

## **Jerry P. White : Keynote for Scholarship Western : Journals**

### **Conference**

**Thank-you** for the invitation to speak. Today I want to look at 3 interconnected things. The first is the importance of OPEN ACCESS and what it really means. The second is the role of Scholarship Western in supporting our open access journals from The International Indigenous Policy Journal perspective. Lastly I want to talk about some of the actions we have taken to enhance our journal's readership and rankings.

Before I do that a thanks is due to some of those that have made our journal a success. Two of the working editors Meghan OHara and Emily Kring. Thank-you, Managing Editor Susan Wingert (who works out of Winnipeg and helped write this talk). We have an advisory board of 10 and an editorial board which stands at 32 senior academics, policy makers, and civil servants from Canada and around the world. Also thanks to SSHCC, INAC , the APRC(I) and individual

donors. As well scholarship Western and Western Libraries for their kind support.

### What is Open Access?

In the simplest terms Open Access is about returning scholarly publishing to its original purpose: knowledge dissemination and allowing that knowledge to be built upon. It makes little sense that price barriers would prevent researchers, government, students, NGOs ...anyone from accessing research that they need.

By open access we mean that there is no cost to accessing or reading publications. Ideally we also believe there should be no cost for researchers to publish. I will come back to that point.

The IIPJ is a completely open access journal. No one engaged from researchers to readers confront any impediments that have a price tag.

### Why does OPEN ACCESS make sense Why is it necessary?

There three basic reasons:

1. Anything less than open access means we are harming the research and teaching enterprise. We maintain that **research unshared is of no social value.** Without access, research dollars and some programs are a waste of time [**for example when research is duplicated.**] Also Research is a cornerstone for the best teaching programs not every teacher, lecturer and professor can pay the fees associated with keeping abreast.
2. Non- open access inadvertently perpetuates colonial relations because it is disproportionately the developing world that is impacted by cost barriers. This means developing countries have harder times building quality education institutions and better curricula
3. Lastly , The general public, communities, businesses and more deserve to have access to the knowledge that they in one way or another have invested in.

If for democratic reasons , or the furthering of scienceknowledge, or serving to build the developing world, OR paying back tax payers that cover the costs, helping students get a better education , helping professors teach ...**if all these don't move us to embrace OA** ... then self interest should :

In a study of 8 fields, sociology being one, the citation rate of articles in non-open access was **only 48% of the citation rate for OA** journals. So there is a direct benefit to University researchers seeking higher H-Indexes.

### **Charging Fees to Publish**

The recent trend toward charging publishing fees is, to me, a travesty. Traditional journals in some disciplines commonly charged per page (often \$100-250 each) andor per color figure (\$150-1000 each). , OA

journals typically charge a flat processing fee that can range from \$8 to as much as \$5000 (Cell Reports).

**This is nothing but a shift of the pay system from subscribers and libraries to researchers.** But it raises the issue of where the hell do we get the \$ to do our work?

**I propose that the State and institutions that are engaged in funding and/or knowledge dissemination split the advantage with us.** That research councils **build into Knowledge Dissemination competitive funding applications for quality OA journals.** That **libraries as they can reduce costs for print and high subscription journals make funding available for OA journals of high quality.** **And this is actually a segue.**

### **Scholarship Western**

Platforms like Scholarship Western are precisely the kind of support that has helped my Journal become as successful as it is. Make no mistake this is a tangible, in-kind support that makes it possible to do what we do. Scholarship Western is already in the forefront ...they

are splitting the difference with us... shifting resources to help OA journals.

Let me talk for just 5 more minutes on the attributes of this system.

The Scholarship @ Western platform has saved us an enormous amount of time and money compared with developing and maintaining our own platform.

1. It is very **user friendly** for both authors and editors.
2. **It maintains a paper trail through the publication process**, which would also be time consuming to do manually.
3. **Synchronizes access among different stakeholders** (e.g., editors, copy editors, peer reviewers, authors) so there are not multiple files floating around in different hands where they might be lost or mixed up. In this way they help with quality control.
4. **It streamlines communication** by putting those tools into the system.
5. **It is optimized for search engines, crawlers, rankings, etc.**

6. **Has tools for tracking dissemination built in (Altmetrics, download counts).**
7. **Adds credibility** to online journals by giving them a professional platform.
8. We get access to **expert technical support** and since it is shared it is more cost effective than hiring our own and finally
9. **Enables us to track statistics for funding and promotion.**

But while having a wonderful technology and platform is critical there are things that Journal teams have to do. Let me list a few that have resulted in what we feel is a real success for The Int Indig Policy Journal\*<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) You need to work hard to ensure those that measure impact are measuring you.

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<sup>1</sup> 73000 annual full-text downloads; over 230,000 lifetime; ranked #1 in the world by Google Scholar (H-5 index} for journals with Indigenous content .

- 2) You need to establish a **network of advisors and associate editors** that buy into the journals and help build it. This is difficult but the rewards are enormous PARTICULARLY the reputational ones . WE have 29 people ... Can, US, Russia, India, Northern Europe, Southern Europe central and south America and Australia-New Zealand .
- 3) You need to actively build a reviewer base. Ours has over 400 at this point. These are reviewers that we hunted down by specialty. **Note that you keep reviewers that perform you cut those that leave you hanging.**
- 4) You need to know where you are going. I believe it was Louis Carroll who said if you don't know where you are going any road will get you there. That will not work. We have an annual strategic plan and a tactical plan we review at 6 months to update the strategy on how to achieve it.
- 5) You need to start knowing you are no one ---you have no status no reputation --- you have to earn it. That comes with quality



reviews, quick turn-around ...we set 21 days for reviewers so we can get back to authors within 31 days ....3-5 months publishing guarantees from final acceptance on re-submission. That takes work and capital.

I would be happy to discuss the issues that we feel work together to create success. I am pleased to say we reached 70,000 verified full text downloads this year. We are ranked #1 by google scholar in their H5 Index for journals with Indigenous/Aboriginal content. I would say we are proud of our collective achievement but a better descriptor is "pretty tired"

So in closing, I believe we are working at the forefront of a needed sea-change in knowledge dissemination...it will be tough but it was only 15 years ago when I was told that I would never amount to anything if I published in ON LINE journals....

As Nobel Laureate Dylan says times they are a changing

Thank-you.

