Moving Open Access to "Post-open"

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Introduction

Discourse on Open Access (OA) is ubiquitous in scholarly literature across disciplines and geographies. Since the advent of the Open Access movement in the 1990s (Moody, 2016), a grand techno-utopian vision has been crafted where freely-accessible, highly-discoverable, easily-disseminated, peer-reviewed, high-quality information resources are celebrated and nurtured by a unified community of global citizens, educators, academics and practitioners in every field. Academic and public libraries imagine a future where high subscription and licensing costs are repurposed for the betterment of the patrons and communities they serve, and the foundation of the information society is solidified by a global culture that embraces frictionless access to knowledge.

Perhaps as a result of this vision, and of the tireless efforts of Open Access advocates (Morrison & Waller, 2008; Parsons, 2017) recent work suggests that awareness of open access resources and their benefits is much higher than actual adoption (Serrano-Vicente, Melero, & Abadal, 2016). This paper provides a high-level overview of some of the current challenges facing Open Access adoption by both readers and creators of academic work and suggests that it is time to move past the advocacy phase to one of praxis.

Working towards post-open

In philosophical and sociological circles, the prefix *post-* has come to represent a state where the root word exists as an ongoing condition. Cramer (2013) presents "post-digital" as the experience of both old and new technologies in a world where digital environments are ubiquitous, I posit that Open Access has reached the point of "post-open."

We are now almost ten years past the release of Aaron Swartz's *Guerilla Open Access Manifesto* (2008), and 15 years past the *Budapest Open Access Initiative* (2002) and the *Berlin Declaration* (2003). The idea of Open Access is no longer novel, and recent data shows that people expect publications to be available on the Internet as soon as possible (Serrano-Vicente et al., 2016, p. 598). We are no longer in a state where the principles of open access are impending: our library patrons expect access, and therefore it should be incorporated in and reflected by all aspects of library services. Each of the challenges outlined in subsequent sections can be capably addressed by working from a basis of openness, [Office1]instead of grafting the principles of Open Access on to our existing paradigms.

"Open" is not always the ideal default

First, an apparent contradiction: a post-open world does not necessarily mean that everything must be open. Though the output of a research process is often viewed as a single set of results, it is heterogeneous: source data, analysis, findings, and publications may all be viewed separately, and a single binary declaration of "open" or "not open" may not apply universally.

One prominent example is in the realm of indigenous scholarship, which presents ways of knowing and remembering that contrast starkly against colonial representations of knowledge. Indigenous scholars have highlighted several challenges with the broad application of open access policies. In many cultures, traditional knowledge is governed by a hierarchy and the authority to share may not be in the hands of the researcher. The privacy of indigenous communities is not always respected when research is performed, and information collected during research is sometimes misrepresented (Flor, 2014); Even the colonial concept of authorship may not align with communal approaches to knowledge ownership in some nations

(Verma, 2015). These challenges are not insurmountable, but they require an engagement with communities that are impacted by research. An example of such engagement can be seen in the content management system Mukurtu, which incorporates community and cultural protocols for managing access to information based on characteristics such as status or gender (Mukurtu.org, 2017). This kind of engagement with indigenous communities shows that respectful and inclusive approaches to access can be crafted when openness is transparently expressed as the goal. Mindful creation of Open Access publishing mandates will be centered on respectful engagement, strong relationships, and ongoing dialogue.

For many institutions, a more common scenario appears in the realm of health sciences, where ethics and privacy issues related to research data and findings continue to present challenges. Collected data may include personally-identifiable information from study participants; conditions imposed by research funders may impose constraints on how intellectual property is shared; and researchers must be mindful of the possibility of uncontrolled, secondary uses of research data (Hugelier, 2015). In an environment where researchers are increasingly expected to make archives of source data available for future review and analysis, research data management–and more specifically, Open Data Management (ODM)–has become a core component of the research design and implementation process. This is an excellent example of "post-open" thinking that has already become common practice.

Open Access is a solution in search of a problem

Patrons usually regard library services as "free" because the cost of service delivery is hidden from users. Most patrons are not aware of the revenue-generating tactics used by publishers, where the copyright on publicly-funded research outputs is surrendered so that the

published versions can be re-sold to public institutions on a subscription basis (Fisher, 2008). Articles from electronic journals are expected to be instantaneously, ubiquitously and freely available, and researchers sometimes only speak out when access to these resources is threatened or removed (Mills, 2016). In short: since library users get most content for free, they do not understand the benefit of getting content that is Open.

As a result of this situation, Open Access champions whose long-term strategy involves getting researchers to forego "closed" publications for research dissemination must advocate their solutions by first informing researchers of the existence of the problem. A satirical form of this logic might be: "the resources you rely on are not actually free; they're just free to you. This is a problem that impacts us, and not you–not directly, anyway–so please do some extra work, and possibly pay some high up-front costs, to make your research Open Access. This will help us reduce the cost of the services you don't think you're paying for."

A post-open approach to advocacy involves transparency about the cost of subscriptions (including the prevalence of bundled subscriptions that pair top-tier, closed journals with lesser-known, Open ones), and identification of library-supplied resources that use Open Access mechanisms. Delivering library services from this mindset would facilitate Open Access awareness by exposing the barriers to closed resources, and would help illustrate the value of all library services to patrons.

Open Access is a solution in search of a standard

As has been suggested, libraries can integrate Open Access advocacy into their services by identifying and promoting the Open resources available in their catalogs. However, a recent survey of librarians' experiences with OA management revealed challenges with this approach

(Bulock, Hosburgh, & Mann, 2015). There is no standard method for identifying an Open Access item based on its metadata, and many hybrid journals mix both Open and non-Open articles within single issues. Moreover, while some publishers have adopted the "open" logo developed by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), others have muddied the water by labeling their content with terms like "increased access." Even in cases where discovery interfaces can distinguish OA content, they may be rendered inaccurate due to the inclusion of indexes that do not store OA-related metadata.

A post-open approach to this form of content identification would incorporate a library's interest in Open Access identification into the implementation of discovery services, bibliographic services, and collection management services so that these challenges can be systematically addressed.

Publishing implications for researchers

Though significant time and energy are spent in the area of Open Access advocacy, much more work is needed to guide researchers through the complexities of OA publishing. Once a researcher has decided to publish using open access methods, many questions must be addressed, and care must be still be taken in the selection of an appropriate Open Access journal. These questions are often best-addressed on a case-by-case basis.

In some cases, the decision to publish under open access principles is mandated by funding bodies (for example Government of Canada, 2016; National Institutes of Health, 2014; Research Councils UK, 2017), in which case the concern becomes ensuring that compliance and reporting criteria are met. Compliance may involve the use of Creative Commons copyright licensing, which must be understood by the researcher regarding its form and its implications for

derivative works and third-party permissions (Gulley, 2013). Restrictions may also be placed on

the use of grant funds to cover Article Processing Charges (APCs), resulting in the need to use

Open Access Funds or other mechanisms to cover these costs.

Care must be still be taken in the selection of an appropriate Open Access journal for

publication. While evidence mounts for high citation rates and strong impact factor scores for

research presented in open publications (Hua, Sun, Walsh, Glenny, & Worthington, 2017;

Majumder, 2016; Mikki, 2017), the existence of predatory and pseudo-journals continues to be a

problem. Since Beall's List was removed in January 2017 (Straumsheim, 2017), other models for

identifying opportunistic publishers have appeared (Dadkhah & Bianciardi, 2016; Shamseer &

Moher, 2017) but these have not been widely tested. As a result, researchers will often benefit

from guidance on target publications, and there is a role for librarians in this area.

In a related issue, the growth of open publishing models has brought scrutiny to peer

review processes (Bohannon, 2013), suggesting that they must evolve. Concerns about peer

review quality have even ignited a counter-Open-Access movement in defense of the methods

used by traditional publishers (Romesburg, 2016). Experimentation with new forms of Open

Peer Review (OPR) is underway, involving transparent review comments, known identities of

peer reviewers, and broader access to the peer review process in the academic community

(Perakakis et al., 2017), but approaches of this type are still not as tested or widely-accepted as

the single- and double-blind methods used by traditional journals (Ramanan, 2015). The result of

this debate is that researchers who are considering Open Access publication must also

understand and weigh the impact of each journal's review process.

In much the same way that academic librarians have embraced Open Access advocacy, a

post-open approach to services (including reference services and embedded librarianship work)

would involve addressing these potential challenges during the research planning and design phases. This is a natural extension of the support services for research data management that are already being offered by many academic librarians in this context.

The relentless role of economic progress

With the growth of Open Access publishing mechanisms, it is only natural that traditional, profit-motivated publishers are keen to maintain their hold on the market. Recent work by Bjrk (2017) shows that the rate of conversion of journals to Open Access is still taking place at only 1-2% per year, and many leading publishers are clinging to the existing subscription-based model for top-tier journals. Embargo periods for "delayed open access" articles are being extended to stall the appearance of manuscripts in institutional repositories, and Article Processing Charges (APCs)[Office2] for journals are slowly increasing. In response to complaints about the growth of these fees, publishers are beginning to create offerings like "mega-journals," which lower APCs at the cost of minimized or non-existent peer review; this raises questions about overall publication quality.

New pricing and subscription models are appearing, further complicating the challenges of collections management. Some publishers' subscription bundles are shifting to force the inclusion of closed journals alongside Open and hybrid publications, making it difficult for institutions to express a clear preference for open content. Some publishers are linking APCs to subscription prices, offsetting the latter as money spent on the former increases, but since the source of APC funding is not always the same as the source for subscription costs, libraries are left grappling with how to manage these agreements. This is happening while institutions are

wrestling with formulae for sustainable research funding support mechanisms (Earney, 2017; Kingsley, 2014).

The post-open approach to these issues may be forced upon librarianship by the policy decisions of funding bodies, higher education administrators or libraries' parent institutions[Office3], who are increasingly embedding Open Access publishing mandates into their strategies. Public services librarians can continue to champion these changes by advocating for and participating in their development, insisting that issues of data management, peer review, and research impact be included in these discussions. This approach will further entrench a post-open sensibility into every aspect of academic library services.

Conclusion

A more holistic approach to open access challenges is needed, with the principles of open access (no longer capitalized as a specific item, but genericized as a matter of practice) integrated within the broader context of an academic library's public services. Though advocacy must continue and many challenges still exist, we are well past the "breaking point" of Open Access implementation. Viewing the state of library services as "post-open," where they are offered under a pretext of Open Access, acknowledges the systemic nature of open information services and aligns those services with our patrons' expectations for an integrated, holistic approach to their needs.

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