ARL-SSRC Meeting on Open Scholarship in the Social Sciences: Summary and Next Steps

December 11—12, 2018
Washington, DC

ASSOCIATION
OF RESEARCH
LIBRARIES

SSRC

Meeting Planning Committee

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Table of Contents

Participants

Thirty-four people attended the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Meeting on Open Scholarship in the Social Sciences held December 11–12, 2018, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. Participants included:

- Scholarly society and professional association leadership from the American Anthropological Association (AAA), the American Sociological Association (ASA), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), the Association of University Presses (AUPresses), the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), and the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science (SIPS)
- Library deans and directors from five ARL member institutions— MIT Libraries, NYU Libraries, UCLA Library, University of Arizona Libraries, and The University of Kansas Libraries
- Individual scholars passionate about open scholarly practices
- Funders from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities
- Staff from ARL, the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), and the SSRC

Participants agreed to a lightweight Chatham House Rule, wherein nothing said in the meeting would be attributed to a particular person, to encourage full and frank discussion, but we would hold ourselves accountable to the work we commit to doing to advance open scholarship.

Introduction

Open scholarship and open research practices are gaining momentum in the social sciences and the academy broadly. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) convened a meeting in December 2018 at a pivotal moment for social science leaders to discuss opportunities and commit to a shared agenda, with tangible next steps, to build on successes to date. By focusing on each participant sector's distinctive roles, shared values, and objectives with respect to an open scholarly ecosystem, the action-oriented meeting explored how the community can increase access to social science research and ensure that scholars and scholarship thrive in an environment that is "inclusive, equitable, trustworthy, and durable."[1]

In order to surface and articulate constituent values prior to the meeting, MIT Libraries visiting scholar and University of Maryland professor of sociology Philip Cohen conducted video interviews with a sample of the participants, including several who were unable to attend. Excerpts of those interviews[2] and Cohen's associated commentary was provided to the participants in advance. The meeting organizers also recommended the following to prepare for the discussions:

Foundational Readings
- "The Fair Open Access Principles"[3]
- MIT Grand Challenges Summit White Paper[4] (Sections 1 and 2)

Recommended Readings
- *Open Science by Design: Realizing a Vision for 21st Century Research* (Summary)[5]
- *To Secure Knowledge: Social Science Partnerships for the Common Good*[6]
- "Fair Open Access: Returning Control of Scholarly Journals to their Communities"[7]

- Academic-Led Publishing From the Experts Series "Interview with Dr. Michael P. Taylor"[8]

Judy Ruttenberg and Mary Lee Kennedy opened the meeting with a message of welcome from the Association of Research Libraries.

> ARL is pleased to host this event because we believe this group of social science leaders has a unique ability to advance open scholarship based on their breadth of experience in discipline-based, infrastructure, and institutional positionality. Our theory is that there is more common ground than difference across the sectors represented here. By bringing this set of stakeholders together we're hoping to build relationships and work toward tangible goals to advance the reach and impact of social science research.

> ARL's Action Plan for 2019–2021 is based on strong collaboration, especially within the academy, understanding the needs of the scholar, and bringing what libraries have to meet those needs. ARL is focused on the interface between institutional policy, public policy, and scholarly need, and this meeting fits precisely in that intersection. One focus for ARL is open scholarship. The research community is at an inflection point for many reasons with respect to openness, and we need to have a collective approach to giving scholars what they need.

Jason Rhody addressed the group on behalf of SSRC.

> SSRC is grateful for your willingness to take part in an open and honest conversation about how we, in our institutional roles, can increase access to scholarly knowledge in concrete ways. In SSRC's prior work on digital culture, and in the recent report "To Secure Knowledge: Social Science Partnerships for the Common Good," the organization addressed several central questions, including; how

might we anticipate the changes we need in technology and infrastructure in order to support future academic work? How do we sustain the scholarly institutions that are key to the success of open scholarship?

That's why you're all here—to inform our organizations and the community with an active vision for how to move forward.

Presentations

Philip Cohen showed several video interview clips[9] with this summary: scholarly communication is at the core of the scholarly mission, and we want to attempt to be equitable and open, reach beyond the academy, use technologies to create networked research objects, understand economic considerations but don't let them drive us, and create new, less hierarchical, more democratic platforms and spaces for knowledge sharing.

Cohen then introduced speaker Elizabeth Popp Berman by talking about inertia and path-dependence in the current system of scholarly communication, asking the audience to consider how we can influence our infrastructure and our institutions so that a system that better supports our values develops its own momentum.

Elizabeth Popp Berman

Elizabeth Popp Berman, associate professor of sociology at University at Albany, SUNY, delivered a research presentation entitled "Social Science in the Public Sphere: Learning from the Successes of Economics." Berman's expertise is in organizations, and this work is part of her research for the book, *Thinking Like an Economist: The Normative Impact of a Positive Discipline on U.S. Public Policy*. Her presentation was both provocative and generative as participants reflected on its content throughout the rest of the meeting.

Berman framed her remarks by looking at "openness" and "closed-ness" from several angles, including financial (free or paywalled) and participatory (open to submissions or invitation-only). As a discipline, economics often works through closure with regard to who contributes, but allows free access to the research outputs. This has been especially important for the purpose of influencing public policy. For example, the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* ("the New Yorker for the economist") has been free to read since 2010 thanks to subsidy

from the American Economic Association's other journals. The journal is aimed at influencing readers beyond the academy, and its editorial policy is authorship by invitation only. Similarly, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) plays a major role in disseminating knowledge within the discipline, with an important working paper series priced at $5 per article and free to journalists. While many of these pre-peer-reviewed papers go on to formal publication in subscription-based journals, by the time they do, they have already found their readers. NBER, in contrast to academic journal publishing, is a closed network of participants—one must either be nominated or approved by the NBER Board to submit a working paper.

Berman treated meeting participants to a fascinating story of how economics became embedded in the US federal government, by way of the RAND corporation and the creation in the 1960s of a program called the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System, or PPBS. PPBS led to the establishment of PPBS offices within federal agencies, the creation of public policy programs within universities, and the proliferation of economics PhDs working outside of academe in government and policy. This is an interesting example of social science in the public sphere, and its outcome is enviable for other disciplines looking to influence policy makers.

During the Q&A and throughout the meeting the following day, participants discussed economics' **closure** in terms of disciplinary autonomy, control over who enters the field, what counts as economics, and who gets to have influence on the world outside the academy. In other words, economics has been very good at a particular type of openness in that research is widely and inexpensively disseminated, but the discipline's influence is tied to its exclusivity. Participants discussed whether this has to be the case, and also whether other social science disciplines can learn to emulate some of the field's openness without embracing its closure.

Marcel LaFlamme

Marcel LaFlamme is the managing editor of the open access (OA) journal *Cultural Anthropology*, and sits on the Executive Committee of Libraria, an international OA publishing cooperative in anthropology. His presentation came from a cross-sector collaboration at the Triangle Scholarly Communication Institute (SCI), a week-long, Andrew W. Mellon–funded program in Durham, North Carolina, in October 2018. LaFlammes's project team (which included librarians, society staff, and scholars) focused on "Understanding and Mitigating the Risks of Open Access for Scholarly Societies." LaFlamme began by acknowledging that open access advocates don't necessarily fully understand the challenges faced by scholarly societies in transitioning to OA. However, reciting those challenges becomes a conversation-ender and prevents acting with urgency. His goal, instead, was to lead a conversation based on a shared set of practical facts, including agreement on the goals for open literature.

With this in mind, LaFlamme relayed the following provocation from Triangle SCI to the group: What financial, operational, and cultural risks would moving toward OA pose for scholarly societies? What are the risks for **not** doing so?

Loss of subscription revenue for societies is a hard problem. Journal revenue supports operational costs as well as popular items such as scholarships to bring graduate students to annual meetings. Furthermore, if access to publications is untethered from membership, what happens to membership? OA might also pose a reputational cost to societies as a group. What establishes their necessity without publications?

On the other hand, in **not** moving toward OA, the risk is that the paywalled journal becomes a residual form that is bypassed by interesting and innovative scholarship outside the society. LaFlamme asked the group, how can external stakeholders help to "future

proof" an OA transition, and create a durable new business model for sustaining societies?

Micah Altman and Philip Cohen

Micah Altman is director of research at the MIT Libraries, and head/ scientist of the MIT Libraries' Program on Information Science. He and Philip Cohen presented an idea that came out of their work at the MIT Grand Challenges Summit: "academy-owned peer review." Theirs is a social innovation rather than a technical one. As presented, academy-owned peer review wouldn't have a high cost of entry and it is a good model for the kind of collaborative action that ARL and SSRC envisioned for this meeting. Concerns surrounding peer review include time, incentives, quality, bias, and inclusion. Altman and Cohen's pilot idea posits the following questions:

- What if peer review wasn't done by journals?
- What if we reviewed research materials as well as papers?
- Should reviews be anonymous, should they be rewarded, should they be cited, and are they scholarship?

Academy-owned peer review would match supply and demand. Academics are willing to do peer review when it contributes to a better system of scholarship. At the same time, new peer review projects need (good) reviewers in order to launch. And the community needs (good) empirical research on peer review.

The solution is to match reviewers with initiatives that promote better scholarship. Cohen and Altman propose a virtual token system called IOTA Review (I Owe The Academy):

- Academics donate their tokens.
- Profiles of reviewers who have donated tokens are published.
- Tokens are granted to reviewing initiatives.
- Initiatives are administered by universities, societies, or journals.

The IOTA token service includes metadata about the person, contact method, creation time, and review fields. It could contain branding for the reviewer or for projects. The proposed service creates, grants, and redeems the tokens; supports evaluation of the token system; and reviews experiments with them. This is a social contract: the reviewer is absolved from doing a closed review and pledges to be responsive to a future request. IOTA, in turn, commits to vet recipients with a principled and transparent process with flexibility at redemption to defer or trade reviews.

Cohen and Altman walked through several application scenarios for IOTA Review, including use in an OA overlay journal, an existing society journal, and an open preprint service (such as SocArXiv). The proposal would:

- Work within narrow niches or broad fields
- Raise awareness of available resources
- Facilitate experimentation
- Align incentives with academy needs

Shared Interests

As meeting participants introduced their motivations for coming to the meeting, and as ideas for collaborative action began to take shape throughout the convening, the following themes emerged:

Institutional roles

- How can campus administrators advance open scholarship?
- What can departments do to encourage openness in promotion and tenure guidelines?
- The importance of scholarly affiliation (institutions, societies, etc.) and how these affiliations are challenged by new business models and new economic realities of higher education
- Commitment to collaboration across sectors

Sustainable, community-governed infrastructure

- How libraries and library publishing can advance open publishing and openness of digital objects other than publications
- Sustainability of inter-institutional platforms and pieces of open source infrastructure
- Moving university presses to new, effective models

Quality and effectiveness of scholarship

- The reproducibility crisis as a motive for increasing openness and transparency
- Interest in improving quality
- Desire for effectiveness of scholarly platforms and scholarly forms (short and long)
- Maximizing impact and reach of scholarship

Access

- Desire for fewer barriers and less friction
- Protection of publication process as well as access: communication of science as a human right

Challenges to Openness

As LaFlamme indicated in his presentation, many challenges to embracing open practices or transitioning to OA business models are well known and have been articulated at many prior meetings. The challenges listed here, by the sectors represented, are presented as **tractable**: issues to be taken into consideration as participants formed collaborative groups for action.

Scholars

- Desire to share their scholarship within a vexing policy environment—licenses, journal policy restrictions on the mode of sharing, for example
- Finding a system to balance openness with assurance of quality (review, curation, approval)
- Desire to challenge peer review as currently structured and also maintain aspects of its ethos, such as double-blind review—evaluating the claim, not the person
- Lack of implementation guidelines for rewarding or incentivizing a promotion or tenure case on open digital scholarship
- Changing the current merit system will challenge people who have succeeded in that system.
- If the entire work process is open, scholars could be open to legal or other challenges.

Scholarly societies

- Financial arrangements between commercial publishers and societies fund operational and programmatic activities in societies beyond publication.
- With increasing adjunctification of faculty positions in higher education, there are fewer reviewers and participants in the scholarly communication system.
- Societies desire to provide disciplinary affiliation for scholars

irrespective of their institutional affiliation or status, and publications have been a path to confer this affiliation. Concern over lack of incentives for those on the margins of academia to participate in scholarly communication

- Fear (in "academy-owned") of losing brand credibility and getting burned by experiments

Libraries

- Fragmentation and competition among community-infrastructure builders makes a complex governance and investment landscape.
- Limited resources and energy to distribute between flipping existing structures and building the future to transcend those structures (such as the journal)
- Balancing incremental change toward transformation with need for actions to scale
- Success in fundamental changes to scholarly publishing will present a threat to entrenched and powerful economic interests and there will be pushback.

University presses and library publishers

- Finding balance of competition among infrastructure providers that spurs innovation, on one hand, and
- The need for a common architecture that fits across infrastructures and disciplines

Academic administration

- Privatization, shrinking public support for higher education

Conditions for Successful Action

The following conditions for successful collaborative action toward openness are not presented here as consensus statements, but did emerge from cross-sector small-group table work.

Challenge institutional self-preservation

Recenter the values of the 2002 Budapest Open Access Initiative[10] rather than looking for business models that will preserve scholarly societies, or libraries, as institutions.

Bring data

- Apply social science methods of research and data collection to the problem of scholarly communication, and subject those methods to rigor and transparency
- Employ a trusted third party to review finances of publishing and envision new models
- Conduct meta-analysis of previous modeling work to inform organizational learning

Build a mechanism for evaluating and curating scholarly quality

Promotion and tenure boards need clear metrics to evaluate scholarship they don't directly understand (because it is from a different discipline or subdiscipline, for example). There is widespread dissatisfaction with how peer review occurs now, so there is opportunity to rebuild it.

Nurture a value chain

Articulate the discrete functions required for high-quality open scholarship and determine their value and how they will be supported and remunerated:

- Reviewers contribute time.
- Societies convene and provide scholars community.
- Societies provide quality assurance and curation.

Write implementation guidelines for reviewers and promote adoption across a critical mass of institutions

We need a link between guidelines written at the society or disciplinary level to translate to implementation in academic departments.

Bring institutional leadership into the conversation

Academic leadership is interested in openness across a variety of areas: promotion and tenure; diversity; impact; and technology transfer. They can help move this agenda.

Improve the scholar's workflow

- Create new infrastructure environments where openness and sharing thrive
- Create specifications for sharing research data by discipline (see neuroscience)
- Apply unique, persistent identifiers that connect the life span of an argument

Invest in making scholarship accessible and understandable as well as open

- Broader influence and impact will require translation of work that transcends disciplines and the academy.

Recognize that the research and learning ecosystem is a multi-stakeholder and multi-institution endeavor

- Working across institutions is difficult but essential to progress.

Five Actions to Advance Open Social Science Scholarship

The meeting was designed to get to collaborative commitments for action. By the end of the second day, five group projects were proposed, with commitments from various participants to lead them.

1. Conduct an authoritative investigation into scholarly society finances by a trusted third party, as the basis for financial and business model conversations with societies and external stakeholders

This proposal is to look at scholarly society budgets with both rigor and discretion, gathering data for actionable conversations about alternative financing models and stakeholder investment. Form a multi-stakeholder advisory group for this project.

Data gathering on vulnerabilities, where resistances might be, and how to negotiate building trust with associations and organizations not present at this meeting. What are the key lever points that would need to be shifted in order to make OA work? There are a lot of experiments out there and they're all over the place. The report will include a short literature review or annotated bibliography aimed at scholarly societies as a meta-analysis.

Contacts: Jason Rhody (rhody@ssrc.org) and Judy Ruttenberg (judy@arl.org)

2. Commission a paper on the role of scholarly societies and scholarly affiliation in a post-subscription environment

Scholarly societies provide a range of services and contribute to the research and learning community beyond publishing journals, though it is often their revenue from journals that enables that broader work.

This paper would be part of a larger conversation envisioning the role and contribution of societies, including providing affiliation to individual scholars, and a more open environment.

Contact: Judy Ruttenberg (judy@arl.org)

3. Conduct a case study pilot on linguistics promotion-and-tenure (P&T)

The traditional criteria for P&T need to be reevaluated to better reward the way work is being done and to better reflect the values of the researchers and scholars doing that work. Linguistics is considered a very good field for a pilot program to examine what new disciplinary criteria might be because there is a longstanding commitment by linguists to open access, because the field itself is small but highly interdisciplinary, because at least some departments (such as UC San Diego) are already beginning to rethink P&T, and because there are many high-profile linguists and departments that can be comparatively easily engaged. A group of meeting participants from several different institutions expressed interest in an experimental research project to measure career advancement challenges and successes with respect to OA in linguistics.

The small group proposed the following ideas to begin to influence the current P&T challenges:

- Could we get a group of linguists across institutions to **develop a set of statements around how to move linguistic scholarship to a more open space**, including how best to change standards and incentive structures for P&T? Incentive structures need to be about the content of the research not where it exists, but how are departments addressing this (for example, redacting the publishers' names in CVs when hiring)? Are there minimal or recommended standards that departments can apply across the board that are in line with values of equity and openness?
- Building on Juan Pablo Alperin's Review, Promotion, and Tenure

project,[11] **submit FOIA requests for state university P&T data** for linguistics and otherwise request guidelines that departments have already.

- **Do a survey of the field**, asking, for example, "In the past 10 years where did you submit your work and why? Did openness play a role? What was the outcome?" How much does prestige publishing matter to hiring, tenure, promotion? To get buy in for the survey, we should make the appeal to the community that we want data on multiple levels, so not just talking about openness but about all the different factors (including gender, ethnicity, etc.) that play into P&T decisions. The survey would address publication practices and how these may change through the various stages of a career: "How much more do you publish in open publications now that you have tenure? Why do you do open work? What started you on that path?" We could hire an undergraduate researcher at each institution who would scrape everybody's CVs and recreate career timelines that would allow for follow-up interview questions: "Did you submit this work anywhere else? We see you're an [x] at your institution, and before that you were at [y]. Did you get tenure? On the basis of what work?"
- We need to showcase successful scholars who have published in open access journals. What percentage of linguistics is published open, and how does that affect success in P&T? Part of this work would be to **compare the survey and the state university P&T data**. How does linguistics compare to other disciplines? Is it possible to highlight the differences between linguistics and physics, for example?
- What is the role of publishers? We **need a better understanding of publisher policies** around book publishing, for example. What changes can be made to current publishing practices? Could there be a new section or even new journals that publish different kinds of work, that reimagine journal articles and scholarly work and publishing?

Contact: Lauren Collister (lbcollister@pitt.edu)

4. Explore implementing peer review in SocArXiv and PsyArXiv

A number of community preprint servers appeared on the scholarly landscape in 2016–17, many under the free auspices of the Center for Open Science. These communities are building networks and now need to raise money for their own sustainability, determining who should be paying and for what.

Many types of reviewing are possible with preprints: is it true, is it novel, is it well written? A system could provide scoring or annotation of different aspects of a preprint, as well as tagging items that are available for review by crowdsource. If societies organized this, would institutions, departments, communities benefit? Could we incentivize them to pay for it? Scholars would volunteer their time, needing recognition and credit. Reviews could be citable and the number of reviews expected could be capped for equity.

Hypothes.is and other web-annotation tools exist now, and any innovation and experimentation with those tools for preprints can exist alongside traditional journal publishing, at least in the near term.

PsyArxiv and SocArXiv will continue the conversation.

Contacts: Jack Arnal (jackarnal@gmail.com), Philip Cohen (pnc@umd.edu), and Simine Vazire (simine@gmail.com)

5. Assess the impact of the reporting relationship between university presses and university libraries

ARL and AUPresses are looking at this as a potential theme for the P2L3 meeting in June 2019, a meeting of university press directors that report to libraries.

Contacts: Peter Berkery (pberkery@aupresses.org) and Judy Ruttenberg (judy@arl.org)

Endnotes

1. "Inclusive, equitable, trustworthy, and durable" is a framework for scholarly publishing put forth by the MIT Grand Challenges Summit, and articulated in the event's subsequent final report (Micah Altman and Chris Bourg, *A Grand Challenges-Based Research Agenda for Scholarly Communication and Information Science*, MIT Grand Challenge PubPub Participation Platform, 2018, https://doi.org/10.21428/62b3421f). The ARL-SSRC meeting planning committee adopted this language for the ARL-SSRC meeting.

2. Philip N. Cohen, *ARL-SSRC Meeting on Open Scholarship in the Social Sciences: Prework Interview Report*, Association of Research Libraries, accessed January 22, 2019, https://www.arl.org/component/content/article/6/4690.

3. "The Fair Open Access Principles," Fair Open Access Alliance, accessed January 22, 2019, https://www.fairopenaccess.org/.

4. Altman and Bourg, *A Grand Challenges-Based Research Agenda for Scholarly Communication and Information Science*, sections 1 and 2.

5. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, "Summary," in *Open Science by Design: Realizing a Vision for 21st Century Research* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2018), 1–14, doi: https://doi.org/10.17226/25116.

6. SSRC To Secure Knowledge Task Force, *To Secure Knowledge: Social Science Partnerships for the Common Good* (Brooklyn, NY: Social Science Research Council, 2018), https://www.ssrc.org/to-secure-knowledge/.

7. Alex Holcombe and Mark C. Wilson, "Fair Open Access: Returning Control of Scholarly Journals to Their Communities," *LSE Impact Blog*, October 23, 2017, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2017/10/23/fair-open-access-returning-control-of-scholarly-journals-to-their-communities/.

8. "Interview with Dr. Michael P. Taylor," Academic-Led Publishing From the Experts Series, Scholastica, November 26, 2018, https://blog.scholasticahq.com/post/academic-led-publishing-experts-series-michael-taylor/.

9. Cohen, *ARL-SSRC Meeting on Open Scholarship in the Social Sciences: Prework Interview Report*.

10. Budapest Open Access Initiative, accessed January 22, 2019, https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/.

11. "Review, Promotion, and Tenure Project," ScholCommLab, accessed January 22, 2019, https://www.scholcommlab.ca/research/rpt-project/.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda

ARL-SSRC Open Scholarship in the Social Sciences
OMNI Shoreham Hotel — Washington, DC

Tuesday, December 11, 2018

4:00—4:15 **Registration**

4:15—5:15 **Introduction and Framing**

Meeting goals and desired outcomes
Welcome from ARL and SSRC
Summary of pre-meeting interviews (stakeholder values)

5:15—6:00 **Research Presentation**

Elizabeth Popp Berman, SUNY Albany — Research from the project "Social Science in the Public Sphere: Learning from the Success of Economics"

adjourn

6:30 **Small (hosted) group dinners at walkable nearby restaurants**

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

8:00—9:00 **Coffee and light breakfast**

Coffee and tea will be available throughout the day

9:00—9:45 **Reflections from the previous day**

9:45—10:15 **Presentations from the field**

Marcel LaFlamme, "Overcoming Risk" at Triangle Scholarly Communication Institute

Micah Altman and Philip Cohen, MIT, "Academy-Owned Peer Review"

10:15—10:30 Break

10:30—11:30 Small table work

Goals and challenges

11:30—12:00 Reports from table work

12:00—12:15 Networking break

    Find collaborators

12:15—1:00 Lunch (in room)

1:00—2:00 Small group work

    Collaborations and solutions

2:00—2:30 Report back on collaborations

2:30—2:45 Break

2:45—3:30 Large group discussion

    Key priorities

3:30—4:00 Wrap-up and commitments for next steps/actions

adjourn