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Brief Reviews of Books and Products **Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge.**

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BRIEF REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND PRODUCTS

Book Review: Bonn, M., Bolick, J., and Cross, W., eds. (2023). *Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge*. Association of College and Research Libraries. viii, 528 pages, softcover. ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-3990-1. \$150.00 (Open access edition available at <https://bit.ly/SCLAOK>).

In 2005, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) published a Scholarly Communication Toolkit, with the aim to support librarians and advocates working in this burgeoning area of library work. The creators of this toolkit designed it for librarians, administrators, and researchers, with introductions to scholarly communication topics and bibliographies to encourage additional research. *Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge* picks up on an important part of this toolkit: its intentional incompleteness. Editors Maria Bonn, Josh Bolick, and Will Cross, leaders in open education and scholarly communication librarianship, provide substantial introductions to scholarly communication (which they often abbreviate “scholcomm”) topics and contexts, and they have deftly assembled a variety of authors and section editors—nearly eighty in total—to discuss challenges in scholcomm and to provide perspectives on addressing them. If nothing else, this book is thorough.

The major argument of the book is by necessity broad. The editors, through their framing and their selection of chapters, argue that scholcomm, scholcomm librarianship, and open knowledge are actively and critically evolving in their relationships to one another, both in their definitions and in their practices. The book has a clear three-part structure. The first part, “What is Scholarly Communication?,” provides readers with definitions and introductions to scholcomm librarianship within legal, political, social, economic, and technological contexts. “Scholarly Communication and Open Culture,” the second part, examines open knowledge—which encompasses such topics as open access, open data, open educational resources, and open pedagogy—as a response to the pressures presented in the first part. The final part, “Voices from the Field: Perspectives, Intersections, and Case Studies,” offers concise perspectives on the interactions between scholcomm librarianship and open knowledge from a wide range of experienced librarians.

The contributors to this volume are prominent figures in the realm of scholarly communication librarianship, with the majority working in scholcomm fields, whether that be in advocacy organizations or in libraries. However, they represent a distinct subset of perspectives on



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scholcomm, as the authors are primarily academic librarians from North America. Organizations such as SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), FORCE11 (The Future of Research Communications and e-Scholarship), and the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) demonstrate the international reach of scholcomm research, and that scholarly communication matters impact people in non-English-speaking countries as much (if not more) than in English-speaking countries. Although these voices are absent from this volume, several authors offer critiques of centering English in academic publishing, and the editors provide a great deal of space for unrepresented perspectives to contribute to this ongoing conversation.

On the whole, *Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge* offers valuable content for librarians and library students who are interested in scholcomm as a field within librarianship. However, this is not a book that needs to be read cover to cover; its parts offer value to different audiences as they seek more information on specific scholcomm topics that individual chapters address. Pieces of this book can be useful for administrators working to develop or enhance their library scholcomm programs and departments, as they demonstrate the value of scholcomm within a broader library setting and beyond authors' rights. Additionally, researchers seeking to understand some discussion of specific scholcomm topics, such as labor or open washing, may benefit from the many additional resources this book provides.

Most chapters contain material useful in reconsidering and applying aspects of scholcomm, including discussion questions that provoke contemplation of the chapter's argument, as well as possible applications in the daily work of a scholcomm librarian. Furthermore, many chapters offer activities relevant to their contents, opportunities for scholcomm librarians to engage further in communities, and additional resources, including thorough bibliographies. The final thirty-five pages are case studies, which are written such that the ideas they contain are easily transferable to other library contexts.

The entirety of Part I (Definitions and Introductions) is authored by the editors, and that is the extent to which Bonn, Bolick, and Cross include their voices in the text of the volume. Definitions in evolving fields, like scholcomm, are important but challenging, and situating them in specific legal, political, social, economic, and technological contexts of the early 2020s is equally important and challenging. By giving the remainder of the book to other authors, the editors demonstrate that the diversity of thought and action within scholcomm librarianship stems from a confluence of contexts, and that there is no monolithic—or even best—approach to confronting those contexts. Additionally, in lieu of a traditional conclusion, the editors include a final section, “Adding your voice to the conversation,” which embodies a core principle of *Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge*: that a single piece of writing is not the final word on a subject. As they write, “Every day cool people do cool

new things that make scholarly communication better” (p. 499), and to that end, they have developed the Scholarly Communication Notebook (<https://oercommons.org/hubs/SCN>), an open repository of resources for teaching and practice, as a place for the conversations to continue.

What is most impressive about the book is the extent to which the editors ensure that the volume practices the values it contains. First, they have worked with the publisher to ensure the book is available in an open access format. Second, they give voice to the many, *many* perspectives on scholarly communication, scholcomm librarianship, and openness, not only in defining what each one of those things is but also in what they mean and how they are practiced. Third, this book affirms scholcomm librarians. As mentioned several times, librarians throughout a library do work that broadly supports scholcomm efforts, but scholcomm librarians do so “directly and overtly.” Affirming and validating that work that is still “new” in many libraries is essential in a critical evaluation of the evolving profession of librarianship. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the editors and authors understand that this book is not the final say in scholarly communication librarianship or in open knowledge but there are many ways, and directions, in which these concepts can expand.