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Book Review

Mapping Scholarly Communication Infrastructure:
A Bibliographic Scan of Digital Scholarly Communication
Infrastructure

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Mapping Scholarly Communication Infrastructure: A Bibliographic Scan of Digital Scholarly Communication Infrastructure

By D.W. Lewis

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The Bibliographic Scan of Digital Scholarly Communication Infrastructure is part of *Mapping the Scholarly Communication Infrastructure* (Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Middlebury College, 2018–20). This project assessed the state of digital infrastructure in the U.S. to inform scholarly communication at colleges, universities, and research libraries.

Author David W. Lewis (Dean Emeritus of the IUPUI University Library in Indiana) is one of two principal investigators for *Mapping the Scholarly Communication Infrastructure* and an advocate for academic libraries' proactive shaping of digital infrastructure for an open scholarly commons. For example, Lewis (2017) urged libraries to funnel 2.5% of their respective total budgets to digital infrastructure providers, with the composition of recipients varying based on institutions' circumstances. Such an investment may be unrealistic, especially in an era of pandemic-related fiscal restraint. Even so, the increased importance of institutions' digital presence—particularly amid COVID-prompted shutdowns—behooves academic librarians to familiarize themselves with the breadth of resources available to support open scholarship.

Enter Lewis' *The Bibliographic Scan.* The scan features: a literature review grouped by functional area and followed by linked citations of mostly open content; lists highlighting significant projects and programs, again organized by function; and descriptions of each organization and project in the scan.

Lewis' literature review includes largely objective descriptions of sources, but he guides the user with occasional subjective comments, like noting which entries address an important

study or offer the best summary. His prose, however brief, is elucidating, as the content of each text isn't always readily apparent from the citation, such as "Innkeeper at the Roach Motel," an article by Salo about institutional repositories. Lewis' succinct writing style makes this section and the scan overall a quick read.

The scan covers over 200 resources that facilitate digital scholarly communication, ranging from tools to projects, highlighted in the sources from the initial literature review. Lewis accounts for the totality of the research workflow, and focuses the most on discovery. He pays greater attention to nonprofits than for-profit enterprises, and it should be noted that content may become dated from the fallout of corporate acquisitions. However, from a researcher's perspective, there is an arguable benefit to having a snapshot in time of digital scholarly communications infrastructure, to track, for example, the loss of not-for-profit organizations. Ideally, funders will recognize the need to continue supporting such initiatives.

The scan reflects the realities of how people—librarians included—conduct and communicate research. For example, the preservation portion includes a Wikipedia entry amongst content from an Ivy League school and a federal institute. Beyond Wikipedia serving as a jumping-off point for research, we have entered an era when scholars can earn a Wikitastic "badge" through Impactstory.org to indicate traction. Wikipedia is also Lewis' default source for descriptions of projects and organizations featured at the end of the scan. He balances Wikipedia's uncertain reliability with subsequent links about each entity from other sources. Also, Lewis recommends the tools Unpaywall and Open Access Button, recognizing that not every user of the scan will have an institutional affiliation.

This resource is recommended for information professionals at various stages of their careers. Lists of key players in the scholarly communications landscape will help MLIS students and emerging librarians bewildered by similar-sounding names like xPub and xSweet. For library staff requesting funds for a new or replacement service, Lewis' overview can quicken the due diligence process. In the span of three pages at most per topic, users can glean popular options available to them for various functions, know whether they are offered by a for-profit enterprise or a non-profit, and gain quick context about patterns and trends from Lewis' brief introductory comments. The scan is especially valuable for emerging scholarly communications librarians. Recurring sources in the literature review, like the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), serve as a guidepost for what to monitor. The scan is also a good starting point for all scholarly communications librarians plotting outreach; for example, through the literature review, they can increase their understanding of researcher proclivities, like preferring questionable academic social media sites over institutional repositories.

Other academic constituents besides librarians are potential users of this resource. University presses and academic journal publishers considering open access (OA) would benefit from Lewis' overview of OA business models. Additionally, faculty unions and tenure and promotion committees would be well served by the section on evaluation and assessment, including altmetrics, to ensure up-to-date approaches for gauging scholarly output.

Overall, this scan is highly recommended for use in the academic context. While it has a U.S. focus, by virtue of the project design, it does include a small amount of Latin American content, and much of the content is on a global scale, meaning that it does not preclude relevance to libraries beyond the U.S.

Fittingly, this publication is freely available on the Web and is covered by the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International license. Further conveying a spirit of openness, the front matter notes that conditions can be waived with permission from the copyright holder.

REFERENCES

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BIOGRAPHY

Heather Saunders is the Dean of Libraries and Archives at Acadia University. Her chapter, "Getting a Seat at the Table: Art Museum Libraries as Open Access Stakeholders" was published in March 2021 in *The New Art Museum Library* (Rowman & Littlefield).