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EDITORIAL

From the Ground Up: A Group Editorial on the Most Pressing Issues in Scholarly Communication

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One of the joys of working with *JLSC* is the amazing community of intelligent, talented, and passionate people who make up its readers, authors, and reviewers. Nowhere is this more apparent than in its Editorial Board, which is currently made up of twenty-one professionals from across the scholarly communication landscape. Because their work usually happens behind the scenes, readers might not realize how influential they are in the life of the journal. They come from a wide range of organizations and backgrounds (not to mention three continents), but they all deal with scholarly communication issues on the ground, every day. There has been quite a bit of discussion lately about the future of scholarly communication in libraries (for an example, see Clifford Lynch's guest editorial in the February issue of *C&RL*[1]), and we wanted to give our board a chance to weigh in. They were asked to share their take on the most pressing issues in scholarly communication today, in their capacity as Editorial Board members (rather than as representatives of their respective institutions), and the following six short pieces are the result. We hope their answers will help inspire the readers, authors, and editors of JLSC to think big, act strategically, and strengthen our growing network of peers.

Melanie Schlosser and Mark Newton
Editors-in-Chief

[1] Lynch, C. (2017). Updating the Agenda for Academic Libraries and Scholarly Communications. *College & Research Libraries*, *78*(2), 126-130.

The authors were given the following questions for inspiration:

- What do you see as the most pressing issue(s) in scholarly communication today?
- What are we doing that's important?
- What aren't we doing that we should be?
- Who should we be working with?
- What mountains should we try to move?
- Where do you see challenges to be met and opportunities to be addressed?

AT THE HEART

Jen Waller, University of Oklahoma

The most pressing scholarly communication issue today is, unfortunately, the same issue that has been present for years: the inherent conflict between the goals of open access and the goals of commercial academic publishers. Scholars' ideals include the advancement of knowledge through the open sharing of information, yet this is in direct conflict with the imperative for all businesses (especially publicly-held businesses beholden to their shareholders) to make money. Making money isn't the problem here, but making money often depends on owning or controlling that which is sold. This, in turn, creates a multitude of other pressing issues for the scholarly community that ultimately harm the spread of ideas that are valuable, important, and perhaps even life-saving.

OPEN CONTENT, OPEN ARMS

Sam Searle, Griffith University

Librarians involved in scholarly communication must move quickly beyond a limited set of formal publication types towards a wider range of more complex and arguably more at-risk research outputs. Repositories are still populated mostly by journal articles (whether pre- or post-print) and books. Open access university presses stick to publishing journals and monographs. Even where technology facilitates less traditional modes of publishing, conservative choices are still the norm: two-thirds of journal editors in a study published in JLSC (Cirasella and Bowdoin, 2013) agreed that discrete issues rather than rolling publication make open access journals seem more 'traditional' and 'respectable' (p.5). Research data continues to ride the hype-cycle upwards—in attention, if not in demonstrable action—while grey literature struggles to find a place in library strategies despite the evidence of its high value to communities outside academia.

As librarians, we must also critically interrogate our own approaches and build more robust multilateral relationships with other types of information professionals. At the turn of the millennium, a Council on Library and Information Resources report (Gilliland-Swetland, 2000) argued that "The paradigms of any of the information professions come up short when compared with the scope of the issues emerging in the digital environment"; librarians, along with other constituent communities, must adopt, adapt, and discard principles and practices as required, to deal with issues of the heterogeneity, scale and accessibility of digital resources (p.v). To what extent has the 'meta-community' envisaged in the CLIR report materialised? Seventeen years later, productive cross-pollination across information specialisations is still a challenge. Scholarly communications librarians who have previously worked in cultural institutions, corporate information management, or government archives may be perplexed and concerned by the duplication of effort and lost opportunities to improve tools, services, and work practices that can result from too narrow an approach.

Other perspectives are invaluable. From archives and recordkeeping: understanding evidentiary requirements in corporate contexts might help us achieve better scientific reproducibility; adopting lifecycle models from recordkeeping encourages earlier intervention and engagement with content creators; reviewing the mature models for appraisal, description, and disposal at the level of the series or collection might spark ideas for more sustainable ways to deal with large volumes of content; and the concepts of distributed archival custodianship and in-place records management stand in stark counterpoint to library approaches that see researcher-controlled caches of content outside of library collections as a problem needing to be fixed. From information management / knowledge management come insights about the importance of tacit knowledge and the requirement to engage deeply with the social context in which information is created and consumed. The more we can work across boundaries between the different information professions and learn from each other, the better our methods, technologies, and services will be in support of scholarly communication.

Cirasella, J., & Bowdoin, S. (2013). Just Roll with It? Rolling Volumes vs. Discrete Issues in Open Access Library and Information Science Journals. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, *1*(4). https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1086

Gilliland-Swetland, A. J. (2000). *Enduring paradigm, new opportunities: the value of the archival perspective in the digital environment*. Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources. Retrieved from http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub89/pub89.pdf

OPEN ACCESS, ONE DAY AT A TIME: SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS LIBRARIANS AND COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Leah Vanderjagt, University of Alberta

The operational positions of scholarly communications librarians require them to think deeply about questions of success, resourcing, requirements, and gaps. They also are able to identify where their influence ends and where more senior and influential members of their organizations need to help build bridges between communities, both inside their institution and with other external organizations. Scholarly communications librarians have strong awareness of the opportunities and obstacles that are our collective work in this movement. Yet 15 years since the Budapest Open Access Initiative, it is still very common to meet scholarly communications librarians who are attempting to carry out this change individually as a "team" of one - even at large universities. Many of these librarians are carrying out multiple position roles relating to scholarly communications reform: running an institutional repository program as well as journal hosting and OA fund administration, advancing research data management and developing frameworks for research metrics services. It is not a reasonable organizational or broad expectation of our profession that one person can change the minds and sharing practices of faculty, fill the repository, lead systems conversations (whether with open source communities or with vendors), negotiate for borrowed staff time from other units, and in doing all this fundamentally change the landscape for scholarly communication and achieve meaningful and lasting change. Inherent to this situation are two fairly common business operations problems: 1) large goals with undefined objectives; and 2) responsibility without authority. Library organizations are responsible for resolving these business problems before scholarly communications initiatives are written off as unsuccessful.

Working in isolation with huge and vague expectations results - unsurprisingly - in burnout, position turnover, and lateral moves to unrelated positions. Since scholarly communications positions are new, problems integrating with other units within their libraries with no clear path to greater influence in the organization leaves these librarians with career advancement challenges. Career advancement blockers are a sustainability problem for OA - if those with most expertise in scholarly communications work are not moving to higher levels providing well-earned expert advice and building connections that will promote the success of initiatives, collaborative implementation strategies will remain mysterious, and the movement will not advance as quickly and effectively as it could. Worse, if talented people don't stay in this work, local movements for change lose momentum and expertise as well as the ability to collaboratively advance solutions built from working relationships. Constant re-learning and re-training from the bottom up in this domain of practice will be the norm.

So it is very important to think about whether the change scholarly communications workers are being asked to enact is, in their opinion, adequately resourced. It is also very important to regularly revisit the goals of our scholarly communications initiatives. As those closest to the work, the voices of the scholarly communications librarians should be prominent, not peripheral.

One way that groups of scholarly communications librarians can combat isolation is to put active work into fostering and nurturing a community of practice. A community of practice is more than a listserv or a conference. It is a group of people actively engaged with one another who can safely rely on one another for support when trying to solve problems both large and small and who share a common agenda. Communities of practice can foster realistic goal setting; the formation of fast-acting, ad-hoc short-term working groups; identification of solvable problems that just need more hands; peer training; and the sharing of successful strategies for work. Scholarly communications librarians must carve out space for safe operational problem solving discussion which, while informed by important and influential ideas, is really focused on making incremental, meaningful changes on a daily basis and in the most practical of ways. Library administrators can help by funding travel for community-building work, or even offering to host regional or national meetings for operational meetings of scholarly communications workers.

In Canada in November of 2016, partly in response to Cliff Lynch's post on IRs and their future, Canadian IR managers arranged for the first pan-Canadian meeting of all IR managers. Attendees discussed four topics: outreach, interoperability/discoverability of content, efficient workflows for populating the repository, and staffing the repository. A summary of the meeting and its conclusions has been released.[2] Most notably though, attendees of the event reported great relief at having met together in person, noting how much the community of practice meant to them. Communities of practice should be important to the open access movement and all its leaders as well. If there is anything the movement has learned over the last 15 years, it's that no one can make change happen in isolation.

OPENING UP THE BLACK BOX OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Nicky Agate, Modern Language Association

One of the greatest challenges we face is the encroachment of capital and profit on all of our labor, whether we're writing, peer reviewing, reviewing, authoring, editing, or teaching. It is increasingly 'normal' to give away one's personal information, browsing habits, and even

[2] https://doi.org/10.7939/R36D5PP5D

the content of one's scholarly labor in exchange for black-box vanity metrics about who has viewed, downloaded, cited, and shared our work.

I'd like to see the community question what these metrics—and the ethics we're promoting by accepting them—actually are, and why we are allowing the technologically feasible determine the academically desirable. What would it look like if we asked which behaviours and processes would be valuable to us as a community, would truly have a (positive) impact, and investigated how we might encourage people to inhabit and perform those?

As a community, we need to fight back against the co-option of truly open and accessible scholarship by major commercial publishers? There is no world in which global corporations making money off the backs of our labor should be acceptable, normalized, unquestioned. Where online privacy and security cease to exist. Where people are required to give away personal data in order to access scholarship. Not-for-profit alternatives exist, but in order for them to succeed we need, as a community, to vote with our feet and use them. Only when we share and download our materials via institutional and disciplinary repositories, build our software on open-source platforms, and use our collective voice to amplify the signal that alternatives are available will we be able to assert true, grassroots support of an open scholarly ecosystem.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Danny Kingsley, Cambridge University

It has become increasingly clear that academia is facing serious challenges, particularly in relation to the reproducibility of research. The single most important factor in improving the transparency and veracity of the academic record is the academic reward structure.
Academia relies on the publication of novel results in high impact journals as the only means to measure researchers. While this remains the case we will continue to experience issues with reproducibility, hyperauthorship, retractions, hypothesizing after the results are known, and generally the publication of bad science.

The solution is to open up the scientific endeavour and to create the means and systems to allow researchers to 'publish' aspects of the research process as it occurs. Open lab books, publishing protocols and methods before the experiments are undertaken, publishing software, sharing underlying data and publishing null results will increase the transparency of the research process and reduce unnecessary duplication. But these are not activities that researchers will undertake without reward. Indeed under the current system, these activities can actively disadvantage individual researchers.

In addition, the current reward structure ties academia into a Faustian bargain with the established publishing industry. There will be no real traction in the area of open access and open science while we limit reward to a small proportion of the research output. So we need to change the way we reward research. And that's where things get very difficult.

Scholarly communication by its nature takes a 'meta' view of the research ecosystem. The research community on the other hand, see the world from within their own discipline. They also think they understand scholarly communication because they are practitioners within it. This is the 'I know teaching, I went to school' position. Of course, some researchers do have a very good understanding of the big picture, but most don't.

This is where it gets very challenging for people who work in scholarly communication. While generally working within administrative areas of research institutions, they often do very 'academic' activities—researching, experimenting, writing papers that are published, peer review, sitting on editorial boards, presenting at conferences and so on. Yet the area is not seen as an academic discipline and is certainly not afforded that type of respect from academic colleagues.

Things have to change. We need to address the reward system in academia, and for that to happen the academic community needs to recognise that work being done in scholarly communication is robust and valid. Credit where credit is due.

A MINDFUL APPROACH TO AUTHOR SERVICES

Gail Clement, Caltech

> "*Stay faithful in things large and taking on the world, but stay faithful in those things small —because remember it's the small things, the size of a mustard seed, that ultimately moves mountains.*" –Cory Booker

What do you see as the most pressing issue(s) in scholarly communication today?

In today's vast, complex, and ethically ambiguous scholarly communication landscape, knowledge creators (i.e., authors) face a confounding array of considerations in making informed and effective authoring and publishing choices. To address the growing need for author support and services, a new industry has emerged that markets fee-based and free-to-customers guidance, support, and interventions directed at authors. Some illustrative (but by

no means solitary) examples include Wiley Author Services[3] offering "Everything you need to know to prepare, submit, publish and promote your next article". Springer has paired up with Edanz, a commercial editorial services company, on an Author Academy with modules on choosing the right journal, understanding open access, overviews of submission procedures, and publication ethics. Competitors Wolters Kluwer and Editage advise authors on the best journal for their work (albeit, with a highly select set of titles highlighted!). At the same time, they offer free tips on avoiding rejection, advising prospective authors that only novel papers get published (adios, replication studies or published results from local field work!). No doubt these services find an appreciative paying audience, offering effective solutions for authors in some circumstances. Yet their limited scope and potentially-biased advice cannot alone address the concerns of knowledge creators. We need a bigger posse.

To achieve a trusted, inclusive, findable, accessible, reuseable, and interoperable (FAIR) scholarly record on which science and scholarship advances, we need engagement and involvement of all stakeholders in the scholarly communication landscape. Research institutions and their libraries; infrastructure providers such as the identifier agencies ORCiD, CrossRef, DataCite; research funders; government agencies; knowledge creator organizations (e.g., scholarly societies)—these are critical stakeholders with key roles in supporting and guiding authors. By working together in the scholarly commons—in collaborative fashion that demands openness, transparency, inclusivity, and, yes, benevolence—we support knowledge creators and bolster the strength and sustainability of their scholarship.

What are we doing that's important?

1. Maintaining a mindful point of view:

Librarians working in the commons bring a long-proven record of sustainable stewardship and a Code of Ethics that "embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment."[4] Particularly germane to the matter of supporting and guiding authorship and publishing choices, librarians:

- provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.

[3] https://authorservices.wiley.com/author-resources/index.html

[4] http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics

- respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
- do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions. (ibid)

This robust community code of practice connects and undergirds our collaborative work on behalf of the authors we serve.

2. Engagement with other commons communities

Librarians work through myriad commons membership organizations to advance common goals and collaboratively develop best practices, standards, in research communication and knowledge management: the Committee on Publication Ethics; the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association; the Research Data Alliance; ICSTI, the International Council for Scientific and Technical Information; CASRAI, the Consortia Advancing Standards in Research Administration; NISO, the National Information Standards Organization; Force11, The future of research communications and e-scholarship; INASP, the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications, *just to name a few*. The rich array of mission-driven research communities dedicated to improving knowledge management and access for global users worldwide is a powerful force for librarians to join.

3. Reconstructed Library Instruction

The shift in library instruction focusing on "users as knowledge creators" positions librarians to reach and teach content that authors need: from legal issues in sharing and reusing others' works; to using CrossRef APIs to harvest open citation data; to writing collaboratively in semantically rich formats such as LaTeX or XML. Uptake of researcher-initiated curricula beyond the library domain, such as Data-, Software-, and Author Carpentry, offers an additional instructional framework to support effective knowledge management while reducing cognitive load for overstretched, time-pressured professional learners.

4. Modelling effective and ethical authorship and publishing practices in our own work

Do we write substantive peer reviews we'd be comfortable posting publicly (perhaps if anonymized)? Are we publishing our papers and data sets in open, reuseable ways to invite further interrogation and reuse? Do we comply with time reporting requirements, follow IRB protocols, and adhere to other standards of responsible conduct of research?

Are we complicit in upholding unfair open access policies that expect free distribution for some authors (e.g., faculty) while remaining complicit in demanding paywalled access for others (graduate theses and dissertations)?

Mindfulness is "the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us."[5] A mindful approach to the complex issues, conflicts, and conundrums facing knowledge creators can, over the wash of time, move mountains."

[5] https://www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/