

OER+ScholComm Summer 2023

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Summary

This report provides background and present status on a collaboration that has resulted in an open textbook and a corpus of additional open teaching and learning materials scoped to scholarly communication topics. It concludes with next steps, calls to action, and our appreciation for everyone who supported us and partnered with us to do this work.

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Background

Our work originated in the recognition that scholarly communication topics are of increasing importance in academic libraries and that open education (one of the growing areas of scholarly communication librarianship) presents a promising opportunity to address the observed gap between formal instruction and practice. Specifically, we imagined an open textbook scoped to scholarly communication librarianship and its topical areas. We outlined our early conception in an *Against the Grain* article in 2017, "[Community Led Teaching and Learning: Designing an Open Educational Resource for Scholarly Communication and Legal Issues](#)."

In order to support this work we were awarded an IMLS planning grant in 2017 ([LG-72-17-0132-17](#)), enabling stakeholder research (with LIS instructors and with field-based practitioners) and outreach. We presented this research in a [poster at the ALISE Conference in 2018](#) and published an article reporting on practitioner research in the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* in 2020, "[Finding Our Way: A Snapshot of Scholarly Communication Practitioners' Duties and Training](#)."

The planning grant also supported an [invitational gathering in Raleigh, NC, in April 2018](#). One of the outcomes of that gathering was a growing realization that an open book alone was not sufficient to support the increase in teaching of scholarly communication topics. While useful, or perhaps essential, the relatively static format of "book" is inherently limited. It can only feature so many contributors and perspectives. It's linear and relatively fixed; a benefit of our book's being an OER is the legal ability to update and adapt the book, but the technical ability and labor involved in doing so aren't insubstantial. Scholarly communication work is highly dynamic, which books tend not to be. What we realized was that the book would be more relevant and useful if it were supported by a companion platform of openly licensed, modular,



curated, and contributed content that can reflect essentially limitless points of view, ideas, and practices as they change and evolve.

We were awarded an IMLS project grant ([LG-36-19-0021-19](#)) to develop these materials alongside and in conjunction with the textbook. Looking to the [Open Pedagogy Notebook](#) as a model, we called our project the Scholarly Communication Notebook, or SCN. We selected ISKME OER Commons as the host platform and developed strategies for populating it with content.

More information about the open book and the SCN is provided below.

The Book

Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge is an openly-licensed introduction to scholarly communication librarianship and the issues that work often addresses. It has been developed by the lead editorial team of Maria, Will, and Josh, with section editors and other contributors. The book will be published in print and digitally under a CC-BY-NC license by ACRL in 2023. While it was conceived as an open textbook of scholarly communication librarianship, we hope it will be a vehicle to increase instruction on these topics in LIS programs more generally, as well as serve as a resource for continuing education. The idea of the book was the cornerstone of our initial collaboration, and we've discussed it with a myriad of valued colleagues and mentors whose feedback helped to shape it.

The book consists of three Parts ([working Table of Contents](#)). Part 1, written by Bonn, Cross, and Bolick, defines scholarly communication and scholarly communication librarianship. It provides an introduction to the social, economic, technological, and political/legal backgrounds that underpin and shape scholarly communication work in libraries.

In Part 2, we're privileged to work with four amazing section editors, each developing their topical section on different permutations and practices of open and working with contributors of their choosing. Part 2 begins with an introduction to "open", broadly conceived, followed by a section each on open access (edited by Amy Buckland), open education (edited by Lillian Hogendoorn), open data (edited by Brianna Marshall), and open science and infrastructure (edited by Micah Vandegrift). Part 3 consists of concise perspectives, intersections, and case studies from practicing librarians and closely related stakeholders.

A CFP for Part 3 was issued in November 2019, and closed in mid-January 2020, with 26 proposals selected and developed in consultation with the editors. We hope these will stimulate discussion and reflection on theory and implications for practice. Some section editors chose to make their materials available for open peer review, which we facilitated through our project site,



Google Docs, and Twitter, and received excellent feedback. We are grateful to those who participated in that process.

This text can provide a foundation for LIS courses that center scholarly communication topics, or supplement other curricular areas as they intersect with scholarly communication. Excerpts from the book have been field tested in two sections of the Scholarly Communication course at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign (UIUC) and in an Academic Librarianship course, also at UIUC. We have a short list of LIS instructors ready to pilot selections from the book in the fall of 2023 including Dr. Bradley Hemminger at UNC Chapel Hill and Chris Hollister at the University at Buffalo, and we're eager to learn from their experience and that of their students.

In addition to print and digital availability through ACRL and its distribution channels, the book will be available in the [Scholarly Communication Notebook](#), on [our project site](#), and in appropriate disciplinary and open education repositories. All contributors will be encouraged to deposit their contribution in their institutional repositories and elsewhere as they see fit. Thanks to ACRL's ready consent to the open license, thus enabling sharing, it should not be difficult to find.

Scholarly Communication Librarianship and Open Knowledge can be easily excerpted and adapted according to the needs of students and instructors. It is an openly-licensed and freely-available text, so instructors can download relevant sections and share them through learning management systems and other means of course delivery, or they can link to any online version. Discussion questions and suggested further readings are generally provided to help prompt individual and class-wide reflection on the material and stimulate further inquiry and argument.

In keeping with the principles and practices of open access, open education, and open pedagogy, we encourage users, particularly instructors and their students, to actively engage in updating and distributing the material in the textbook to make it relevant for their own contexts and learning and to benefit diverse audiences with a range of related interests and experience. Editable files will be made available upon publication to aid adaptation.

The Scholarly Communication Notebook

Many of the resources in the [Scholarly Communication Notebook](#) complement and align with sections of the open textbook. The SCN has collections relevant for teaching about copyright, open access, research data management, and open education, for instance; all topics in the textbook. Instructors are encouraged to explore the book and SCN in tandem to discover ways in which the OER offers opportunities for active classroom engagement to help process and apply the extended exposition and argument in the textbook. As we work to realize adoption and



use of both the SCN and the book, we will be developing a teacher’s guide to support and inspire alignment of [these two complementary resources](#).

The Scholarly Communication Notebook is a repository of community-designed and curated open resources for teaching about scholarly communication and for doing scholarly communication work in libraries. It may be used as a complement to the open textbook described above, or as a standalone collection of resources. [The SCN is hosted as a Hub in ISKME OER Commons](#), which was selected for ease of use, existing features and support, and being a widely known repository of OER. We intend the SCN to be the locus of an active, inclusive, empowered community of practice for teaching scholarly communications to emerging librarians, where practitioners, LIS educators, and library students can create and share relevant content together in the spirit of mutual support and benefit.

We identified seven topical collections: Open Access, Copyright, Scholarly Sharing, Open Education, Data, Impact Measurement, and What/Why Scholarly Communication. Each collection includes a short description in the collection header. For example, the Scholarly Sharing collection “contains materials regarding author rights, institutional and subject repositories, library publishing, and related issues.” As these topical areas often intersect, some resources are listed in more than one collection as appropriate. As of June 2023, there are over 200 SCN-endorsed items indexed across these collections.

The SCN was populated with content through two primary strategies. First, with funding from IMLS, we issued three calls for proposals: in September 2020, May 2021, and October 2021. In each round, we accepted 10-12 projects, for a total of 35 newly created open resources scoped to teaching and learning about topics in scholarly communication. Creators were paid \$2,500 (per project) in recognition of their labor. Each resulting project is deposited to the relevant collections in the SCN and promoted through a news post on [our project site](#) and through [the SCN Twitter account](#), with encouragement to creators to share in their own social and professional networks. All of the projects released so far can be viewed by [searching “New to the SCN” on the News page](#) of the project site.

Second, [we named curators for the collections](#), experts in those areas, to scan the environment for existing openly licensed content appropriate to our purpose. The curators identified a majority of the items indexed in the SCN. Again, each curator was paid for their work, and each will produce a short overview “environmental scan” and a news post about their work. For example, curator of the Open Access Collection, Jill Cirasella’s post about the collection, [Which Open is Which?](#), was published during Open Access Week 2022. Sara Benson, curator of the Copyright Collection, authored [a post for Fair Use Week 2023, highlighting the content of that collection](#). Additional posts will be published and shared as they are ready.



The SCN is intended to support, educate and represent a diversifying workforce of LIS professionals. It is designed to extend social justice values to all participants by intentionally and thoughtfully reflecting the broad range of people, institution types, and service models engaged in scholarly communication work. Anyone is welcome to use and contribute openly licensed content to the SCN. If you're a practitioner, the SCN hosts content that may contribute to your professional development or library instruction. If you're an LIS professor, the SCN is full of resources created by practitioners for use in the classroom or curated with that purpose in mind. Open pedagogy can be a method for creating authentic assignments through which LIS students might contribute knowledge to the SCN. The SCN is in a phase of active development and evolution, so content ([instructions for contributing content](#)) and feedback are very welcome.

In June 2023 we invited our community of collaborators to a second convening to review all work done on the project and discuss next steps. We hosted two virtual meetings, inviting those who attended the 2018 meeting at NC State all book contributors, and all SCN contributors to attend the session that best aligned with their schedule.

In addition to general updates, Nick Shockey from SPARC generously spoke to the value and importance of our collective work and to addressing needs that SPARC sees from its vantage. We shared a draft of this report and used breakout discussions to invite community participation and feedback on the project. In the first meeting, the breakouts were organized around the following issues: connecting to education, connecting to practice, emerging issues, and ongoing engagement. We are grateful to Brianna Marshall, A.J. Boston, and Christopher Hollister for their assistance facilitating these sessions. Of the roughly 150 folks invited, about half attended one of the two sessions and, as ever, generated great discussion and ideas.

It's not necessary to replicate those discussions here, but several themes and topics were strongly represented. There was much discussion of community roles and engagement, we think evidence of related desires to contribute and to have opportunities to discuss issues with peers through lunch and learn, training opportunities, and communities of practice and the like. Many attendees stressed the continued need to address DEI in our work and in our communities. Other visible issues included AI in scholarly communication, anticipating and reacting to the OSTP Nelson Memo, concern about data brokering practices (user privacy, surveillance), and transformative agreements/APCs. [Notes from the first meeting are here](#), and [the second meeting here](#). [Slides are also available](#). Thanks to everyone who attended and contributed to these rich discussions! We will continue to reflect on the issues and ideas raised, and seek community input.

Findings and Next Steps

After six years of work on this project we have found that the OER+SC project is an effective model for bridging classroom education and practice in the field. The legal permissions,



technical access, and community-driven connection built into open education remove significant barriers and facilitate more authentic connections. This bridge, which [has been identified](#) as a clear [need for the field](#), offers significant benefits for LIS students and faculty, for practitioners, and for the field's ongoing turn towards openness and inclusion.

In order to realize this opportunity, we have gathered and supported the development of a critical mass of open materials. With this community, we are cultivating a clear agenda for ongoing development that fills gaps in the existing corpus. We have seen significant interest in and uptake of these early materials. Blog posts sharing new resources have been met with enthusiastic responses and individual resources have been taken up and used in classrooms and in the field. In addition, the SCN itself has been used successfully in graduate courses, and we are launching wider use in three leading courses in the fall of 2023.

Finally, it is clear that this project will be sustainable if, and only if, it is taken up broadly by the LIS community. While we have been able to develop the core intellectual and technical infrastructure with support from IMLS, the SCN will only remain up to date and relevant if practitioners continue to draw from and add their own materials to the resource. Likewise, the resource will only be valuable if learners - both current students and those looking to stay up to date in the field - recognize the SCN as a valuable resource for their education. The SCN has the potential to refresh our understanding of this quickly-evolving field and to center the diverse set of approaches necessary for scholarly communication to live up to its highest goals. In order to set this virtuous cycle in motion several concrete steps must be completed.

Next Steps

The first, and perhaps most critical, step for this project will be to assure that the SCN is adopted broadly in classrooms across LIS. Faculty should be aware of and adopt the textbook in part or in full, as best-suits their pedagogical needs. Because it is openly-licensed, we hope that faculty instructors will be empowered to easily incorporate the parts that work for them and change or replace the pieces that do not. We are now developing plans for an online edition that will be free and include more graphical elements, as well as offering space for incorporating audio/video content and ancillary materials such as slide decks, quiz banks, and so forth. We are partnering with three leading scholarly communication instructors to pilot the textbook and share their own materials and approaches to using in their upcoming courses.

We are also encouraging them to explore the SCN to discover new resources as they are developed and to facilitate a model of open pedagogy that supports renewable assignments by developing materials that can be shared with their peers and act as a portfolio once they enter the job market. Libraries and library students have seen clear benefits from developing materials for the Notebook and we hope to share these examples and support wider adoption of these pedagogies going forward. We recently had an [ALISE Academy proposal accepted, for delivery](#)



[in Fall 2023](#), which will use the SCN as a model for teaching LIS faculty about open educational resources and practices.

In addition to this work focused on integration with LIS education, we also plan to support integration in practitioner training. The textbook and SCN can be significant resources for practitioners skilling up or adding scholarly communication responsibilities to their portfolio. We hope to raise awareness of this opportunity in professional venues in the coming year. We also intend to develop models for offering recognition and professional credit for developing materials for the SCN. We have already seen some expected reputational advantages to contributing a popular, high-quality resource, and we understand that those must be accompanied by more concrete incentives that are tied to professional advancement, recognition in the field, and so forth.

As we conclude this phase of our work, it is clear that library and information science needs open materials and open pedagogies. Open resources remove barriers of cost that make LIS less accessible and inclusive. Open practices and infrastructure can bridge classroom and practice work in ways that make the field more impactful and sustainable. We have clear evidence of successful use of open education in scholarly communication courses and will continue to expand that effort to a wider set of courses in the coming years. The field as a whole has a great opportunity to extend these benefits to other areas, from core courses such as reference and cataloging to emerging areas. We hope graduate programs, academic libraries, and academic institutions will take up this opportunity.

Finally, this work has taken a village of thoughtful, critical, generous, kind, and intelligent people. While we are at the helm of this community, we recognize and emphasize a majority of the content related to the project has been created or collected by the community of practice. We are and will remain deeply indebted to and appreciative of every contributor. We are proud to be a part of this awesome collective.

If you have suggestions, want to talk, or questions, please get in touch with us!

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