Editorial: Open Access—Our Golden Route in Academic Publishing in an Increasingly Open World

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Abstract

Open access (OA) publishing — that is, the immediate, online, free availability of research outputs without many of the restrictions imposed by traditional copyright agreements — is changing the landscape of scholarly publications. The *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning (JOFDL)* is well positioned in the changing world of publishing with its focus on making high-quality research in the Asia–Pacific region readily available to all. The recent inclusion of *JOFDL* in the Directory of Open Access Journals highlights this commitment to accessibility. With that in mind, the three articles in this issue of *JOFDL* explore the experiences of learners in three separate and distinct educational contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand. Two of the articles are situated in the schooling sector, where research on students learning at a distance is urgently needed to inform the development of more equitable practice worldwide. The third paper explores student engagement at the tertiary level, continuing the theme from the 2014 DEANZ conference relating to the 'e' in engagement. Using the article by Jeurissen as a focus, the editorial highlights the role of open, flexible, and distance learning revitalising te reo Māori, the New Zealand indigenous language. The philosophy and methods of open access publishing are also discussed.

Keywords: open access; open learning; distance learning; open publishing; DOAJ; green and gold routes; te reo Māori; indigenous language revitalisation

Introduction

In this editorial we explore the world of open access (OA) publishing, and celebrate the *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning (JOFDL)*'s recent inclusion in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Open access is at the heart of open, flexible, and distance learning because, as stated by Swan and Chan:

> Open Access provides the means to maximise the visibility, and thus the uptake and use, of research outputs. Open Access is the immediate, online, free availability of research outputs without the severe restrictions on use commonly imposed by publisher copyright agreements (Swan & Chan, 2009).

The editorial continues our exploration of what makes *JOFDL* such a distinctive international refereed journal, and further updates readers on our progress to increase access to this journal. The editorial team's first two editorials summarised the 'state of play' of the journal after the 2013 journal review and the appointment of the new editorial team (Davis, Fields, & Hartnett,

2014a) before valuing more open and equitable approaches to practice and research in this field (Davis, Fields, & Hartnett, 2014b).

The three original research articles in this issue also fit with our distinctive mission, which is aligned to that of DEANZ, our national association of open, flexible, and distance learning. The association's byline is "making ako accessible for all: Kia hora nga mahi ako ki te katoa". (DEANZ, n.d.). We also situate the most urgently needed research on high school students' perspective of their distance learning experience of indigenous language learning (te reo Māori) in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Papers in this issue

The three papers in this issue report on strategically important research for open, flexible, and distance learning globally, but particularly in our bi-cultural nation of Aotearoa New Zealand. The two articles situated in the schooling sector report research on students learning at a distance and highlight areas in which research is urgently needed to inform the development of more equitable practice worldwide. Specific points noted are the need for a distance course to teach our endangered indigenous Māori language for students in high schools, and the design of distance programmes for middle school students. The third paper provides an institutional perspective at the tertiary level. This continues the theme that emerged from the 2014 DEANZ conference theme of the 'e' in engagement, which has resulted in a very rich series of papers in this journal. The topic of Maree Jeurissen's paper is, in the Editor in Chief's opinion, so strategically important that we have taken space to highlight the context of indigenous language revitalisation and bring additional key New Zealand literature to readers so they may appreciate why learning te reo Māori via online distance education is so significant. We also learn of some developments since Jeurissen gathered her evidence in 2012.

But first, we introduce the other two papers.

Keryn Pratt's research into online postgraduate programmes offered by distance from her university department continues research to improve student retention and engagement that streamed out of the 2014 DEANZ conference. Pratt applies Simpson's (2008) Proactive Motivational Support model (PaMS) to inform our understanding. It is interesting to see how complementary her findings are to a paper, recently published in *Distance Education,* which uses narrative enquiry on Australian students' experience of similar virtual environments framed by Pittaway's engagement framework (O'Shea, Stone, & Delahunty, 2015). These findings can be used to inform and improve teaching and learning strategies at course and programme levels in tertiary education, and they are probably also relevant to the schooling sector.

The original research by Nathaniel Louwrens and Maggie Hartnett focuses on the experience of middle school students who study at a distance in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through careful consideration of three dimensions of engagement (behavioural, cognitive and emotional) the authors clarify the importance of their findings to explain why courses that simply aim to deliver content and skills can fall far short of a good educational experience. The importance of both the design of online activities and the context in which engaged learning takes place are clarified in ways that will be recognised by teachers in schools and tertiary education. The current context for these 11–15 year old school students when learning online in a distance school setting is described in the next section.

Open, flexible, and distance learning, and revitalisation of te reo Māori

Most or all indigenous languages are increasingly endangered and, with them, we risk losing their cultures and ancestral knowledge. UNESCO, an agency of the United Nations, clarified this fact on a web page that includes an interactive map of endangered languages:

> It is estimated that, if nothing is done, half of 6000 plus languages spoken today will disappear by the end of this century. With the disappearance of unwritten and undocumented languages, humanity would lose not only a cultural wealth but also important ancestral knowledge embedded, in particular, in indigenous languages.
>
> However, this process is neither inevitable nor irreversible: well-planned and implemented language policies can bolster the ongoing efforts of speaker communities to maintain or revitalize their mother tongues and pass them on to younger generations. (UNESCO, n.d.)

Te reo Māori, the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand, is one of these endangered languages. It is situated in the only nation in the world with a treaty (te Tiriti o Waitangi) that recognises the importance of enabling the indigenous people to live their own way, and promotes this for all of its peoples. The Royal Society of New Zealand (2013) identified the nation as linguistically 'super diverse', while also having urgent language issues. The urgent need to pass language on to younger generations, plus the lack of speakers of these languages, indicates that open, flexible, and distance learning is likely to have an important role for the indigenous people of this country and others in the Pacific region.

For this reason it is important for this journal to correct a common misconception that indigenous people do not wish to adopt distance learning. In his keynote at the 2010 DEANZ conference, prominent Māori scholar and leader Professor Sir Mason Durie drew our attention to the Māori sports academy that depends on partnership with the nationwide Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, previously known as the Correspondence School (Te Kura TCS). Based on OECD experience and emerging trends in the world of Māori, he had also described four future scenarios of schooling, one of which depended on flexible and distance learning. Because this keynote is little known and relatively inaccessible, we quote Durie's description in full.

> Te Hononga Ipurangi
> Suppose, in this scenario, that Māori have embraced communication and information technology with enthusiasm. Imagine also that by 2015 Māori Television has become a major player in educational television, has formed a partnership with Te Huarahi Tika, the Māori Spectrum Charitable Trust, and also with CISCO which has by now overtaken Microsoft Word as leaders in academic networking. Together Māori Television, Te Huarahi Tika and CISCO will have created an environment where Māori learners can be part of national and international networks for learning. The virtual classroom pioneered through Kaupapa Ara Whakawhiti Mātauranga, CRS Education and Paerangi in the early 2000s will have become the norm. Though students will still attend schools, most learning will be through the internet. Being a small school will no longer prevent students from studying a wide range of subjects, including those where there is a national shortage of teachers. By then all teachers will have been required to obtain a first degree in ICT and will be expert in helping students gain maximum benefit from worldwide networks. (Durie, 2011, p. 135)

Jeurissen, as a teacher educator specialising in languages and pedagogies appropriate to learners with English as a Second Language (ESL) in New Zealand, is better placed than most to research and interpret the experience of those learners in English medium New Zealand schools who enrol in online distance learning to gain qualifications in the language before leaving high school. Her earlier paper, which was published in the *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education,* was also

drawn from this research and enhances the indigenous quality assurance. According to editors Nakata and Mackinley:

> In the language revitalisation area, Maree Jeurissen addresses a significant oversight within the schooling sector in the quest to increase the numbers of te reo Māori speakers to ensure survival of the Māori language; namely, the potential role of English-medium schools. She reports on a case study that investigated the relevant factors in one English-medium secondary school, to elicit more understanding of what inhibits the process. (Nakata & Mackinley, 2014, p. iv)

Jeurissen's (2014) study gathered evidence from all the students who chose te reo Māori as an option for NCEA level one in 2012 in one English medium high school, so it is important not to assume that their challenges are the same for today's students. For example, the nationwide Te Kura, which offers courses and whole programmes nationwide, has been working since then to increase its use of online tools and enhance the learner experience. They are managing this through increased support for supervisors in schools where students are dually enrolled, and advisory sessions for those who study their whole programme at a distance (Davis, 2015). The experience for Te Kura students may have also been enhanced by their previous experience with networked schools, including primary schools, where online learning has been introduced through the Virtual learning Network (VLN) to enhance a number of subjects, including te reo Māori.

Rachel Roberts, ePrincipal of these networked schools, reported in the December issue of the DEANZ Magazine:

> Virtual Rumaki are classes that support the learning of te Reo Māori and tikanga Māori. These classes have grown from a collaboration between four Gisborne area schools Motu, Waerenga o Kuri, Tiniroto and Waipaoa Stations who were part of an ICT professional learning cluster. We began working with their kaiako Koka Jules O'Donnell as their contribution to participation in the VLN Primary School activities. Since this time Waipaoa Station school has closed but Koka Jules continues to work online with 75 tamariki in 20 different schools from Rakiura to Great Barrier Island. Now that rural broadband has come to the village of Whatatutu near Gisborne, Jules has been joined by Nan Peetikuia Wainui to teach our total immersion te Reo Māori class. Koka Jules & Nan Peeti are a taonga to our schools.

From a parent:

> Our culture is important to us, so the Tikanga that comes with the lessons as well as the songs they learn and also being able to have conversations with other Maori students, are very important to us. [my child] started with Koka Jules and has progressed to the advanced classes with Nan Peeti. These teachers are fluent Maori speakers and live the Maori culture and Tikanga, so they bring that extra heart to the classes. They have earned the children's respect. …. For me, as a Maori person and parent, it is really important to expose my child to this level of Maori language and Tikanga learning. I value the classes very highly. In our community all the Kaumatua has passed away, they were our big supporters who taught our children. (Roberts, 2014, p. 4)

The *JOFDL* editors would be particularly delighted to receive further papers in the area of te reo Māori and/or to hear from a potential guest editor for a special issue on this topic.

Open access publishing

There is a growing shift in the way scholarly publishing is managed, located and accessed; it affects what scholars can find and how, and it has implications for where scholars will choose to publish. It is open access publishing, and it is a disruptive force on the traditional model of

commercial scholarly publishing. For those of us working in the area of open learning, the term has been around for over a decade, but for those in some other academic areas it is just now coming to the fore. The popularity and reach of the concept of open access is growing hugely and appears unstoppable at this point—it cannot be ignored any longer. *JOFDL*'s Editor in Chief recognises that the editorial team are fortunate to include one of New Zealand's leading information scientists, Alison Fields, who is leading the journal's journey into more equitable open publishing—including the writing of this editorial.

The ideology behind open access: The Budapest Open Access Initiative

In 2012 the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI), which provided the recognised founding statement defining OA, celebrated its 10th year and started to revisit its original ideology and objectives. The Initiative reaffirmed its original 2002 definition of OA without alteration:

> By "open access" to [peer-reviewed research literature], we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited. (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2012)

The purpose of the Initiative is to make "the research publicly available to everyone—free of charge and without most copyright and licensing restrictions—[it] will accelerate scientific research efforts and allow authors to reach a larger number of readers" (Budapest Open Access Initiative, n.d.a).

To achieve this goal, two strategies were identified: self-archiving and open access journals. Self-archiving of peer-reviewed research literature usually comes in the form of authors or institutions placing their work in discoverable repositories or archives, such as institutional repositories. Users can then access copies providing they can find them. Open access journals are a new generation of journals that sit outside the traditional subscription-based access through commercial journal vendors, and instead provide free, immediate, and permanent online access to peer-reviewed research literature. *JOFDL* falls within this latter category, and complies with the Declaration of the Budapest Open Access Initiative.

Literature about OA is also growing, and for those new to this area, useful overviews are presented by Suber (2013) who is Director of the Harvard Office for Scholarly Communication and the Harvard Open Access Project, and Björk et al. (2010) who provide a solid description and analysis of OA journal literature. Other useful resources are listed on the DOAJ site under Open Access Information.

DOAJ and its growth and quality

The Directory of Open Access Journals, which began in 2003, is the pre-eminent listing of OA journals:

> The aim of DOAJ is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals, thereby promoting their increased usage and impact. The DOAJ aims to be comprehensive and cover all open access scientific and scholarly journals that use a quality control system to guarantee the content. In short, the DOAJ aims to be the one-stop shop for users of open access journals. (Directory of Open Access Journals, 2015a)

The steady growth of OA peer review journals being produced and listed with DOAJ indicates the growing acceptance and now preference for OA journals as a publishing medium. The chart

in Figure 1, which is taken from Heather Morrison's *Dramatic Growth of Open Access* series, shows the unrelenting rise of OA journals listed in DOAJ.
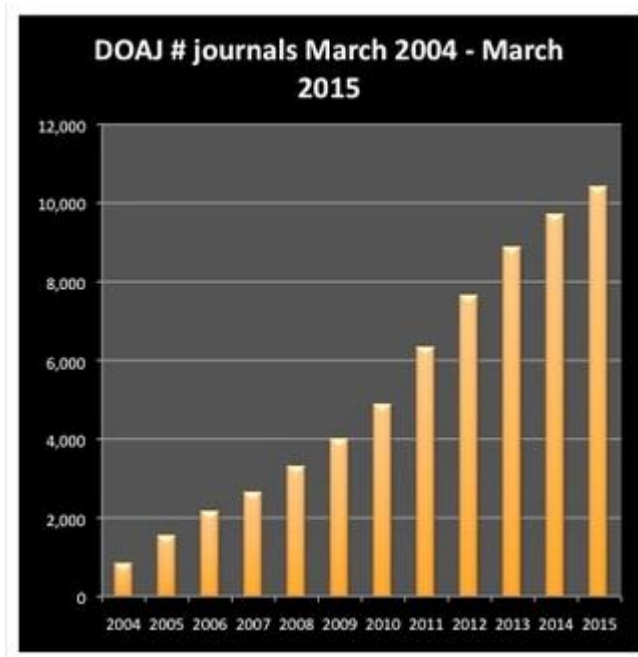

Figure 1 The growth of journals in DOAJ

There are some interesting points to note about this chart.

- The chart shows the growth of the numbers of journals listed with DOAJ. Each journal has many issues, each issue has a number of peer-reviewed scholarly articles, and each journal continues to publish articles after it lists with DOAJ. So, although it appears that there is a steady rate of increase (of journals), the real rate of increase (of peer-reviewed scholarly articles) is exponential. Current statistics on the DOAJ site in June 2015 show listings of 10,600 journals and 1,913,457 articles. In only 10 years, the landscape of academic publishing has changed.
- There is an ongoing programme of quality control at DOAJ, with the latest major effort requiring that all journals accepted into DOAJ before March 2014 reapply for inclusion. This means that every journal is being thoroughly re-checked for quality, compliance, and currency to maintain the quality of OA journals listed in DOAJ. This review has had the effect of keeping journal numbers down in DOAJ, but the overall growth rate remains steady. *JOFDL* was added to DOAJ on 8 April 2015, and its entry contains the green tick 'Accepted after March 2014', showing it has passed the new entry criteria for inclusion.

Traditional commercial journal vendors are now having to consider changing the way they deal with such open access journals. Some, including those listed on the DOAJ site, are embracing this change in the field of academic literature and the challenges and opportunities that arise from it, while others are still negotiating their way in this new territory.

Quality control of OA journal standards

Listings of OA journals in DOAJ would be of little value if there were no quality control over inclusion. Rest assured there *is* a lot of quality control, and issues are being identified and dealt with as they arise. The Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing is a joint statement from the Committee on Publication Ethics, the DOAJ, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, and the World Association of Medical Editors. The statement is "an effort to identify principles of transparency and best practice that set apart legitimate journals and publishers from non-legitimate ones and to clarify that these principles form part of the criteria on which membership applications will be evaluated" (Directory of Open Access Journals, 2015b). A *Nature* article by Van Noorden (2014) outlined DOAJ's move to reassess all journals in its current listing, describing it as an effort to "weed out 'predatory journals': those that profess to publish research openly, often charging fees, but that are either outright scams or do not provide the services a scientist would expect, such as a minimal standard of peer review or permanent archiving" (p. 17). In the same month, Anderson (2014) referred to Van Noorden's article and explained more of DOAJ's position, including its review of the inclusion criteria. The review was planned in December 2012 as part of its ongoing quality control systems. This cleaning process is now well underway and is a way of ensuring the integrity and value of DOAJ.

Methods of providing OA: Green and gold routes

As mentioned above, two main strategies were identified for making open access scholarly literature available: self-archiving and open access journals (Budapest Open Access Initiative, n.d.b). These two approaches are complementary, and are often referred to as the green and gold routes (Suber, 2012). The green route of self-archiving research literature is usually achieved by making copies of research outputs available in institutional, subject, or other repositories. The gold route of publishing in an OA journal makes the articles openly available. As far as authors are concerned, there are currently three types of gold route journals: those that are free to submit to, those that require an author payment (Author Processing Charge or APC) and hybrid models that may include both of these. *JOFDL* is a gold route OA journal that does not charge authors for submissions, and has held this status since 2011.

Some OA journals require APCs as a method of funding the journals, since OA journals do not gather any income by requiring readers or libraries to pay subscriptions or pay-per-view for their content. Kozak and Hartley (2013) estimate around 28% of the journals listed in DOAJ require scholars to pay APCs to have their journal articles published. Journals not requiring APCs need to find other sources of income to fund the costs of publishing quality peer-reviewed scholarly literature, and often turn to institutional, organisational, or external funding. *JOFDL* currently relies on its scholarly association plus free hosting of the journal on the website of Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand's national centre for tertiary teaching. The editors provide their services for 'free' without editorial support except for the final copy editing, which is to say that their institutions also share in the support of this journal.

A good deal of research is starting to emerge on how APCs are affecting the choices that scholars make in selecting where and how to publish their work, and how this new model of funding is affecting institutional, library, and personal budgets. From New Zealand, recent research reports on this new model for scholarly publishing, acknowledge that: "In the UK the Finch report (Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings, 2012) and RCUK policy (RCUK, 2013) recommended gold open access and block grants be made available for researchers in UK universities for their payment" (Angelo & Lund, 2014, pp. 2–3). However, there is no equivalent fund available at present for researchers in New Zealand. Angelo and Lund (2014) conducted research to determine how researchers at the University of Canterbury have responded to gold open access publishing and how much is being spent on APCs. Their research indicates that of the scholars who published in OA journals that have APC's over a 2 ½ year period, 138 papers were published at an average cost of NZ$1365.80 per paper (Angelo & Lund,

2014, p. 6). The funds for these payments were taken from research grants, other departmental budgets, researchers' own funds, and other sources. The research also identified the main reasons these researchers had for choosing an OA journal and how likely they would be to pay APCs in the future. Their discovery that "70% thought it likely or very likely they would pay APCs again" (Angelo & Lund, 2014, p. 8) indicates a general acceptance of this new model of publishing.

In the United Kingdom, Woodward and Henderson (2014) have conducted research on the Total Cost of Ownership, which considers payments to journals for both journal subscription licences and APCs. They discovered that calculations on costs are difficult to determine because payments are made at a number of points in the publishing process, some attract VAT, and others may be eligible for refund if outside the United Kingdom, payments may also come from various sources and be made by a variety of people, pre-publication details of articles are sometimes difficult to positively identify as titles, and content may change prior to publication. They concluded the only way to effectively manage these costs was to form cross-departmental teams that include university areas such as "the Research Office, Finance, HR and Library" (Woodward & Henderson, 2014, p. 5) all facilitating the collection of information from scholars about their research publications and the various payments required. But even this does not guarantee an effective system.

The wealth of OA research now available

As OA publishing evolves and becomes more established and entrenched in the world of scholarly publishing, more research will come forth about its merits and management. Two examples are worth mentioning. The first of these is Laasko and Björk (2012), who conducted a large-scale longitudinal study:

> . . . to measure the volume of scientific articles published in full immediate OA journals from 2000 to 2011, while observing longitudinal internal shifts in the structure of OA publishing concerning revenue models, publisher types and relative distribution among scientific disciplines. (Abstract)

The second is Björk and Solomon (2012), who sought to determine:

> whether the proliferation of open access (OA) publishing would damage the peer review system and put the quality of scientific journal publishing at risk … by comparing the scientific impact of OA journals with subscription journals, controlling for journal age, the country of the publisher, discipline and (for OA publishers) their business model. (Abstract)

These, along with numerous other studies, are helping to inform both the publishing world and those facilitating access to scholarly literature (e.g., academic libraries) of the impact of OA and how to negotiate the changing landscape of scholarly publishing. For those wanting to be involved or to keep up to date, there are articles, blogs and other resources listed in DOAJ's Open Access Information page (https://doaj.org/oainfo). There are also a number of conferences and meetings dedicated solely to OA practices. Many of these are on the Open Access Directory Wiki (http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/2015)

Conclusion

Open access publishing has been a reality for over a decade, and in that time has begun to disrupt and change the face of traditional commercial scholarly publishing. *JOFDL* deliberately chose to become an OA journal in 2011 and has proved that it is able to serve its readers and authors well in this form.

Open access without author charges is the gold standard we have chosen because it is most equitable and extends its reach to more of those who have fewer resources. This fits well with the aim of DEANZ, the academic association for which we are the scholarly flagship. The aim of this association is to "foster high standards in the practice of distance education in New Zealand . . . by ensuring that the spirit of partnership embodied in the Treaty of Waitangi, Te Tiriti O Waitangi, and the articles of that Treaty are honoured by DEANZ" (DEANZ, n.d.). We use open access publishing to promote equity for all with information that is free to submit, free to access and free to use; and the 'spirit of partnership' promotes equity in indigenous education for te tangata whenua Māori as the first people as well as equity in education for all.

We look forward to the next decade of OA publishing, and the inevitable and continuing changes to the world of scholarly publishing.

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