

Against the Grain

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The Golden Age of the Green Ecosystem: A Color-Blind Perspective on Repositories

by **Micah Vandegrift** (Open Knowledge Librarian, North Carolina State University) <mlvandeg@ncsu.edu>

Plan S ruined everything. Coasting on the OSTP Memo and data skills training through various carpentries and sundry camps, we were all moving along nicely into a data managed future. Sure, we gave up on the SHARE v. CHORUS debate, which was understandable given that the commercial conglomerate publishers had all our money and ability to build a database (still in “beta” after 5 years?) and lobby our lawmakers more quickly and effectively than we ever could (“CHORUS Search,” n.d.). But even so, “public access” to research literature was happening, either covertly through SciHub or overtly through mirror journals, double dipping APCs, and institutional repositories. We had the OA tipping point to point to, after all (Kaiser, 2013). But, with those Europeans and their rush to be competitive in global innovation, all of a sudden we have to figure out how to achieve 100% open access in two-ish years. On top of this, we have the shifting (long overdue) recognition that scholarship is a global endeavor, and that a certain information analytics company is buying up the systems, platforms, and workflows to make an end-to-end scholar centipede of corporate knowledge (Rittman, 2018; Posada & Chen, 2018). Access for all!! (as long as you’re a Pepsi Scholar, not a Coke Scholar).

Star and **Ruhleder** wrote a thing a while back about an “Ecology of Infrastructure” (Star & Ruhleder, 1996). Not surprising in our anthropo-scenic moment of weather uncertainty and tech giantism, systemic environmental metaphors are back in vogue (Korten, 2015; Eichmann-Kalwara, 2018). In the U.S. especially, where our connection to our pristine landscapes invades all our deepest held ideals, discussions that had been peppered with nodes and hubs have evolved pretty quickly to conference panels rife with bio-organic titles. For good or ill, this lingo codeshift may underlie a paradigmatic shift that has allowed us to much more clearly see, trace, and feel the impacts from one end of the scholarly production industry on the other. **Elsevier’s** acquisition of Mendeley was one thing (who ACTUALLY uses Mendeley anyways?). Their acquisition of **bepress**, on which libraries had staked their “open” reputations, is another thing entirely. All of this is par for the course if you have been around libraries for any amount of time — consolidation is the bread and butter of information capitalism. But, from an early mid-career point of view in 2019, the OpenCon Generation relies on our patchwork of tools, systems, and platforms and we expect them to conform to our values and principles. To extend the metaphor, the health and biodiversity of the scholarly ecosystem is dependent on whatever happens next in the academy-owned, scholar-led, community-governed space, and Early Career Researchers from all disciplines are agitating for a more open, transparent

system (“Invest in Open Infrastructure,” n.d.; “ScholarLed – Open Access Presses,” n.d.; “Good Practice Principles for Scholarly Communication Services,” n.d.).

Repository land has had a difficult go of it. Despite the constant labor of working with researchers to identify opportunities for open interventions in their work and interpreting and translating cryptic publisher self-archiving policies, libraries invested deeply in the human (bio/organic + plus a soul!) infrastructure of repository managers/coordinators, scholarly communication librarians, and developers focused on customizing repository platforms to accommodate 6-36 month embargos, automagical workflows, and faceted search (Smart, 2019). Then, **Clifford Lynch**, the oracle of open, goes and flips the script by updating the agenda, such that “the linkage between journal article open access and institutional repository agendas has been a mistake, and one that has resounded to the detriment of both agendas” (Lynch, 2017). The collective professional gasp was echoed in the hallowed halls of **Florida State University Libraries** by a particular finger directed at a computer screen.

And yet, regardless of any oracular proclamations or new commandments, the short years since 2017 have seen a boom in pre-print archives, the meteoric rise of open educational resources, and the continued glut of things that don’t fit neatly in any category of yesterday’s scholarly output ending up online with DOIs, and probably often not peer reviewed (“OSF Preprints,” n.d.). The focus is subtly shifting away from access toward that other thing that libraries do really well — discovery (Chiarelli & Johnson, 2019). At the nexus of open discovery, Plan S, and the **Universities of California** going full ElseNope are two c-words we have generally avoided in InstiRepos: curation and collections. This feels like the moment scholarly communication is really, finally, wholly welcomed into the library org chart with open arms. What if institutional repositories act much less like buckets and much more like sponges?

Entertain a thought exercise, if you will. Assume, as is posited in COAR’s NextGen Repositories report, that what matters about the infrastructure that we build/support is standard behaviours and characteristics, rather than customization and differentiation (COAR Next Generation Repositories Working Group, 2017). Now, agreement on declaring licenses at the resource level can be a much lower barrier than choosing between DSpace, Islandora, or Samvera. Assume also that scholarly com-

munication and IR shops are past the awkward teenage phase, and nearing adulthood with all the attendant confidence and a bit more caution. The NextGen repository, then, is not guided by the summer crush of post-print embargoed content needs, but agitating toward a systemic/systematic evolution. It thinks of itself as a core information asset and data source for the library and the organization. Its sponge-like qualities include a deep appreciation for description and documentation, and holding lots more than appears on the surface because its very fabric is porous and holey, soaking in and squishing out protocols (ORCID), layers (web annotation model), and technical principles (batch discovery). In this scenario, the NextGen Repository is not an all seeing panopticon, but a cherubim, living, protecting, delivering, and caring for an evermore essential portion of the scholarly record.

Colleagues and researchers **Colin Nickels** and **Hilary Davis** propose a concept they titled “scaffolded publishing”

“whereby [a scholar] would submit an idea to a conference, get feedback to help develop the idea, then submit a journal manuscript or short-form book manuscript for publication as well as create a digital project or blog post that allowed them to explore other ways to express their scholarship” (Nickels & Davis, 2018). This idea, that many discrete things conjoin to become A Publication, dovetails very nicely with a post-green, sponge-like repository environment. Of course we will always collect Authors Accepted Manuscripts where folks supply them, but thinking of the institutional repository of tomorrow as support for scaffolded publishing frees it from the constraints of Open Access as defined by the Suberian/Harnadian debates of the early 2000s. The institutional repository doesn’t need to be driven by open access. It can function as a single cell in support of a more open scholarly ecosystem by facilitating the sharing and valuation of many new forms of scholarship (that just happen to be accessible online, clearly referenceable, licensed openly, and well documented and described).

Maybe, all said, Plan S didn’t ruin anything. As we await actual implementation of the policy, it is clear that the haranguing by the repository community, including **LIBER**, **ARL**, and that quirky **BOSTON STRONG** joint **MIT/Harvard** statement, has reignited the fervor of repo believers everywhere and caused some pause to be taken by ScienceEurope and friends (Bourg, Brand, Eow, Finnie, & Suber, 2019).

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It is also apparent that our colleagues on the faculty really want to share their work, be it green, grey, garnet or gold (Zhang & Watson, 2018). The recently released Periodic Table of the Open Research Ecosystem (pardon the shameless self-promotion) proposes that perhaps we're grown up enough to talk with more nuance about the spectrum of research production (Vandegrift & Vandegrift, 2019). Research documentation and shared scaffolded publishing objects are ripe for the pickin' even if the Published Work is plucked and potted in a walled garden. But, lets not forget that repositories are a red herring. The real green monsters are academic incentive structures and the glacial pace toward acceptance of public, digital, and open work as central to the scholarly record and therefore worthy of the tenure varsity jacket. Stay vigilant. Where we're going, we don't need commercial conglomerate publishers.

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Rumors from page 6

hear what the fantabulous **Mr. Mabe** has to say on Wednesday, November 6 from 4:25-5:25 in Grand Ballroom 2 of the Gaillard Center "EuroVision, Plan S Horizon Europe and More."

Voila! **The International Association for Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM)** has recently announced that its Board has appointed **Ian Moss** as the organization's new **Chief Executive Officer**. **Moss** who currently serves as Director of Public Affairs for the **British Phonographic Industry (BPI)** will take up the position in December 2019. **STM** is the leading global trade association for all involved in scholarly communications. **Moss** joins the organization at a particularly exciting time, as new publishing models are introduced which alter how researchers publish and share their work.

Is the monograph dead? I don't think so. The world's two biggest university presses, **Oxford University Press** and **Cambridge University Press**, have announced the results

of a joint, global survey into the future of the scholarly monograph. **Oxford** and **Cambridge University Presses** together carried out a large-scale survey over the summer. The survey was open to researchers in Humanities and Social Sciences at all stages of their careers and garnered almost 5,000 responses. The results have been released in a report entitled: **Researchers' perspectives on the purpose and value of the monograph**. Looking to the future, survey respondents at all stages of their careers declared that the monograph would still have value in ten years' time. However, they felt that experimentation and evolution would be necessary for it to remain relevant and useful, with a particular desire for improved access and discoverability.

<http://www.knowledgespeak.com/>

When did **Transformative Agreements** become "the new new" thing? Or is the new new thing canceling the "big deal"? Read about it on the **Copyright Clearance Center** website. The amazing **Jenn Goodrich** as Director of Product Management at CCC, leads the development and evolution of CCC's transactional licensing services as well as its

RightsLink for Scholarly Communications platform, an e-commerce platform that automates the payment and collection of article publication charges (APCs) for open access content. **A preconference on Tuesday** before the **Charleston Conference — Chaos or Complexity: Transforming Publishing Models in the Plan S era** is on my to-listen list! <http://www.copyright.com/blog/what-is-transformative-agreement/>

www.charlestonlibraryconference.com/https://sched.com/support/section/guide-for-attendees/

Did you know that **The Frankfurt Book Fair** has a New York office? I recently enjoyed meeting **Thomas Minkus** and **Michelle Claussen** from that office. **Michelle** will be attending the **Charleston Conference!**

<https://www.buchmesse.de/en>

The resourceful **Rebecca Seger**, formerly of **Oxford University Press**, has moved to **Ithaca S+R** as their **Vice President, Institutional Participation and Strategic Partnerships** as of September 30.

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