SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN CANADIAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

A PRESENTATION DELIVERED TO the folks at QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

APRIL 30, 2014
“Scholarly communication” is the process by which scholarship is produced, supported, managed, and communicated, and includes all those involved in supporting the life-cycle of scholarship.
STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To study the scope of SC activities within Canadian research libraries
- To understand the organizational structures in which SC plays a role
- To determine challenges and limitations
- To investigate best practices
- To explore future strategies
6 University Librarians

10 Associate University Librarians

12 Scholarly Communication Librarians / 1 Liaison Librarian
Today I will focus on 4 of the conversation topics

1. Organizational Structure
2. Advocacy & Promotion
3. Skills Development
4. Assessment
Organizational models

- Committees
- Teams
- SC Librarian
- Subject/Liaison Librarian (LL)
## Committees - examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ University Steering Committee</td>
<td>✓ Scholarly Communications Library Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Tri-Campus Scholarly Communication Committee</td>
<td>✓ OA Week Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Campus Library Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>✓ Campus Copyright Committees</td>
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<td>✓ OA Policy Working Groups</td>
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## Teams and SC librarians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>Scholarly Communication Librarian</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Often have specialized functions – SC, copyright, e-science, digitization</td>
<td>• Point person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Included varied expertise &amp; dedicated members</td>
<td>• Resident expert, keeps up with issues</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Are seen to work in isolation &amp; lack flexibility in membership</td>
<td>• Takes referrals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May be full-time, more commonly part of another position</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Growing tendency to broaden out to involve liaison role</td>
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Advocacy and Promotion

- Can often appear ad hoc. Look for opportunities.
- Take Dog and Pony show presentations to everyone senate, departments and council...
- OA week is big: *One big basket.*
- CL and AULs must be talking about issues at the upper levels.
- *Sneak the message in through other avenues...”* i.e. when educating about copyright, talk about author rights, creative commons, Open Access, and scholarly publishing.
Liaison Librarian as key advocate

- LLs are the face of the services
- LLs have a naturally close relationship to their departments
- LLs are asked to promote the issues and SC services.
Desire to strengthen the SC role of the LL

We may need a point person for SC but they cannot be only person who advocates. We need more individuals to see this as part of their role. We need SC to be written into the job description of all librarians.
Champions needed at the top too!

Our University Librarian is our champion. She is out there banging the drum at the higher level talking to deans, to VPs and other groups on campus. She is the big PR person. The rest of us just do not have the ear of people at the higher level.
Skills we need: The ISSUES

We need librarians:

- to be up-to date and informed
- to know the issues inside out
- to be ready to talk to faculty when they come with misinformation.
- to have confidence when speaking with faculty and
to know enough to actually be able to keep up a conversation

The devil is in the details
Skills we need: SOFT SKILLS

We need librarians who
- understand faculty & disciplinary differences
- have political acumen, & the ability to engage people in ways that make sense to them, make it seem like it is ‘their’ agenda
- are comfortable with the cold call
- confidence to speak up and the depth of knowledge to speak about it passionately.

We need people with
- Project management skills
- Trouble shooting skills
- Grounding in T&P practices within the disciplines

Staff are familiar enough to speak broadly about SC & OA but if there is a skill lacking it is the ability to present about those issues in a coherent and persuasive way.
New skills for new times

I wish our liaison librarians had more knowledge. They have so much on their plate but understanding the nuances, having a better grasp of the issues and more background would be great.

UL
Skills we need: TECHNICAL

- Data management, data curation, TDRs, data visualization, Meta data etc.
- Digitization Standards, METs, OCR
- Programming, systems & applications
- XML, UNIX, open source environments.

A computer science background is handy. But we don’t want our librarians to be programmers. At the very least, we need librarians who are able to communicate with the technical staff & converse with them in their terms.
Skills we need: PUBLISHING

We need librarians with

- Knowledge about the scholarly publishing process
- Knowledge around commercial publishing
- Understanding of the economic basis of the commercial publishing industry.
- Understanding the differences between the journals
- Knowledge about what researchers need to do when they are publishing an article
- Knowledge around the contract process and how academic editors behave
- Strong proofreading skills
Assessment

1. No
   - No need
   - We are too busy
   - It is too soon for true assessment

2. Just counts
   - We are doing a lot of tracking but have no hard targets...Hits, downloads, Google analytics

3. Focus on Qualitative Measures
   - Because things are just starting and growing organically, we find greater value in the qualitative at this point.

   - If we get 3 new journals hosted, are we successful?
   - We need to get a landscape view of who is doing what.
   - We need to agree on shared definitions and build Canadian benchmarks.
   - I’d be interested in know what others are doing.
Great ideas

1. Establish a University-wide committee to look at SC.
2. Place stories in standard university publications.
3. Use media outlets to advertise new journal but do not advertise OJS or IR.
4. Invite people who are publishing in OA journals to discuss the issues and get feedback.
5. Offer awards to grad students for OA publishing.
6. Talk to faculty all the time about their funding mandates (CIHR).
7. Target major research projects and departmental publications for the IR.
8. “Get out and talk to potential donors foundations, & socially motivated families They’ll immediately see the value of open.”
9. Advertise in the community.
Developing a community of practice

- We need to get ourselves in order. We are trying to help scholars communicate and we don’t even communicate with each other. AUL

- Why we are reinventing the wheel at every institution? Is it because we think we are special snowflakes? It is killing me. SC Librarian
Librarians participating in the research cycle

We emphasize research among our librarians and are developing our campus profile as researchers not just librarians. We hire “scholar librarians.” AUL

As each new librarian is hired, we articulate to them that research is an expectation and that we will find ways to support this work. AUL

“Librarian as researcher” needs to be emphasized if we want to be taken more seriously in the academy. UL

Librarians need to be scholarly. It is hard for librarians to speak to faculty about their publications if they have no personal experience in it. AUL

Are you conducting research?
