CARL 2011 RESEARCH IN LIBRARIANSHIP GRANT: FINAL REPORT

A STUDY OF LIBRARIAN ROLES IN PROMOTING SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION RESEARCHERS.

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RESEARCH PROJECT TIMELINE

November 1, 2011 to October 30, 2013

FINAL REPORT SUBMISSION DATE

November 12, 2013

COMPLETED ACTIVITIES

1. Research Ethics approval was obtained from both institutions before embarking on the project.
2. A literature review was conducted with the support of a University of Toronto Faculty of Information Studies Graduate Student. An annotated bibliography was completed in early

January 2012 highlighting journal articles and web sites pertaining to scholarly communication with a focus on librarian roles.

3. Between February and September 2012, interviews with libraries responsible for scholarly communication were completed with individuals from 29 of the 29 CARL university libraries.

4. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using telecom facilities at York University and recorded on a secure server. Topics were arrived at after discussions with colleagues at University of Guelph and York University. Participants were asked to share the questions with institutional colleagues before the interview to enable them to provide us with more complete responses to our questions. Some interviewees sent us supporting documents or referred us to useful documentation to support their responses.

5. Emerging themes were shared with the CARL- CRKN OA working group at the request of the Secretary in July 2012. We also responded to an invitation from the University of Manitoba to share preliminary findings. Jane Burpee gave a presentation to University of Manitoba library staff on August 28, 2012.

6. At the conclusion of the interviews, recorded transcripts were coded and grouped systematically for recurring themes using NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. The results were analyzed before the formal dissemination began.

7. Dissemination of results occurred at CLA, IFLA, EBLIP: Full text of presentations and papers are available in the following locations:

   - CLA National Conference and Trade Show May 29 - June 1, 2013, Winnipeg: Conversations with Scholarly Communication Librarians: Results of a CARL-funded Study.

     Guelph: https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/handle/10214/7244

   - The 7th International Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP) Conference July 15 - 18, 2013, Saskatoon: No time to scale back: Gleaning best practices for librarian involvement in scholarly communication in Canadian research libraries.

     Guelph: https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/handle/10214/7614

   - The 79th IFLA General Conference and Assembly August 17- 23, 2013, Singapore: New frontiers in Open Access for

Collection Development: Perspectives from Canadian research libraries.

Guelph: https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/handle/10214/7612

IFLA: http://library.ifla.org/74/

8. A fulsome report of our results is being prepared for submission to a peer reviewed journal.

BUDGET DETAILS

See attached Statement of Operations from Research Accounting at York University.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study investigates librarians' roles in support of scholarly communication (SC) within Canadian research institutions. The objectives of the research study are twofold: 1. to develop an understanding of how SC activities sit within the library's organizational structure; and 2. to study how librarian roles are changing in order to support emerging practices in SC. The findings are the result of interviews that took place in 2012 with representatives from Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) member libraries.

Twenty-nine academic librarians from libraries affiliated with CARL participated in our study. We interviewed six University Librarians (UL) (or equivalent), 10 Associate University Librarians (AUL) (or equivalent), and 13 librarians with primary responsibility for SC. Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended.

The interviews focused on the following areas of interest:

1. The landscape of SC activities within Canadian research institutions;

2. The organizational structures in which SC is promoted;

3. The role of the librarian in supporting SC;

4. The key challenges and limitations to the advancement of SC initiatives; and

5. Visions for the future within participant institutions and across the country.

Respondents explained how their libraries were supporting SC activities.

All 29 libraries covered in our interviews have Institutional Repositories (IRs) and all have or are developing Electronic Theses and Dissertation (ETD) programs to meet the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) goal to acquire only ETDs by 2014.

Twenty-two libraries have journal publishing programs. For the most part these are openly accessible. Digitization and digital preservation activities are growing in a majority of libraries. Special collections, institutional and cultural artifacts, aboriginal and heritage materials are new targeted content. The funding for such initiatives does not always come solely from the library budget. Community grants or vendor partnerships, for example, are being used to support these projects. Digital humanities are seen as an area of growth in some libraries and most participants see research data management as an important role for libraries in the future. Research publication metrics and knowledge mobilization are also emerging as areas of interest.

Open Access is uniformly accepted as an integral part of SC activities. With few exceptions, CARL libraries participate in Open Access Week. OA week is viewed as a key advocacy platform for talking about the issues. Other ways to advocate about OA include regularly delivered workshop sessions in areas of author rights, theses and repository deposits. Many libraries are also delivering sessions about emerging topics in SC. Some libraries deliver targeted sessions in which OA issues are touched upon. Examples mentioned by participants included creative commons, alternative metrics, and data management workshops.

Respondents brought to our attention that OA policies are at a nascent stage in many CARL institutions. The institution-wide OA policy, the faculty-based policy, the senate resolution on OA and the several librarian OA policies or commitments mentioned, are seen to lack teeth and are not strictly enforceable. A few respondents referred to the value of having ETD mandates for filling up their IR. Libraries are creating awareness of public access policies arising from granting agencies on their campuses and their librarians support researchers by

helping them understand the positive implications of adhering to these policies.

More than half of the libraries in this study have author funds or memberships covering author fees for publishing in OA journals. A couple of respondents mentioned having innovation funds for publishing available by application at their institutions. Respondents mentioned the value that these funds bring in increasing awareness about OA authorship and new modes of SC.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

In most cases, SC is the responsibility of an AUL, particularly with those who also hold oversight for collections. In a few libraries, the UL has direct responsibility for SC. SC programs are also found to be situated within IT, serials or technical services departments. At most institutions, copyright is the responsibility of a legal office or some other department outside the library. However, copyright and SC are combined as a unit in a couple of the respondents' institutions.

Three types of organizational structures are found in CARL libraries: the solo SC librarian; the SC team with dedicated roles; and the committee structure. Regardless of what type of structure is in place at a library, the liaison librarian is valued as an important role in promotion and advocacy of SC. Larger libraries are more likely to have more than one of these structures. In a few libraries, the UL is the de-facto SC librarian. There are distinct advantages to each of these structures. Inclusive structures, ones that embed SC into job descriptions and daily practices, are seen as more likely to succeed. Some librarians spoke of restructuring based on this understanding.

3. LIBRARIANS ROLES

LIBRARIANS IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

University Librarians, who were interviewed, see their roles as advocates for SC transformation while participating in university committees, Deans' Council and other platforms where they have influence with administrative leaders. Additionally, they are active in professional associations, taking positions on important topics such as copyright and open access. One example of the power of advocacy was shown in the signing of the Berlin Declaration on Open Access by

CREPUQ, spearheaded by Quebec Library Directors. This was being drafted during our interviews.

AULs see themselves as leaders at the planning and the execution level. They lead the library by providing strategic direction to the activities of liaison librarians, providing an impetus for changing paradigms in library practice.

Scholarly Communication librarians see themselves as leaders at the operational level. Most of the SC librarians interviewed have responsibility for the IR and for the promotion of digital scholarship. As the SC point persons, they entrust some of the advocacy work to liaison librarians who when necessary refer back to them for their deeper expertise. The SC librarian plays a major role in educating graduate students and faculty in author rights and new publishing models. Liaisons are active at the front-line educating their constituents on SC issues.

As initiatives grow, respondents feel that their institutions are often looking to the library to support and manage them over time. ETDs, institutional repositories, and GIS and data, are three such examples mentioned of 'special projects' that were initiated elsewhere and eventually moved from external department to the library.

A number of respondents felt that SC advocates are often spinning their wheels and talking to the converted. They want more done to promote SC across Canada. Many participants feel that faculty, students and the broader community need support in understanding the issues. Collective action which supports local advocacy work would be a valuable way to avoid duplicating efforts.

Collaboration at the technical level is also desired by respondents. One respondent lamented that we did not have one repository for the country skinned differently per institution. Another wished we could come together to improve support documentation for various open source initiatives (OJS, OCS, IRs).

LIBRARIANS AS LEARNERS

There was consensus among respondents that all librarians need to be active learners in order to develop skills that are becoming more technical and varied. According to several respondents, SC librarians often need programming skills, web publishing skills, and metadata expertise. An in-depth understanding of publishing and its place in the research cycle is also considered essential. While workshops are often organized within libraries which keep staff up-to-date with SC

practices, participants feel that there is a pressing need for librarians to develop soft skills. They need to be able to clearly communicate the issues to faculty and students, and to present ideas "in a coherent and persuasive way". They also feel that it is imperative that librarians have political acumen and engage people where it makes sense to them, to make them feel that it is part of their own agenda. Librarians from Québec would like to see more French translations of promotional material.

Responding librarians and their colleagues attend workshops, webinars, and key conferences in SC. The role of CARL, ARL and ACRL in this context is much appreciated. The ACRL SC Roadshow received particular mention. However, some respondents note that the same individuals are attending everything. They feel that conference and workshop attendance needs to be shared more widely and aspects of train-the-trainer need to be better incorporated into practices.

LIBRARIANS AS RESEARCHERS

In order to understand and participate in the SC process, respondents overwhelmingly feel that librarians should be conducting their own research. This came up time and again during the interviews. On the other hand, some institutions see librarians in terms of their role in service delivery. As such, their role is to support the research enterprise rather than to be research practitioners themselves. Several ULs and AULs we spoke to, valued the idea of "scholar librarians" and when hiring, consider it important to articulate that research is an expectation that will be supported. Some participants saw value in librarian participation in professional association conferences and regional or national committees. Analysis of the interview comments made it clear that some librarians appear to be more active than others in scholarship and professional contributions.

4. KEY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Respondents reported on areas that they feel are creating the greatest barrier to the success of SC activities at their institutions and across Canada. According to them the following are the most challenging impediments to the advancement of SC:

- Absence of strong public access policy mandates from Canadian federal granting agencies and institutions.
- Insufficient federal/provincial funding support for Canadian-driven open access initiatives.
- Concerns about a lack of economic sustainability of new SC models.
- Disciplinary cultures and tenure and promotion practices acting as a deterrent to embracing OA.
- Faculty apathy regarding the issues, lack of understanding of the self-archiving option for making their publications OA, and lack of time to adopt these practices.

Respondents find that these challenges explain what they feel is a sluggish uptake to some of the services offered although they have little understanding of the actual impact these services are having. Inherent in this acknowledgement is the fact that few libraries are applying formal assessment practices to SC work. Respondents agree that assessment is important and that it needs greater attention. Librarians are taking note of downloads and other usage metrics in order to celebrate milestones but without applying rigorous analysis to the numbers. Many respondents explain that many SC activities are in the development stage and too new for assessment and analysis in meaningful ways. However, some respondents suggest that it is time that shared and standardized assessment tools be developed for the Canadian context.

Canadian librarians find that they have to attend international or US based meetings in order to connect with each other and learn about emerging SC activities, according to one respondent. Others want CARL to develop a structure that involves librarians at all levels in committee roles. Several respondents feel that we should look at innovative approaches such as the ones used by ACRL, JISC, and the Texas Digital Library.

5. VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Participants openly expressed their ideas and provided suggestions for moving the SC agenda forward in Canada. They feel strongly about the need for a whole new vision of SC practice in our libraries. Respondents want to see:

- The development of Communities of Practice and additional support for skills development;
- The development of formal assessment strategies of SC activities;
- Support for librarians as researchers;
- Strong leadership at all levels.

Each of these visions reinforces the message from our participants that we need to work together to stop reinventing the wheel at every institution.

CONCLUSION

Findings from this research study help us understand the context of the present and preferred future landscape for scholarly communication in Canada. Results demonstrate the range of ways that librarians are acting as key players in shaping the evolution of scholarly communication on their campuses and across the country.

Not surprisingly we found that participants see SC as an important role for the library and librarians. Results indicate a strong commitment among libraries towards playing an expanding role in SC. Despite budget and economic woes in higher education which are affecting library budgets, we heard of plans to expand services and to deepen initiatives within broad strategic directions.

Librarians are taking an active role in advocacy and promotion of Open Access and new scholarly publishing models. More penetration of these activities throughout the organization is desired. Broadening the educational approach and new skills training can help in achieving these ends.

In our study, challenges and limitations to the advancement of SC initiatives which came up during the study are discussed with an eye to the future. More attention and understanding of the value and impact of organizational structures on librarian and staff roles is needed. Greater emphasis on deepening skills development, collaborative and consortia approaches to common practices is recommended.

Subsequent to the interviews and before we released our findings we were delighted to see CARL spearhead a number of initiatives with measures to address the concerns of our respondents. Recent workshops in research data management, assessment, and research methodology are welcome additions to the professional development landscape for librarians. More efforts could be made by CARL to connect librarians at all levels. The new Open Access Working Group initiated by CARL is an excellent step in this direction. Collective participation can only enhance the broadening of knowledge and stimulate interest in SC as an important mission for libraries of the future.

In order to deepen the understanding and advancement of SC in Canadian research libraries, we encourage ongoing and regular consultation with librarians having expertise in this area.

KEY PAPERS CONSULTED

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