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“Outreach by Stealth” and Other Strategies of Effective Open Access Outreach Services to Researchers

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Background & Context

This research grew out of the results of previous research:

The screenshot shows the header of the journal website with a blue background. On the left is a large white letter 'B' on a dark blue square. To its right, the text 'Evidence Based Library and Information Practice' is displayed in white. Below the header is a white navigation bar with blue links: HOME, ABOUT, LOGIN, REGISTER, SEARCH, CURRENT, ARCHIVES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, SUBMISSIONS, OPEN ACCESS, TWITTER, MOST READ ARTICLES, and MOST CITED ARTICLES. A breadcrumb trail below the navigation bar reads 'Home > Vol 9, No 4 (2014) > Dawson'. The main content area features the article title 'The Scholarly Communications Needs of Faculty: An Evidence-Based Foundation for the Development of Library Services' in a large, bold, blue font, followed by the author's name 'Diane Dawson' in a smaller, italicized font. Below the author's name is the word 'Abstract' in a bold, black font.

Background & Context

New Tri-Agency OA Policy on Publications (May 2015)



Home > Research Funding Collaboration > Policies and Guidelines > Open Access > Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications

Partnerships and Projects

Learn about Canada's scientists and professionals

Canadian High Arctic Research Station

Northern Contaminants Program

Canada's Extended Continental Shelf Program

Health Canada: Centre for Vaccine Evaluation

Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications

1. Preamble

The [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#), the [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada \(NSERC\)](#), and the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada \(SSHRC\)](#) ("the Agencies") have a fundamental interest in promoting the availability of findings that result from the research they fund. To this end, the Agencies have developed this policy on open access to research publications and data, to the widest possible audience, and at the earliest possible time possible through widespread and barrier-free access to cutting-edge research and findings.

Problem:

Best practices/Good practices for library OA outreach services to researchers.

Outreach to raise their awareness about:

- Their funder's OA policies
- Services & resources available to support them in complying
- OA in general – dispelling myths & misinformation

Methods – Data Collection

Geographic Focus: United Kingdom



Reasoning:

- RCUK Policy on OA (since 2013)
- Other OA Policies:
 - Wellcome Trust (since 2013)
 - HEFCE Research Excellence Framework (REF) (April 2016)



= complex policy environment!

Methods – Data Collection

Identifying “exemplar” institutions:

- Russell Group members
- Recommendations of local experts (RLUK, JISC, Member of the Burgess Review)
- In top ranks of “OA Grant Size Ranking” according to Burgess Review

Methods – Data Collection

7 institutions, 14 individuals interviewed

Methods – Data Collection

- Semi-structured interviews
 - ~1hr each; digital audio recorded
- Interview guide of 8-12 questions:
 - *Warm-up*: individual's role and responsibilities
 - Overview of services offered
 - Outreach services
 - Researcher's schol comm needs
 - *Wrap-up*: advice or expand on anything

Methods – Data Analysis

- Interviews transcribed
- Coded in NVivo
 - *Inductive method* > themes emerged directly from data



Methods – Data Analysis

Grouped subthemes into 4 major themes:

1. The Message & Communications
2. Key Contacts & Relationships
3. Qualities of the OA Service Provider
4. Advocacy vs Compliance



Theme 1: The Message & Communications

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– Keep it Simple & Relevant

Just call it... if it is boot, call it a boot.
Just call it what people out there would
call it. I think it needs to be clear,
simple.”

-Participant #4

Theme 1: The Message & Communications

– Flexibility / Know your Audience

“A lot of the outreach...has almost been outreach by stealth, so it’s been around kind of integrating open access and particularly copyright...Copyright is the other thing that nobody ever wants to talk about...”

-Participant #9

Theme 1: The Message & Communications

– Flexibility / Know your Audience

“The researchers don’t care if you say 40% compliance, they could care less. You deliver different messages to different groups of people.”

-Participant #8

Theme 1: The Message & Communications

– Persistence/Patience & Repetition

“I found certainly with open access is that you need to tell somebody something three times in three different ways every three months before they actually start really remembering it.”

- Participant #9

Summary

- Message/communications need to be:
 - Clear, simple, jargon-free; relevant/timely
 - Flexible – adapted to audience, integrate (by stealth!)
 - Repeated – need persistence, patience



Theme 2: Key Contacts & Relationships

Theme 2: Key Contacts & Relationships

– Identify Influencers

“In general, we have more traction in the departments where the head of the departments engage more with us, and where we can send messages and the message comes from head of department.”

- Participant #12

Theme 2: Key Contacts & Relationships

– Identify Informers

“...most useful is finding a key person in a department, this key administrator who can help you come into the department and know about the concerns, know about the best way in to get your message there...”

- Participant #10

Theme 2: Key Contacts & Relationships

– Relationship-building

“Face to face is good, you get people who do remember the service, do remember your name which is a really useful part of that, people feel they have contact as well as just a generic email address.”

- Participant #3

Summary

- Key Contacts – find and nurture:
 - *Influencers* – high level administrators, peer level champions
 - *Informers* – dept staff can help lots!
- Build these relationships



Theme 3: Qualities of the OA Service Provider

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– Expertise (& Preparation)

“Academics will sometimes test you as somebody trying to sell the message and once they realize you probably know more than they do then I think they start to buy in a little bit more...”

- Participant #6

Theme 3: Qualities of the OA Service Provider

– Expertise (& Complexity)

“When I go to meetings with administrators ...and talk about open access they very often say I am so glad you are doing it because it is so complicated and they are right...”

- Participant #6

Theme 3: Qualities of the OA Service Provider

– Expertise (& Credibility)

“The idea was to employ people who – we’ve got lots of PhD’s out there who are people who can talk to researchers about research and have some credibility here.”

- Participant #8

Summary

- Qualities of the OA Service Provider:
 - Expertise – knowledgeable, prepared
 - Depth of knowledge – complexity of policy env
 - Diplomacy – complexity in politics too!
 - Credibility – experience as a publishing researcher



Theme 4: Advocacy vs. Compliance

Theme 4: Advocacy vs. Compliance

“In my experience [the] stick is a little bit more efficient than [the] carrot, especially when working with academics.”

- Participant #2

Theme 4: Advocacy vs. Compliance

“So yeah, it’d be great if it was about the value of Open Access, or the value of the institutional repository, and we try to get that message across but it, a lot of it, most of it, is around compliance.”

- Participant #10

Theme 4: Advocacy vs. Compliance

“I’m really nervous that this is what it’s going to end up being seen as...that Open Access is purely a box ticking compliance exercise. I’m genuinely really worried that that’s what’s going to happen in the UK, because there is such strong drivers for compliance.”

- Participant #9

Summary

- Advocacy vs. Compliance:
 - Tension – we need the “stick” to motivate
 - Focus on compliance draws attention away from benefits of OA
 - Danger – OA is seen as yet another administrative burden



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Questions?