

# Book Review

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**The Complete Guide to Open Scholarship.** By Victoria Martin. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2022. 199p. \$80 softcover (978-1-4408-72808); \$72 e-book (ISBN 978-1-4408-72815).

Victoria Martin's *The Complete Guide to Open Scholarship* is a timely book. The United States recently celebrated 2023 as the "Year of Open Science."<sup>1</sup> Institutions continue to adjust to changing expectations since the onset of COVID-19. Increases in remote work, hybrid classes, and general societal and economic challenges in the past few years have spurred greater interest in ease of access to materials. People want to be able to access content with little fuss from wherever they are. The open scholarship movement facilitates those desires. This book provides a brief overview of that movement.

Martin provides a clear description of what readers should expect: a series of related, but standalone chapters summarize the important theoretical and historical aspects of each of the different open movements (xiii). Martin condenses years of debate, growth, and evolution into eight chapters. Martin also identifies the primary audience right in the preface: academic librarians who work with people who may be creating or using open scholarship (xii). Martin writes primarily for people in the United States and, to a lesser extent, countries in Europe. References to other parts of the world happen sporadically in specific chapters.

The open scholarship movement covers a broad range of topics. Librarians and scholars may be familiar with some aspects of the movement, but less familiar with others. This book provides a solid foundation for exploring additional aspects. Each chapter considers theories of openness in a particular aspect of open scholarship and highlights important contributions of different groups over time. For example, one chapter focuses on free software, and another focuses on the process of citizen science. Martin takes time to identify lengthy lists of benefits and drawbacks to openness in each of those areas. Although Martin explicitly states that this book is not a how-to-do-it manual (xii–xiii), those bullet points serve well as practical talking points in discussions with content creators and consumers. Each chapter also includes related resources and tools for more in-depth exploration of the topic. Some of those resources are practical—such as an addendum that authors can use when working with publishers (4, 7, 51, 65)—and others are more informational.

Open scholarship is as much about how content is created as it is about how it is used. It identifies who can do what with different types of content. All of the chapters describe how the open movement attempts to balance the needs of the user with the needs of the creator. Some chapters place more emphasis on the user, and others place more emphasis on the creator. The chapter on citizen science adds another layer by describing power structures within a single project. Although citizen science can be inclusive, it also has the potential to cause harm if not consciously carried out in a respectful way (111, 116–117). Almost every chapter highlights the tension between the user interests and those of the



creator. An individual may want full freedom to easily use and adapt someone else's content as a user, while still retaining some control over how others use their own creations.

Participants in the open scholarship movement also approach it from different perspectives. Philosophical social benefits motivate some people to participate. Others simply consider the open movement as more efficient. Participants also debate financial considerations and open scholarship as a common good. Several chapters discuss the conflation of cost-free and free-of-restrictions-on-use. Most chapters also address concerns about quality. Potential users and creators hold wide ranges of opinions about open scholarship. Understanding these themes prepares the reader to engage with any of them.

The book is a bit repetitive in parts because the main chapters are designed as independent documents, with brief references to other chapters in the endnotes. The repetition would primarily only be noticeable to someone who decided to read the entire book sequentially. It would be less noticeable to people who are satisfied with reading just one or two chapters. Although the segments are standalone, different parts of the open movement interrelate and overlap. Readers may intend to only read one chapter but then find the need to explore a related chapter to get a fuller understanding.

In spite of all of the useful information in the book, Martin downplays and overlooks a few topics. Martin correctly identifies open scholarship as a way to increase access to content (56–57). As Martin notes, that access largely depends on reliable, censorship-free access to the internet (56–59). In the “Language and Cultural Barriers” section of the chapter on open educational resources (OER), Martin also acknowledges discrepancies in whose knowledge gets shared (82). Martin does not, however, make a similar acknowledgment in the chapter on open access publishing. The dominant funding models still privilege authors at well-funded institutions. Researchers without that backing or who are located in lower-income geographic areas face greater challenges in getting published.<sup>2</sup> Martin mentions the availability of waivers for article processing charges without any further discussion (47). Collections and electronic resources librarians may be surprised that the phrase “transformative agreement” does not appear in this book. Martin mentions institution-sponsored memberships as ways to support open access publishing (47, 87) and notes that open access frees up subscription funds “for other purposes.” Martin also dedicates a few paragraphs to cOAlition S, one of the major proponents of transformative agreements (54–55). That section focuses on the desired outcomes rather than strategies for achieving it. Similarly, the role of the OER librarian is not mentioned explicitly. Martin implies that librarians can support efforts to create and use OER but does not mention the practice of making it into its own separate role. Martin merely hints at these ideas.

This book is already slightly out of date. The US government is in the process of removing the option for an embargo period on making government-funded research available to the public.<sup>3</sup> The National Information Standards Organization also recently released Standard Terminology for Peer Review.<sup>4</sup> Among other things, it removes ableist language that appears in Martin's chapter on peer review. The wording that Martin uses is still in common parlance, but should be phasing out soon. Regardless, this book still provides value as a starting point for learning about the open scholarship movement. Readers

can jump from it to the additional resources Martin recommends and then seek out additional resources dedicated to specific aspects of the movement.—*Erin Wentz (erin.wentz@mcphs.edu), Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences*

## References

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3. Alondra Nelson, “Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research,” Memorandum, Office of Science and Technology Policy, August 25, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/08-2022-OSTP-Public-Access-Memo.pdf>.
4. National Information Standards Organization, “ANSI/NISO Z39.106-2023, Standard Terminology for Peer Review,” Baltimore, NISO, July 5, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3789/ansi.niso.z39.106-2023>.