

Editorial – 'Twas the night before Christmas

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'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the library,
Not a book was overdue, not even "West's Respiratory Physiology";
The book-drop was placed by the chute with care,
In hopes that Elsevier soon would be there;

The computers were nestled all snug on their desks,
While visions of screen-savers danced until esc;
And the librarian in her twinset and pearls,
Had just settled down to search for articles,

When out on the helipad there arose such a clatter,
She sprang from the chair to see what was the matter.
Away to the window she flew like a flash,
Sidestepping the shelving as she threw up the sash.

The moon's silvery shadow on the grass below,
Gave the lustre of an ethereal glow,
When, what to her wandering eyes should appear,
But a miniature drone, and eight Uber reindeer,

With a gig-job driver, paid minimum wage,
She knew this was capitalism's late, late stage.
More rapid than the NBN his bots they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

"Now, MEDLINE! now, CINAHL! now, PSYCINFO and EMBASE!
On, COCHRANE! on CROSS-REF! on, DEEPDYVE and SCOPUS!
To the top of the result-list! to the top of the pay-wall!
Now search away! search away! search away all!"

As toner that's replaced, no matter how well-sealed,
Will go everywhere as soon as it's unpeeled,
So over to Endnote the algorithms they flew,
With the sleigh full of citations, and metadata too.

And then, in a twinkling, she heard in the stacks
The ever-present threat of budget cutbacks.
As she drew in her hand, and was turning around,
Through the air-conditioning Covid came with a bound.

Dressed in a mask, and keeping his distance,
A vendor appeared, selling with great persistence;
A bundle of books he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes -- how they twinkled! his markups how merry!
His journals were in bundles, his profits like a cherry!
His authors all gave their labour for free,
Making him more money when raising the fee;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
Though smoking was banned as it led to death;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
Though obesity, too, is known to be deadly.

He was chubby and plump, and possibly diabetic,
And she wondered when she saw him, if he needed a medic;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Were further signs that he needed a hospital bed;

He spoke not a word, a sure sign of pathology,
She offered compression stockings, to prevent coagulopathy;
For the evidence was there, as Cochrane reviewed¹,
All trials meta-analysed, all anecdotes eschewed;

He sprang to his sleigh, despite his clear ill-health,
Muttering about open-access eroding his wealth.
She sighed and exclaimed, ere he drove out of sight,
LISTEN TO YOUR LIBRARIAN, FOR WE ARE INVARIABLY RIGHT!

1. Sachdeva A, Dalton M, Lees T. Graduated compression stockings for prevention of deep vein thrombosis. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2018, Issue 11. Art. No.: CD001484. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001484.pub4. Accessed 10 December 2021.

All the best for the coming year. Thanks for reading JoHILA.