

SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

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SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION— IT IS OUR PROBLEM! ARL / ACRL INSTITUTE ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES ASSUMPTIONS AND SHIFTS PERSPECTIVES

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The future of research libraries is inextricably tied to the issues imbedded in scholarly communication. If this statement is true, why isn't every research librarian an authority on scholarly communication issues? For many librarians, the answer to this question is: confusion over whose problem scholarly communication is.

Some librarians recognize that scholarly communication issues aren't solely library issues, but we've taken them on because we see and feel the effects of these issues acutely and often more immediately than most other stakeholders. We have been willing to commit resources and take risks to create change in the system of scholarly communication. It's frustrating when we attempt to convince the faculty to join with us or "do their part" to change the system and they tell us it isn't their problem—it's a library problem.

A good way to gain clarity, or to develop a new perspective on working with faculty around scholarly communication issues, is to attend the ARL/ACRL Institute on Scholarly Communication. The institute is an artful blend of active and reflective learning in a collaborative context, clear learning outcomes, and a product—an action plan for your campus community. The institute's three-pronged approach—which emphasizes program planning, advocacy, and new communication models—provides effective tools to "get to the next level" in the change process, as Karla Hahn of ARL stated during the opening of the institute held in July.

From Emory University Libraries, a team of three librarians with diverse backgrounds and perspectives attended the institute: Liz Cooper, Anthropology Librarian, who brought the perspective of a librarian helping scholars with their research needs; Katherine Skinner, Digital Programs Team Leader, who provided the perspective of a recent PhD graduate and project coordinator on many digital projects, including the peer-reviewed Internet journal *Southern Spaces*; and myself, as the senior leader with broad-based knowledge and understanding of how to establish projects and move them forward in a coordinated way. Once the institute was underway, we worked with several other institutional teams, some including faculty members and administrators. The presence of non-librarian participants greatly benefited the success of the institute.

Preparing for the Institute

In April, we were notified that we had been accepted for the July institute and had extensive pre-work to do to lay the foundation for our campus planning effort. Our preparation included conducting an environmental scan of our institution's awareness of scholarly communication issues, evaluating the preparedness of the library to work with faculty on the issues, observing the effectiveness of outreach efforts underway, compiling an inventory of activities the library is engaged in to promote new models of scholarly communication, and defining initial priorities for our plan.

The pre-work accomplished a critical goal—it brought together three people from disparate parts of the organization to develop collective awareness around the broad issue of scholarly communication. With clear tasks to accomplish in a specified time frame, we quickly learned how to work well together as a team.

The pre-institute work also informed our focus for the institute and afterwards. After compiling the pre-work data for Emory University, we had an impressive list of accomplishments and ongoing activities. However, as observed by Linda Mathews, then Vice Provost and Director of Libraries, these activities were uncoordinated, project-based, often unknown by others outside the activity, and involved a small group of largely grant-funded staff.

Outcomes from the Institute for Emory

Our learning during the institute really challenged our assumptions and led us to significantly redevelop our initial plans. During the community review that began the final day of the institute, I shared that, based upon our experiences during the past day and a half, our team had completely rethought the plan we developed during our pre-institute work. For instance, we originally identified the development of an institutional repository (IR) and the establishment of a campus advisory committee as two key implementation steps. After our experiences at the institute we questioned whether the investment in an IR should be an immediate priority for Emory, given the long adoption curve others reported. Other approaches to supporting faculty with new publishing modes seem to fit better with the electronic publishing program already in development at Emory.

We also wondered who would do all of the work we realized was needed. Our team of three had been sent to the institute without a commitment that we would address the issues outside of the regular focus of our jobs. We didn't feel that we had the time to take on anything extra. Further, the discussion about data gathering led by Julia Blixrud of ARL really struck a chord with us—we wanted a database listing grants received, editorial boards Emory faculty served on, where the faculty published, how often they published.

Didn't we need to do more research before we recommended any action steps?

Within a few weeks after the institute, we had regrouped and developed a comprehensive planning approach bringing many areas in the library to work together on facets of scholarly communication issues. With the encouragement of Emory's new Vice Provost and Director of Libraries, Rick Luce, we are planning a series of presentations to the library staff to generate enthusiasm for the challenges and opportunities present in scholarly communication to encourage more librarians to think differently about how we work with faculty in support of their research. Our goal is to make these presentations a showcase for what is already being done by Emory in its disparate arenas and raise collective awareness in a broader group of librarians, much as the institute raised awareness in our team of three.

My goal for Emory is to share the answer to "whose problem is it?" Librarians have been engaging faculty with the wrong set of issues. Increasing journal prices, "big deals," and rights management are library problems. How we solve these problems will affect faculty but they are not problems in their sphere of interest, knowledge, and work. Librarians need to engage faculty in transforming scholarly communication at the beginning of the process. We need to develop tools, databases, and services that make it easier for scholars to do their work. As scholars use and incorporate these new tools, databases, and services, they will transform scholarly communication. Helping scholars discover, access, organize, and preserve knowledge are activities central to the mission of the library. We know that scholars need help with interdisciplinary research, for example. We know that scholars need tools that enable collaboration, management, and archiving of large data sets. We can develop easy-to-use tools that enable scholars to do their work while changing the scholarly communication model.

Highlights of the Institute

The first three hours of the institute were powerful and shifted my and my team's thinking and perspectives. After a brief introduction to the process of creating a program plan for our local campuses, Lee Van Orsdel, Dean of University Libraries, Grand Valley State University, introduced a lively exploration of advocacy. After Van Orsdel offered several strategies for working with faculty on their own turf addressing their issues, she moved us into an active learning mode. Each team created a sound bite or "elevator speech" tailored to faculty addressing a scholarly communication issue on our campus. Then we shared our sound bites with the group and asked the faculty present if the sound bites resonated with them.

This was the first of the most compelling moments in the entire institute. The faculty present spoke openly and

candidly about scholarly communication and its impact on their professional careers and ways of conducting their work. While not always agreeing with one another, our faculty participants offered their own perceptions. We heard views such as the following: Faculty will share their own work—despite any copyright agreement they signed with the publisher. They understand that open access material is freely available, but it is not free of costs. Where their work is published and who sees it is of primary importance. They don't care whether or not large numbers of people have access to it but they do want to insure that key scholars in their field have access to it. Local repositories do not enable other scholars in their field to gain access to their work as well as a discipline-specific national repository could. The importance of publishing in the top five journals in their field could not be overstated—it matters throughout their careers, even post-tenure, because the prestige gained affects their ability to obtain grant funding, subsequent publishing and future job opportunities, and even defines who their colleagues are.

What emerged from the exercise and the discussion is that faculty look to the library for advice regarding copyright, for help using discovery tools that work across disciplines, and to work with learned societies to preserve the quality of their peer-reviewed journals.

When John Ober of the California Digital Libraries introduced an exercise relating to the Federal Research Public Access Act, it challenged us to step outside of our comfort zone. Although national advocacy is not an activity all academic librarians are eager to engage in, I had the direct experience of doing so when I served as President of ACRL and saw positive results from it. As Eric Lease Morgan noted in his Travel Log, "This workshop was a lot about advocacy. Advocacy is a form of communication, and it is also a form of marketing."¹

When the focus of the institute shifted to explore new modes of scholarly communication, presentations by Lynne Withey from the University of California Press, Karla Hahn of ARL, and Karen Williams of the University of Minnesota launched a series of discussions and planning exercises.

In a lunchtime keynote, Withey acknowledged that the future of publishing is digital but explored why most e-book publishing has been largely unsuccessful. Importantly, she noted that digital publishing ventures like Atlas of Global Inequity are successful because they have scholars' involvement, collaboration with the library for technical support, and are grant-funded.

Withey touched on the three economies of scholarly communication—prestige, subsidy, and market. To put it another way, faculty want the prestige that comes from being published, the library uses a university-subsidized budget to purchase their published works, and the publishers make money. It is the collision of these three

economies that inhibit collaboration, and the challenge is how to integrate the three economies. The conclusion I came away with is that there is no monolithic solution, that sustainable change will be specific to the discipline, format, and use of the content.

Emory University is working on a few grant projects to develop tools and methods to reduce the costs of sustaining digital projects. I knew that any plan our team proposed would be evaluated based upon sustainability.

Our team's thinking about what Emory needed to be doing really started to shift when the institute began exploring issues around the development of institutional repositories. After hearing four participants' reflections on their IR experiences, the three of us concluded that Emory's plan needed to build upon the successes and lessons learned by these early adopters. We decided that since all of the presenters reported significant difficulty convincing faculty to deposit pre- or post-prints of their work into the campus IR, we weren't ready to follow down that path. Instead, we wanted to offer services scholars have identified as needing, such as help with archiving data sets, gray literature, and collaborative workspaces.

We were inspired by the presentation by Karen Williams of the University of Minnesota, who discussed research findings by a team from the University of Rochester that found that scholars want to be able to work with co-authors; track versions of the same document; work from different locations; make their work available to others; have easy access to others' work; help them keep up in their fields; organize items using their own schemes; control ownership, security, and access; know items are persistently usable; not have responsibility for servers and digital tools; not violate copyright; and not be any busier.² Williams went on to share research findings from a University of Minnesota study that aligned with the University of Rochester findings. Nearly 70% of the faculty surveyed said their research is interdisciplinary and collaborative. Faculty reported being very comfortable with electronic content; wanting tools, such as finding aids, but being slower to adopt them; needing help managing research content; working from multiple places; and needing help to do this and disseminate their research in traditional ways.

The need for tools—to conduct research, to manipulate data, to discover information—hit home for us. Emory is the site of the MetaScholar Initiative, which is a series of projects addressing new scholarly communication models, archiving and preservation of digital content, and the development of search and discovery tools. We knew we would need to focus on how to transition these grant-funded projects to practical applications in the library. We also knew the three of us alone were not in a position to effect much change due to lack of time and competing priorities. During our table

discussions with other teams, we found that these issues were common challenges.

By the end of the institute, we were feeling a bit overwhelmed by our task of developing a comprehensive program for addressing scholarly communication at Emory University. We also needed a sense of how comprehensive a plan the library would support and what resources could be committed. Leadership of the Emory University Libraries was in transition as a new Vice Provost and Director of Libraries, Rick Luce, started in September.

Next Steps at Emory

At Emory, we are now poised to take a step to the next level of a collaborative and coordinated approach to scholarly communication. We will emphasize connecting with the graduate students and pre-tenure professors who may be more willing partners in experimenting with new dissemination modes; we will create tools for collaboration and discovery; and we will build a stronger base of awareness and understanding within the library. Our planning will be guided by the primary lesson learned at the institute—focus on initiatives that solve problems scholars have concerning scholarly communication and not problems the library has concerning scholarly communication.

An IR for theses and dissertations is underway at Emory and one of our strategies will be to build upon this IR to include other works like gray literature, data sets, and graduate student work. As a member of the vice provost's strategic planning group, I am able to incorporate the need for tools into this group's vision and goals for digital scholarship and an e-science initiative. Emory has many groups that are interested in these issues and that are doing good work. Our challenge will be to coordinate work, align priorities, and build a program out of these disparate activities. I am hopeful that the strategic plan will set priorities and directions in a unified way.

My understanding of the problems of scholarly communication has been fundamentally changed as a result of the ARL/ACRL Institute on Scholarly Communication. I now see the connections between the system of scholarly communication and the future of the digital library that I didn't quite understand before—they are completely intertwined. Libraries need to pave the way for scholars with the development of new tools to conduct research and to share it. Scholarly communication—it *is* our problem!

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¹ Eric Lease Morgan, "Institute on Scholarly Communication: A Travel Log," August 21, 2006, <http://dewey.library.nd.edu/morgan/workshop.html>.

² Nancy Fried Foster and Susan Gibbons, "Understanding Faculty to Improve Content Recruitment for Institutional Repositories," *D-Lib Magazine* 11, no.1 (January 2005), <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/january05/foster/01foster.html>.