

## Editorial

We have three research papers in this issue of *Prometheus*. Joanne Gaudet considers ignorance, a subject of constant fascination to many *Prometheus* readers. For a decade and more the world has viewed the information revolution facilitated by information technology in terms of more information leading to better decision-making. It can, but the opposite result is perhaps even more likely. The ability to use information has not kept pace with the supply of ever more information. Knowledge management is hardly a solution. Gaudet argues that the mobilization of ignorance is an essential accompaniment to the mobilization of knowledge: what we do not know is every bit as important as what we do know.

Chris Brown turns his attention to policy making in the world of education. His interest is in ‘evidence-based’ policy, a term often used by policy makers with no other purpose than to protect their policy from criticism. Brown prefers the less defensive ‘evidence-informed’ policy and with it a phronetic approach that encourages policy makers to be mindful of the very latest evidence. Cultural change is required before their thinking will be dragged from the linear trajectory of so much policy development.

The third research paper comes from John Dion and Dimitris Assimakopoulos. They consider whether social network analysis has much to say about a firm’s market orientation, by which they mean success with new products. Not surprisingly, perhaps, they find that social network analysis does indeed have something to say. Interesting that what it has to say seems to be most significant when managers are involved in the analysis.

There is something very strange about the academic publishing industry. Even in collegiate days, academics providing publishers with free labour as authors, referees and editors made scant sense. Times change, and these days are far from collegiate. Academics and their institutions compete fiercely, especially in their publication. Academics publish less to disseminate research to an academic college than to produce the measures of performance on which their employers insist. Papers published in top journals are worth a fortune to authors and their institutions. Pressure to publish - especially in top journals - has become crushing and cut-throat. Just where does this leave academic publishers? Their considerable profits suggest they have managed to adapt. And still academics provide these publishers with free labour. It’s all very curious.

The issue is sufficiently pertinent to be the stuff of which *Prometheus* debates are made. *Prometheus* debates allow academics to wield their expertise in combative style in the discussion of contentious issues. As befits academic discussion in a journal dedicated to critical studies of change, previous debates have often been very contentious indeed and feathers have flown, though never writs. The academic publishing industry, as in the *Prometheus* debate on open access, has previously been happy to throw itself into the fray. Not so on this occasion. Many, many individuals

working in the industry were invited to respond to the Proposition paper; not a one felt able to accept. It was made all too clear that the industry was in no mood for this debate. Indeed, at one time the editors were asked to excise the major part of the Proposition paper. Our refusal and ensuing negotiations explain why this debate was not published as intended in September 2013, and why no issue of *Prometheus* has appeared since.

Some wonder whether electronic publishing and open access are rendering the academic publishing industry redundant. The industry responds that it does more than ever to facilitate the publication of academic research. Academic publishers are now deeply involved in the editorial function, providing editors with statistical information, marketing advice and manuscript tracking systems, even arranging referees in some cases. Unpaid editors often welcome this assistance and certainly it offers some rebuttal to the accusation that academic publishers do little in return for their profits. But are academic publishers intruding in the editorial role? For example, without reference to any editor, the names of all academic publishers have been expunged from the Response papers in this issue. Institutional anonymity is already a custom in management studies, one that has done little for the standing of the subject. It would be unfortunate were it to spread throughout the social sciences, driving academic research from the empirical to the theoretical and abstract.

Readers will note an innovation in this issue - each of its five debate papers carries a prominent disclaimer, inserted without reference to any editor. It includes the line: 'The accuracy of the article should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information'. *Prometheus* debates are conducted in good faith by experts on the subject. Contributions to a debate can never be authoritative; otherwise there would be no debate. The argument that what cannot be proven must either be repressed or expressed as personal opinion has implications for the publication of research throughout the social sciences.

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