



The Potential of Library Publishing Services to Transform Scholarly Communication in Ireland

Johannah Duffy

Abstract:

Libraries need to move beyond traditional roles of purchasing and distributing scholarly literature, librarians need to strategically position themselves and take ownership of improving access. As a direct result of Covid-19, there is a new level of urgency to transform the scholarly communication process and there are enormous opportunities for an expanded and inclusive library publishing service which addresses access to knowledge and literature. This rich discussion will stimulate the drive to make library publishing a mainstream service within Irish libraries.

The purpose of this study is to provide a vision for how academic libraries can assume a more central role in a future where open access (OA) publishing has become the predominant model for disseminating scholarly research. This work will analyse existing trends related to Open Access policies and publishing with an emphasis on the development of repositories managed by libraries to publish and disseminate articles. These trends, coupled with emerging economic realities, will create an environment where libraries' will assume a major role in the Open Access publishing environment. This paper will provide an insight for academic libraries and their institutions to consider a dramatic shift in the deployment of subscription financial resources from a largely closed scholarly communication system to one that provides open, unrestricted access to research.

Given the importance of scholarly publishing, a number of Irish Third level libraries have launched library publishing services including the establishment and management of high quality library published peer-reviewed open access journals and Open Educational Resources to support formal and informal scholarly communication. Librarians are also upskilling in the area of library publishing. A number of Irish Librarians have completed the Library Publishing Coalition's Library Publishing Curriculum. There is also the Library Publishing Group as part of the Library Association of Ireland. This work aims to identify and examine the factors of library publishing services that facilitate scholarly communication. The clear message from this discussion is that libraries need to include publishing in their services, advocate for open access and serve their communities and societies.

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The Potential of Library Publishing Services to Transform Scholarly Communication in Ireland

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ABSTRACT

Libraries need to move beyond traditional roles of purchasing and distributing scholarly literature, librarians need to strategically position themselves and take ownership of improving access. As a direct result of Covid-19, there is a new level of urgency to transform the scholarly communication process and there are enormous opportunities for an expanded and inclusive library publishing service which addresses access to knowledge and literature. This rich discussion will stimulate the drive to make library publishing a mainstream service within Irish libraries.

The purpose of this study is to provide a vision for how academic libraries can assume a more central role in a future where open access (OA) publishing has become the predominant model for disseminating scholarly research. This work will analyse existing trends related to Open Access policies and publishing with an emphasis on the development of repositories managed by libraries to publish and disseminate articles. These trends, coupled with emerging economic realities, will create an environment where libraries' will assume a major role in the Open Access publishing environment. This paper will provide an insight for academic libraries and their institutions to consider a dramatic shift in the deployment of subscription financial resources from a largely closed scholarly communication system to one that provides open, unrestricted access to research.

Given the importance of scholarly publishing, a number of Irish Third level libraries have launched library publishing services including the establishment and management of high quality library published peer-reviewed open access journals and Open Educational Resources to support formal and informal scholarly communication. Librarians are also upskilling in the area of library publishing. A number of Irish Librarians have completed the Library Publishing Coalition's Library Publishing Curriculum. There is also the Library Publishing Group as part of the Library Association of Ireland. This work aims to identify and examine the factors of library publishing services that facilitate scholarly communication. The clear message from this discussion is that libraries need to include publishing in their services, advocate for open access and serve their communities and societies.

INTRODUCTION

The future for Irish academic libraries is open in terms of being catalysts for Open Access (OA) to the scholarship created by our institutions. This vision for the future is predicated on our profession's track record of advocacy for opening up access to research outputs that are freely accessible online with full reuse rights. Our fundamental role as librarians is to remove barriers to the free exchange of information and transform the landscape of scholarly communications through building institutional repositories, publishing OA journals, hosting Open Educational Resources, facilitating access to research data, and advocating for the passage of OA policies. Many of these activities fall under the emerging field of library publishing, which will be a fundamental role for many Irish academic libraries in an OA future.

The main patronage of scholarly literature are research libraries which have always provided essential economic support for sustaining the market of academic publishing. With the switch to open access (OA), libraries are now faced with transitioning this support from the demand (subscriptions) to the supply (publications) side. The way in which this is currently done, in general, "risks strengthening the preponderance of the for-profit approach to scholarly communication. We therefore believe that it is essential to apply library budgets to foster a greater diversity". (Verbeke, D. and Mesotten, L., 2022, p.1.). The future posits that academic libraries will claim a much more central role in OA publishing. This role will be enhanced by current and future trends in OA policies and publishing that play to the strengths of library publishing's focus on OA dissemination accompanied by economic models that are not motivated by profit-making. While funding agencies in Ireland, and across the EU such as Plan S and cOAlition S, today are moving toward requiring OA of outputs of the research they fund, some tend to favour "gold" or "green" methods. Gold OA makes the content immediately accessible but unsubsidized journals often charge authors Article Processing Charges (APCs). Green OA typically involves publication in subscription journals and deposits a version in an OA repository that is often subject to a publisher embargo that delays access to the open version. These developments will leave library publishers well -positioned to provide immediate OA outlets, including repository-based platforms, that can be both academically rigorous (peer-reviewed) and economically attractive.

IRISH LANDSCAPE

As academic libraries continue to seek ways to support OA we see endeavours by institutional repositories such as Technological University of Dublin's Arrow@TUDublin, Dublin City University's DORAS, Maynooth University's MURAL, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland's Repository, Atlantic Technological University's Research@Thea and Trinity College Dublin's TARA, many of which are also building innovative library publishing services as they seek to become disseminators of scholarly communication in ways that transcend the traditional roles of acquiring information for users that is produced by publishers. The Library Publishing Coalition (LPC) defines library publishing as "the set of activities led by college and university libraries to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and educational works". (Tracy, D. G. 2017, p. 219).

Generally, library publishing requires a production process, presents original work not previously made available, and applies a level of certification to the content published, whether through peer review or extension of the institutional brand.

Based on core library values and building on the traditional skills of librarians, it is distinguished from other publishing fields by a preference for OA dissemination and a willingness to embrace informal and experimental forms of scholarly communication and to challenge the status quo. (Library Publishing Directory, 2014).

To the greatest extent possible, scholarly and scientific publishing should take advantage of new technologies and business models to make the fruits of scientific research universally available to anyone with an Internet connection, preferably at no charge to the reader. Given new technologies, rising costs for certain scholarly publications, and shrinking library budgets, it is no surprise that librarians might consider taking up publishing themselves, in an attempt to remedy the situation. (Okerson and O'Donnell 1995).

Irish third level institutions provide specialist education in such fields as art and design, medicine, business studies, rural development, theology, music and law and have considerable expertise in developing Open Access to publicly funded research, aligned with international policies and initiatives, and are now seeking to strengthen their approach to support international developments on Open Science led by the European Commission, Science Europe and other international agencies.

The Irish Open Access landscape favours the 'Green' approach to Open Access. This was outlined in Ireland's National Principles on Open Access formulated by a committee of Irish research organisations and has stressed the importance of depositing the correct versions of research papers in the researchers' local repositories.

“Open Access adds value to research, to the economy and to society. The outputs from publicly funded research should be publicly available to researchers, but also to potential users in education, business, charitable and public sectors, and to the general public. (National Principles for Open Access Policy Statement, 2012).

The National Open Research Forum (NORF) founded in 2017 is funded by the Irish Department of Further and Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Science and aims to inform the research community, and the public about open access and to ensure all researchers in the country are able to make their work openly accessible, through at least one open access repository. It also aspires to support the evolution of a state-of-the-art and all-inclusive national open access infrastructure. Ireland's national ambitions for open research have been outlined in the National Framework on the Transition to an Open Research Environment (NORF, 2019), launched by the Government of Ireland in July 2019. The National Framework consists of 28 objectives across five strategic areas: open access to research publications; enabling FAIR research data; infrastructures for access to and preservation of research; skills and competencies; and incentives and rewards.

Progress in the area of open access to research publications has been demonstrated by a steady growth in repository-based OA and an increase in publisher-mediated OA from 2015 onwards. While the National Framework set a target of OA for all publicly funded research from

2020 onwards, current estimates of OA at the national level are in the range of 47-54%. Initiatives supporting the growth and uptake of Open Access have included a growing number of IReL a consortium of Irish research libraries, transformative agreements, the commencement of Plan S (supported by Science Foundation Ireland and the Irish Research Council and other funding agencies), support for local and international OA initiatives including OA repositories at each of our Higher Education Institutes, and ongoing developments in the repository landscape.

Some key challenges identified in relation to OA include:

- A need for further analysis to set clear baselines and appropriate domain targets for open access, including establishing criteria for monitoring OA at the national level.
- In relation to repositories, a key challenge will be to bring all repositories up to a minimum level to support evolving OA requirements (e.g. Plan S technical requirements) and to standardise metadata in line with international initiatives (cOAlition S, 2019).
- Other challenges include equity of choice in open access publishing and a need to understand varied publishing practices across disciplines.
- Lack of preservation policies and infrastructure to support sustainable access to scholarly communications output (NORF, 2019).

THE SCHOLARLY COMMUNITY

Vibrant scholarly communities are sustained by publishing outlets that allow researchers to address diverse audiences. While attention is often focused on international publication, much of Library publishing work is supported by publications that address national and regional audiences in their own languages. The importance of bibliodiversity to sustaining knowledge ecosystems and ensuring that the transition to an open future continues to support the creation of situated knowledge is essential.

Larger publishing companies control most publishing at the international level. Their leading position in this market is reflected by the esteem they are held in academia. Many of their imprints are prestigious and highly rated in research evaluation processes. Nevertheless, they only represent a fraction of the publications needed for the production and use of new knowledge in research and education, as well as in cultural and societal life.

The diversity of academic content provided by Library Publishing, both at the national and international level is essential for preserving research in a wide range of global and local topics, inspired by various schools of thought and expressed in a variety of languages. These ideas are closely related to the principles of the Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication: we need to support the dissemination of research results for the full benefit of society; protect national infrastructures for publishing locally relevant research; and promote language diversity in research assessment, evaluation, and funding systems. (Helsinki Initiative on Multilingualism, 2019)

Library publishing can be locally relevant, because it deals with research issues that concern the nearest geographical, social or cultural context. In this sense, the research carried out has a clear mission to contribute to solving problems, thus producing societal impact. It must be communicated in regional or national languages to reach its natural readers and contribute to the expected impact of the research.

Although many of today's institutional repositories are based on hosting manuscripts of articles that are published in subscription journals, there is an increased desire by the research community that Irish repositories will also focus on making original articles and related data accessible. In this process, the boundaries in the current dialectic of Green and Gold OA will become blurred. Researchers will be motivated to publish their content through repositories as their perspectives become more article/data-centric, and less compelled by publication in specific journals. Another advantage that library publishers will have over commercial publishers is a willingness to "publish" the complete work of a scholar across her or his career at an institution—data, white papers, technical reports, presentations, etc. This allows a scholar and their institution to more easily track the full impact of research but it also positions libraries to fully document the work of influential scholars (Zidane, P et Al. 2022).

The need to build relationships with faculty researchers and the research community is pivotal in this regard. The advocacy work of libraries for OA publication and leveraging relationships are a strategic investment in an OA future. For librarians, the notion of continuity in the midst of change is a perennial theme that both worries and invigorates the profession. It is clear that librarians are beginning to think about relationship building with the wider research community. They are recognizing it as an important component of their duties, and some are making tangible efforts to approach it in a more programmatic fashion. The quickest ways to ruin a relationship and damage a reputation, either by librarians or faculty, are to neglect key deadlines, fail to return e-mails, or not supply agreed-upon deliverables. Both librarians and faculty members place value on the importance of good two-way communication.

Some key questions Librarians need to ask themselves throughout their library publishing quest:

1. Do you purposely and systematically set out to build relationships with faculty members?
2. What are your relationship-building strategies?
3. What has changed in your work as a liaison since you started in libraries?
4. How do you know you are successful when reaching out to your departmental faculty?

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The origins of the Library Publishing Group, Library Association of Ireland can be traced to Jane Buggle and Marie O Neill of the Institute of Art, Design + Technology Library who represented Ireland at the inaugural IFLA Special Interest Group on Library Publishing Midterm Meeting held in Dublin, Ireland in Feb/March 2019, They also presented at the Library Publishing Special Interest Group Midterm Meeting held in Oslo in March 2020.

Along with likeminded Irish Library Publishing advocates, from across the country, the LPG was formed in February 2020. It is affiliated to the Library Publishing Coalition based in the United States and the IFLA Library Publishing Special Interest Group and its mission is to support and expand the library publishing culture in Ireland. Activities include teaching, sharing best practice and fostering and developing networks and communities within Ireland and internationally.

The Library Publishing Group aims:

- To raise awareness of the Library Publishing movement in Ireland.
- To disseminate information on the latest developments within the Library publishing sector nationally and internationally.
- To promote academic writing and publishing activity amongst library staff providing a variety of relevant supports to facilitate this, including knowledge-sharing events, workshops and mentoring.
- To mentor new library publishers and to showcase library publishing initiatives and successes in Ireland.
- To forge links between open access and institutional publishing presses and libraries.
- To liaise with relevant agencies such as the Library Publishing Coalition, the IFLA Special Interest Group on Library Publishing, PKP and other key organisations.
- To promote and teach the Library Publishing Curriculum to Group members and across the library sector (Ibid).

Its vision is: “to create an active and inclusive community of practice for library publishing in Ireland”. To this end, the first digital Directory of Irish Publishers was launched on Bloomsday (16 June) 2023 by Publish OA Ireland. Publish OA was created in response to the Irish government’s target of achieving 100% open access to publicly funded scholarly publications by 2030 and is funded by the National Open Research Forum (NORF). The project will run until November 2024; its key objective is to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a national OA platform for journals and books for Ireland.

Furthermore, Institutions and organisations in the Irish educational landscape are starting to perceive the use and creation of Open Educational Resources as consistent with their values, experiences, and needs and are developing partnerships in support of the creation and publication of OER (Bell, 2018, Cronin, 2017). These are “teaching, learning and research materials that make use of appropriate tools, such as open licensing, to permit their free reuse, continuous improvement and repurposing by others for educational purposes” (Miao et al., 2019, p. 9). The 2002 UNESCO Forum definition of OER as “technology-enabled, open provision of educational resources for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes” helped fuel the proliferation of OER (Hess et al., 2016, p. 129). Initiatives like the University of Galway’s OER project in 2021, provided funding of 10 impactful and innovative OER projects throughout the university. This project created OERs that are now used in teaching and research in the University of Galway and further afield.

Academic libraries are now among the organisations advocating for OER, often playing a key role in education, advocacy, and support of their creation and publication. Publication of OER resonates with the role of the academic library (Bell, 2018). Historically, library patrons have copied, annotated, and otherwise interacted with library resources in ways homogeneous to the 5Rs some consider definitive of OER (Wiley & Hilton, 2018). Contextualizing the academic library’s role in supporting and publishing OER, Anderson et al. (2019) found publication of OER to be a continuation of the academic library’s role in “embracing open and accessible information sources for users” (p. 2). Hess et al. (2016) suggested academic library publishing of OER can provide a bridge between formal and informal learners, helping facilitate “inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all” (Miao, 2019, p. v). Academic libraries, which are libraries intentionally aligned with a specific institution of higher education, are entering the OER publishing arena for a variety of reasons. These reasons include existence of already established

publishing infrastructure in academic libraries, perceived alignment of academic library mission with OER, institutional reputation, and as a response to commercial publishing (Sandy et al., 2018). Librarians have the know-how to navigate the increasing number of repositories and platforms hosting OER to help instructors find suitable, quality course materials (Hess et al., 2016). Just as academic libraries have historically helped users “with their unmet information needs” (Hawkins, 2019, p. 4), academic libraries are able to address unmet publication needs. Academic libraries are unrestricted by the need to appeal to a commercial audience, a characteristic that frees them to publish high-quality content despite unconventional subject matter, limited readership, or logistical publication challenges (Sandy et al., 2018). Increasing cost and access restrictions have “encouraged libraries to explore alternative options for sharing scholarly research” (Sandy et al., 2018, p. 339). Academic library publishing is becoming acceptable and recognized as an alternative to challenges associated with traditional methods for the publication of scholarly communication. The UNESCO Guidelines on the Development of Open Educational Resources Policies identified “equity, inclusion, collaboration and respect for diversity” (Miao et al., 2019 p. v) as values core to the development and use of OER; academic library publishing of OER seeks to address these needs.

CONCLUSION

In practice, library publishing faces challenges in funding, scale and training. It requires funding for its operations, including infrastructure, training, legal and marketing support. (Lai Ma, et al. p.4). However, Demmy Verbeke and Laura Mesotten provided a possible solution to this at the United Kingdom Series Group Conference in 2022, current expenses on subscriptions and transformative agreements can be repurposed to develop a scholar led publishing and research infrastructure, they also reported the development of a publishing programme at the Leuven University Press with less than 1% of the library budget. By switching to library publishing or scholar-led publishing, institutes can possibly save money in the long run. The future is bright; library publishing provides an important way to lead ourselves into that open future to increase the positive impact of libraries on scholarly communication.

OA and library publishing share an intertwined future, by shifting our approach from being consumers of information to becoming disseminators of scholarship, we can navigate the changing landscape in which OA will become the default method for distributing the outputs of research. In the process, we will provide our faculty and other scholars with publishing services that fully support OA in ways that are economically feasible.

Building the personnel skill sets and economic and technological infrastructure of this service model are only one part of the equation. We must also continue to act as advocates for scholars to embrace new open modes of scholarship. (Cronin, 2017)

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