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Finding your way in academic librarianship

Introducing the Scholarly Communication Notebook

Scholarly communication, often called "scholcomm," is one of the fastest growing and most rapidly changing fields in librarianship. Scholcomm jobs are increasingly prevalent at all types of institutions, and there is increasing recognition that, in a sense, every academic librarian's work serves and is driven by changes in scholarly communication. Unfortunately, while scholcomm is something we all need to understand, it's not taught in many LIS programs. Only a handful of programs offer dedicated courses, and only 12% of respondents from a recent survey indicated that scholarly communication was addressed in other courses.[1]

As three people working across diverse roles in the field, we're excited to share a resource that we hope can help academic librarians understand this work, skill up in areas that are relevant to their own practice, and share their own projects with others in the field: the Scholarly Communication Notebook (SCN).

Overview of the SCN

The SCN (https://www.oercommons.org/hubs/SCN) is an extension of an earlier, related, effort to create an open textbook about scholarly communication librarianship. That book, *Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge*, is forthcoming from ACRL in 2023. It features the contributions of more than 80 of our peers, and we're excited and a bit relieved to see that facet of our work wrapping up, at least for now. While developing that work, and in conversation with contributors and peers, we became increasingly aware that a book alone is insufficient to increase scholcomm knowledge and instruction in the way that we hope to enact. The book format is linear, constrained by space limitations, and the number of contributors is finite. We have done our best to include a wide set of perspectives and experiences but still recognize these limitations. Even if openly licensed, a book remains a relatively static resource. Scholarly communication is not static at all. Far from it, as many will attest and recognize through hard-won experience. Our contribution is the SCN, an online collection of contributed, modular, open content scoped to scholarly communication topics, which might complement the book or find use independent of it. With the generous support of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), we set about building the SCN in 2019.[2]

The SCN is a community hub, a space for sharing ideas and models, and a space to dem-

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onstrate the many ways scholarly communication work can and is being done. Setting up as an ISKME OER Commons Hub enables us to benefit from OER Commons' existing visibility, structure, support, and ease of use. The SCN consists of seven collections: Open Access, Copyright, Scholarly Sharing, Open Education, Data, Impact Measurement, and What/Why Scholarly Communication, the last capturing content that is broader than the subareas. While we are interested in existing content, with funding support from IMLS, we commissioned new content through three calls for proposals in 2020 and 2021.[2, 3] In each of these calls, we selected approximately ten projects and provided $2,500 to each as incentive and compensation. As a result, 34 projects were sponsored, with more than 60 authors representing institutions ranging from community colleges to regional teaching institutions to research intensive universities. Projects included games, slides, tutorials, exercises, videos, and readings. Next, a team of curators set about identifying existing openly licensed content for inclusion. As of time of writing, there are more than 100 items, with more added regularly.[4]

Case study

All three of the principles on these projects have taught on scholarly communication topics in a variety of settings, ranging from one-on-one consultations to full semester for-credit courses. As an associate professor at the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Maria Bonn has taught a 16-week, graduate-level course titled "Issues in Scholarly Communication" off and on since 2014. Her annual scramble to populate a syllabus with timely and interesting content was part of the impetus for her being part of this collaboration.

In the spring semester of 2022, Bonn experimented with offering the class as an eight-week accelerated, specialized course. As both a field test for the SCN and as a demonstration of her commitment to the quality of its content, she built the course around the SCN "collections" and used resources from those collections each week for instruction and activities. The results were outstanding: the course engaged students and created a clear sense of the relevance of the material for academic and professional success. From an instructional perspective, the experiment was also a resounding success in easing class prep and providing a bank of material to draw upon for quick pivots in class topics in response to student interest or current events.

Bonn's class began and concluded with the students playing ScholCom 202X, an interactive fiction game.[5] Its creator, Stewart Baker, tells us, "In ScholCom 202X, the player takes on the role of a new scholarly communication librarian at a small public university in a 'distant future' that shares elements with our own time (Zoom jokes included). The game is structured as ten distinct scenarios covering four general areas of scholarly communication (rights, publishing, institutional repositories and dissemination, and open access). In each scenario, the player is introduced to a library patron with a scholarly communication problem or question for them to respond to." In good pre- and post-test fashion, the students did indeed progress further the second time, and some even caught on to Baker's more subtle work-life balance agenda embedded in the game. One student called out in the middle of the class session, "Hey, you get points for saying no!" We can all learn to do that better, right?

Another gamified resource came into play (literally) on the day the class discussed impact measurement, when the students played Kathryn Gannon and Nora Bird's "Altmetrics

Bingo," designed to "introduce graduate students and faculty to altmetrics and new ways to evaluate engagement with scholarly publications."[6] As a bonus, the first scholar the students discovered for whom they were able to "bingo!" is a faculty member at their own university.

Both resources resulted from the awards made possible by our IMLS grant. Along the way, the class also used resources identified by our curatorial team, things like PhD Comics' YouTube video "Open Access Explained" featuring Jonathan Eisen and Nick Shockey and *Creative Commons for Educators and Librarians*, the book companion to the Creative Commons Certificate.[7, 8]

Tips for using SCN in practice

We've spoken in the past about opportunities to incorporate the SCN into classroom instruction and facilitate open educational practices in formal LIS education.[9] We believe that the SCN has just as much potential to support continuing education and meet immediate instructional needs for librarians in the field.

Discovering scholarly communication

As described, the SCN can be a resource not only for library students but also any librarian who is new to scholarly communication topics. Recent LIS graduates who have not had training in scholarly communication topics (likely to be most librarians given that our study found only 3% report having access to a scholarly communication-focused course and fewer than 10% report coverage in their other courses!) can look to the SCN to learn the basics. In addition to the openly licensed textbook discussed above, the SCN has a carefully curated collection of materials focused on foundational scholarly communication topics.

Similarly, librarians who are beginning a new role in scholarly communication—regardless of how recently they graduated—can benefit from the materials in the SCN. If they are considering a new position that is focused on scholarly communication, they can quickly get a sense of the work as well as hot topics in the area by consulting the SCN's subject-based collections. The SCN can also be a tool for preparing for a job interview, furnishing the candidate with a wealth of examples and case studies, and coming up with some good ideas for new projects once they land the job.

Skilling up in the field

The SCN can also help librarians keep up with the quickly evolving and emergent topics in scholarly communication. Librarians with scholarly communication responsibilities in their current role will benefit from refreshing their understanding of specific topics with recently added materials. Recently contributed resources on labor equity in open science and trans inclusion in OER can help introduce and refine your understanding of emergent topics while recently contributed resources focused on critical explorations of peer review and teaching copyright through podcasting can refresh your understanding by bringing a new lens to foundational topics in the field.[10, 11, 12, 13]

In addition to librarians with a role devoted completely to scholarly communication, many academic librarians have roles that are adjacent to these topics. A scholarly communication librarian or team expanding into a new area of work will benefit from reviewing the existing models and inspiring new approaches included in the SCN. Similarly, the far-too-common situation where a librarian is "volun-told" to take on some aspect of scholarly communication

as part of their "other duties as assigned" can lean on the wealth of materials as a foundation and source of inspiration as they find their bearings.

Explore new ideas and present in a pinch
The SCN can also be a resource for exploration and to whet your appetite with new models and ideas. If your scholarly communication program is facing new challenges or just feels stuck in a rut, browsing through the growing number of exciting projects and models can offer new insights and approaches. An existing department or team might benefit from collaboratively talking through the examples included in the SCN to refresh their approach, and a department head or library director can triangulate their strategy with the latest in the field and chart a better course for their organization by referring to the SCN.

Finally, the SCN offers materials ready-made for practice on the ground. If you suddenly find yourself scheduled to present on a topic later this week (or even later today), the SCN can be a source of inspiration and openly licensed materials that can help teach a workshop, present to colleagues, or just respond to an urgent request for more information from a boss.

Conclusion: Make your mark in the notebook
Regardless of how your role intersects with scholarly communication, the SCN can be a resource for keeping up with the state of the art in the field. There are some amazing things there, with more added regularly. All credit is due to the creators of these resources and to our curatorial team for helping to discover and deposit existing content. We have plans for continuing to improve and make the resource sustainable, but we know it will live or die based on community engagement. We intend for the SCN to continue to grow and evolve, with new collections emerging organically from the gathered materials and curated intentionally to map to practice in the field in the years to come.

We hope this overview has inspired you to check out the SCN. In addition to catching up on what your peers are doing, you should consider adding your voice and perspective to the SCN by contributing your materials.[14] If you have made something that you are proud of, share it with your peers. If you find something inspiring in the current materials, please give it a try at your own institution and share your own experiences. If you find something that worked at a different kind of institution than your own, remix and share the new localized version back. The next chapter of scholarly communication is yours to write. ✁

Notes

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2. North Carolina State University Libraries, "Libraries Receives IMLS Grant for Scholarly Communications Notebook," press release, August 9, 2019, https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/news/main-news/libraries-receives-imls-grant-scholarly-communications-notebook.

3. Jenna Strawbridge, "CFP Round 3: Contribute to the Scholarly Communication Notebook (SCN)," *OER+ScholComm* (blog), October 31, 2021, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2021/10/31/cfp-round-3-contribute-to-the-scholarly-communication-notebook-scn/.

4.   Josh Bolick, "Meet the Curators" *OER+ScholComm* (blog), October 21, 2021, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2021/10/21/meet-the-curators/.

5.   Stewart Baker, "New to the SCN: ScholCom 202X (an interactive fiction game)," *OER+ScholComm* (blog), May 18, 2021, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2021/05/18/new-to-the-scn-scholcom-202x-an-interactive-fiction-game/.

6.   Altmetrics Bingo, homepage, Katherine Gannon and Nora Bird, 2021, https://altmetricsbingo.wixsite.com/teaching.

7.   "Open Access Explained," YouTube video, Piled Higher and Deeper (PHD Comics), October 15, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5rVH1KGBCY.

8.   Creative Commons, "Creative Commons Certificate for Educators, Academic Librarians and GLAM," https://certificates.creativecommons.org/cccertedu/.

9.   Will Cross, Maria Bonn, and Josh Bolick, "Taking a Page from the Scholarly Communication Notebook to Transform Library and Information Services Education," video presentation, CNI Fall 2021 Project Briefings, November 16, 2021, https://www.cni.org/topics/publishing/taking-a-page-from-the-scholarly-communication-notebook-to-transform-library-and-information-services-education.

10. C. J. Garcia and Anali Perry, "New to the SCN: Labor Equity in Open Science," *OER+ScholComm* (blog), June 14, 2022, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2022/06/14/new-to-the-scn-labor-equity-in-open-science/.

11. Emily Ford, "New to the SCN: Peer Review: A Critical Primer and Practical Course," *OER+ScholComm* (blog), April 18, 2022, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2022/04/18/new-to-the-scn-peer-review-a-critical-primer-and-practical-course/.

12. Kat Klement and Stephen Krueger, "New to the SCN: Trans Inclusion in OER" *OER+ScholComm* (blog), May 31, 2022, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2022/05/31/new-to-the-scn-trans-inclusion-in-oer/.

13. Sara Benson, "New to the SCN: Teaching with Copyright Chat," *OER+ScholComm* (blog), April 11, 2022, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2022/04/11/new-to-the-scn-teaching-with-copyright-chat/.

14. Josh Bolick, "How to Add Content to the Scholarly Communication Notebook," *OER+ScholComm* (blog), September 13, 2022, https://lisoer.wordpress.ncsu.edu/2022/09/13/how-to-add-content-to-the-scholarly-communication-notebook/.