The Scholarly Communication and the Publish or Perish Pressures of Academia, edited by Dr. Achala Munigal, Assistant Professor and Librarian at NERTU, Osmania University, provides insightful and helpful views and guidance on the roles, trends and future trajectory for scholarly research and communication, knowledge creation, and publishing for tenure and promotion in the digital age. Dr. Munigal has assembled an impressive team of eighteen esteemed higher education library and information professionals from several continents to share theoretical and practical insights into these important issues.

Since the middle of the 1990’s, the processes and products of scholarly research and the impact of scholarship have evolved exponentially. The advent of the Web and of ever more powerful digital tools and publishing platforms has stressed traditional notions of scholarly value, quality and impact, which remained relatively stable for nearly a century. The encouragement and requirement to publish the prescribed types of products in clearly identified publications (esteemed publishing houses and peer-reviewed journals) exerted steady and firm control for academic gatekeepers, who decided, which scholars survived and thrived (achieving tenure and promotion) and which scholars perished (being denied tenure and promotion) in the closed academic society.

Academic research, the channels and opportunities for communication of academic scholarship, and the evolving notions and varieties of academic scholarly publishing have changed significantly since the advent of the Web in the mid-1990’s. This change is ongoing and relentless, such that scholars and academicians must work to not only perform research and gather the core of their research into publishable products, but they must also remain conversant with the stream of digital research and publication tools and platforms, opportunities for greater incorporation of media (static or dynamic) into their scholarly products, and negotiate new issues of access, of copyright and of intellectual property rights. Scholars and academicians must now also forge partnerships with digital media (hardware and software) and copyright experts, entrepreneurs and social media leaders to ensure maximal, or at least greater, impact and visibility for their scholarly work. They must navigate these issues while at the same time surviving and thriving in the publish-or-perish
cultures of traditional academia, where scholarly publication is the lifeblood of successful tenure and promotion.

While the scholarly communication and publishing cultures vary across continents, nations, societies and cultures, the impressive collection of chapters contributed for Prof. Munigal’s volume is impressive in not only quality but in applicability across cultures. The separate chapters range from broader scholarly communication issues to specific research tools and platforms such, that all tenure-track faculty will find in them useful and usable information.

Several chapters take on the broader issues of the changing face and culture of scholarly communication and publishing, especially from Indian and Russian perspectives. Several chapters focus on emerging issues in intellectual property and copyright, especially from US American and Portuguese perspectives. Several other chapters provide insight into research project construction, research management tools (e.g., references, citations), as well as search and meta-search tools. Several of the contributed chapters delve into various aspects of assessment – altmetrics and impact – especially from an Indian perspective. Another chapter broaches the strong and emerging open access publishing enterprise, including digital repositories and the role of open-access in publishing for impact, especially vis-à-vis tenure and promotion.

Dr. Munigal’s collection of important academic scholarly opinion in this book fulfills several essential needs for both established and novice academic scholars: guidance in navigating an ever-changing landscape; a broad, international perspective on communication issues faced in academic scholarly research and publishing; and deep focus on shared and important issues of tools, platforms, copyright/intellectual property, and open-access in the digital age. These topics are important enough and the landscape dynamic enough, that one could justifiably see rationale for planning subsequent updates of the volume every five to ten years.

D. Russell Bailey
Providence College, USA

D. Russell Bailey, Ph.D., is an international speaker, scholar and consultant on emerging issues of libraries, scholarly communication and digital knowledge creation. Professor Bailey is most widely known for his international research, publishing and consultation work in the Commons – Information Commons, Learning Commons, Research Commons – from 2000 through 2014. His best known works are “Information Commons Redux” (2002 with B. Tierney), contributions to Donald Beagle’s Information Commons Handbook (2006), and Transforming Library Service Through Information Commons (2008 with B. Tierney). His Commons work has also been published in India and China. His work in creating digital knowledge (Digital Humanities and Digital Liberal Arts) – from 2012 through 2017 – has produced peer-reviewed articles on creating Digital Humanities, History, Art/Art History and Latin American Literature and Art (see http://works.bepress.com/d_r_bailey/ for some of this work. He has also contributed to earlier international volumes on libraries in the digital age.