Book Review

Michael Fernandez, editor

Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge. Edited by Maria Bonn, Josh Bolick, and William M. Cross. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. 2023. 512p. $150.00 softcover (ISBN: 978-0-8389-3990-1). Open access edition at https://bit.ly/SCLAOK.

Bonn, Bolick, and Cross's work, *Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge,* presents the macro and micro of scholarly communication ("scholcomm"), the "what" *and* the even more important "why" and "how" of scholcomm work in libraries, and thoroughly examines openness in its many different forms: open access (OA), open data, open educational resources (OER), and open science. While its length qualifies it as a textbook, the way it's written makes it an enjoyable, information-packed read for both library workers with minimal scholcomm knowledge, as well as those with deeper knowledge and expertise. Where other texts appear to break down scholcomm and openness into key concepts like policy and infrastructure—separate from the implementation of open access in academic libraries[1]—Bonn, Bolick, and Cross's textbook lays it all out for readers in an organized manner.

The editors wonderfully humanize the scholarly publishing landscape and open science movement from the start, when they quote Micah Vandegrift who said, "scholcomm is people."[2] This thread runs throughout the entire book in that the editors continuously circle back to the many people and stakeholders who participate in scholcomm, not least among them being early career researchers who are uniquely positioned to question traditional practices and incentive structures that are at odds with open science (363).

The text offers a critical look at the many things that are "wrong" with scholcomm, for example, "scholarly communication is driven by a financial market, one populated with many active agents with motives other than supporting the sharing of scholarship as widely as possible with the goal of maximizing its impact" (12). In this same vein, the expression "artificial scarcity" is used to call out paywalls or other access restrictions imposed on articles in scholarly journals, which really gets the reader to question the commodification of information early on in their reading journey (4). However, the book also celebrates the many "wins" in scholcomm and open access work, like the move away from "Big Deal" journal subscription packages in academia and the implementation of university-wide open access policies (45). The individual chapter authors do a wonderful job of not only saying what scholcomm and open access *are*, but also what they *are not*, with sections such as "When Data Shouldn't be Open" (134) and by exposing places where open access isn't talked about enough—like public libraries (94).

In terms of writing style, the section headers used throughout the book are fun and captivating. Many are posed as questions, such as, "Why Do I Care?," which is directly followed by this straightforward answer "Simply: it aligns with a lot of the reasons you may be looking to work in libraries," and further unpacked in the subsequent pages (94). Shortly after, we see a similarly worded header, "Why Care? There are Jobs?," and just below it, table 2.1 ("Library Departmental Roles in OA"), with its compelling

column titles: "Department," "Obvious Role," "Less Obvious," and "Oh, Really?" (97). The tone is light and inviting and is bound to make librarians take notice and rethink their assumptions. Even though it's titled *Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge*, the book offers careers to consider beyond those in libraries, such as data professional roles (142).

Readers will be highlighting or jotting down things they wish to revisit and try for themself from the main chapter sections as well as in the frequent, dedicated "additional resources" areas. To name just a few, the editors plug the U.S. Copyright Office YouTube Channel (75) and point out the license type ("usage rights") feature of a Google Advanced search (294). Additionally, every section ends with discussion questions, which would serve workplace "journal clubs" well.

There are fascinating historical tidbits throughout the book; for example, how page count charges made more sense in a world of print publishing and now article processing charges (APCs) have been rebranded as fees to support open access (21). There are more detailed timelines too, like the one found in section "2.3.1.2: A Short History of OER." Despite having the word "short" in its name, this section offers much more substance than a simple "then and now" (229).

Sometimes the text appears to oversimplify the hard work involved for librarians (with and without formal scholcomm titles) to wrangle and work with open knowledge. Tasks such as "resource description, classification, and management" and "locate and organize OER" are easier said than done (268). But luckily, these more general statements are followed up with specific recommendations for how a librarian might perform outreach to encourage OER uptake, how they might establish a funding program to support this work, where they might search for OER, and other guidance (293). Here and there, concepts are minimally introduced and further detail does not come until pages or sections later. For instance, OER outreach is introduced in subsection 2.3.2.2 and then spelled out further in subsection 2.3.2.3. This gradual release of information, or "teasing" of a concept, might appeal to readers who have less experience with these topics, but other readers might prefer for these concepts to be introduced and broken down all in one spot.

There are many visualizations used throughout the text, and in some cases, several visualizations are offered to explain one larger concept. This is seen at the beginning of chapter 2.4, "Open Science and Infrastructure," where different graphics are used to illustrate all of the various layers of this research ecosystem (350–352). Here we see one taxonomy where "open science" is the master or "parent" concept that all the "child" concepts flow out of, along with two other visuals where "open scholarship" is the umbrella term. This gives readers options for how they wish to digest and compartmentalize this new knowledge.

Even though much of the book celebrates the rapid exchange of information that is possible with openness, readers are reminded to question power structures and be inclusive of local and diverse knowledge systems. This bold quote serves as both a warning and call to action: "If it is not respectful and inclusive of local and diverse knowledge systems . . . we will continue to witness the strengthening of systems that seek to be global and 'open' research infrastructures, yet continue to limit wider and equitable participations from researchers in less powerful regions and institutions" (358).

The guiding principle of "scholcomm is people" is perhaps best illustrated in part 3 ("Voices from the Field . . ."). In these bite-sized accounts, each no more than five pages long, individuals share their own experiences doing the work and explain the initiatives they participate in at their respective institutions. A handful of the narratives address how people arrived at doing scholcomm work (sections 3.1.7, 3.1.), showing readers that their own involvement in scholcomm activities doesn't have to be linear or official, but instead can be born out of "[pursuing one's] passion" and "following [your] bliss" (428).—*Kayla Del Biondo (kayla.delbiondo@yale.edu), Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut*

Notes

1. Kevin L. Smith and Katherine A. Dickson. *Open Access and the Future of Scholarly Communication: Policy and Infrastructure*, vols. 9–10 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

2. Micah Vandegrift, *Scholarly Communication is People: Three Crazy Ideas for LIS to "Own" Open Access* (presentation, ACRL-NY Symposium on Open access and the Academic Librarian, 2014), https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.1273504.v1.