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Publishing Open Access e-Journals: Leveraging an Outreach Opportunity

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1 IN THIS CHAPTER

Theme

Outreach & Assessment in developing publishing services

Highlighted Service

Journal hosting & management

Software/Platforms Utilized

Digital Commons by bepress

Resources

Example outreach

"A library, to modify the famous metaphor of Socrates, should be the delivery room for the birth of ideas, a place where history comes to life."
~ Norman Cousins[1]

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) Libraries began exploring the institutional repository (IR) landscape in 2009 with the intention of publishing electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs), journals, special collections, images, videos, sound files, or anything else that would fit a need for us. The hosted systems we examined were effective as either platforms for displaying special collections or platforms for managing publishing processes. However, we didn't find a system that did both of those things well. The existing open source platforms were capable of ingesting and effectively displaying a wider range of file types (including images files), but

these systems required technical staffing levels that we could not support. After assessing the different systems, the ability of our staff to support them, and the needs of our institution, we realized we would have to narrow our publishing scope and identify fewer goals for the hosted repository, and let those goals inform which platform to choose.[2]

Discussion

Informed by the SPARC research report *Library Publishing Services: Strategies for Success Research Report* (Mullins) finding that publishing services were a growth area for academic libraries, EKU librarians determined that journal hosting would provide the most valuable service for our campus community. Specifically, we identified a potential for increased faculty engagement, having been approached by several faculty members expressing interest in editing journals to host locally. This would provide our scholars with an opportunity to publish unique content and contribute high-quality peer-reviewed journals in niche areas of strength at EKU (such as Fire Science and Regional Engagement). Additionally, we identified local journal publishing as a way to disrupt the unsustainable journal publishing model and to contribute to the open access (OA) movement in the scholarly communication system.[3] We concluded that the future of academic libraries involved more than just serving as a "middleman" to the provision of content but rather as a participant in the production of scholarship.

> ## EKU librarians determined that journal hosting would provide the most valuable service for our campus community.

EKU Libraries did not have enough programmers on staff to support an open source solution, so bepress' Digital Commons was chosen. Built on a journal publishing platform, Digital Commons' ability to serve as a management tool for journal hosting was its primary benefit. Additionally, it could serve as a container for other potential collections of our repository: electronic theses, faculty scholarship, curated data, and limited archives materials.

After choosing the platform, we began the process of determining what needed to be communicated to potential journal publishers. There were three categories of editors: those who had expressed an interest in editing journals based at EKU, those who were editors for

Library Publishing Toolkit, ed. Allison P. Brown.
Geneseo: IDS Project Press, 2013.
http://opensuny.org/omp/index.php/IDSProject/catalog/book/25

print journals based at EKU, and those who were editors for journals not based at EKU. The following goals for communicating with these editors or potential editors were identified:

- Educate faculty about OA and the unsustainability of current scholarly communication models

- Inform faculty of the journal publishing tools in bepress

- Market the library as a host for the processes of production and distribution of information as opposed to simply a warehouse of published information

- Market librarians as partners in the scholarly communication process

- Market the repository as a tool for highlighting the scholarship of our institution and region, in line with the regional stewardship goals of EKU

- Convey the potential of the repository to allow EKU to make a unique contribution to OA digital scholarship

- Provide a forum for librarians and novice and experienced editors to share editorial knowledge, experience, ideas, and questions

Professional Learning Community

To achieve these goals, Dean of Libraries Carrie Cooper asked Edwards and Sizemore to design and lead a professional learning community (PLC). At EKU, PLCs are typically semester-long, active collaborative learning experiences with regularly structured scholarly activities leading to an end product such as a report or presentation.[4] A PLC can be ingrained in the infrastructure of an organization as a way of working together which results in continuous school improvement (Hord, 1997). EKU's professional learning communities are modeled on Peter Senge's description in *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (1990, p. 5), as spaces "where people continually expand their capacities to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together."

EKU's Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) has been using the approach of PLCs for several years as a means to address issues and challenges confronting EKU faculty and students.[5] In the fall of 2010, Dean Cooper approached the TLC about hosting a PLC on "Becoming a Successful Journal Editor." The TLC agreed to host it and to help subsidize refreshments for each session. In addition to providing financial support, they worked with Edwards and Sizemore to find ways to tie the PLC to the campus-wide Scholarship Week event scheduled later that year. Once details of the partnership with the Center were finalized, we focused on recruiting participants for the PLC.

Recruitment

Dean Cooper reached out to faculty members who had already approached her to express interest in either starting a new journal or transferring an existing journal to the Encompass

platform, and she simply invited them to participate in the PLC. The TLC also suggested additional faculty members, based on their conversations with faculty members who had discussed journal editing with them. Because the number of faculty members pre-identified already met the recommended number of participants for a PLC (8–12), we decided not to issue a campus-wide call for participants and instead focused on writing formal letters of invitation (see Appendix A) to the identified faculty members (as recommended by the TLC). The 12 faculty participants included Edwards and Sizemore, plus a mix of seasoned journal editors and faculty interested in becoming journal editors.

Curriculum

Instead of being didactic, the curriculum for the PLC was structured around active learning techniques where the leaders facilitated conversations. The goals of the PLC were to encourage discussion, exchange knowledge/information among participants, and expose participants to the newly acquired Digital Commons publishing platform, branded "Encompass" (http://encompass.eku.edu/).

Sizemore and Edwards selected a broad theme for each session that served as a launching pad for the discussion. They gave the participants opportunities to tailor the PLC to their interests, first by sending tentative session ideas to the participants for their review and feedback and later by spontaneously changing the theme of a session in order to address questions that were raised in a previous discussion. After feedback was received, a final schedule was developed and distributed to the participants (see Appendix B). The sessions were held in the spring of 2011.

For the sessions that did not feature guest speakers, the facilitators began with open-ended questions to prompt discussion (e.g., as an editor-in-chief who is also a faculty member with teaching and service responsibilities, how do you manage workflow with limited staff for a journal?). Additionally, participants came prepared with their own questions related to the topic at hand.

The sessions featuring guest speakers proved especially successful, as PLC participants appreciated engaging with experts in an intimate setting and exploring each topic in-depth:

1. The Journal Editor panel featured two editors of well-respected journals: Dr. Vic Kappeler, an editorial board member for *Criminal Justice Review*, a peer-reviewed scholarly journal focused on criminal justice issues in the United States, and George Brosi, the editor of *Appalachian Heritage*, a literary quarterly featuring creative writing and art of the Southern Appalachian region. The facilitators sent a brief list of questions about the process of editing and/or managing a journal to the guest editors in advance of the PLC so they would know what to expect (see Appendix C).

2. The Scholarly Communications session with Lee Van Orsdel, Dean of Libraries at Grand Valley State University and scholarly publishing expert and OA advocate, was integrated into the series of events planned for EKU's Scholarship Week. After presenting a campus-

wide lecture on the current state of scholarly publishing and the emergence of OA due to its importance in addressing the crisis in journal pricing (bit.ly/10132Ai), Van Orsdel met privately with PLC participants to discuss OA in more detail.

3. Lastly, Russell Helms, managing editor for *Jelly Bucket* and *Aurora,* two creative writing journals produced at EKU, shared tips on maximizing journal quality, and the "dirty business of running a journal." In addition to suggesting ways to attract quality submissions, he discussed the importance of paying attention to the design elements of a journal (logo, text design, use of color, etc.), as the visual elements of a journal are usually the first things a reader notices and thus will influence his or her opinion about the quality of the journal.

Outcomes

EKU Libraries considered the Journal Editor PLC a success because it inspired thoughtful conversation, opened new lines of communications with faculty, and led to the development of several locally hosted journals. Journals emanating from PLC group members include:

- *Kentucky Journal of Excellence in Teaching* (http://encompass.eku.edu/kjectl/)

- *PRISM: Journal of Regional Engagement* (http://encompass.eku.edu/prism/)

- *Journal of Military Experience* (http://encompass.eku.edu/jme/)

- *ninepatch: A Creative Journal of Women & Gender Studies* (http://encompass.eku.edu/ninepatch/)

- A forthcoming peer-reviewed journal: *JARFS: Journal of Applied Research in Fire Sciences*

> # [The program was] a success because it inspired thoughtful conversation, opened new lines of communications with faculty...

Participants who arrived feeling uncertain about where to start with journal editing left with insights into the practical responsibilities of editing and hosting a journal: time commitments, workflow design, article submission processes, copyediting, obtaining an ISSN, designing a logo, organizing the website, etc.

The PLC brought more awareness of the differences between publishing in print and publishing online and exposed some faculty to the concept of high-quality peer-reviewed OA online journals. Furthermore, it expanded the discussion about OA journals on campus and illuminated the debate between the humanities and sciences on the feasibility and importance of OA publishing. There were good "devil's advocates" in the group that enlivened the discussions of OA, particularly around the issue of creative works.

There were a few challenges. In the participant feedback forms only one participant felt that he did not learn new information. Scheduling was problematic: Several of the participants were not able to attend regularly due to time conflicts. Additionally, this was quite a large time commitment for librarians Edwards and Sizemore who planned and facilitated the PLC, and was challenging to fit the work in with regular job responsibilities.

After launching Encompass in 2011, it quickly became a popular destination for researchers. In its first year, the 2,453 items deposited in Encompass were downloaded 75,226 times (an average of 30.6 downloads per item). In 2013, the *Journal of Military Experience* was profiled in the *New York Times* (Simon, 2013). As of the writing of this report, the repository's sixth journal, *The Journal of Retracing Africa* (http://encompass.eku.edu/jora/), has started accepting submissions.

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Endnotes

[1] Shilling, p. 135.

[2] See Burns for a research study examining the costs and values of IRs, especially as they relate to the types of services offered and the size of the institution.

[3] Several studies have explored this. For example, see McGuigan, Waltham, and Ovadia.

[4] See http://www.tlc.eku.edu/professional-learning-communities and http://www.allthingsplc.info/about/evolution.php

[5] See http://www.tlc.eku.edu/faqs

Appendix A

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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EKU TEACHING & LEARNING CENTER

201 Keen Johnson
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, Kentucky 40475-3163
(859) 622-6519   Fax (859) 622-5018

Dear _____,

During the Spring 2011 semester, EKU Libraries and the Teaching & Learning Center (TLC) are offering a professional learning community (PLC), "Being a Successful Journal Editor." As facilitators of this community, we would like to extend an invitation to you to be a participant in this community because you are currently a journal editor or have expressed an interest in developing an online journal in EKU's institutional repository, Encompass.

Participants in the "Being a Successful Journal Editor" PLC will:
- Have an opportunity to engage in discussions about a new or existing journal
- Learn strategies related to creating a broader readership
- Discuss trends and issues related to scholarly communication and open access
- Learn how to host an online journal through Encompass, EKU's institutional repository.

The PLC facilitators will provide you with:
- Guided discussions
- Guest speakers
- Individualized assistance with your journal if hosted on Encompass
- Snacks.

We anticipate the PLC will meet 5-6 times on alternate Fridays during the spring semester for an hour each session.

Please email Laura Edwards at laura.edwards@eku.edu as to your interest and any questions you might have so we can start planning our professional learning community.

Sincerely,

Laura Edwards,
Electronic Resources Access Librarian

Linda Sizemore,
Government Documents & Law Library Team Leader

Hal Blythe, Co-Director
Teaching and Learning Center

Charlie Sweet, Co-Director
Teaching & Learning Center

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Appendix B

JOURNAL EDITOR PLC

SCHEDULE & SPECIAL EVENTS

FEBRUARY

2/4: INTRODUCTIONS/SHARE YOUR JOURNAL

SHARE YOUR JOURNAL AND ANY CHALLENGES YOU FACE AS AN EDITOR

DISCUSSION POINT: WHAT MAKES A GREAT JOURNAL

2/18: JOURNAL EDITOR PANEL DISCUSSION

PANELISTS: DR. VIC KAPPELER, EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBER FOR *CRIMINAL JUSTICE REVIEW*, AND GEORGE BROSI, EDITOR OF *APPALACHIAN HERITAGE*

DISCUSSION POINT: ROLE OF EDITORS AND EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

MARCH

3/4: DIRTY BUSINESS OF RUNNING A JOURNAL

DISCUSSION POINT: MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

3/18: SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS WITH SPECIAL GUEST LEE VAN ORSDEL

LEE VAN ORSDEL, DEAN OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES AT GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY AND MEMBER OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING AND ACADEMIC RESOURCES COALITION (SPARC), SPEAKS NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES.

TENTATIVE: 10 AM CAMPUS-WIDE PRESENTATION

TENTATIVE: DINNER WITH LEE, EITHER THURSDAY 3/17 OR FRIDAY 3/18

3/28 – 4/1: SCHOLARSHIP WEEK

3/28: ENCOMPASS & SELECTED WORKS (11:15 AM)

3/29: *BRAIN RULES* OF SCHOLARSHIP, BY BRAIN RULES AUTHOR JOHN MEDINA (12:30 PM)

(FOR MORE SCHOLARSHIP WEEK EVENTS, SEE HTTP://WWW.TLC.EKU.EDU/WORKSHOPS/)

APRIL

4/1: BROADENING YOUR READERSHIP

DISCUSSION POINT: STRATEGIES FOR WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF YOUR JOURNAL

The Faculty-Led, Library-Supported Journal

Appendix C

Questions for Journal Editor Panelists
February 18, 2011

◇ How authors choose a journal for their submission

◇ On multiple submissions of the same article to different journals

◇ How authors should write a cover letter

◇ How authors should prepare papers for submission

◇ How editors assign papers to referees

◇ How referees evaluate articles

◇ How editors make publication decisions

◇ How authors should interpret the feedback of the referees and editorial decisions

◇ How authors should prepare the resubmission cover letter and response

◇ The types of collaboration that are permitted in an individually authored article

◇ How/when should authors obtain copyright permissions

◇ How a paper presented in a conference or on the Internet might affect submission to a journal

◇ How authors should engage in proofreading/copyediting

◇ Behind the scenes in the editorial office: questions about liaison, deadlines, inquiries from authors etc.