

Incorporating Existing Library Partnerships into Open Access Week Events

Andrea A. Wirth (andrea.wirth@oregonstate.edu)
Oregon State University Libraries

Abstract

Oregon State University (OSU) Libraries participated in Open Access (OA) Week in 2009 and 2010. In order to expand the range of events offered, the committee members assigned to program planning looked for opportunities to work with partners beyond the library. The collaborative activities developed through these partnerships created settings for in-depth conversations among librarians, faculty, and students about scholarly communication issues. Subject librarians' relationships with their departments provided opportunities to host events in venues other than the library, which helped, facilitate access to a diverse audience. An established cooperative relationship with the University of Oregon made it possible to provide additional presentations to the OSU community. An evaluation of the quantity and quality of contacts made during OA Week suggests the collaborative activities enriched these outreach activities and that participation in OA Week is worthwhile for OSU Libraries to continue.

Keywords: Open Access Week; Subject Librarians; Outreach

Introduction

Open access (OA) refers to scholarly literature that is made freely available online "without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself."¹ Ways in which authors provide open access to their scholarship include posting a version of their work in an institutional or subject repository after publication in a subscription-based journal or publishing in a journal without any access restrictions. Open access publishing is not limited to journal articles, but frequently these are the focus of OA efforts given the intense scrutiny journals receive in respect to their increasing prices in contrast to stagnant library budgets.²

Open Access Day became Open Access Week in 2009. The week is "an opportunity for the academic and research community to continue to learn about the potential benefits of Open Access, to share what they've learned with colleagues, and to help inspire wider participation in helping to make Open Access a new norm in scholarship and research."³ Participation in this international event provides a framework for libraries to promote open access at the local level.

Scholarly communication programs on different campuses reflect the varying needs of the institution and the capacity of the university libraries.⁴ Oregon State University (OSU) librarians have been developing and refining a scholarly communication program since 2004. Though largely inspired by first-hand knowledge of journal price inflation and a budget that could not keep up, the program grew over time. One aspect of this broader approach is participation in OA Week, which provides an opportunity to highlight ways in which the library is proactively helping to create change in scholarly publishing.

OSU participated in Open Access Week in both 2009 and 2010. The primary goal that influenced OSU planning was to reach non-library members of the community including faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates for the purpose of informing them about open access, local OA initiatives, and resources available to them. Since OA Week events focus on such a broad audience, it is an important part of the scholarly communication program that otherwise primarily addresses issues of interest to faculty and administrators and to an extent, graduate students. For these latter audiences, dissemination of OSU research and authors' rights are key conversation topics, whereas graduates and un-



dergraduates may wish to discuss barriers to accessing scholarly content that hinder their immediate information needs as students.

Programming and events were influenced by the strong connections the subject librarians have with their departments, the encouragement for and growing expectation of subject librarian involvement with scholarly communication initiatives, and an expanding range of collaborative activities between Oregon State University and the University of Oregon (UO). An assessment structure to quantify the success of OA Week events was put in place in 2009 and continued in 2010. This article reports on these events and their preliminary evaluation.

Literature Review

Two areas recently described in the library literature that parallel OSU Libraries' planning for OA Week are the roles of subject librarians in scholarly communication initiatives and means of utilizing the energy of existing collaborative relationships between and within institutions.

Subject librarians often share news of library activities with their departmental connections over and above their traditional roles for supporting disciplinary research and teaching. In a growing number of institutions, this includes sharing information about scholarly communication initiatives. For example, position descriptions of subject librarians the University of Minnesota include phrases such as "educate and inform faculty, graduate students, and campus administrators about scholarly communication issues" and "help faculty and graduate students understand their rights as authors."⁵ Other evidence supporting the use of an established subject librarian model to foster scholarly communication understanding is from the University of British Columbia, where the program Steering Committee recognized that "liaison librarians' disciplinary networks could be crucial to formulating a picture of [scholarly communication] changes at the system level."⁶ In other cases, liaison models may be utilized in a variety of ways to promote aspects of the programs, such as institutional repository outreach.⁷

Library consortia or other existing partnerships between libraries can help to pool resources and generate ideas for scholarly communication initiatives. In one example, the Boston Library Consortium (BLC) developed a system-wide program around the topic of authors' rights. The consortium developed training materials, brochures, and a website of resources for the consortium's libraries. Although a robust consortially-managed program did not evolve from these efforts, the BLC work helped local initiatives by "emphasiz[ing] the high priority that the BLC has placed on addressing the crisis in scholarly communication"⁸ and starting the conversations and training within the individual libraries.

Unlike the ongoing attention to open access and scholarly communication systems in library and other disciplinary journals, assessment of outreach methods used to connect with researchers about open access has not been formally reported on with regularity.⁹ How does a library know when the investment of time and money spent in an outreach effort such as OA Week is worthwhile? In 2007, an Association of Research Libraries survey found that only nine per cent of survey respondents with scholarly communication programs in their libraries had evaluated their program initiatives. However, 42 per cent of libraries reported "demonstrable outcomes" from their activities¹⁰ suggesting a link between outreach efforts and community action on the issues. Only a few articles have been written that specifically address the authors' insights into planning and assessment of OA Week activities.¹¹ The next step perhaps is to share goals of outreach efforts regularly, the associated planning to achieve those goals and outcomes as they pertain to OA Week and other scholarly communication program efforts that could be adapted for OA Week.

Open Access Week at OSU

A committee of librarians drawn from the Scholarly Communication Working Group (SCWG) and subject librarians planned the OA Week events. The SCWG consists of librarians involved in the scholarly communication program at OSU Libraries. The pool of subject librarians

at OSU is small, yet in both 2009 and 2010, at least one subject librarian (beyond those already on the SCWG) volunteered to help. Once formed, the committee planned the week's events with the support of the library administration, including approval of a modest budget, event scheduling, and the formation of overarching goals. Both years, the goals focused on engaging campus community members (faculty, staff, and students) in conversations about open access for the purpose of expanding OSU's collective knowledge on the subject.

Availability of resources from the Open Access Week website and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Research Coalition (SPARC) helped with developing marketing materials.¹² However, the committee's time and budget were limited so utilizing the talent, knowledge, and connections of other librarians beyond the committee became essential for developing a robust event lineup. The committee also looked to the broader OSU community for ideas and venues.

For both years, the committee tracked contacts made by capturing the number of participants at each event and their patron category (e.g. library staff, graduate student) to the extent possible. Additionally, the committee gauged impact of the events by how well they provided a forum for engaging with faculty and students. The committee used the data to address the question of whether OSU Libraries' commitment to OA Week was worthwhile and to help inform future efforts.

The events for each year were held in the library and other locations across campus. Almost all of the events reflected some type of collaborative effort with colleagues outside the library. Two of those initiatives are highlighted in this article: those with other OSU departments and colleges and those with another university library. The other OA Week program activities are described briefly as well.

Collaboration with Academic Departments

As many libraries do, the OSU Libraries have a strong liaison program. Prior to participation in

OA Week 2009, several subject librarians had been working closely with their departments on topics such as the institutional repository (ScholarsArchive@OSU) and authors' rights. The committee decided to draw upon this existing momentum.

Subject librarians and OA Week committee members worked with non-librarian faculty and staff at several OSU academic departments on "traveling tables" events. Traveling tables are simple by design – displays informing attendees about a variety of scholarly communication initiatives with a something-for-everyone approach, yet broadly discipline based. The tables were staffed by librarians (typically the subject librarian for the department and an OA Week committee member).

In both years, authors' rights and the institutional repository (IR) were areas of focus. Based on feedback from the 2009 traveling tables, the 2010 tables included more information relevant to undergraduates, such as the "Right to Research" brochure,¹³ textbook costs, and forthcoming opportunities to publish in local and regional open access undergraduate journals.

The tables were located in high traffic areas around campus. Five of the seven tables were in common areas of academic colleges and departments. The other tables were located in Marketplace West (a popular dining facility on campus) and in the library after an open access presentation. The five tables located in departmental or college settings were focused on psychology and English (combined), mathematics and statistics (combined), geosciences, oceanic and atmospheric sciences, and forestry.

The tables in the College of Forestry and the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences (COAS) in particular were possible because of the relationships already established by the subject librarians with the faculty and the communications and publications coordinators for the colleges. At the College of Forestry, the table was marketed thoroughly with significant assistance from the Forestry Communications Group (FCG). In addition to library advertising on campus, a member of the FCG advertised directly to the College of Forestry email lists, made

spectacular signage for the hallways leading to the display, and provided treats for visitors to the tables.

COAS was an early ScholarsArchive@OSU supporter and more recently became a disciplinary advocate for authors' rights and open access by adopting an open access mandate.¹⁴ This came in part through the teamwork of the liaison to the college and the Digital Production Librarian who have both worked closely with the Publications and Outreach manager of the college. Because of the already-strong understanding of OA issues in the college, the 2010 traveling table for COAS primarily addressed advanced questions about the repository.

These colleges are ideal units to work with at OSU given their existing infrastructure for highlighting the work of the faculty and students in their programs and recognition that the library can further that same goal. Other departments that hosted traveling tables offered support (space, tables, set up, posting of flyers, etc.) but primarily the librarians accomplished the work. Nevertheless, drawing upon existing connections with the departments – whether with individual faculty or students, office managers, or those with specific roles (publications) – is a worthwhile strategy for libraries to use in building a successful series of events outside the library.

Collaboration with the University of Oregon

OSU Libraries work closely with the University of Oregon (UO) Libraries on collaborative initiatives including digital collections and collection development. Working together on events for OA Week was a natural path to take and helped both libraries offer more programming. The primary achievement for the two libraries in this regard was the sharing of speakers and panelists.

Several events over the course of the 2009 and 2010 OA Weeks enhanced the programming lineup. All of the events were marketed to the OSU community, in keeping with the goal of reaching people outside the library. In 2009, a panel of faculty speaking about open access mandates from the perspective of their institu-

tions and departments was featured at both universities. Two speakers from UO and one from OSU participated in two similar panel sessions – one hosted at UO and one at OSU. In addition, there was an attempt to stream the OSU panel to the UO Libraries for those that missed the UO version; however, problems with the selected technology precluded this from working smoothly.

In both 2009 and 2010, the OSU Libraries program benefitted from events streamed from the UO Libraries – events that otherwise would not have been available to OSU. Because of this sharing of resources in 2009, OSU closed OA Week with a streamed presentation from UO by Carl Malamud (Public.Resource.Org) on Open Government. In 2010, OSU began OA Week a day early with another presentation streamed from UO “Why Open Access Works and Copyright Doesn’t” by guest speaker Kevin Smith (Duke University).

Elevator Speeches and More

Creativity and collaboration come in many forms. In 2009, the entire library staff was invited to participate in an elevator speech contest. The committee developed a short list of “sound bites” on scholarly publishing that all library staff members were invited to share with patrons as opportunities arose. Interested staff members were given a small two-sided card with a short definition of open access on one side, and three talking points on the other:

- “OSU students/researchers need access to information for scholarship and research”
- “Few research libraries can afford to maintain current access levels”
- And a comparison of OSU annual tuition costs with one of OSU’s more expensive journal subscriptions

Staff self-reported their contacts with patrons to the committee and by doing so were eligible to win a prize.

In 2010, one of the authors of an OSU workshop developed for talking with librarians and faculty about their rights as authors¹⁵ presented the

workshop at the OSU Cascades Campus. This was a good opportunity to collaborate with branch librarians in the week's events. Several faculty and staff from the local community college library participated as well (the two libraries share a building).

Assessment

Though work has been done on measures of success for aspects of scholarly communication

programs, particularly institutional repositories,¹⁶ little has been done to assess the impact of OA Week that could inform future outreach efforts.

The OSU planning group defined success simply: increase the awareness on campus through quality conversations about open access. The planning group tracked the number of contacts made in order to count people reached in any of the OA Week events (Table 1).

Event	2009						2010						2009-2010 Total
	Traveling Tables			Other			Traveling Tables			Other			
	English & Psychology	Forestry (college)	Library	Elevator speech	Mandate panel	Malamud presentation (streamed)	Geosciences	Marketplace West	Math & Statistics	Oceanic & Atmospheric Sciences (college)	Smith presentation (streamed)	Authors' Rights Workshop	
Undergraduates	37	3	3	unk	unk	unk	3	45	10	0	0	0	101
Graduate students	7	8	0	unk	unk	unk	4	9	8	10	0	0	46
Faculty & staff (non-library)	9	9	3	unk	unk	unk	9	0	7	10	6	4	57
Faculty & staff (library)	0	0	0	unk	25	12	0	0	0	0	12	4	53
Other/Unknown	6	5	1	250	6	2	2	2	5	0	2	0	281
<i>Total</i>	59	25	7	250	31	14	18	56	30	20	20	8	538

Table 1: Contacts made during OSU OA Week events 2009-2010



True assessment of these activities may be around the corner since it is difficult to gauge the impact of these single events on behavior. For example, will contact with undergraduates influence their selection of appropriate freely available resources in the future? Is an upswing in either use of or deposits to an IR truly the result of contact made during OA Week or some other factor? In the future, OSU and other institutions involved in OA Week outreach should develop plans for assessing whether behavior changes towards open access because of any program outreach activities, including OA Week, and adjust the program's focus accordingly.

In two years of participation in OA Week, 40 per cent of the contacts made (215 total) were from the traveling tables' events and anecdotal evidence suggests several of those initial conversations have continued. The shared presentations with UO had 65 attendees (12 per cent of total contacts), and one quarter of those attendees was not from the library. The elevator speech reached more people than any other single event, although no data about the patron status was collected, as this would have been impractical. Each of these efforts demonstrates the benefits of collaborative initiatives and their impact by meeting the goal of Open Access Week – informing the OSU community.

Conclusion

Existing library partnerships can be taken advantage of in order to develop Open Access Week events that reach a broad audience. Several aspects of OSU Libraries' planning that helped accomplish this objective included:

- Setting realistic goals (such as seeking to inform rather than change behavior)
- Utilizing strengths of existing library programs (such as liaison relationships with units and collaborative efforts with other libraries)
- Documenting what is done (counting contacts and noting their affiliations, and capturing anecdotal information about any on-

going conversations that start during OA Week)

- Working with units that actively showcase their publications (especially those that maintain lists of citations to current publications or tout departmental publications in their newsletter)

Given the number of conversations with faculty and students across campus, the events succeeded in connecting with people beyond the library. Some examples of this engagement are discussions that started during OA Week and continued well after on topics such as: consultations on authors' rights; requests for help with depositing content in the institutional repository; requests to be added to a list of volunteer OA advocates; and requests for further information on the place of open access amid traditional scholarly publishing.

Solid programming is time-consuming to plan and requires help and interest from beyond the committee members. In particular, the events were enhanced by the subject librarians' liaison relationships with the campus colleges and departments and the established foundation of collaboration with the University of Oregon Libraries. Setting a manageable goal such as engaging users can be as useful as a more complex one such as changing behaviors.

Although materials available to support libraries developing OA Week events are plentiful, articles describing successful OA outreach efforts are sparse. This is understandable since judging the success of the events is difficult when they are likely to be part of a much larger program at an institution – one that works throughout the year and includes varied types of outreach. However, planning committees can collect basic data to capture information about participation and level of engagement. Reporting on successful endeavors can be a source of good advice for other libraries participating in OA Week and it may help keep the momentum going at both the local and international levels.

Endnotes

¹“Budapest Open Access Initiative,” <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read>.

²For more background on open access, consult: Peter Suber, “A Very Brief Introduction to Open Access,” <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/brief.htm>, and Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), “Open Access,” <http://www.arl.org/sparc/openaccess/>.

³Jennifer McLennan, “Welcome to Open Access Week 2010,” <http://www.openaccessweek.org>.

⁴Hillary Corbett, “The Crisis in Scholarly Communication, Part I: Understanding the Issues and Engaging Your Faculty,” *Technical Services Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2009): 130. Corbett aptly describes scholarly communication programs as having “personalities”.

⁵Kara J. Malenfant, “Leading Change in the System of Scholarly Communication: A Case Study of Engaging Liaison Librarians for Outreach to Faculty,” *College & Research Libraries* 71(2010): 69.

⁶Joy Kirchner, “Scholarly Communications: Planning for the Integration of Liaison Librarian Roles,” in *Research Library Issues: A Bimonthly Report for ARL, CNI, and SPARC* (2009): 22.

⁷Carole L. Palmer, Lauren C. Tefteau, and Mark P. Newton, “Strategies for Institutional Repository Development: A Case Study of Three Evolving Initiatives,” *Library Trends* 57, no. 2 (2008):159-160.

⁸Corbett, “The Crisis in Scholarly Communication, Part I”: 133.

⁹See Charles W. Bailey, Jr. *Transforming Scholarly Publishing through Open Access: A Bibliography* (Houston: Digital Scholarship, 2010), <http://digital-scholarship.org/tsp/transforming.htm>. For examples of commentary on open access in disciplines other than librarianship, see: Jackie W.

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¹⁰Kathleen A. Newman, Deborah D. Blecic, and Kimberly L. Armstrong, “Scholarly Communication Education Initiatives: SPEC Kit 299,” *SPEC Kit 299* (2007): 16.

¹¹Jamaica Jones, Andrew Waller, and Jennifer McLennan, “Open Access Week: Library Strategies for Advancing Change,” *Research Library Issues: A Bimonthly Report from ARL, CNI, and SPARC* 2010; Anne Gilliland, “Evaluating Open Access Day 2009 at Ohio State University,” *Evidenced Based Library and Information Practice* 5, no. 4 (2010).

¹²Several websites and organizations point to resources that can be used freely such as those made available through SPARC (<http://www.arl.org/sparc/resources/index.shtml>), the Open Access Week website (<http://www.openaccessweek.org/>), and the OA Directory “Educational Materials about OA” section (http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/Educational_materials_about_OA).

¹³Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, “Right to Research: The Student Guide to Opening Access to Scholarship,” (2008).

¹⁴Oregon State University College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, “COAS Open Access Policy,” http://www.coas.oregonstate.edu/media/Open_Access_Policy.pdf.

¹⁵Andrea A. Wirth and Faye A. Chadwell, “Rights Well: An Authors’ Rights Workshop for Librarians,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 10, no. 3, (2010).

¹⁶ Examples of articles addressing aspects of institutional repository assessment include: Ronald C. Jantz and Myoung C. Wilson, "Institutional Repositories: Faculty Deposits, Marketing, and the Reform of Scholarly Communication," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 34, no. 3, (2008); Palmer, Tefteau, and Newton, "Strategies for Institutional Repository Development"; and Mary Westell, "Institutional repositories: proposed indicators of success," *Library Hi Tech* 24, no. 2 (2006).