

JLSC

ISSN 2162-3309 | JLSC is published by the Pacific University Libraries | <http://jlsc-pub.org>

Volume 3, Issue 3 (2015)

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Gilman, I. (2015). Sustained by Engagement: JLSC and Sustainability. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 3(3), eP1280. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1280>



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Sustained by Engagement: *JLSC* and Sustainability

Isaac Gilman

Issue Co-Editor

The question that is inevitably asked of any new journal or publishing initiative is “Is it sustainable?” While traditional and open access publishers alike face this question, the answers often appear less clear for the latter. Decades of experience have taught commercial journal publishers what the market will bear (even if said market groans while bearing it), and have refined book publishers’ ability to identify salable titles. Lacking the ability to rely on sales or licensing revenue, however, relatively young open access publishers seek foundation funding or institutional subventions, experiment with author-side fees, build community funding networks, or depend on the wisdom (and donated time) of the crowd—or often some combination thereof—in order to develop the necessary financial stability.

For all its potential financial uncertainty, however, the issue of sustainability is really no different for open access journals than for traditional journals. Financial stability is merely symptomatic of a more fundamental driver of sustainability shared by all publications: community engagement. The most successful journals are those with strong support from their communities of authors, reviewers, editors, and readers. A journal that is not deemed necessary or relevant by its community will lose community support and will be unsustainable.

As an independent (affiliated with no society or association) open access journal that charges no author fees, the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* has always been dependent on the engagement of our community, both intellectually and financially. And we have long recognized that our own sustainability is tied not only to that engagement, but also to our stewardship of the intellectual and financial contributions made by our community.



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As in any endeavor, stewardship requires planning for both the present and the future. For *JLSC*, this means ensuring that there is a continuity of strong editorial leadership for our authors and reviewers, that we provide services and tools that benefit our authors, that we ensure perpetual access to the intellectual work that has been entrusted to us, and that we remain financially and editorially independent. This issue of *JLSC* marks the symbolic end of a transitional period in which we have engaged with all of these areas:

- The articles in Volume 3, Issue 3, which will be released gradually over the next few months, represent the combined editorial work of the outgoing editor (me) and our incoming editors (Mark Newton and Melanie Schlosser), with the pieces by Bolick; Crowder, Reilly, and Marion; and Van Tuyl and Michalek representing the end of my editorial involvement. After four years with *JLSC*, I and Marisa Ramírez have stepped down as editors and Mark and Melanie have assumed the editorship. Both Mark and Melanie bring strong backgrounds in scholarly communication librarianship, and are well-positioned to lead *JLSC* forward. I am excited to follow the ways in which they, and our editorial board, will grow both the journal and its support for authors in our community.
- This September, *JLSC* migrated to the Ubiquity Press platform after three years of a successful partnership with Berkeley Electronic Press. Ubiquity's hosting/service model provides *JLSC* the opportunity to gradually add additional production services as needed, the ability to present articles in HTML and XML in the future, and the possibility of gathering additional article-level metrics that will help our authors better understand (and communicate) the impact of their work.
- Pacific University Libraries, *JLSC*'s publisher, recently entered into an agreement with Portico® (ITHAKA®) to provide e-journal preservation services. Prospective deposits have begun, and backfile deposits will be made later this fiscal year.
- As a means of supplementing the support provided by Pacific University (primarily in personnel time), and ensuring that the journal remains free to read and free for authors, the *JLSC* editorial board has approved a new sponsorship policy. We were very pleased to welcome our first sponsor, Oregon State University Libraries and Press, this fall!

We are honored by the time and talent that our community has shared with *JLSC* over our first four years; your engagement—as editorial board members, as authors, as reviewers, and as readers—has met and exceeded the expectations that Marisa and I held when we first envisioned the journal. *JLSC* truly has become an extension and reflection of our shared professional community, and I am confident in its sustainability for years to come.