

Open Access: One Goal, Many Pathways

Rachel E. Scott and Michael Fernandez

How better to celebrate the one-year anniversary of *Library Resources & Technical Services (LRTS)* becoming fully open access than an issue chock-full of insights, experiences, practices, and data on open access in library settings? The work published in this issue aligns with several of the obstacles we encountered in making *LRTS* open and available to all. Namely, despite two decades of growth, open access publishing remains fraught with misconceptions, unrealized benefits, and logistical challenges. In library settings, open access poses opportunity and uncertainty in equal measure and brings to light competing demands for resources. The complexities and expenses associated with open access have led to the perceived and material exclusion of many, including librarians—which of course has considerable implications for equity. This issue highlights the work of librarians who have not been sidelined by challenges, but rather embraced them to investigate how open access does—or does not—align with institutional goals, budgets, and workflows.

The articles in this issue do not suggest a single path forward or even necessarily a standard set of steps—the diversity of institutional contexts, goals, and needs would not support that. Instead, authors make compelling cases to collect and review data, take small steps forward when a more comprehensive approach is not possible, leverage existing workflows and infrastructures to support open access, and, given its alignment with professional values, advocate for openness. Whether working consortially or as individual “policy entrepreneurs,” the authors highlight the need for systematic yet flexible approaches to adopting, assessing, communicating, and supporting open access.

The articles also reveal the extent to which librarians are not working in isolation to adopt and promote open access. Authors reiterate the importance of explicitly aligning open access initiatives with the mission and vision of a broader institution or consortium, offices of research, shared governance structures, library personnel labor, professional associations, scholars, and various other stakeholders. Encouragingly, several authors document how working on open access has facilitated conversions among groups or individuals that had not previously been in contact. Partnerships and dialogue seem inherent to building understanding about open access—even in cases that are ultimately critical of a specific open access model or practice.

We hope that this special issue on open access encourages more submissions on the topic of scholarly communication. Although scholarly communication has long been within the scope of *LRTS*, few studies on the topic have been submitted to the journal. That *LRTS* articles were paywalled for six months post-publication and did not support authors’ copyright retention by default reduced the journal’s capacity to espouse its values around openness. Now that these obstacles to living the values of our shared profession have been removed, we hope that authors researching the theoretical and

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practical impacts of openness will share their findings with *LRTS* and the journal can keep this essential dialogue going.

Finally, we want to offer an update on the open access funding of *LRTS* and its counterpart journals within the American Library Associations' Core division: *Information Technology and Libraries (ITAL)* and *Library Leadership & Management (LL&M)*. All three journals are now fully open access and published together on the American Library Association's Open Journal Systems platform. As reiterated in several articles in this issue, open access is many wonderful things, but cost-free is not one of them! With support of the Core Publications Coordinating Committee and the Core Executive Board, we have created the Core Journals Open Access collections with subscription agents including EBSCO and Harrassowitz. We hope that as your institution is able, you will support these essential publications and ensure the sustainability of their open access into the distant future.

In this issue, we present a new column, Communications on Practice. Communications on Practice offers editorially reviewed content on a broad range of issues. This column allows *LRTS* to publish timely reports on current topics of interest that may not have a large body of literature to draw on or a large dataset to analyze and report. These pieces also allow *LRTS* editors to engage directly in dialogue with stakeholders on the practical elements of our shared profession. By broadening our column coverage with Communications on Practice, alongside our regular peer-reviewed Features and Notes on Operations, we hope to be agile in responding to the increasingly dynamic work of technical services while maintaining our high standards of scholarly rigor. In this issue:

Communications on Practice

Joseph Lerro and Rachel E. Scott offer their perspectives on collaborating to expand support for open access. The goal of this editorial dialogue is to highlight the flexibility of open access agreements when approached as a partnership and not an out-of-the-box "solution" imposed on clients. Working in partnership allows for the needs of stakeholders to be accounted for and agreements to be tailored to the needs and goals of both parties.

Chelsea Dickson considers the local implications for global open access initiatives. Dickson contends with the relatively widespread adoption of open access policies throughout Europe and the constraints on open access at Kennesaw State University (KSU). Although an open access policy has not yet been adopted at KSU, Dickson shows how librarians acting as "policy entrepreneurs" can nonetheless provide meaningful support and education for open access within their communities.

Features

Ben Rawlins contextualizes the open access publishing and agreements at the University of Kentucky (UK) through comparison to those of peer, benchmark, and fellow Southeastern Conference institutions. The analysis suggests that the transformative agreements under consideration at UK have not yielded the desired return on investment at this institution and will not be pursued.

Sierra Laddusaw shares findings from a census of institutional repositories (IR) at public regional universities in the United States. The results track the adoption of IR by these institutions across time and by platform, as well as documenting the varieties of materials deposited. Although not written with a focus on open access, the article clearly articulates a growing adoption of IRs, which are often a library's primary means of supporting campus open access initiatives.

Maureen Walsh, Gene Springs, and Anita Foster share context and data from a three-year transformative agreement between The Ohio State University and Taylor & Francis, the first such agreement in the Americas. The results demonstrate a considerable uptake in open access publishing with the publisher and by authors within disciplines that often lack funding for open access publishing. The authors make a case for the agreement as part of their library and institution's strategic commitment to transform the scholarly publishing economy.

Notes on Operations

Sarah Sutton describes the work of library and information science faculty at Emporia State University to incentivize open access publishing via promotion and tenure policies. All full-time faculty and the dean contributed to the policy, finalized in 2021, which recognized: "The importance of open access to faculty as a core competence of librarianship and as a means of advancing the common good."

Savannah Lake, Elizabeth Siler, Jeff McAdams, and Kate Dickson discuss their recent work to advocate for and develop an open access policy at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The general framework for open access policy advocacy offered serves as a useful model for librarians at institutions that do not yet have an open access policy and would like to work through some of the entrenched challenges toward adopting one.

Erica Zhang and Cynthia Johnson outline the process of developing shared resource management principles for open access materials for libraries in the University of California System. The development coincided with the implementation of Alma, and the considerations and practices described offer a useful model to those working to align the work of their organization with its guiding principles.

Savannah Lake and Stephannie Regenauer document their initiative to leverage Web of Science data to identify eligible publications for deposit in the University of North Carolina at Charlotte institutional repository, clean the metadata, and batch ingest the articles. The article provides clear guidance to librarians who would like to pursue a proactive yet sustainable approach to populating their institutional repository.

Rachelle McLain and Hannah McKelvey discuss how entering into open access agreements has shifted collection development priorities at the University of Montana Library. The authors offer a list of considerations that informed their decision-making process and could be adopted by librarians who are unsure about questions to ask when considering implementing their first open access agreement.

Further information on managing, promoting, and assessing agreements will be useful to librarians new to this work.

Alexander Dodd presents a case study of three open access agreements at the University of Maryland and considers their costs and impact within the framework of the role of public research universities to advance scholarship and access. By outlining the costs and outcomes of these agreements, Dodd highlights a variety of tensions between financial and institutional value.

Book Review

Erin Wentz reviews *The Complete Guide to Open Scholarship* by Victoria Martin.