# Open Access Advocacy: Think Globally, Act Locally

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**Abstract**

While the open access movement is a global movement, University of Northern Colorado librarians acted locally and collaboratively to make changes to their scholarly communication system. Authors of this article describe how global advocacy affected their local, institutional open access activities that resulted in a library faculty open access resolution at University of Northern Colorado Libraries. This article is based on the "Advocating for Open Access on Your Campus" presentation at the Colorado Academic Library Consortium Summit on May 21, 2010.

## Introduction

The "think globally, act locally" slogan of the environmental movement serves as a guiding principle for our participation in the open access movement. We make changes in our scholarly communication systems on a local level, and we are guided by the global principles of the international Budapest Open Access Initiative of 2002, http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml, and the Berlin Declaration of Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities of 2003, http://oa.mpg.de/openaccess-berlin/berlindeclaration.html. Both initiatives espouse the principles of making research in all academic fields freely available on the Internet. This can be done through publishing research in open access journals or by making research articles, published in traditional journals, freely available.

## Global Advocacy

The 'gold' and 'green' open access publication models are two ways authors can make their articles open access. The 'gold' open access publication model involves authors choosing to publish in open access journals. Open access (OA) journals "provide free, immediate, permanent online access to the full text of research articles for anyone, webwide."[1] Additionally, authors can publish in toll access or subscription based journals but pay a fee to make their article an open access article. This is known as the 'author choice' open access option. An increasing number of traditional publishers are now offering an 'author choice' open access option, as reflected in the SHERPA/ RoMEO listing, http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/PaidOA.html. In the 'green' open access publication model, authors publish in subscription based journals but can choose to provide access to the article via departmental or institutional or discipline specific repositories. More and more traditional publishers are now allowing articles to be deposited in repositories. Statistics kept by SHERPA/RoMEO indicate that 62% of publishers formally allow some form of self-archiving.[2]

BioMed Central and the Public Library of Science (PLoS) are two 'gold' open access publishers, among many, listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). DOAJ aims to provide a comprehensive listing of scholarly and scientific open access journals, thereby increasing their visibility and ultimately increasing their "usage and impact."[3] Heather Morrison commented in 2008, "It is noteworthy that the number of journal titles included in DOAJ is impressive compared with commercial journal packages. DOAJ's 2,832 journals compares favorably with the approximately 2,000 titles in Science Direct."[4] As of May 2010, DOAJ's coverage includes more than 5000 journals.[5] This is a

huge growth of open access journals within couple of years. Any library can add these titles to their e-resource access and management service (ERAMS), providing local access to global resources and building awareness of open access journals.

**Open Access Advocacy Events**

Building awareness of and support for open access can also be done through staging an event. The first open access event, National Day of Action for Open Access, occurred in the United States on February 15, 2007 sponsored by Students for Free Culture and the Alliance for Taxpayer Access. The event's purpose was to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Budapest Open Access Initiative and to urge support for the passage of the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA).[6] The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and PLoS joined Students for Free Culture to sponsor the first international event, Open Access Day, on October 14, 2008 to continue advocacy for open access of publicly funded research.[7] From 2009 forward, Open Access Day became the global activity of Open Access Week held in October. The purpose of Open Access Week is to provide "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."[8]

**Open Access Mandates**

One form of strategically collaborative political activity is the passage of open access mandates (also referred to as "institutional self-archiving policies"). Open access mandates have been passed by various groups: specific academic departments, entire universities, library faculties, and so on. The following brief list gives you a geographically diverse sampling of open access mandates that provide free global access to research:

- In 2003, the University of Southampton School of Electronics and Computer Science of the United Kingdom passed the world's first open access mandate.
- In 2004, Queensland University of Technology in Australia passed the world's first university-wide open access mandate.
- In 2008, the United States National Institutes of Health passed an open access mandate making publicly funded research freely available.

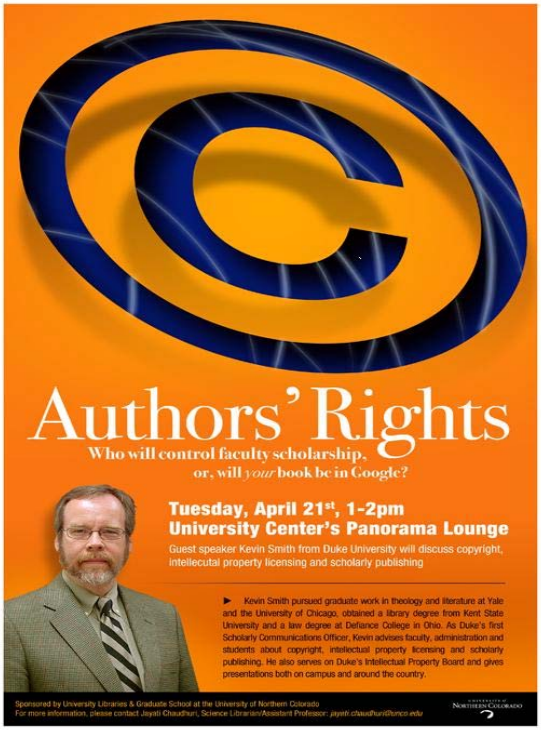
You can find these and many other mandates listed on ROARMAP, the "Registry of Open Access Repository Material Archiving Policies," hosted on the EPrints web site. This database tracks the world-wide growth of institutional self-archiving policies. As of July 6, 2010, 223 mandates were registered on ROARMAP.[9]

**Local Advocacy**

Open access advocacy at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) currently takes three forms: recent activities of the Libraries Scholarly Communication Committee, awareness activities during Open Access Week, and the political activity of a Library Faculty Open Access Resolution. The Libraries Scholarly Communication Committee was formed in 2007 and includes members from the library and Graduate School. While initially focusing on copyright and attending training on scholarly communications issues, the committee decided to focus on the open access and authors' rights beginning in 2009. The committee, in collaboration with the Graduate School, brought Kevin Smith from Duke University to speak to faculty regarding authors' rights issues.

Open Access Week activities and the passage of a Library Faculty Open Access Resolution also involved collaboration, the first with UNC faculty and the second with UNC library faculty.

**Open Access Week Activities**




Open Access Week 2009 activities included a display in the library and a faculty panel discussion of open access. The basis for both was research done by members of the Libraries Scholarly Communication Committee regarding UNC faculty involvement in open access activities as revealed on their vita or websites. Initially the members looked for articles published in open access peer-reviewed journals and/or involvement with open access journals as editors or members of editorial boards. This scope was expanded to include any open access resource related to their area of expertise, thereby resulting in the identification of faculty with some open access activity from every college. The LibGuide for Open Access Week, http://libguides.unco.edu/openaccessweek2009, included this open access activity of UNC faculty by College.

A virtual display of samples of UNC faculty open access resources was included in the library display. Also included in the display were handouts available through the Open Access Week website, http://www.openaccessweek.org/profiles/blogs/handouts-about-oa-a4. Books on copyright and images from open access journals affixed to poster board completed the display.

A panel was assembled of five faculty members involved with open access publications to discuss open access, with the UNC library dean Gary Pitkin serving as moderator. Dean Pitkin serves as the editor of Technical Services Quarterly, a traditionally published journal. Common themes heard from the panel members were the importance of peer review and the importance of publishing in the journals in their own particular field, including professional association or society journals, over open access. Open access was seen as an added benefit rather than a core element of their scholarly publication choices. The strongest supporter of open access was a faculty member from the health sciences.

The comments of the UNC faculty member panel were similar to those related in the results of the recent Ithaka survey of over 3000 U. S. faculty regarding scholarly communication. When asked what the most important consideration is in choosing a journal to publish their research, over 80% responded that the journal needs to circulate widely their discipline so that their article will be read by peers. Of least importance, just under 40%, is that the journal makes the article freely available online.[10]

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**Grassroots Collaboration: the Library Faculty Open Access Resolution**

The aforementioned Open Access Week promotional events and celebrations are effective ways to advocate for open access on a local level, but also in concert with a world-wide celebratory event. Collaborative political action is another form of advocacy that can coalesce locally and yet also be tied to a global political movement. The idea is to realistically determine your sphere of influence, and organize accordingly, at a grassroots level.

The Oregon State University (OSU) library faculty was the first library faculty group in the United States to adopt an open access mandate. On March 6, 2009, the library faculty of OSU adopted a policy that required deposit of the final published versions of their scholarly works in their institutional repository. Here is an instance of the global case inspiring the local one. Reading of this adoption in the open access movement blogs inspired us to pursue a library faculty open access resolution at the University of Northern Colorado.

While we were not ready to lobby for a campus-wide resolution, we felt equal to the task of organizing our immediate peer group. We knew our fellow librarians had a high awareness of open access issues and thus comprised a realistic target group. Also, we had not yet identified supporters of open access outside of the library faculty. Thus, having determined our sphere of influence, we began to organize on a local, grassroots level.

Even though we were cautious in our targeted sphere of influence, we were bold in our goals. Our intent was to serve as a positive example for the campus community and our Colorado peers. The resolution would be a highly symbolic means to raise awareness of the open access movement. Yet we also wanted practical, tangible results: we wished to promote our institutional repository Digital UNC, to give our authors leverage when negotiating with publishers, and to make our scholarly work more accessible.

In August of 2009 we approached the library dean with our idea and Dean Pitkin was supportive of its inclusion on the October library faculty meeting agenda; as the editor of Taylor &Francis' Technical Services Quarterly, he was keenly aware of the importance of authors' rights issues and self-archiving policies.

Thus, in September 2009 we became intra-library advocates of open access, self-archiving, and authors' rights. We gave voice to and repeated that message in numerous informal meetings. We used an inclusive, personal, and transparent approach, informing library administrators and faculty in advance of our intention to bring the resolution forward in our October faculty meeting. At that time we had sixteen library faculty members, inclusive of ourselves. We met two-on-one with each faculty member over a period of about five weeks, from mid-September to mid-October.

Library faculty members were very supportive of the initiative, but out of the conversations, several concerns emerged. The predominant concerns centered around two areas: the peer evaluation and tenure review process and publication contracts. As for the peer evaluation and tenure review process, faculty did not want the resolution to be applied punitively by peers. In other words, they did not want to be negatively reviewed if they published in a non-open-access venue. We reassured them this was not our intent and that the resolution would be crafted to allow latitude. The second area of concern belied a lack of confidence in contract interpretation skills and a fear of violating publication agreements. We informed peers of the publisher data compiled in the SHERPA/RoMEO database. We also spread the good, under-reported news that many traditional publishers of library science literature have liberal self-archiving policies already in place. This concern underscored our belief that authors' rights education is of paramount importance in

promoting open access, self-archiving, and assertive behavior toward publishers.

These concerns were re-expressed during the later faculty meetings. However, they did not become obstacles or stumbling blocks. The airing of concerns seemed to have a therapeutic effect; it built trust, and hastened the eventual consensus. These initial informal meetings were essential to the success of the collaborative effort; they helped us to clarify our message and were the building blocks of consensus.

The timing of our first faculty meeting was auspicious; it took place on October 21, 2009, during our Open Access Week celebrations. The context of our promotional blitz provided fertile common ground in which to start crafting the wording of the resolution.

We didn't start from scratch. We used the resolutions of the following bellwether libraries in North America as our examples: Gustavus Adolphus College, Oregon State University, University of Calgary, and University of Oregon. These libraries reflected an interesting divergence of approaches—the Gustavus and Calgary resolutions were quite general, whereas the Oregon institutions were more assertive and prescriptive in terms of specific licensing requirements and deposition procedures.

Key content points discussed at our initial meeting were: commitment to campus promotion, scope, institutional repository statement, escape clause, open access statement, copyright language, specific license requirement, and time-frame for subsequent review. At the close of the October meeting, we had a good sense of collective agreement as to the salient points to include; a subgroup created a draft and distributed it via email for comments prior to the November 18 meeting.

Even when choosing a manageable, localized sphere of influence, complications can crop up. Just a few days prior to our November 18, 2009 meeting, potential problems regarding process and governance came to the fore. This blindsided us; in our naïve idealism, we had assumed the propriety of a simplistic, grassroots democratic process. Governance issues were not on our radar. We were told there was no mechanism campus-wide for faculty to make and pass a resolution outside the auspices of the Faculty Senate. And we knew it was premature and politically infeasible to go campus-wide with the issue.

The combined expertise of our Dean and our Faculty Senate representative was invaluable at this stage. They helped clarify our options. The two choices were:
(1) the library faculty could propose by acclamation an open-access statement to the Dean. Upon his approval, the process would go to the Provost and possibly University Council. This would be a University Libraries open access document; or
(2) a library faculty resolution could be passed in lieu of a University Libraries document. This could be accomplished through an ad hoc session of the library faculty to discuss and adopt an open access resolution.

We discussed the two options and decided it would be most effective to adjourn and then reconvene as an ad hoc body. After two ad hoc meetings we passed an open access resolution that contains a statement supporting open access principles and promotes prompt deposition in Digital UNC.

In the most significant section of the resolution, we address authors' rights and individual latitude. We resolve "to seek publishers whose policies allow us to make our research freely available online. When a publisher's policies do not allow us to make our research freely available online, we resolve to engage in good faith negotiations with the publisher to allow deposit of peer-reviewed, pre- or post-print versions of our scholarly work in Digital UNC. This resolution, however, gives us the latitude and individual discretion to publish where we deem necessary, given our career goals, intended audience, and other reasonable factors."[11] Here, we explicitly encourage nego-

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tiations with publishers while affirming the freedom of the individual scholar to choose publishing venues. This is a different stance than the Oregon resolutions, which do not address negotiations. They simply mandate deposit of the author's final version at the time of publication. By acknowledging the publisher's role, we arguably take a more centrist position. On the other hand, we feel it is important to strongly advocate for rights to deposit the peer-reviewed version of the work. Finally, in closing the resolution, we address scope and periodic review. The resolution, http://libguides.unco.edu/oa, was approved unanimously December 2, 2009.

Upon unanimous approval, we were eager to share our resolution with the library community. We targeted both local and global audiences when we publicized and promoted our newly-approved open access resolution. On December 9, 2009 we advertised our resolution globally on ROARMAP. News of our resolution hit the blogosphere. There was an announcement in Peter Suber's Open Access News. Happily, our action had a global domino effect and influenced others. The Z. Smith Reynolds Library of Wake Forest University acknowledged several institutions, including ours, that influenced the passage of their open access policy on February 1, 2010.

Next, we wanted to share the news locally with our campus community. We delayed announcement until March as we worked with library administrators to time our campus announcement to dovetail with their public unveiling of Digital UNC to their fellow administrators. On March 9, 2010 we publicized the resolution on campus via an announcement on the campus-wide listserv. In the announcement we provided a link to our educational LibGuide, "Open Access and Authors' Rights," containing the text of our resolution along with other information and resources.

We were fortunate in many ways during this process, and collaboration was a key component of that good fortune. The sharing of complementary knowledge and skills, and supportive administrators helped us overcome governance hurdles. Collegial group dynamics, an atmosphere of trust, and open-minded attitudes enhanced the entire process. The ad hoc, non-binding, and small-group nature of the task also eased the way. The localized scope of our political endeavor made our goals feasible. Yet the global open access movement community informed us and strengthened our resolve. We'd like to acknowledge SPARC, ACRL's Scholarly Communication Committee, Peter Suber, and Steven Harnad for the positive momentum they provided during process.

**Conclusion**

At UNC, our local, grassroots efforts to change the scholarly communication system have just begun. The initial grassroots efforts were effective as we received a few positive inquiries in response to our campus-wide announcement and increased hits on our LibGuide. For the future, we have several goals in mind. We want to make repository deposition a routine activity for our library faculty. . In addition, we plan to customize our authors' rights education for each academic discipline on our campus. We need to engage in much more dialogue with our campus-wide faculty and we hope this may result in growth of our institutional repository and in departmental open access resolutions, and ultimately a campus-wide resolution. The strategy of "think globally, act locally" is an effective one. The end result of our local actions will be increased global access to our institution's scholarship.

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