

Open Access Library Services: Progress as Publishers

Mark Newton / Purdue University

Digital Collections Librarian / marknewton@gmail.com



Services at academic libraries continue to expand to suit both the evolving research needs of faculty and students as well as the library's growing interest in supporting broad access to scholarly content. Through both digital repository and dedicated publishing programs, librarians are collaborating with publishing professionals and technologists to partner with scholars in the production of scholarly work — frequently with the goal of broadly impacting the system of scholarly exchange through experiments in open access business models. In 2010-11, an IMLS-funded study to look at the present state of library publishing services followed on from reports published by ARL and Ithaka only a few years earlier. It is clear that in the interim, libraries have expanded publishing programs, improving options for understanding of the impact of the academic research library on the production of open scholarship today.

Technology, Services, and Sustainability provide able lenses for observing the impact of the library publishing programs.

• What are the tools that underlie library-based publishing programs, and how do these support open access?

• What are the suite of services that have emerged through library publishing programs, and what are the trends with respect to open access?

• How are these library publishing programs funded, and what are libraries learning about models for sustainability?

Technology



Services



Sustainability



Library Publishing Services: Strategies for Success Survey

The IMLS-funded Library Publishing Services: Strategies for Success category II National Leadership planning grant proceeded in three phases: a survey of the member libraries in stratified consortia (Association of Research Libraries, Oberlin Group, and University Libraries Group), a series of library publishing case studies at the partner institutions (Purdue University, University of Utah, and Georgia Institute of Technology), and three two-day regional library publishing workshops held at the partner institutions.

Each phase of the program was designed to elicit various data on the current state of library-based publishing programs at a range of institutions. The survey focused on acquiring information on size and scope of the programs and investigated partnerships, policies, and technology choices at work behind the scenes. Many of the questions were modeled after those in the 2008 ARL Survey report. Trends identified through the survey suggest that these programs have experienced modest growth in the intervening years — by percentage of respondents, the surveys suggest cross-the-board gains in services offered, programs in development, and experimental programs in place.

This research study data was aimed at all types of library publishing programs, not just those in ARL libraries, and not limited to those engaged exclusively in Open Access publishing.

Among responding institutions with **operational** library publishing programs in either **ongoing** or **experimental** status:

OJS Enjoys Widespread Adoption

And all of the major platforms have been developed to deliver open content

59%

59% (24/41) of responding institutions use the Open Journal Systems (OJS) software from the Public Knowledge Project

- 27% (11) reported using Digital Commons
- 37% (15) reported using DSpace, although respondents were asked to consider their repository and publishing programs separately

Libraries are Publishing a Variety of Content Types although the top platforms are tooled for journal production

78%

78% (32) of respondents with operational library publishing programs are publishing journals.

- And 97% of those who provided data about specific journals (30/31) indicated some “electronic-only” titles in their portfolios
- 46% (19) of operational programs publish conference papers or proceedings, and
- 49% (20) are publishing “book-like” works

Some of these programs report revenue from subscriptions, but **Library Budgets** presently underwrite the majority of journal-publishing programs

84%

84% of operational journal programs reported financial support through library operations budgets and grants (27/32)

- By contrast, only 9/32 respondents reported subscription models
- An even smaller number reported financing through author-side feeds (4/32) or chargebacks to faculty or departments (2/32)

Findings based on work sponsored by the Institute for Museum and Library Services, conducted jointly by the Purdue University Libraries, the Georgia Tech Library, and the University of Utah Library.



Access. Knowledge. Success.

Additional Observations

Rationale

- 87% of survey respondents that either currently or are considering providing publishing services (68/78) are doing so because of the

“Perceived need by [the] library to change the established scholarly publishing system”

New Partners

- Sixteen of the 41 respondents with operational programs indicated partnerships with societies or scholarly associations, suggesting scope of library publishing extends beyond the home institution.

Recommendations

- **Establish Unique Role and Value of Library Publishing**
As the majority of respondents suggested their library publishing programs were initiated to effect changes in the current system of scholarly publishing, it is therefore important to establish a broadly understood role for these new agents to occupy within the system. Many of these publishing programs serve to amplify the library's philosophical stance toward access to information, and services are often intertwined with library-run open access postprint repositories. Regardless, authors will be challenged to accept the library as a new publishing partner without a clear picture of the value to users of library-based publishing services.
- **Continue Experimentation with Diverse Revenue Streams**
It is clear from the survey responses, and was evident throughout the other phases of the study, that library budgets have borne the responsibility of funding these largely nascent publishing programs. It may be the case that, as they mature, these services will become a greater part of the formal mission of academic libraries, thus justifying their expense beyond pilot programs. Still, the financial pressures upon the academy, and on stretched library allocations specifically, warrant additional investigation into long-term sustainability models, particularly as (1) the subscription tools are not as well developed in the available software packages, (2) collecting subscription revenue is in some cases antithetical to the purpose of these programs, and (3) collecting author fees for OA publishing will likely increase in difficulty where the focus is institutional (i.e., cross-disciplinary), attending to authors in disciplines less attuned to grant-intensive research and scholarship.

Relevant Works

James Mullins, et al. (2011) Library Publishing Services: Strategies for Success Research Report Version 1.0. Washington DC: SPARC (http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/lib_research/136)

Karla Hahn (2008) Research Library Publishing Services: New Options for University Publishing. Washington DC: ARL (<http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/research-library-publishing-services.pdf>)

Laura Brown, et al. (2007) University Publishing in a Digital Age. New York: Ithaka S+R (<http://www.ithaka.org/ithaka-s-r/research/university-publishing-in-a-digital-age/>)

