave.org](http://www.nextwave.org)), a weekly online publication devoted to scientific training and career development. Created in 1995, *Next Wave* is part of *Science Online*. The site includes a career-development center and the PostDoc network, a link to the GrantsNet funding database, and weekly articles addressing such topics as career transitions, balancing career and family, and science policy. *Next Wave* has subscriber-accessible sites in the United States, Canada, the UK, and Germany, each with country-specific content. *Next Wave* is supported by grants in all those countries except the United States, where the site generates revenue from institutional and individual subscribers and by advertising on the *Science Online* sites. *Next Wave* is published under the auspices of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, but receives

no direct funding support from it.

Taylor stressed that promoting the site is important for its continued success and that the association with *Science* has helped bring attention to the site. Although *Next Wave* has managed to break even so far, maintaining support presents continuing challenges, including these:

- The period of grant funding is limited.
- Initiatives can begin only after funds are raised.
- Maintaining controlled access to the site is labor-intensive and therefore expensive.

Michael Jon Jensen is the director of publishing technologies for the National Academy Press. Although the main mission of the press is to disseminate publications of the National Academies, it must also support itself through the sale of its books.

For the last 5 years the National Academy Press has made the contents of its books freely available on its Web site, [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu). Despite the conventional business wisdom that you don't give away what you can sell, the free online access has proved an effective and successful tool for selling books. The content serves as its own advertising, and making it freely available to all ensures that the advertising reaches the right customers. Jensen described the system as a "gift economy": the more you give away, the more you get. He believes the system works as well as it does for the following reasons:

- Readers still prefer to read printed materials.
- The online content entices readers to buy the books.
- Even though it is possible to print out an entire book from the Web site one page at a time, users rarely print more than a

few pages this way.

- Access is not the same as ownership. Readers can access the material online, but they do not own the book.

Carter Glass, manager of electronic publishing development for the American Geophysical Union, stressed that for online publications, mere content is not sustainable. To be successful, an online publication must emphasize tools, not text. Glass believes that readers will pay for convenience, time-saving features, and uniqueness.

Glass pointed to Amazon.com as a Web-based venture that succeeds because of the services it offers its customers. Some examples are keeping track of what the customers buy, suggesting what else they might like, and allowing them to post book lists and reviews. By offering innovative services like those, Amazon.com has "set the bar" for online publishing, and customers are beginning to expect similar services from other sites.

Glass suggested some unique and useful features that online scientific publications might offer their readers in the future:

- Using online articles as scientific tools. For example, a model system could be posted and readers could plug in their own data to test it.
- Keeping track of what subscribers are reading and helping them find other articles they're interested in.
- Cross-disciplinary linking of journals in different fields, such as environmental science and chemistry.
- Providing summaries of articles.
- Workflow solutions: provision of tools to allow online collaboration and discussion. 