Developing Open Access Journals: A Practical Guide by David J. Solomon

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David J. Solomon

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As the founder of *Medical Education Online*, a peer-reviewed open access (OA) journal that has been in existence for 15 years, David Solomon is able to offer useful advice based on extensive experience in the field of electronic publishing. *Developing Open Access Journals: A Practical Guide* aims to outline the necessary skills and steps involved in implementing and sustaining an OA publication. Although published in 2008, this remains a comprehensive manual to electronic publishing, offering timely, relevant advice regardless of the software used or the subject matter of the journal. The text consists of 10 chapters, divided into three parts, which provide succinct, clear advice for those new to the publishing field. There is an abridged, online version (http://www.developing-oa-journals.org/), but since it is a 17-page summary of a 200-page book, it should be considered an introduction rather than an electronic counterpart.

Part I is in the most need of a sharp editorial eye. Chapter one's discussion of the history of scholarly publication, for example, seems incongruous with the more practical focus of the rest of the text, and readers may not find the subject matter relevant to their more practical purposes. While the second chapter contains a discussion of five successful OA journals, one of which of course is *MEO*, there is a lack of consistency in the material presented. For example, usage statistics are available for some of the journals, but are inexplicably omitted for others. Nonetheless, Part I represents only two of 10 chapters, so it does not detract from the overall usefulness of the text.

Parts II and III are of enormous value to any individual who is either launching a new journal or assessing the workflows, policies, and procedures of an existing OA journal. The criteria and tools provided in these sections could also be useful for the planning and development of subscription journals, including advice on establishing editorial boards and soliciting content. Solomon writes in a straightforward fashion and includes helpful tools, such as checklists and tables, to help guide readers through complex topics, including business models, policies and by-laws, staffing, and revenue. This is by no means an easy feat and Solomon should be congratulated for his ability to make what are admittedly intimidating topics comprehensible. Part III is devoted to sustaining journals after launch, which is particularly valuable since similar texts frequently limit themselves to the implementation of a journal rather than identifying and discussing key factors in its ongoing success.

This book provides a useful step-by-step guide for beginners and is a valuable reference for experts, particularly librarians or faculty members interested in launching or maintaining electronic journals.

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