Advancing Open: Detailed Summary of Event

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Introduction

The *Advancing Open* event took place May 6-7, 2019 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The event provided a unique opportunity for scholarly communications practitioners to convene and delve into two key questions:

1. **What is holding Open Scholarship back in Canada?**
2. **What actions and strategies will mobilize open initiatives and uptake in the academic environment in Canada?**

With 70+ practitioners and stakeholders from across Canada in attendance, the discussions were wide ranging. This document is a summary of the views and opinions expressed by participants at the *Advancing Open* event. Using the notes generated during the plenary sessions and themed sessions on specific aspects of scholarly communication practice (Policy, Workflow and Operations, Technology, People, Education and Outreach), a number of common perspectives and themes were identified that the event participants felt are essential to advancing Open scholarship in Canada. Key perspectives are presented in no particular order.

Further consultation will take place over the coming months with groups who were unable to attend the event so that additional ideas and opinions can be gathered and added to the data set. The final result of these efforts will be a white paper written for the scholarly communications community in Canada to use as a discussion instrument with academic library leaders and decision makers in an effort to strengthen both vertical and peer-level strategy alignment for advancing Open scholarship in Canada. The white paper will also help the community set its own priorities for grassroots action.

To continue the conversation, we encourage scholarly communications practitioners to use the Schol Comm in Canada Slack channel (https://scholcommincanada.slack.com/) and the Repos-L listserv (repos-l@listserv.uottawa.ca). We welcome written input to this process; please send your responses to ann.barrett@dal.ca.

Submitted to the Canadian Open Access Movement Community by members of the CARL Open Repositories Working Group: Community-Building and Engagement Task Group

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Opening plenary

The *Advancing Open* event began with an initial keynote presentation by Juan Pablo Alperin, Assistant Professor in Publishing Studies at Simon Fraser University and Associate Researcher with the Public Knowledge Project, entitled "**Are faculty the key to advancing open?"** based on [research examining faculty publishing values in relation to review, promotion and tenure expectations](#). Two fundamental recommendations of this talk were for the Canadian open movement to a) focus less on impact as an incentive for Open Access (OA), as the research did not prove this as a motivating factor in behavioural change; and b) provide open infrastructure to scholars and allow them to use and shape it according to their needs. [This presentation was recorded and can be viewed on Youtube using this link.](#)

The keynote presentation was followed by a plenary facilitated all-participant discussion.

Plenary group discussion: What is holding Open Scholarship back in Canada? ([this plenary was recorded and can be viewed on Youtube using this link)](#)

Discussion takeaway: Advancing Open Scholarship has many common challenges around the world. In Canada we have made some significant strides and contributions toward advancing open scholarship and infrastructure, (e.g. Portage and the Public Knowledge Project). However, the lack of a common vision at the national scale has us struggling to situate and prioritize our work to address specific Canadian problems. Our efforts to date have often been institution-specific, and we lack the collaboration and key supports to help promote substantive progress.

Scholarly practitioners feel they are stymied on three fronts: the faculty and researchers we support largely lack interest in helping develop the open access movement; the for-profit academic publishing industry isn't interested in exploring new publishing models that that could diminish their profit margins; and national funding agencies in Canada mandate but do not enforce open requirements, leaving the libraries standing alone as the primary national promoters of OA.

Key perspectives:

- Open issues are often seen as "library issues" in the academic world; faculty/researcher/administrator lack of understanding of OA is a problem.
- Participation in Open initiatives is difficult for researchers – infrastructure is hard to use, article processing charges (APC) act as a deterrent, publisher restrictions are hard to understand, and disreputable publishers are a real concern. All of these issues hinder participation in the OA movement.
- The academic reward systems--tenure and promotion models--do not recognize the value of OA.

- Funders are not all on board with OA, and those who have a mandate for OA are not enforcing it.
- Each academic institution is going its own way with institutional repositories (IRs). There is little cooperation or sharing of resources and expertise, resulting in inefficiencies and inequities.
- Librarians within each institution should be collaborating on Open initiatives: library staff from scholarly communications, collections, resources, copyright, archives, liaison and IT all have to be involved in Open.
- Canada has a number of successful Open initiatives (PKP, Érudit, Portage) but we don't have a single vision or focus for Open Scholarship in Canada.
- We are not working as cooperatively as we could to gather voices from French and English Canada and voices from Indigenous communities and diverse populations.
- There are many structural and cultural reasons for authors to resist change in scholarly communications. We must clearly express (and help faculty share success stories) of the positive value proposition of Open Scholarship and open infrastructure to researchers.

Breakout discussions

Breakout discussion: Open Policy

Discussion takeaway: Current OA policies--from national funding agencies to localized university policies--aren't enough to enact change: we must address the current culture of scholarship and the cultures of our institutions (locally, regionally, nationally).

Key perspectives:
1. [Plan S](#) is an interesting option, but not something Canada can and/or should adopt at this time:
    a. Europe already has an established foundation of funders and networks, unlike the Canadian context
    b. Not a community-owned OA plan
    c. Hard to enforce
    d. Technical requirements for repositories and journals are excessive and difficult to implement
    e. Heavily emphasizes Gold OA over other models
    f. Doesn't mandate Open Source (OS)
    g. Lack of clarity regarding how read and publish agreements will work in the plan
2. Coordination of Open initiatives at a national level is strong in some areas (e.g. Open Data/Portage) and limited in other areas:
    a. Clarify OA roles and goals of key leadership organizations like CRKN, CARL, LAC, and the Tri-Agencies and strengthen leadership/practitioner communications through deliberate, planned information-sharing strategies and events.
        i. Increased transparency and dialogue is needed between scholarly communications practitioners and the Tri-Council
    b. Ensure researchers are involved in leadership
    c. Build a more transparent, reciprocal relationship between national stakeholders and scholarly communications practitioners
    d. Model international initiatives (e.g. Norway and Germany)
    e. Model and learn from other successful national Canadian initiatives (e.g. Portage)
3. The current efficacy of localized OA policies at Canadian universities is minimal, and practitioners are looking for support in ensuring compliance at their institution:
    a. Train more people on advocacy for and use of OA policies
        i. Look to the UK where training and support models are in place
5. Integrating OA into tenure and promotion regulations in collective agreements is an essential component to furthering OA:

a. Current academic values of individualism and competitiveness in publishing and research, combined with a complicated approach to academic freedom and publishing, complicates scholarly communication practitioners' work.
      i. How to communicate value of faculty retaining their rights in an effective way?
6. Reject APCs as an unsustainable and inequitable model:
   a. OA does need a consistent infusion of funding, but it should be directed to alternative sustainable models
      i. The Open movement includes university presses

Questions for further discussion:
- What needs does Canada have that aren't covered in Plan S?
- How do we define the roles among national stakeholders, and what should their relationships to practitioners entail?
- How do we approach conversations about integrating OA into tenure and promotion and collective agreements?
  - If every university redirected their APC funds to another Open initiative, where should that money be redirected?

Breakout discussion: Open Technological Infrastructure

Discussion takeaway: Many expressed a desire to deliberately reduce duplicated effort and focus efforts on collaborative initiatives, but current open technological infrastructure requires significantly increased support from the federal level in Canada. Sustainable approaches to discoverability and interoperability are ongoing concerns; some practitioners proposed a universal national infrastructure, while others are in favour of a coordinated system.

Key perspectives:
1. Essential to ensure systems of inequality and inequity are not replicated in Open technology.
    a. Access is not equality.
2. Support and leadership specifically pertaining to digital preservation is unclear at a national level; institutions are trying to do this work on their own.
    a. There are gaps in the funding landscape for which no one has taken responsibility
    b. It is essential to create a long-term, sustainable approach to infrastructure
3. Collaboration and shared resources are important to sustainability, at either a regional, consortial, or national level.
    a. Look to existing models that work (e.g. PKP, Federated Research Data Repository)
4. Need to consult with disciplinary communities and associations to understand their needs - researchers' voices should be centred in future planning.
5. Training and expertise in OS software is essential, but university hiring practises and structure often do not accommodate the technical skills required to effectively maintain OS software nor the fundamental costs inherent to running the software.
6. Users of OS should contribute support to OS foundations to ensure sustainable development; community-based approaches to software development is time-intensive and requires contributions from many stakeholders.
    a. Support will look different depending on the resources available to users

Questions for further discussion:
- How can small institutions contribute to OS technology even though they have fewer resources to support large-scale initiatives?
    - "The Big Fix often comes with a big price"--not everyone can pay that price, so what then?
- How to ensure all researchers benefit/are served by a national infrastructure?
- What resources can be leveraged to start meaningful work on national infrastructure?
- How can we connect scholarly communications and IT in a meaningful and sustainable way?
- How can we ensure barriers to equality in infrastructure are removed in new and existing systems?

Breakout discussion: Open People

Discussion takeaway: Scholarly communications professionals feel overworked and lacking the supports necessary to work effectively and efficiently. Burnout and turnover undermine local and collaborative OA efforts. The community is seeking strategies for developing an understanding of how to decolonize the Open movement and ensure that respect for and inclusion of Indigenous peoples and Traditional Knowledge is prioritized in our work.

Key perspectives:
1. Open is not appropriate for all forms of knowledge; we must recognize the needs of Traditional Knowledge:
    a. Metadata standards don't suffice for Traditional Knowledge or for being inclusive of historically marginalized groups.
    b. Multilingualism within our software systems should be better supported.
2. The system within which we work is built on colonialist ideals, and we cannot nor should not expect Indigenous peoples and other marginalized peoples to be served well by that system, nor to want to participate in it:
    a. We must build relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities and centre their needs in our work.
    b. We must be accountable for changing the system to ensure it is welcoming to all.
3. Enhanced, meaningful collaboration with colleagues is important:
    a. Build connections with collections, acquisitions, e-resources librarians to integrate OA into all library functions.
4. Rely more on institutions like the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) to communicate changes and updates within the OA realm in order to alleviate some of the burden of professional development.
5. Funding and investment in OA must include decolonization of the academic publishing ecosystem and equity-focused disbursement of resources.
6. Increased support for scholarly communications is essential from our institutions:
    a. Current workloads and roles are unsustainable.
    b. The work is often invisible and involves a great deal of emotional labour.
    c. There is a lack of information about scholarly communications job roles and reasonable expectations of staff
        i. Proposed repository of job ads for scholarly communications job description to help define the work of practitioners.

Questions for discussion:
- What kind of system would we build if we started over anew, with respect for indigeneity at the centre of our work?
- How can we advocate for greater support for OA and scholarly communications within our institutions, and at regional and national levels?

Breakout discussion: Open Education and Outreach

Discussion takeaway: OA has not yet become embedded into the culture of academia; it is frequently an afterthought within institutions and much integration of OA in the Canadian academy still needs to be done. A cultural shift is necessary to centre OA within academia, which will require increased resources allocated to OA, including staff, time, and money. Open Education and Outreach would be strengthened by organizational leadership participation and engagement in promoting open models of scholarly discourse and determining local strategies that will be most fruitful.

Key perspectives:
1. Outreach and education must be sustainable
    a. OA Week is an example of a time intensive activity that doesn't result in change; faculty presentations are often "one and done", resulting in no further dialogue.
2. Communication and collaboration within the library are essential--collections and acquisitions should be closely connected with scholarly communications.
3. OA initiatives should not be used as a branding opportunity for institutions:
    a. Branding could apply to services that support OA
4. Conversations surrounding cancellations should be principle-based, and cancellations should be communicated as principle-based to stakeholders (particularly faculty).
    a. Leaving a Big Deal is not the same as encouraging faculty to publish OA; if OA is the goal, must explicitly dedicate resources to it instead of considering it a money-saver.
    b. Personal relationships are important when discussing cancellations
5. Integrating OA into the reappointment, permanence, and tenure (RPT) guidelines would be helpful in making outreach and education meaningful and productive.
6. National collaboration is key to share the labour of education and outreach.
7. Adequate staffing for outreach and education is difficult to maintain
    a. Outreach is often difficult to make visible and demonstrate value

Questions for discussion:
- How do we manage library resources in a more effective manner that support and further OA? (e.g. breaking the habit of buying books that never circulate and redirecting those funds to OA initiatives)
- Can we create educational OA materials that scholarly communication practitioners can share nationally? How can the community best share those materials?
    - Some type of repository would be needed to hold these materials

Breakout discussion: Open Workflows and Operations

Discussion takeaways: Scholarly communications practitioners feel a lack of structure and common objectives within the field make it difficult to be an effective practitioner. The fragmented nature of repositories means practitioners are often isolated, and duplication of work ("reinventing wheels") is common. Practitioners reported a strong sense that library budget allocation practices do not often incorporate OA or engage the expertise of scholarly communication librarians, and instead privilege traditional "just in case" methods of resource acquisition. Participants also expressed that library budget processes, for the most part, do not prioritize the innovative tools and unique digital collections that provide the OA movement in Canada with its strongest value propositions.

Key perspectives:
1. Identify core competencies of scholarly communications:
    a. Develop training materials to facilitate entry into the scholarly communications field and to support staff adjacent to but not regularly engaged with OA
2. Formalize community supports and structure to better support scholarly communication practitioners, who are often the only person invested in the field at their institution:
    a. Suggested method of formalized community is an association; see Appendix A for more information.
3. Develop documentation that identifies common workflows and operational guidelines:
    a. Need to recognize varying levels of resources institutions can achieve; scalability is essential.
    b. Need for collaborative sharing of documentation from all aspects of scholarly communication practice in order to prevent silo-ing of practitioners.
4. Mandates codify the goals of scholarly communication and OA, and provide a framework for day-to-day operations to develop.
5. A centralized repository solution is desirable, though practitioners recognized that a mixed model would provide more flexibility:
    a. Sustainable management of multiple Open initiatives/platforms is a concern.
6. Reconsider current allocation of library budget away from traditional book buying and instead invest in unique resources like digital collections:
    a. Work with collection librarians to integrate open dissemination practices into library budgets
7. Consider how the liaison librarian role intersects with scholarly communications and make more sustainable connections and collaboration between the two roles (if they are separate).
8. The scope of scholarly communications is expanding, and more trained staff are necessary to accommodate and support this growth in the field.
9. Connection and communication with university administration and faculty is essential:

       a. Develop a local community of interest in OA to leverage growing awareness and meaningful institutional support for OA initiatives
           i. Support that doesn't translate to resources means our work doesn't translate to impact.

Questions for discussion:
- What does the job of scholarly communications entail? How do we as a community define it?
- What does measurable success look like in scholarly communication?
- Can we use a national system to centralize some of our day-to-day tasks and decrease duplication of effort? What would that look like?
- Are library schools teaching open models of dissemination?
- How do we address precarity in scholarly communications, and ensure research dissemination is seen as essential to institutions?

Closing Plenary Discussion

The plenary facilitated all-participant discussion was a closing event for participants to share their opinions on how we need to move forward together, considering the discussions and ideas they encountered at Advancing Open and in their own opinion. This plenary was recorded and can be viewed on Youtube using this link.

Discussion takeaway: Current OA outreach and education approaches have not created an informed user base among faculty or the general public. Barriers to growth of OA include lack of resources to support scholarly communication practitioners, persistent misunderstandings of OA, and a lack of collective strategies, vision, and leadership.

Key perspectives:
1. OA is a complex, constantly changing issue; we need to make the learning curve easier and more streamlined for faculty
2. There are lingering misconceptions about OA, which is often conflated with predatory publishing
3. Lack of common infrastructure, particularly to support discovery, hinders OA
4. The traditional academic metric-based tenure and promotion models do not make space for values-based publishing decisions
5. Lack of collaboration within the scholarly communication community and with colleagues in the library means our efforts are not as effective as they could be
6. Enforcement of OA compliance by federal funding agencies is weak
   a. Funding agencies aren't transparent about how they evaluate OA activities

Questions for further discussion:
- Should we aim to make current publishing models Open, or try to rebuild the system?
- How can we make OA essential to all parts of the library?
- How can we make OA easier to understand and implement?

Moving Forward Together

Scholarly communications practitioners propose that an inventory of current OA work be taken (investments and infrastructure) to characterize our current Canadian OA environment. This combined with the recent CARL survey (citation) would inform the prioritization of the following suggested next steps:

1. Explore a national vision of Open Scholarship which would include infrastructure with a discovery layer.
2. Ensure all stakeholders, including researchers, have a voice in building national initiatives.
3. Ensure equity is the foundation of any future actions/infrastructures/initiatives
4. Create more supports for OA: train new professionals; support professional development; create a scholarly communications association in Canada
5. Increase collaboration among practitioners at regional and national levels; prioritize resource, expertise and knowledge-sharing. Devote institutional funds to OA collaboration efforts and strive to bring leaders and practitioners together in these efforts, especially when considering tactical implementation challenges.
6. Expand the conversation beyond scholarly communication practitioners to include library staff in resources, collections, liaison, copyright, archives and IT specialties.

Appendix A: Leadership in Canadian scholarly communication

(i.e. Should we have a scholarly communication association?)

Advancing Open organizers held two 'discuss anything' unconference time slots and both times this was offered, entirely separate groups of participants both discussed the possibility of a national association of scholarly communications practitioners. We report these conversations separately below.

Discussion takeaway: Scholarly communication practitioners are interested in forming an association of professionals but have some reservations about what an association can and/or should be.

Key perspectives:
1. Benefits of an association would entail:
    a. Share the labour of practicing Open Scholarship
    b. Connect practitioners
    c. Alleviate feeling of being alone or siloed as a scholarly comm professional
    d. Lend strength and organization to advocacy work
    e. Enable closer collaboration and communication
2. Concerns regarding an association:
    a. Important voices (particularly practitioners of colour and those from small institutions) were largely not part of initial discussions; could an association inadvertently exclude some voices?
    b. Debate over a formal governance structure vs. an informal
        i. Is a community of practice strong enough to get things done?
    c. Who leads the beginning of an association?
3. Generally accepted statements about a potential association:
    a. No gatekeeping: must be open and welcoming to all
    b. Foster generosity and sense of community
    c. Celebrate and promote expertise within community

Questions for discussion:
- What existing models of associations and/or governance would be appropriate for scholarly communication practitioners?
- How do we ensure inclusion of all scholarly communication practitioners, including those outside of academia (do we want members outside of academia?)?
- What kind of leadership would or should an association provide?