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# 12 | **Publishing Pedagogy: The Institutional Repository as Training Ground for a New Breed of Academic Journal Editors**

*Catherine Mitchell and Lisa Schiff*

Institutional repositories are not just places to put stuff. While they often play an important role in establishing the archive of research associated with an institution (especially in the setting of open access policies), they also can provide a platform for transformative publishing practices and the educational opportunities embedded therein. The University of California's institutional repository (eScholarship) has, since its inception in 2002, provided open access publishing services for journals affiliated with faculty across all 10 University of California (UC) campuses. Spanning disciplines as diverse as emergency medicine, Italian studies, biogeography, and comparative psychology (to name a few), the eScholarship journals program has burgeoned as faculty have grown increasingly engaged in questions of access, editorial autonomy, and audience—and have thus sought to reclaim control of the journals they manage. Not surprisingly, this interest in new journal publishing models has similarly taken hold—often in advance of faculty initiatives—among UC's graduate and undergraduate students whose academic experience is increasingly steeped in an awareness of the political and financial implications of traditional scholarly publishing practices and the possibilities offered by new models.

For the past decade, eScholarship has provided publishing services for UC faculty and students interested in starting open access journals or transitioning extant journals from print to digital open access. The drivers for the establishment of these publications are often both professional and pragmatic. Particularly among graduate students, there is a great deal of

interest in working at the helm of a scholarly journal as a means of developing both editorial skills and academic bona fides (Dunlap, 2006; Hopwood, 2010; Lemke, Lehr, & Calvoz, 2014; Thomson, Byrom, Robinson, & Russell, 2010). In the case of print journals, there is often an economic imperative to move to digital publication as plummeting subscription rates (Fischer & Steiner, 2013) threaten the viability of poorly resourced student publishing efforts. As the long-established model of academic publishing begins to unravel and reconstitute itself in any number of new forms, those involved in the process of publishing are becoming, by necessity, increasingly concerned with issues of legitimacy, value, and cost. Needless to say, it is crucial to encourage students to consider these complex and far-reaching issues as they embark on their own early contributions to this domain.

This chapter will explore the role of the institutional repository as both an explicit pedagogical prompt and a necessary piece of infrastructure for supporting the larger enterprise of student education, particularly the academic training of future scholarly journal editors. We will focus our discussion on the ways in which IR-supported student journals provide a forum for engaging students in important discussions about the thorny scholarly communication issues they are likely to encounter as they progress in their academic careers. Particularly as the scholarly publishing model shifts toward open access, students are likely to encounter complex and often spirited discussions within their disciplines about copyright and licenses, the quality/nature of peer review, submission guidelines and editorial standards, and journal sustainability. We will discuss eScholarship's practical potential as a space where students consider and negotiate these complex issues via a suite of tools and services associated with the journal publishing program, including the following:

- New journal proposal form and evaluation process
- Back-end system to support manuscript/peer review management
- Copyright and licensing educational sessions and policies
- Print-on-demand services

Following this discussion, we will shift to a Q&A session with Stacey Meeker, the director of a long-standing UCLA graduate student journal publishing program funded and managed by the UCLA Graduate Students

Association (GSA) Publications office. This program currently supports 29 journals, 20 of which are, to date, hosted by eScholarship, and stands as a high water mark for how consortial-level publishing tools developed by the California Digital Library (CDL) can work complementarily with the support and best practices advocacy provided by local campus staff and organizations to help student editors navigate the increasingly choppy waters of scholarly communication. Finally, in a reflexive turn, we will refocus the lens and discuss the ways in which the practices and concerns of UCLA's student journals have significantly informed the CDL development agenda and policies for eScholarship.

## **ESCHOLARSHIP JOURNAL PUBLISHING TOOLS**

A few years ago, we realized that there was an opportunity to embed our eScholarship platform in conversations about serious and sustainable open access publishing via the tools and training we offered to new journals. This section surveys these tools and services, exploring their pedagogical nature and potential impact on students' understanding of some of the central issues in scholarly communication. Although these materials are now provided to all journals starting up in eScholarship, we pay particular attention to the student-run publications, where the conversations we are supporting are often new and professionally formative.

With these tools, we seek to engage students in at least some of the critical issues involved in producing a journal, but we also offer them the opportunity to experiment, within limits, with various choices and to observe the impact of those choices on their publications. Given the consortial nature of eScholarship as a repository and publishing platform for all 10 UC campuses, we seek to align these tools with campus-based journal support efforts and often collaborate with our campus colleagues in refining both.

### **New Journal Proposal Form**

Any UC-affiliated researcher or student interested in starting a new journal (that is, a journal that has not yet published its first issue) in eScholarship is required to submit a completed journal proposal form ([http://escholarship.org/Proposal\\_for\\_New\\_eScholarship\\_Journal.docx](http://escholarship.org/Proposal_for_New_eScholarship_Journal.docx)). Motivated by a flood of new journal requests in the past few years and derived from journal planning documents developed by the Directory of Open Access Journals

and the Open Society Institute (particularly OSI's "Model Business Plan"), this form enables us to engage early on with journals (often at the point of formation) and to delineate, through our questions, the planning and decision making we feel is necessary to launch and sustain a quality open access journal. Particularly for those students who lack a point person on campus who can help them explore the question of their journal's viability and acquaint them with the best practices of journal publication, the proposal form is a crucial exercise in journal planning. We first ask the students to address the following key issues of validity and relevance:

**Credibility and quality:** Students name participants, from faculty sponsors to editorial board members, who are willing and able to provide scholarly guidance and do the work to ensure a high-quality publication. We also encourage the students to consider sponsors or editorial board members whose participation will be a signal of credibility to fellow scholars in the field.

**Current work in the relevant domain(s):** Students are asked to specify which academic discipline(s) the journal will target and to distinguish their publication from at least three major titles in that field. These questions are designed to ensure that the students have carefully considered the purpose of their journal and its potential to provide a substantive contribution to the scholarly record.

**Contributors:** Securing a sufficient number and quality of contributors is challenging and a key piece of ensuring the long-term sustainability of a publication. We ask the students to identify the pool from which they expect to receive article submissions, and if the pool is small, we encourage them to identify ways they might generate a broader interest in their journal as a publishing outlet.

**Readership:** Students are asked to identify the audiences and the appropriate disciplinary indexes for their publication. These questions are closely tied to their ambitions for the journal as a contribution to their field: are they seeking simply to address other students on their campus, or do they imagine a broader reach for the journal?

The answers to the above questions serve both to "make the case" for the journal and to position its editorial staff to be explicit about the

journal's unique contribution to a field of inquiry. The students' answers often serve as the basis for the public-facing material on the journal's eScholarship site, typically in the "Aims and Scope," "About Us," and "Editorial Board" sections. The point, then, of the proposal process is not just to convince a resource manager that the journal is ready to have repository resources committed to its creation but also to help the students best articulate the value of the publication they intend to create.

Beyond affirming the quality of their journal's scholarly contribution, student editors are asked to outline the policies and procedures they are implementing to ensure the longevity of their publication. While all journals necessarily face the challenge of sustainability, student journals are uniquely at risk because of two factors: rotating staffing and, in some instances, limited funding. We ask the students to consider the following:

**Editorial board recruitment:** Is there a pool of other students from which to select editorial board members? What is the nature of the selection process and which criteria are applied? Are there specific goals for the composition of the board?

**Editorial board management:** Are there policies in place to deal with the known attrition that results as students finish their degree programs and cycle out of the university? Are there well-established expectations with regard to term length for members of the editorial board? What mechanisms are in place to ensure knowledge transfer during times of editorial board member transition?

**Identification of publishing services needs:** Will the journal require copyediting or design resources? Is there an expectation that the journal will be available in print and digital versions? Is there a pool of willing and qualified peer reviewers?

**Resource management:** What are the sources of financing and/or volunteered labor? Are there sufficient resources to handle all of the tasks associated with maintaining the publication?

**Marketing and outreach plans:** Which audiences does the journal seek to reach? What mechanisms are in place to make the journal discoverable by those audiences? Are there discipline-specific indexes where the journal needs to be listed?

## **Back-End Peer Review and Manuscript Management System**

eScholarship journals benefit from a back-end peer review and manuscript management system designed to help journal managers and editors coordinate the editorial and production activities necessary to bring a journal to publication. As journals transition to eScholarship, managers work with CDL staff to customize this platform to meet the specific needs of their publications, thereby shifting issues of journal management from the realm of the abstract (as expressed in the proposal form) to a concrete set of possible system modifications that will reflect the publishing choices and standards the students have articulated.

### *Peer-Review Processes and Management*

Open access student journals can face a legitimacy problem within their disciplines, particularly in fields where open access publishing is still considered a less serious or less prestigious mode of publication. For many of these fields, establishing a carefully considered and clearly articulated peer-review methodology is a crucial step toward making the case for the gravitas of a journal enterprise and its publications. eScholarship journal editors, in determining how submissions will be selected for publication, typically choose a single- or double-blind peer-review process. Making this choice provides an opportunity to discuss and think through the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional review model and the challenges of devising alternative methods. The need to ensure that review processes occur consistently and reliably exposes students to the level of detailed decisions required to produce a quality journal, including both editorial guidelines for reviewers and the mechanics of how they will interact with the review system. Beyond articulating the specific editorial and content-specific expectations for articles under review (determined by the editorial board and unique to each journal), editors must establish the following:

- A mechanism for reviewers to access submissions (e.g., via log-in to the peer-review management system or as an e-mail attachment)
- Strategies for engaging reviewers who have not completed their reviews within a defined period
- Customized language to communicate with reviewers at different stages of the process

- Standards for rating reviewers based on their performance
- A means of establishing and maintaining a pool of strong and reliable reviewers within the journal's scholarly domain(s)

The term “peer reviewed” has historically functioned as shorthand for legitimate scholarly work. In recent years, however, the practice of peer review has become a lightning rod for controversy as the scholarly community engages in debates about its form, practice, and authenticity. Can review within specific and arcane fields of study ever truly be blind? Need review be blind in order to put an argument through its paces? What about postpublication peer review as a self-consciously transparent process of evaluation? Digging into the mechanics of managing a blind peer-review process challenges students to consider the truths and assumptions built into the traditional system of scholarly evaluation and the importance of academic legitimacy for the long-term success of a publication.

### *Editorial Production Workflow*

Student editors grapple not only with the intellectual work of submission review and selection, but also with the task of establishing rational and efficient workflows for the editorial production of journal issues. Given that the production quality of a journal can indicate to readers—both explicitly and implicitly—the commensurate quality they may expect of its scholarship, the presentation of the journal and each individual piece therein carries great value. Journals with little or no budget must prioritize tasks, identify potential volunteers in editorial board members, and balance the desire for more complex publication formats (such as embedded multimedia) with the basic requirement of supporting adequate copyright, proofreading, and layout processes for the journal. Varying levels of funding necessarily determine the structure of the work to produce a publication, for instance, whether third parties can be used for services such as proofreading and layout.

Customizing the editorial production process offers students an authentic setting in which to explore the value and roles of traditional tasks such as copyediting and layout within a primarily online environment. Perhaps more importantly, this work provides both students and repository managers an opportunity to consider how scholarly publishing is conducted



within a journal's community of practice and how best to reconcile that practice with the limitations of a journal publishing system that is generi-cized to work across many disciplines.

### **Copyright/Licensing Staff, Educational Sessions, and Policies**

In the interest of promoting widespread dissemination of research articles, CDL staff recommend that eScholarship journals use a Creative Commons (CC) license to indicate the terms of reuse for the materials they publish. The choice of license comes up immediately for journal managers, during the initial setup of the publication, as they begin to work on developing the terms of their journal's author agreement. Although the text can be quite minimal ([http://escholarship.org/sample\\_author\\_agreement\\_final.doc](http://escholarship.org/sample_author_agreement_final.doc)), we encourage journals to establish nonexclusive agreements with their submitting authors, thereby promoting broad use of the material ([http://escholarship.org/help\\_copyright.html#agreements](http://escholarship.org/help_copyright.html#agreements)). Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to use CC licenses—and which one to use if choosing to do so—is up to the journals themselves. Although CC licensing can be a beneficial approach to increasing the visibility and reuse of these publica-tions, some fields have legitimate constraints and accepted practices that limit reuse, most notably those humanities and social sciences publications that rely heavily on the integrity of the text and that are often encumbered by third-party content.

In light of the complexity of these matters, we maintain an FAQ on CC licensing ([http://www.escholarship.org/help\\_cc\\_faq.html](http://www.escholarship.org/help_cc_faq.html)) and work with campus partners to host local information sessions on copyright and intellectual property issues for student editors. We also have an on-staff copyright specialist who is available to answer questions and help journal managers (student or otherwise) understand this complex terrain.

### **Print-on-Demand Service**

eScholarship has an agreement with a print-on-demand (POD) vendor that allows journal editors to make their open access publications available for sale in print (see [http://escholarship.org/publish\\_escholarship-plus\\_faq.html](http://escholarship.org/publish_escholarship-plus_faq.html)). A “Buy” link on the journal issue page in eScholarship takes the user to the vendor site where the purchase can be completed. We have found that, for some student journals, it is imperative to offer a print option as a

means of legitimizing the journal in the eyes of a funder or faculty participant, particularly among law reviews. Aside from that specific use case, however, POD publication offers open access journals the opportunity to make their research available in multiple formats to address the needs of multiple user communities.

Built into that opportunity is the necessity for editors to work through some of the business issues associated with print publication, most particularly pricing and distribution. Do the journals hope to generate enough revenue to offset some of their production costs? If so, do they have a marketing plan in place to raise the visibility of their publication and generate sales? At what price point are they likely to make the case for their value? POD publishing options bring to the surface the economics of journal production and resource management. Few student open access journals have a robust financial profile, so any opportunity to inject revenue into their processes is an important step toward long-term stability. Particularly in cases where there is a known market for subscriptions to or print versions of open access publications, POD can offer a remarkable (and relatively risk-free) opportunity for students to explore trends in multifformat publishing and open access sustainability.

## **Q&A**

As described above, the use of eScholarship's journal publishing platform necessarily draws student journal managers into some of the essential concerns in scholarly publishing today, from the value of peer review to the challenges of reuse licensing. We continually work to provide students with resources, guideposts, and structured opportunities to consult with staff experts as they wrestle with the complexities embedded in the process of producing a journal. At the same time, as a consortial service provider one step removed from the 10 physical campuses of UC, CDL has limited opportunities to interact directly with students and faculty. Though we have implemented a self-service help center (<https://submit.escholarship.org/help/>) to support eScholarship users, how-to videos and written documentation can never take the place of local expertise and support. While this consortial model creates distance between eScholarship staff and our journal editors, it also enables our campus partners, within the UC libraries and beyond, to leverage a centralized (and centrally resourced) platform as

a means of extending their own local suite of services. Through this partnership, we have seen tremendous results when an investment is made to establish committed local resources to engage directly with students as they develop and manage their journals.

In the following Q&A section, we focus our lens on an especially robust example of the synergy between a centralized platform and local staffing to support student journals: the UCLA Graduate Students Association Publications program (<http://www.gsa.asucla.ucla.edu/services/publications>). The UCLA GSA supports nearly 30 journals spanning the humanities, literary and art productions (including both creative works and criticism), the social sciences, law, cinema and media, and interdisciplinary studies. As mentioned above, many, but not all, of these journals are published using eScholarship. Through a series of written exchanges and telephone conversations with Stacey Meeker, director of Publications at GSA, we explore the benefits of campus-level student journal support services, the use of the eScholarship journal publishing platform as the technical foundation for these services, and the major opportunities and challenges facing graduate student journal managers at this moment of transition within the realm of scholarly communication.

*1. What do you consider to be your role in supporting the education of graduate students as journal managers/editors?*

As the director of Publications for the UCLA Graduate Students Association, I see our primary mission as that of advocating for the graduate and professional students who devote themselves to editing our journals. While assuring funding and providing support services for our journals, some of which are over 40 years old, our program serves the students who edit the journals, publish in them, and fund them with their fees. Because we work with most of the graduate and professional journals across campus, we are able to see and hopefully anticipate patterns of needs and concerns as they arise and communicate these concerns to eScholarship and our network of other partners. We provide assistance in technical aspects of publishing with which editors may be unfamiliar (e.g., metadata or tool choice), and we try to facilitate endeavors

requiring higher-level coordination (e.g., helping provide or advocate for additional administrative or technical services). In the rapidly changing world of scholarly communication in general and scholarly publishing in particular, we try to keep our editors up-to-date as efficiently as possible and provide them with information about feasible options available to them. One of our most crucial functions is to oversee journals' budget allocations, approve expenditures, and make sure that the journals whose legacies and futures are in our collective care can go on about the business of publishing.

*2. What are the specific issues related to journal publishing that you have focused on with graduate students?*

Our approach to open access has been an organic one that embraces the diversity of our journal community and its institutional complexities. Our overall goal could be described as facilitating opportunities for graduate students to gain experience in the nuts and bolts of scholarly communication as they generate, add value to, and disseminate high-quality content across a variety of disciplines and knowledge production structures. Rapid technological and institutional changes in scholarly communication have added to the traditional publication mix the necessity of reflecting on the nature of scholarly communication itself. We have done our best to encourage and enable this ongoing discussion.

Our editors have been obliged to give much thought to the implications of concrete choices involved in the implementation of an open access model of publication. The move to open access has encouraged a spirit of experimentation among editors considering today's publishing ecology. We talk about tools and how to use them, standards and the role they play, and the value that editors and publishers bring to their publications. Editors have debated these matters on campus, articulated their thoughts in introductions and forewords to their publications, and participated in conference panels on open access publishing in their individual

disciplines. We have also discussed Creative Commons licenses at length, and editors have generally come to the conclusion that they prefer to offer authors a choice of license. Other landmarks on the open access landscape—the Directory of Open Access Journals, for example—have been topics of discussion and have become part of the working vocabulary of our community of editors.

*3. What are the drivers for and challenges of transitioning student journals from print to digital?*

Our experience has shown that when graduate and professional student editors are given the chance to weigh the pros and cons, they tend to move in the direction of open access. A major initial impetus for the move of some of our extant print journals to open access digital delivery and eScholarship was a digitization initiative undertaken by the UCLA Library and the Internet Archive in cooperation with GSA Publications. The result was not only the digital preservation and dissemination of five long-standing print journals' distinguished backlists through the Internet Archive but also a series of serious conversations about what moving future operations to an open access model hosted by eScholarship might mean for these journals: increased visibility and discoverability on a credible platform; a more structured working environment where peer review, file management, and communications could be centralized and yet accessed remotely by editors in different locations; freedom from cumbersome and labor-intensive print subscriptions that in most cases did not recover journal expenses; and a much lower up-front investment.

The move, however, was by no means a given. Some editors and authors as well as faculty were wary of digitizing the backlists, fearing a loss of prestige or even the eventual demise of the journals. This early experience with a set of well-respected journals was covered in our campus newspaper (Saraswat, 2010) and noticed by our graduate division, which published a feature showcasing the effort in the *Graduate*

*Quarterly* (Watkins, 2011). This campus endorsement, which included input from the library's scholarly communication team and from Information Studies professor Christine Borgman, a faculty expert on scholarly communication and open access, helped to further legitimize the move to free online delivery, which has become an accepted goal for most of our journals even if obstacles still block some paths.

Although the law journals were not prepared to join us at that point, I believe that the example of these first waves of journals helped to persuade other editors that remaining in a closed, print-first model is not desirable in the long term. However compelling the practical facts may be, though, the rapid adoption of an open access model by UCLA law journals—six in one year alone—shows the importance of the general embrace of the model by an institution's disciplinary culture and the need for acceptance of the model by a critical mass of faculty. In the case of the UCLA School of Law, two reference librarians are responsible for this. Vicki Steiner, recognized as UCLA's 2014 Librarian of the Year for her efforts to promote open access, and Cheryl Kelly Fischer assured a necessary level of disciplinary assent through ongoing efforts to engage faculty and students, ranging from individual conversations to general meetings. Their own publication on open access and legal scholarship (Fischer & Steiner, 2013) and their credibility with their colleagues were necessary factors in bringing about this rapid adoption. They have worked closely with GSA Publications to learn from our earlier experiences and to demonstrate the success of the model for journals on other parts of campus in terms relevant to legal scholarship.

[In terms of challenges,] graduate and professional journals face special difficulties related to workflows, record-keeping, and institutional memory because of the relatively short tenure of the editorial staffs and the varied levels and kinds of experiences that editors bring to the enterprise. Perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, these problems are often compounded in the era of free cloud computing. Records

become tied to individual editors' accounts and vulnerable to accidental deletion or untethering from the institution, and documents can be difficult to track if continuity between teams isn't made a priority and codified as a process. These problems further compound the difficulty of providing the changing members of an editorial staff with a picture of an entire production workflow. The desire to have a well-structured, credible online working environment has been a consistent factor attracting our editors to open access publishing on eScholarship. Managing double-blind peer review is difficult. Maintaining centralized records of communication is difficult. Version control is difficult. . . . All editors, but graduate and professional student editors in particular, need the kind of infrastructure support that a well-developed and responsive IR can provide.

*4. What are some of the most successful educational tools and processes you have developed to help student journal managers/editors navigate the scholarly communication environment in all its complexity?*

Simply having an office and being accessible (both in person and remotely) as a go-to resource is an important foundation for helping editors navigate the scholarly communication environment. Editors need to feel comfortable about asking questions and talking through whatever issues they may be encountering. By conceiving of our program as an information hub grounded in student needs that complements and provides pathways to other resources, we have been able to encourage editors to stop by, communicate with each other, and stay connected to developments in scholarly communication on campus and elsewhere.

However standard their practices, each of our journals is unique, and editors must create their own collections of operational documents and tools, from aims and scope statements to style sheets. We try to provide journal editors with good models for those tools in workshops, and we work with them on an individual basis to assist in whatever ways possible to

develop and refine those tools, which they can then share with their fellow editors. We have focused our efforts on matters such as workflows, wording of editorial letters, protocols for communicating with authors and reviewers, author agreements, file preparation guidelines, proofreading techniques, and even style and grammar, which we sometimes cover in conjunction with our Graduate Writing Center, which is also a GSA initiative.

Working closely with teams as they go through the steps of the editorial process helps them to acquire the specialized knowledge needed for effective copyediting, proofreading, and working with a complex remote information system. But most editors cannot be expected to learn, on their own, best practices concerning metadata or to keep abreast of developments in the areas of copyright, licensing, and fair use. In order to help our editors meet these specialized needs, we collaborate with the UCLA Library and the Law Library to host regular workshops. Our office serves at once as a filter and aggregator of useful information and a mechanism for leveraging campus resources and connections to help journals do their work without having to reinvent the wheel.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although CDL has been in the business of publishing UC-affiliated journals in eScholarship for more than a decade, it is only in the last few years that we have begun to focus on the explicit pedagogical opportunities that are built into supporting a journal publishing platform. eScholarship staff take seriously our charge to provide consortial services that meet the real needs of our constituencies throughout the UC system. Rather than a vendor selling a product or a third-party provider satisfied with a “build it and they will come” approach, we work collaboratively with our campus partners to ensure that our systemwide services harmonize with local programs and initiatives. One such initiative, both at UC and within the larger higher education library community, focuses on the practical purposes and pedagogical potential inherent in maintaining local publishing programs that serve graduate and undergraduate students. Working at scale and set apart from



a physical campus, we have constructed a suite of tools for establishing and managing journals that, by their nature, organically provide students with the structure and the space to reflect on significant issues in scholarly communication that are, more and more, shaping the published results of academic inquiry.

We have learned, however, through our close collaboration with UCLA staff at the Graduate Students Association, the library, and elsewhere, that our tools and services are only the starting point of a rich pedagogical experience for student editors. Committed local staff have the opportunity to understand more clearly the important variations in practice among academic disciplines and where those variations must be reflected in the tools we provide, in turn helping the eScholarship service to grow and adapt to the real needs and concerns of our user community. We have, as a result of this collaborative relationship with UCLA, grown to recognize the importance of supporting an array of reuse licenses, providing flexible publishing workflows, and establishing a robust practice of documentation in a setting in which student staffing is always in flux. Attending to the specific needs of this particularly engaged publishing program, while remembering our responsibility to maintain a service that is generalizable to the entire UC system, has enabled us to introduce a new level of refinement to the eScholarship platform. This kind of dynamic platform development benefits the entire population of eScholarship journal managers (across our 70+ journals), resulting in a stronger service that, simultaneously, supports the worldwide dissemination of new research and helps launch journal editors who are ready to take on the thorniest of publishing challenges.

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