

# Libraries and OA Journals

The primary goal of open access is to make scholarship available to everybody. That alone should be enough to get librarians and libraries involved. A secondary goal for OA journals—and specifically those not published by the big international journal publishers—is to reduce the ever-growing financial pressures of scholarly journals and, ideally, free up some money for other purposes.

It's not feasible to provide a comprehensive action plan here. Space is too short, I'm unqualified to offer such a plan, and the range of possibilities keeps growing.

## Key Steps

Consider the following steps:

- **Understand the issues and the field.** This report is a good start.
- **Help your community to participate.** Work with researchers and scholars to find good open-access outlets—and to understand why finding them is a good idea.
- **Participate yourself.** Consider steering your own articles toward OA journals (see “Finding the Right OA Journal” below) and doing the same with your editorial board, editing, and peer-reviewing activities.
- **Improve findability and publicity.** Make sure your users can find articles in OA journals at least as readily as they can in subscription

journals—and, although green OA isn't a focus of this report, see if there are ways to make repository versions of subscription-journal articles more visible.

- **Publish OA journals.** For some academic libraries (and possibly others), it makes sense to start an OA publishing program or work with campus departments (or the university press) to build such a program.

A few additional notes follow.

## Finding the Right OA Journal

There aren't any good OA journals in your field (or the field somebody's asking about)? Really? Here's one little list in library science:

*Library Philosophy and Practice; Evidence Based Library and Information Practice; Information Research: An International Electronic Journal; Code4Lib Journal; College and Research Libraries; In the Library with the Lead Pipe; Collaborative Librarianship; Journal of Educational Media and Library Sciences; Information Technology and Libraries; Ariadne; Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship; School Library Research; North Carolina Libraries; Journal of Electronic Publishing; Practical Academic Librarianship; LIBRES: Library and Information Science Research Electronic Journal.*

Those fifteen journals are all no-fee OA journals I've had some personal experience with. I could add another fifty-seven no-fee journals in the field, and

there are probably a few I couldn't evaluate at all. It's also an incomplete list—for example, *Library Leadership and Management*, the peer-reviewed journal of ALA's Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), is a no-fee OA journal but isn't currently in *DOAJ*. The journals are out there. Shouldn't you be publishing in one of them rather than in a subscription journal?

It shouldn't be difficult to build a similar list for almost any field. As usual, *DOAJ* is the place to start.

## Library Publishing

The Library Publishing Coalition is a growing coalition of library publishers. It reports 124 libraries involved in publishing as of the 2015 *Library Publishing Directory*. Those libraries publish (or provide publishing support services) for more than 730 OA journals as well as monographs and, in a few cases, non-OA journals.

*Library Publishing Coalition*  
[www.librarypublishing.org](http://www.librarypublishing.org)

The *Library Publishing Toolkit* “examines opportunities for libraries to leverage their position and resources to create and provide access to content.” (I provided a foreword for the 2013 edition but have no other personal involvement in the project.) It includes a range of case studies. It's available as a free download.

*Library Publishing Toolkit*  
[www.publishingtoolkit.org](http://www.publishingtoolkit.org)

I'll suggest that libraries (working alone or with departments) might focus on specific areas, subjects likely to yield, say, 20 to 200 articles per year—and on finding a way to make it work without APCs. That's likely to be more difficult with large journals, for a number of reasons.

## Exploring the Numbers

If you wish to explore the numbers for OA journals in mid-2014 in more detail than is provided here, you can download anonymized versions of the major spreadsheets used in this project—stripped of publisher and journal identification, but including one row for each journal with all relevant nonderived data. Both spreadsheets—the *DOAJ* subset and the Beall subset,

including data keys—are on figshare. The datasets are fully available for any use you wish to make of them (as with all datasets on figshare, they have CC-BY licenses); it would be a courtesy to mention my name and this publication in any formal use of the numbers.

*Open Access Journals 2014 data, DOAJ subset*  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.1299451>

*Open Access Journals 2014 data, Beall-list subset*  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.1299452>

## Resources

You'll find some of these resources valuable in helping you to understand OA and consider what steps you and your library could take to make it better.

*Open Access: What You Need to Know Now*. Walt Crawford. Chicago: ALA, 2011. ISBN 978-0-8389-1106-8. Chapter 5, “Taking Action,” offers some starting points for action. Includes a longer list of resources on OA.

*Open Access*. Peter Suber. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-262-51763-8. Also available in open-access form at [http://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/content/openaccess/Suber\\_05\\_toc.html](http://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/content/openaccess/Suber_05_toc.html) or as an OA PDF at [http://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/content/9780262517638\\_Open\\_Access\\_PDF\\_Version.pdf](http://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/content/9780262517638_Open_Access_PDF_Version.pdf). Includes a list of additional resources.

*Directory of Open Access Journals*, <http://doaj.org>. The starting point for finding OA journals.

The Library Publishing Coalition, [www.librarypublishing.org](http://www.librarypublishing.org). Publishes an annual open-access *Library Publishing Directory* available in PDF or HTML form; at this writing, the first (2014) edition is also available as an interactive directory at <http://atom.lib.byu.edu/lpc>.

*Library Publishing Toolkit*. Alison P. Brown, ed. Geneseo, NY: IDS Project Press, 2013. ISBN 978-0-9897226-0-5 (print). Available as a free download at [www.publishingtoolkit.org](http://www.publishingtoolkit.org).

*Cites & Insights*. Walt Crawford. (<http://citesandinsights.info>.) ISSN 1534-0937. Free but not OA (it's not refereed scholarship). While *Cites & Insights* is not devoted to OA, that's been a major topic throughout its fourteen-year history. The

research leading up to this report is documented in much greater length but with less overall coherence in the April 2014, July 2014, October/November 2014, December 2014, January 2015, and March 2015 issues. Many other OA-related essays have appeared; those from 2001 through 2009 are collected as *Open Access and Libraries*,

available as a 513-page paperback ([www.lulu.com/shop/walt-crawford/open-access-and-libraries/paperback/product-10905732.html](http://www.lulu.com/shop/walt-crawford/open-access-and-libraries/paperback/product-10905732.html)) or a free PDF download ([www.lulu.com/shop/walt-crawford/open-access-and-libraries/ebook/product-17516488.html](http://www.lulu.com/shop/walt-crawford/open-access-and-libraries/ebook/product-17516488.html)).