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Open access and evolving scholarly communication

An overview of library advocacy and commitment, institutional repositories, and publishing in Canada

The open access movement in Canada is very active in many areas. This is not surprising; of the 16 people at the Budapest meeting which was the foundation of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI), three were Canadians, all global leaders in this arena: Leslie Chan, Jean-Claude Guédon, and Stevan Harnad. The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) was among the earliest signatories of the BOAI, and quickly initiated a nationwide institutional repository program. The Canadian Library Association (CLA) recently approved an innovative "Position Statement on Open Access for Canadian Libraries," calling for all libraries to participate in advocacy, educating patrons abut open access resources, and encouraging support for open access, including economic support.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) has an open access mandate policy, requiring open access to CIHR-funded research within six months. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has an Aid to Open Access Journals program. Other funding agencies in Canada either have, or are developing, open access policies and support.

This article presents an overview of CLA advocacy and open access in Canada, with a focus on initiatives with a strong library involvement or leadership.

CLA and other library associations

On May 21, 2008, the CLA executive approved the "Position Statement on Open Access for Canadian Libraries."[1] The text of the position statement is:

Whereas connecting users with the information they need is one of the library's most essential functions, and access to information is one of librarianship's most cherished values, therefore CLA recommends that Canadian libraries of all types strongly support and encourage open access.

CLA encourages Canadian libraries of all types to:

• Support and encourage policies requiring open access to research supported by Canadian public funding, as defined above. If delay or embargo periods are permitted to accommodate publisher concerns, these should be considered temporary, to provide publishers with an opportunity to adjust, and a review period should be built in, with a view to decreasing or eliminating any delay or embargo period.

• Raise awareness of library patrons and other key stakeholders about open access, both the concept and the many open access resources, through means appropriate to each

library, such as education campaigns and promoting open access resources.

• Support the development of open access in all of its varieties, including gold (open access publishing) and green (open access self-archiving). Libraries should consider providing economic and technical support for open access publishing, by supporting open access journals or by participating in the payment of article processing fees for open access. The latter could occur through redirection of funds that would otherwise support journal subscriptions, or through taking a leadership position in coordinating payments by other bodies, such as academic or government departments or funding agencies.

• Support and encourage authors to retain their copyright, through the use of the CARL/SPARC Author's Addendum or Creative Commons licensing, for example.

The "Position Statement on Open Access for Canadian Libraries" emerged from years of open access advocacy, education, and member consultation by CLA members, who endorsed a "Resolution on Open Access" in 2005. In 2006, a CLA Open Access Task Force was formed to draft policies on open access for CLA's own publications and to draft the "Open Access Position Statement." In 2007, CLA announced open access policies for its own publications that are so strong that they are almost an open communications policy; basically, if information is not confidential, it should be shared openly. CLA's newsletter "Feliciter" is openly accessible after a one-issue embargo period, authors are encouraged to self-archive, and no embargo is imposed on self-archived content. Monographs are considered for open access on a case-by-case basis.[2]

Other Canadian library associations, including the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) and provincial associations have been actively involved in open access advocacy in Canada, contributing strong pro-open-access submissions to open access policy consultations by research funding agencies. The British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) has been particularly active in this area; BCLA is recognized on Peter Suber's Open Access Timeline as one of the early leaders in this area, having adopted a "Resolution on Open Access" in 2004.

Open access repositories

A manifestation of the "green" arm of the open access movement, open access repositories generally fall into two categories: institutional repositories, mostly maintained by universities (these sometimes contain non-open access digital content), and subject repositories, which are international. In Canada, there are a growing number of repositories, mostly of the institutional variety. As of late July 2008, the Registry of Open Access Repositories (ROAR)[3] lists 46 repositories in Canada, while the Directory of Open Access Journals (OpenDOAR)[4] lists 42. Most of these are new and small but growing; the three repositories with the most records (more than 10,000) are those belonging to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the University of Toronto, and the University of Calgary.

Many of these repositories are part of the CARL Institutional Repositories Program.[5] There are 26 institutions listed as participants with several more indicated as being under development. The CARL program began in 2003 and was designed to support members as they established repositories. Now that this has largely been achieved, other issues are being investigated including usage statistics, metadata, and the creation of a repository advocacy toolkit. CARL also coordinates a cross-repository search service, the CARL Metadata Harvester.[6] This search service may prove to be particularly useful in identifying Canada-specific research, a long-term and ongoing issue when searching large subject-specific databases.

New repositories are emerging on a regular basis in Canada. For instance, as this article was being completed, the National Research Council's (NRC) Institute for Scientific Information announced the creation of the NRC Publications Archive, with a December 2008 launch date.[7]

Funding agencies

There are three main federal research funding agencies in Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

SSHRC adopted open access in principle in 2004. In time, SSHRC is likely to adopt an open access mandate policy for SSHRC-funded research; however, this has been delayed, with one of the key reasons being that many of Canada's social sciences and humanities publishers were not publishing online in 2004.

In addition to funding social sciences and humanities research, SSHRC coordinates a research journals support program for Canadian social sciences and humanities research journals. This is a common practice in many countries. For the vast majority of publishers, scholarly publishing, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, is a necessity for academic reasons, but not a profitable venture. In June 2007, SSHRC launched an Aid to Open Access Research Journals program,[8] designed to assist open access journals and to test new criteria for the journal subsidy program. The development of new criteria for journal readership is necessary because the original criteria for the subsidy program required a certain minimum number of subscribers, making it impossible for fully open access journals to qualify for subsidy.

In Fall 2007, CIHR announced a new policy, Policy on Access to Research Outputs[9] aimed at broadening the accessibility of CIHR-funded research. As of January 1, 2008, CIHR grant recipients are required to do their utmost to make sure that the peer-reviewed journal articles that report the results of their research are published in an open access journal and/or are deposited in an open access repository. In the latter case, this must occur within six months of publication.

NSERC is working on a policy that will require open access to NSERC-funded research; a draft is anticipated for March 2009.

It is likely that Canada's three research councils will harmonize their policies, so watch for a maximum six-month embargo, and support for either open access publishing or author self-archiving.

Canada's International Development Research Council (IDRC) has an open access policy and archive, and ambitious plans to provide open access to previously funded research since the inception of the council. Where open access cannot be provided, IDRC provides access through interlibrary loans. Canada's NRC is expected to announce an open access policy to take effect in January 2009 to fill its new archive which will open December 2008.

In Canada, there are also provincially based funding bodies, some of which are investigating, if not supporting, open access. For example, the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research allows the research allowance portion of Independent Investigator Awards Transition Awards to be used to cover open access publishing costs.[10] The Ontario Institutes of Cancer Research (OICR) recently announced a strong open access mandate policy for OICR-funded researchers.[11] One interesting feature of the OICR policy is a dedicated fund to assist researchers to pay article processing fees to publish in open access journals if they wish.

Synergies

Many Canadian university libraries are involved in a program called Synergies.[12] Funded for three years by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Synergies is designed to assist Canada's social sciences and humanities journals to move into the online environment, and provide a decentralized, national approach to searching and preserving Canadian social sciences and humanities research. Synergies builds on the foundation of Érudit,[13] a Quebec-based research publication service provider in existence since 1998 and Open Journal Systems (OJS),[14] a free, open source journal

publishing software initially developed by John Willinsky and colleagues as part of the Public Knowledge Project (PKP).[15] OJS is currently used by about 1,500 journals around the world. While OJS supports subscription services, about half of the journals using OJS are fully open access, and almost all of the rest provide free access after an embargo period. While Synergies specifies no particular access model for individual journals, it is expected that at least some of the journals in the project will be openly accessible.

There are five members of the Synergies consortium, University of New Brunswick, Université de Montréal (lead institution), University of Toronto, University of Calgary, and Simon Fraser University, and 16 regional partners. Already, OJS hosting and support services are provided at many Canadian universities, generally through the library. For example, Simon Fraser University Library leads in the development of the OJS software, in addition to providing OJS hosting and support services for SFU faculty, and acting as a temporary host for country OJS journal portals, such as Vietnamese Journals Online. The University of Alberta libraries hosts about 17 journals using OJS, while York University Library maintains about 15 journals. Athabasca University Library is host to the International Coalition for the Advancement of Academic Publishing (ICAAP),[16] which includes independent journals as well as journals that Athabasca faculty members are involved with. Athabasca University is committed to becoming a fully open access press, and the library plays a key role in academic publishing at Athabasca.

Research data

While open access has mostly dealt with journal content, there is increasing discussion about making other scholarly outputs, including research data, openly available, as well. There is a burgeoning open data movement and, in Canada, policy makers are starting to deal with the issue. For instance, the CIHR policy noted earlier requires the deposition upon publication of some research data (bioinformatics, atomic, molecular coordinate) into an appropriate public repository.

Submission fee support

The "gold" arm of the open access movement involves the reform of scholarly publishing, from an environment where access is only by subscription or pay-per-view to one where everyone with an Internet connection can look at material freely. This necessitates changes to business models for publishers. In the case of some journal publishers, a submission fee is charged in order for accepted articles to appear in an open access journal (or as an openly accessible article in a non-open access journal). While some grants allow for monies to be used to cover these charges (such as AHFMR discussed earlier), not all authors have access to funds that will permit this. Consequently, some universities, usually via the library, are paying submission fees for the authors from their institutions. In Canada, the first institution to set up such a program is the University of Calgary. The University of Calgary Open Access Authors Fund[17] began September 2008 and will cover submission fees for accepted articles that are slated to appear in fully open access journals and in "hybrid" open access journals that offer institutional subscription rebates based on the take up of their open access option. The University of Calgary is the sixth institution worldwide to create a submission fee support program.

Conclusion

The open access movement is flourishing in Canada, just as it is around the globe. The Directory of Open Access Journals lists 107 fully open access, peer-reviewed journals that are based in Canada (as of July 2008), and many more are in the works. Canadian libraries and librarians are leaders in open access advocacy and support for open access publishing and self-archiving. Most of Canada's research funding agencies either

have, or are developing, open access mandate policies or other support.

Notes

1. CLA position statement can be found at www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Position _Statements&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay. cfm&ContentID=5306.

2. Details on the CLA policy are available in the June 29, 2007, of "CLA Digest" at cla. informz.net/cla/archives/archive_155065. html.

3. Registry of Open Access Repositories, roar.eprints.org/.

4. OpenDOAR, www.opendoar.org/.

5. CARL Institutional Repositories Program, www.carl-abrc.ca/projects /institutional_repositories/institutional _repositories-e.html.

6. CARL Metadata Harvester, carl-abrc -open accessi.lib.sfu.ca/.

7. NRC Publications Archive, cisti-icist.nrc -cnrc.gc.ca/media/press/nparc_e.html.

8. Open Access Research Journals pro-

gram, www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program _descriptions/open_access_journals_e.asp.

9. Policy on Access to Research Outputs, www.cihr.ca/e/34846.html.

10. Independent Investigator Awards Transition Awards, www.ahfmr.ab.ca/grants /independent-investigator-transition.php.

11. OICR's strong open access mandate policy for OICR-funded researchers, www.oicr. on.ca/portalnews/vol2_issue3/access.htm.

12. Synergies, www.synergiescanada. org/index_en.html.

13. Érudit, www.erudit.org/?lang=en.

14. Open Journal Systems, pkp.sfu. ca/?q=ojs

15. Public Knowledge Project, pkp.sfu.ca/.

16. International Coalition for the Advancement of Academic Publishing, icaap. org/.

17. The University of Calgary Open Access Authors Fund, devel.library.ucalgary. ca/services/for-faculty/open-access-authors -fund-0. ✎