

**Consultation on the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences**

**“Open Access and the ASPP: Draft Policy Position” [May 2014]**

**Response from the Ontario Council of University Libraries**

Submitted to: [consultation@ideas-idees.ca](mailto:consultation@ideas-idees.ca)

September 17, 2014

The Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) (<http://www.ocul.on.ca>) supports the initiative of the Federation to embrace Open Access. This policy has the potential to simultaneously improve the reach of Canadian scholarship, and to build capacity amongst Canadian presses. Given the fragility of the Canadian scholarly publishing industry, supporting monograph publishing is critical to a successful transition to an Open Access environment.

The policy appropriately recognizes the importance of OA for scholarly monograph publishing but does not mandate it. Acceptance of scholarly e-books is evolving, and has been much slower than for e-journals. The Federation’s role in building critical mass may be key to scholars’ acceptance, both as authors and as peers assessing career contributions.

We present the following eight recommendations for your consideration.

Embargo

*“To qualify for the incentive, books will have to become Open Access within 12 months of publication”*

1. We acknowledge that a 12-month embargo is likely required in order for this program to proceed. We are concerned, however, that an incentive which presumes traditional publisher revenue streams as a given is less likely to support publishers in implementing transformative change which will ensure their long-term viability.

OA publishing models vary. We encourage the ASPP program to go beyond a simple “open” vs. “closed” to reward innovative digital OA publishing. This will assist the ASPP Publications Committee in assessing the quality of the OA model, in addition to the quality of the book’s scholarship. E.g.:

- Set minimum OA standards and preferable formats (e.g. pdf/HTML; no DRM restrictions)
- Require that the final publisher version (after peer review, editing, copy editing) is the version of record and be made OA
- Encourage publishers to experiment by funding a variety of OA business models (e.g. “freemium”)

- Consider revising the “eligible works” criteria<sup>1</sup> to fund shorter books (more common in an OA environment? Librarians are definitely seeing a growing number of shorter e-books being published.)

#### Beyond Individual Financial Incentives ... to Transforming Infrastructure?

*“There will be a limited number of Open Access incentives available per year, with priority determined by the scores received from the ASPP Publications Committee”*

2. A book-by-book approach to OA provides financial support for a limited number of books each year, but does not address the need for a large-scale Open Access publishing infrastructure. Could we explore innovative university/library/publisher partnerships to meet our shared goal of a robust Canadian scholarly publishing ecosystem? It is clear that, when we discuss funding individual titles, the parties do not even have a clear, shared understanding of the economics involved in publishing a book. As the ACUP report<sup>2</sup> clearly demonstrates, there are “a very wide range of costs” associated with publishing a scholarly monograph in Canada, and no “average cost to publish a ‘standard’ monograph.” Perhaps it is time to focus on supporting infrastructure improvements rather than individual title support.

Some examples of current transformative infrastructure approaches are:

#### **Scholars Portal** (<http://www.scholarsportal.info/>)

A service of OCUL, Scholars Portal (SP) is a proven access platform for books and journals, and a Trusted Digital Repository (TDR) for journals. OCUL is actively engaged in increasing the Canadian content hosted on Scholars Portal. Under a current agreement, for example, we load all of the e-books published by the members of the Association of Canadian University Presses (ACUP), whether they are OA or not, and Scholars Portal is the *only* access platform in Canada for this complete material. (<http://ocul.on.ca/node/1650>). The OCUL Directors are always interested in exploring the opportunity to enhance the SP collection with additional Canadian publications and to provide Open Access where it is permitted.

#### **Open Library of Humanities** (<https://www.openlibhums.org/>)

With a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and modest grants from 2 UK universities, the OLH hired software developers to create a platform. In the pilot, the goal is to publish 250 articles and 12 books (buying certain services from established publishers like OUP) and the cost (\$350,000) would be shared by libraries. The more participants, the lower the cost to each.

---

<sup>1</sup> Federation [Guidelines](#) “The minimum length of eligible works is 40,000 words, including references.”

<sup>2</sup> Monograph Publishing in an Open Access Context: A review for the Association of Canadian University Presses, January 2014 <http://www.acup.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/ACUP-report-open-access.pdf> [pp 18-19]

**Open Edition** (Books <http://books.openedition.org/obp/513>; Premium model <http://www.openedition.org/8873?lang=en>)

**PKP's Open Monograph Press** (<https://pkp.sfu.ca/omp/> )

An open source software platform for managing the editorial workflow, OMP can also operate as a press website with catalog, distribution, and sales capacities.

**Campus OA Funds in Action** (<http://bit.ly/1pVpegU>)

There is potential to extend current Campus/Library OA funds to support the ASPP OA initiative.

### Copyright/Licensing

*"The Federation will not require any particular type of copyright licencing for ASPP-funded books that are published Open Access, but generally encourages publishers to adopt the most flexible licence possible."*

3. We strongly urge the Federation to adopt a Creative Commons (CC) approach to licensing.

CC is a globally accepted and used standard. CC licenses support the goals of the Berlin Declaration to which the policy refers, and would take advantage of a best practice in the OA community. Mandating the use of an established Creative Commons scheme would serve the interests of publishers, authors and readers. Using CC licenses would save publishers' resources which would otherwise go into creating their own ad hoc licenses; would help ensure clarity and reliability regarding authors' rights and content reuse by readers.

Librarians deal with a myriad of licensing schema. It is our view that publisher-specific licenses lead to increased complexity and confusion in an already complex landscape. Such licenses are often difficult to understand and can obfuscate the actual reuse permissions. Earlier this year, for example, the Global Coalition of Access to Research, Science and Education Organizations called on the International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers (STM)<sup>3</sup> to withdraw its proposed model licenses for these reasons<sup>4</sup>

### Discoverability/Preservation

*"Recognizing that, in general, publishers prefer to host Open Access titles on their own websites, ASPP-funded titles will not be required to be placed in any particular repository,*

---

<sup>3</sup> STM (International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers) Model OA Licenses <http://www.stm-assoc.org/open-access-licensing/>

<sup>4</sup> PLoS Blog. August 7, 2014. <http://www.plos.org/global-coalition-of-access-to-research-science-and-education-organizations-calls-on-stm-to-withdraw-new-model-licenses/>

*but the Open Access version of the book should be easily found via an internet search, and the Federation may also host links on its website.”*

4. The policy should encourage the deposit of OA books in as many repositories as possible to facilitate access and use, and deposit in at least one repository which meets the Federation’s minimum standards (permanent links and reliable access). Scholars Portal should be one such option.
5. High quality metadata (e.g. author, title, publisher, ISBN) make OA books visible, discoverable and usable. Federation standards should support the use of persistent digital identifiers and existing/emerging standards<sup>5</sup>. For example:

**ISBN:** If a digital publication is available in more than one format (e.g. EPUB, .pdf), each should have its own ISBN; If it is available in the same format but with different usage rights then each of the different usage rights should be identified by a separate ISBN<sup>6</sup>

**DOIs<sup>7</sup> (Digital Object Identifiers):** should be assigned at the book and chapter level

**ORCID ID<sup>8</sup> (Open Researcher and Contributor ID):** for authors

6. Preservation (access for future researchers) differs significantly from providing immediate access to digital scholarship. Given that publisher websites come and go, we need a more robust approach to preservation. Scholars Portal was the first Canadian repository to be certified as a “Trusted Digital Repository” for journal articles [<http://www.ocul.on.ca/node/1637>] and is committed to achieving this status as a book repository. Long-term preservation of Canadian scholarly publications is critical to future researchers. We urge the Federation to think ahead to address long term preservation, possibly in collaboration with the Canadian academic library community.

### Final Recommendations

7. Trial Period: Implementing an OA policy for a limited trial period [3 years] would provide time to assess the program and allow for Canada’s scholarly presses to continue innovating and developing capacity as digital publishers.
8. Assessment: The Federation should consider both the impact of individual books and an assessment of the OA business model under which the monograph is supported.

---

<sup>5</sup> Book Industry Study Group (BISG). BISG Policy Statement POL-1101. Best Practices for Identifying Digital Products. Revised February 25, 2013 [https://www.bisg.org/docs/BISG\\_Policy\\_1101.pdf](https://www.bisg.org/docs/BISG_Policy_1101.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.doi.org/factsheets/ISBN-A.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.doi.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://orcid.org>

This would provide a pool of Canadian evidence to inform future policies and initiatives.

Assessment should include traditional impact measures (e.g. citations, book reviews) as well as emerging “altmetrics<sup>9</sup>” which attempt to assess impact with criteria such as “usage” (clicks, downloads, views, library holdings), “captures”(bookmarks, favourites), and social media “conversations” (blog posts, +1s, likes, shares, Tweets). Altmetrics for ebooks are in their infancy, but possible altmetric tools could include: Altmetric <http://altmetric.com>, Plum Analytics (<http://www.plumanalytics.com/>), Impact Story (<https://impactstory.org/>), and Topsy <http://topsy.com/>.

### About OCUL

The Ontario Council of University Libraries is a consortium of the twenty-one university libraries in Ontario. Established in 1967, OCUL’s mission is to collaborate in the development and delivery of enhanced, innovative, and effective information services and resources for Ontario's universities. OCUL members serve a population of more than 450,000 students. OCUL actively supports a dynamic Canadian scholarly publishing sector. In addition to the eBound Canada and ACUP/ APUC deal previously mentioned, at a broader level, Ontario university libraries support transformative approaches to production and delivery of digital born content by participating in initiatives such as the Open Library of Humanities and Knowledge Unlatched.

### More Information

Contact **Kathy Scardellato**, Executive Director, OCUL  
416-946-0578 [kathy.scardellato@ocul.on.ca](mailto:kathy.scardellato@ocul.on.ca)  
<http://www.ocul.on.ca>

---

<sup>9</sup> Altmetrics Manifesto: <http://altmetrics.org/manifesto/>