

# JLSC

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## **JLSC Board Editorial 2019**

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# JLSC Board Editorial 2019

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Dawson, & Danny Kingsley

## INTRODUCTION

**Anne Gilliland, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill**

**Rebekah Kati, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill**

**Jennifer Solomon, Ubiquity Press**

Many of us were hired to work toward systems where knowledge is open, equitable, transparent, and diverse. At the same time, our hiring institutions can be ambivalent about change, and we ourselves sometimes fall short of the ideals we espouse. One antidote for burnout and disillusionment is to build a durable, continuing community that can survive and do good work despite setbacks and failures. As JLSC editors, the three of us—Anne, Jennifer, and Rebekah—plan to continue facilitating the conversations that make this community a sustainable reality.

The editorials below all engage with the idea of community. We hope that their thoughts and critiques will encourage all of us to think about our own communities and work to improve them.



## WHAT IS A SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION COMMUNITY? WHO OR WHAT IS INCLUDED AND WHOM DO WE EXCLUDE?

**Luqman Hayes, Auckland University of Technology**

When we consider the ambitions of open access, the idea of community is a far reaching, global, equitable one. But to consider both open access and scholarly communication in such idealized ways is to ignore their inherent biases, power structures, and inequalities. The arena of scholarly communication is concerned with the creation, evaluation, dissemination, and preservation of research output. Each of these in turn is defined by preexisting power structures, with their roots in empire and the development of capitalism, whether those structures are manifest in the academy (and academia), in technology, or in the business of publishing. Those power structures perpetuate notions of individualism and the dominance of Western research paradigms and practices, serving to reinforce division in terms of wealth, resource, and status, despite the best efforts of many to reduce such gaps.

As a consequence, the communities which scholarly communication relates to or represents are defined by and subject to these same inequities. So we may, in turn, ask, What communities are missing from this picture? Whose voices are amplified, and whose—to be blunt—are unable to speak the dominant language? Conversely, we may ask what a scholarly communication community might look like were we to decolonize some of those structures, assumptions, and biases.

In te Ao Māori (the Māori worldview), the concepts and values with which meaning is given are based on reciprocity and consensus-building. Whanaungatanga refers not only to kinship but also to the way in which the collective is strengthened by the relationships, connections, and shared experiences it has. Mātauranga Māori, while relating to the body of knowledge passed through ancestors, incorporates multiple elements such as whakapapa (genealogy), kōrero (discussion), whakatauki (proverbs), and waiata (song) (Salmond, 1985).

The challenge, therefore, is to consider scholarly communication and the communities it interacts with in ways that not only incorporate but are also defined by those communities themselves, so that it may become sustainable, culturally responsive, relevant, and accessible to all.

### A COMMUNITY OF CITIZENS

**Emma Molls, University of Minnesota**

In describing the recent terminology used in scholarly communication circles, Melanie

Schlosser and Catherine Mitchell (2019) approach a more complex thought exercise: What is a community? The negation is also important: What is not a community?

In his recent JLSC article, Dave Ghamandi (2018) provides an answer to the latter. In his argument that academia and scholarly communication have been permeated by neoliberalism, Ghamandi illustrates what community is not: a marketplace. In a neoliberal market, “goods and services are commodified, privatized, or financialized,” and there exists only a “supplier-consumer relationship.” There are no citizens; there are only consumers.

What if, instead of once again playing the role of consumer, we as librarians, authors, editors, and readers became citizens within the scholarly community? This is not to suggest that market-created businesses and organizations create governance structures and voting systems, but instead that we become active participants. Sociologist Ray Pahl (1990) describes active citizens as “local people working together to improve their own quality of life and to provide conditions for others to enjoy the fruits of a more affluent society.” In “Citizenship: Towards a Feminist Synthesis,” Ruth Lister (1997) furthers this definition by noting that active citizens do for themselves, rather than having the privileged—or in this case, the market—do for them.

So how do we become active citizens? Perhaps it is more of a rebecoming—a recommitment to the commons and to each other, rather than to the market. Ghamandi’s article also serves as a scholarly civics lesson, concluding that all community efforts should be celebrated. Through this lens, active citizenry looks like more building and more doing, by us and for us.

## **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

### **Dave S. Ghamandi, University of Virginia**

Scholarly communication as a field of study and a body of scholar-practitioners has grown into a diverse community of communities. The various strains of thought, behaviors, strategies, and organizations make it impossible to think of this field in a singular way. As such, we’re in a moment that calls for greater clarity, especially because many people working in scholarly communication are interested in changing some aspects of it. The lack of clearly articulated differences between scholarly communication actors and organizations, especially in North America, has several effects, including to help preserve the current balance of power in this space.

For example, the growing support within various communities for open access may create a false perception of unity. Stuart Lawson (2019) argues in his dissertation that open access is a

complex idea with advocates from across the political spectrum. This may help explain why, amid broad opposition to the broken model of high-priced, pay-to-access scholarly literature, there isn't much consensus on what scholarly communication should look like or how to go about attaining it. In the meantime, the academic publishing oligopoly has moved from dismissing open access to coopting it with various pay-to-publish models. Where open access policy does exist, it's often based in neoliberalism—an ideology that's supported inside and outside of the oligopoly.

So, in the interest of clarity and not sectarianism, it's incumbent upon scholarly communication communities (and individuals) to clearly express, in detail, their aims, objectives, values, philosophies, strategies, and tactics. OA2020 (2019), while calling for a “large-scale implementation of open access to scholarly journals,” deliberately chose to exclude specifics from its Expression of Interest. Its depoliticized and big-tent approach—which “invite[s] all parties involved in scholarly publishing”—implicitly supports the publishing oligopoly. The Radical Open Access Collective (2019), however, does a much better job of stating their beliefs and positions in their statement of philosophy.

Left-leaning open access communities, of which I'm a member, face more challenges than those that lean to the right. Contesting neoliberal ways of thinking, market models, “common sense,” learned helplessness, and concentrated capital will require many more years of sustained dialogue. We would be wise to take note of Paulo Freire's (2000) scholarship on dialogue, problem-posing, and the role of revolutionary leaders. We could also work to incorporate Antonio Gramsci's ideas on raising critical consciousness and instilling countercultural values into our praxis. There's an opportunity for the Left to describe what we want to see in scholarly communication and a rich tradition of mutual aid, solidarity, and cooperation from which to draw. Inviting people to share in a radical imagination might actually help us break through the passivity and see more folks get up and get involved.

## **PRIORITIZING COMMUNITY-CENTERED OUTCOMES IN THE SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION AGENDA**

**Camille Thomas, Florida State University**

Through critical reflections, those of us involved in the scholarly communication community are closely examining the role of diverse cultural, institutional, and disciplinary contexts. The landscape has changed, but have we adjusted our desired outcomes accordingly?

Changing culture with community at the center means getting clear about what roles, common goals, and investment may look like going forward. If we are looking to move away

from neoliberal models and avoid replicating the outdated systems of traditional publishing, we should ask ourselves a series of questions: What are ideal outcomes based on the present context? What are attainable outcomes going forward? How do we sustain the work already done? How will we address barriers to participation in the community? What kind of future will be built from our current initiatives? How do we communicate new outcomes to stakeholders? How will we implement community-centered values into our practice, initiatives, and daily work?

Up until now, primary outcomes have included supporting authors to make their closed work open, to increase the volume of open content, and to create tools as well as policy to support this work. This work is ongoing, as seen with recent negotiations in Germany and California (United States) addressing the serials crisis. It is important to sustain and continue this work. Culture change requires a great deal of patience. Scholarly publishing and the production of educational materials were largely unchanged for decades. It will take just as long, if not longer, to learn from and build upon the work that has already been done by advocates.

As the work evolves and the landscape becomes more complex, it is important to reflect on lessons learned. If we are to make scholarly communication more community centered, we must make these assessments with consideration to growth beyond collection volume and stakeholders beyond scientists.

Common issues in the scholarly communication community include advocate burnout, marginalized scholars, disciplinary silos, predatory publishers, and coopted community spaces (Crissinger 2015). Rather than replicate influence based on exclusivity and traditional impact, we can harness the power of our community—its people—to build influence based on trust as well as quality. When researchers believe open access journals and articles are trustworthy and reliable, it enhances the intention to publish open access (Moksness and Olson, 2017). Now we must look at outcomes around discovery, sustainable infrastructure, visible labor, and meaningful use of scholarship in practical contexts.

## **USING OPEN EDUCATION TO BUILD A SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION COMMUNITY WITH SHARED VALUES AND DIVERSE VOICES**

**Maria Bonn, University of Illinois**  
**Will Cross, North Carolina State University**

JLSC is, by several measures, a successful publication. It has an active readership, a healthy submission rate, and a significant number of candidates coming forward each time there are openings on the editorial board. This success is one indication of a substantial, engaged

scholarly communication community. But, as we see in many areas of academic librarianship, that community does not fully represent the diversity, of both identity and perspective, of academic libraries or the scholars those libraries serve. There is substantial and important work going on developing new models of scholarly communication, but the models we have and share tend to be from “leading” (i.e., famous, rich, white) programs. We need to bring other voices into our community conversation so that scholarly communication can live up to our aspirations for a system that is transformative and breaks down, rather than reinforces, established hierarchies.

In order to do this, we need to open up venues for that conversation that welcome new and different voices and highlight diverse institutions and approaches. This is especially true for emerging voices and, while there is an active and vocal community of scholarly communication practice, LIS education still seems to be quiet on this topic. Even as scholarly communication is recognized as a “core competency” in academic librarianship (Finlay, Tsou, & Sugimoto, 2015), recent studies affirm the fact that most LIS graduates don’t enter the field with any significant education around scholarly communication (IMLS 2017)—indeed, our own research (forthcoming) indicates that most librarians who take a job in scholarly communication simply don’t feel prepared to do this work. A 2018 gathering of experts in the field explored these issues and identified opportunities for bridging this gap (OER + ScholComm, n.d.). One major theme that emerged was the potential for using the affordances of open resources and open pedagogy to connect diverse practitioners with library students and those who are new to the field or profession.

An open textbook can provide a rigorous, scaffolded overview of the fundamentals of the field for anyone regardless of wealth, while using 5R permission to revise and remix in ways that decenter assumptions about a singular “correct” approach (Wiley, n.d.). A body of open pedagogical practice can take the next step and build a direct link between the work done by students in the classroom and the diverse approaches to scholarly communication that might never be recognized in a commercial textbook and that can only be made possible by what Robin DeRosa and Rajiv Jhangiani (2017) call an “empowering, collaborative, and just architecture for learning.”

## **WHAT DO WE OWE THE SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION COMMUNITY?**

**David W. Lewis, Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)**

A community is a group with a mission to preserve its interests or to create change to advance them. The mission of the scholarly communication community, at least for me, is to make research and scholarship freely and easily available to anyone who can use it.

To advance this mission will require more than the good work of passionate individuals. It will require institutional investment. This investment is required to create the infrastructure that supports an open, community-owned, community-controlled commons of digital scholarly information. This is a challenging task, and to date, while some progress has been made, we have not been overly successful. Our investment has been insufficient. To generate the necessary investment requires that we overcome the collective action problem.

Mancur Olson (1965) defined the collective action problem in the mid-1960s. He demonstrated that groups, especially large groups, have a difficult time acting in concert, even when such action clearly serves the group's interests. John Wenzler (2017) applied Olson's work to academic libraries, arguing that it is not possible for us to achieve our scholarly communication goals. Cameron Neylon (2017), in a more nuanced application of Olson's work to scholarly communication, shows that in some cases the collective action problem can be overcome. But what Neylon shows is how small groups can act and how collective action can be successful when some members of the group receive a benefit that they value enough to pay for the collective good. An example of the first is Plan S. Neylon's example of the latter is CrossRef: Those wishing to mint DOIs fund the database that is openly available to everyone. Neylon's examples of success do not, however, diminish Wenzler's point. The academic library community as a whole has failed to act collectively to create the world of open scholarship that we claim to be working toward.

So, the question becomes, how does the large and diverse academic library community begin to act collectively? What will it take to for this community to collectively invest so that the robust infrastructure we all need will be available? Elinor Ostrom (1990), in her book, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, examines situations and institutions where commons are successful. Her work demonstrates that the collective action problem, though real, can be overcome given the right circumstances, incentives, and motivations. For us, her most useful insight is that the management of a large commons is best accomplished with a hierarchical organizational structure in which small local groups that know and trust each other manage a portion of the commons, a collection of these small groups manages a larger section, and a collection of the collections manages the whole. I am uncertain whether or not the academic library community, especially in the United States, has the incentives and motivation to create this kind of collective structure. I am certain, though, that if we do not, the for-profit sector will continue to exploit us with its monopoly power.

So, we all have to ask, what do we and our institutions owe the scholarly communication community? I would assert that it is much more than we now commit. If we do not find ways to make the collective investments, the world of open scholarship we hope to create will falter, and our efforts will fall short.

## WHICH SCHOLARLY COMMUNITY?

**Demmy Verbeke, KU Leuven**

Open access is often heralded as a great equalizer. It allows the public to peek inside the ivory tower that is academia, and it allows scholars from all over the world to collaborate on a more level playing field. What's more, it unites researchers from all disciplines and backgrounds on the issue of scholarly communication, as it addresses the challenges of cost, ownership, and sustainability faced by all.

However, we should not confuse this unity of purpose with a unity of method. An open-access model that is restricted to a single approach fails to recognize bibliodiversity (i.e., the diversity in formats and languages in the writing and publishing world), and it hampers innovation. Such is the danger of, for instance, transformative agreements that might make sense in the disciplines where the so-called Big 5 hold a majority market position, but that are unneeded in the humanities. The humanities are, to use the word of Micah Vandegrift (2019), "weird." They do not particularly care about journal impact factors, and they have community-owned infrastructures in place (such as OPERAS) (Giglia, 2019). So they don't need their best and brightest to negotiate transformative deals, but can let them focus on developing a sustainable scholarly communication system instead. Yet, all too frequently, the modest investment needed for such R&D is put on the back burner, and the means are relocated in an effort to solve OA issues in other disciplines.

A community is not a real community unless everyone feels at home. An attempt to solve the scholarly communication crisis that focuses all attention, energy, and budget on journals and big commercial publishers holds back disciplines that face other challenges. Let's stay unified in our purpose. Let's stay diverse in our approach. Only thus can we create a scholarly community representative of all disciplines.

## ENGAGING A COMMUNITY OF SMALL LIBRARIES IN SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

**Christine Fruin, Atla**

When one thinks of actors or stakeholders within the scholarly communication ecosphere, large commercial publishers, R1 institutions, and persons engaged in STEM research may immediately come to mind as prominent voices in the community. However, in my role as the manager of scholarly communication programs for an association that represents theological libraries and archives and persons who engage in the practice of theological or

religious studies librarianship, I have come to understand and appreciate the importance of engaging small libraries in scholarly communication.

Library consortia and library associations that represent small academic or special libraries have an opportunity to not only educate their members about scholarly communication but also engage them in its processes. Their individual “small” voices can resonate loudly and effect great change in the space when collaboration and conversation is fostered. Their participation in scholarly communication should not be discounted or overlooked—it should be encouraged.

How can library consortia and library associations engage their members in scholarly communication? At Atla, we have several programs and initiatives that offer our members an opportunity to lend their voice and action to the scholarly communication community.

Like other library organizations, Atla has a scholarly communication committee composed of association members and a staff liaison. This group plans presentations and workshops on scholarly communication topics such as text mining, digital humanities, and open access publishing at our association’s conference, as well as facilitates external professional development opportunities for members such as the recently hosted ACRL Scholarly Communication Roadshow (Atla 2019). Atla also provides opportunities for its members to engage in the process of writing, reviewing, and editing scholarly works through our open access publishing program, which publishes open monographs, journals, and other serials on subjects at the intersection of librarianship and religious and theological studies that potentially impact libraries. We have other services, such as our free dissertation and thesis abstract database Research in Ministry™<sup>1</sup> and the Atla Digital Library,<sup>2</sup> that offer members the opportunity to share their institutions’ scholarly output and digital collections with a global audience. Finally, we actively seek out strategic partnerships or other forms of collaboration and conversation with other actors in the scholarly community. We engage with other library organizations such as the Scholarly Publishing Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), are a member of the Library Publishing Coalition (LPC), offer DOI deposit of our open publications with CrossRef, and collaborate with the Collaborative Knowledge Foundation (Coko) on its open-source software program Editoria. Through these programs, opportunities, and relationships, our members, who may not be seen as important stakeholders in the scholarly communication community, establish their collective voice in the conversation and demonstrate that they are vital and important to the cause of scholarly communication reform.

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<sup>1</sup><https://rim.atla.com>

<sup>2</sup><https://dl.atla.com>

## MITIGATING ADVOCACY BURNOUT: A ROLE FOR COMMUNITY

**DeDe Dawson, University of Saskatchewan**

Scholarly communication librarians are often the sole individuals responsible for a range of important programs and services related to researcher and author support at their institutions. They can wear many hats and get pulled in many different directions. Since their duties are new to academic library work, their efforts may feel less understood, less valued, and less supported (in resources and recognition) in their places of employment. As Leah Vanderjagt pointed out in the 2017 JLSC Editorial, these factors can lead to burnout (Agate et al., 2017).

Beyond the planning and delivering of programs and services, scholarly communication librarians also usually take a lead outreach role in advocating for change to a more sustainable, equitable, and open scholarly publishing system: both locally on their own campuses and more broadly at the national or international level. This can frequently put them in confrontational situations and in the position of myth-busting the usual misinformation about open access again and again. This is heavy emotional labor at work. It can be exhausting and discouraging—particularly since real change can seem excruciatingly slow. Influencing systemic change in the scholarly publishing system is a massive goal. There are powerful, vested interests in the current system that are profiting immensely from the status quo, as well as from academic processes (i.e., tenure, promotion, merit, and hiring practices) that shore up the system by relying on journal-level metrics and prestige as proxy measures of article quality. These academic processes are ingrained in tradition and are also slow to change. It can feel like a David and Goliath situation, and lead to a particular kind of burnout: advocacy burnout.

A quick Internet search of this phrase produces many anecdotes from activists and advocates from a wide range of different causes. Advocacy burnout seems to be a common experience among those passionately working to raise awareness and inspire change—with seemingly little daily progress. Advice to combat advocacy burnout is abundant in these anecdotes; a common theme in the suggestions is to practice self-care (e.g., meditation, downtime with friends, hobbies, etc.). But I found Tad Spencer's blog post "Avoiding Advocate Burnout" especially relevant to the circumstances of a scholarly communication librarian (Spencer, 2016). Spencer notes that advocates addressing large societal problems are susceptible to advocacy burnout because the magnitude of the problem is so overwhelming. So, his first (of seven) highly useful points of advice is to "shrink the change": scale down the problem to something you can realistically address. Interestingly his example is working on a campus policy (sound familiar?), not on open access but on tobacco use. And not to focus on "pass-

ing the policy” as the goal, but on the relationship-building you do in the process. He ends with the advice that I consider the most powerful: community. “At certain points in doing advocacy work, we can feel as though we are simply yelling into the wind, unsure if anyone is listening.” Who in the open access advocacy community has not experienced this? It can be soul-crushingly discouraging to feel the righteous passion of your cause but not experience the same level of response from those around you. This feeling may be even more pronounced if you are one of those solo scholarly communication librarians handling multiple OA initiatives with low organizational investment. Fortunately or unfortunately, there are others in your shoes. So, find your community! Recharge your enthusiasm by connecting with others who share your passion. I have found like-minded and supportive colleagues on Twitter, and even though we’ve never met in person, the community I feel from these virtual relationships is sustaining. I also benefit from a wonderful community of Canadian scholarly communication librarians on a Slack channel established by Jeanette Hatherill at the University of Ottawa following a November 2016 gathering of repository managers from across the country (Hatherill & Vanderjagt, 2016). This provides a safe space for asking questions, exploring strategy, and seeking encouragement. The more that we can create such spaces, the less likely it will be that advocacy burnout will wear us down to the point that we need to seek another role—for the sake of our own well-being.

## **SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IS MORE THAN A COMMUNITY—IT’S A DISCIPLINE**

### **Danny Kingsley, Consultant in Scholarly Communication**

Scholarly communication as an area of practice and research is populated with a strong and vibrant global community. Its academic roots stretch back into the 1940s (Merton, 1973). As an extremely fast-moving field, the majority of scholarly communication conversations currently occur in discussion lists, blog posts, and preprints, and at conferences. Even despite the multiple issues with delays in traditional academic publication (itself an area of focus for the community), there are multiple peer-reviewed publications of which this journal is just one.<sup>3</sup> My PhD thesis on open access (Kingsley, 2008) was one of the first in the world; now there are people across the globe studying in this space. There are professorships and academic departments in scholarly communication worldwide—this is a growing area. However, partly because of the nature of the work, the majority of the research-active people in this space are themselves also higher education administrators, often working in academic libraries. And this is where we start encountering issues.

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<sup>3</sup> For a list of journal options in scholarly communication, see <https://osc.cam.ac.uk/about-scholarly-communication/publishing-options-research-scholarly-communication>

In the United States, librarians can be tenured faculty. In the United Kingdom and Australia, the divide between the academic staff and the professional (or more demeaningly labeled “general”) staff is a preciously held distinction by the academic community. This is despite the fact that a very high number of people working across the breadth of administration in universities themselves hold PhDs. This fact is no more stark than in recent discussions about Plan S where there has been a persistent complaint that academics have not been consulted, which flies in the face of well over a decade of attempts by members of the scholarly communication community to try to engage academics.<sup>4</sup> The general tone of these complaints has been that somehow policies are being made by a bunch of faceless administrators who clearly have no idea what academics need. This rhetoric is the culmination of a serious problem that has been bubbling under the surface for years—the complete denial by the academic community that scholarly communication is itself an area of serious and academic study and that those working in it are experts. This was very starkly demonstrated with a debate piece I coauthored a few years ago (Keenan & Kingsley, 2015), where four separate academics invited to respond to the position that open access is the whipping boy for issues in scholarly communication did so by each independently undertaking an “analysis of scholarly publishing,” clearly unaware that this had a decades-long history (Kingsley & Keenan, 2015; Kingsley, 2016).

It is time to move away from this falsely constructed snobbery. The challenge experts in our field face is the perception that experience as a practitioner in scholarly communication (which is what most academics are) is the same as having a deep and comprehensive understanding of the social, philosophical, economic, and political landscape surrounding it. The analogy I use is “I know teaching, I went to school!”. There are, of course, many knowledgeable and engaged academics who are working with the scholarly communication community to help form good policy, practice, and systems. However, there needs to be a more global acknowledgment that as experts in scholarly communication we are able to advocate, lobby, and negotiate on behalf of our academic community. Unlike the commercial publishing industry (in which many academics place a great deal of trust), the scholarly communication community not only understands and advocates for academia, but is very much concerned about the equitable and wide dissemination of the scholarly record.

So this is a call to arms. As members of the scholarly communication community, we need to make our expert voice more collectively heard. It is time for us to lobby for ourselves. Energy we spend trying convince our individual academic communities to listen to us is energy pulled away from the business at hand. And goodness knows, there is enough work there that needs to be done.

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<sup>4</sup>For a list of commentary about Plan S, see <https://unlockingresearch-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=2433>

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