



Home Latest About Research Book Podcasting Resources Past Events

LSE Comment Popular

## Faculty Learning Communities are a positive way for libraries to engage academic staff in scholarly communication.

Tweet 48 [Share / Save](#)



*The stakes and politics of research and scholarship are different depending on discipline, department, and institution, and as such, increasing awareness of scholarly communication is fraught with difficulty. Librarians **Jennifer Bazeley** and **Jen Waller***

*share their experience developing a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) in order to address the issues. Cultivating awareness of the entire scholarly communication landscape created stronger faculty advocates for change, but key differences emerged between longer established and newer faculty members.*

Librarians at Miami University Libraries have been following the changes in the world of scholarly publishing for many years. A few of us, in particular, have been active advocates for open access and for authors' rights. Over the years we have tried a number of different strategies to increase awareness among faculty members at our institution about the issues inherent in the changing landscape of scholarly communication. Several years ago we began our work with an early attempt to present an open access resolution to academic deans at the university. The ensuing discussion created so much controversy that we had to abandon it.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](#) unless otherwise stated.



My Tweets

Popular Posts This Week

Subsequent activities largely went unnoticed by faculty, including the creation of an online guide addressing open access issues for faculty and librarians, a copyright workshop for faculty, and a library-wide celebration of Open Access Week.

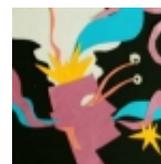
Our strategies were not failures, yet we knew that we weren't reaching faculty in a meaningful way. In fact, we were doing *outreach* when what we needed to do was *engage*. In late 2011 we began brainstorming new ways of targeting faculty and hit upon the idea of creating a faculty learning community (FLC). At Miami University a FLC is a group of trans-disciplinary faculty, staff, and students who meet regularly over an academic year with a specific curriculum intended to advance teaching and learning. With support from the university's center for teaching and learning and library administration, we designed and established a FLC on scholarly communication. We ran the first iteration of this FLC during the 2012-2013 school year.



Image credit: **Steven Shorrock** (Flickr, [CC BY-NC-SA](#))

Looking back on it, there were two things that were key to our success with this FLC. First, we examined the issues from a faculty perspective – faculty members have a different stake in the scholarly communication lifecycle than librarians do, a fact we didn't fully appreciate before the FLC. Secondly, it quickly became apparent that the interdisciplinary nature of the FLC itself was exceedingly beneficial. Hearing views from multiple disciplines (STEM, humanities, and social sciences) and multiple roles (librarians, faculty, graduate students, and staff) expanded our discussions and ultimately shaped everyone's views for the better.

Throughout our discussions of scholarly communication, FLC members identified two primary barriers to creating change in the system. The first is that the current scholarly publishing system underpins the promotion and tenure (P&T) system. Reshaping publishing has significant



The

**Organized Mind: How to better structure our time in the age of social media and constant distraction.**

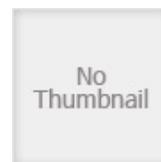
2,657 views



30 tips for

**successful academic research and writing**

1,020 views



Your essential 'how-to'

**guide to writing good abstracts**

658 views

**Latest book reviews**



**Peter Dawson reviews**

**Beautiful Game Theory: How Soccer Can**

**Help Economics.** by Ignacio Palacios-Huerta

**Help Economics.** by Ignacio Palacios-Huerta

**Susan Marie Martin reviews**

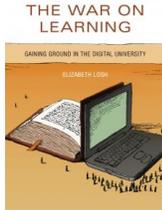
implications for P&T as it exists now at our institution, and change can move at a glacial pace. The current system forces faculty to invest enormous amounts of time and effort in the current scholarly publishing system, leaving little or no time to explore alternative models. The structured nature of the FLC forced our members to look closely at other models and to fully explore other options.

The second, albeit related, barrier is a widespread lack of awareness among our faculty members of the changes occurring (or those that have already occurred) in scholarly communication outside the sphere of themselves and their individual departments. Many members of the FLC were surprised to learn that there are significant issues and challenges in the current scholarly publishing system or that there are alternatives to the status quo. Many in our group never had the time or resources to focus on the issues *behind the system* while actually participating *in the system*.

We facilitated this FLC for two academic years, with a different group of faculty and staff for the second year. Interestingly, the community aspect of the group in the second year was drastically different than the first year. Our first group formed a community quickly and more naturally than did the second. In our second year, we had to work much harder to create the community and to build trust. Even so, one of our second-year members remained skeptical and defensive throughout the year. This forced us to slow the pace of the second group, and in some cases, re-think our strategy for generating awareness and engagement.

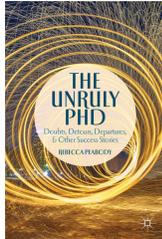
Throughout the experience we noticed that faculty members *tended* to fall into two broad categories. Faculty who had been at the university for a long time or who had successfully completed the tenure process responded better to a “slow and steady” approach. Our initial outreach campaigns and Open Access Week celebrations were meaningless to them, because they had been entrenched in the existing system for so long. We discovered that the issue of predatory publishing resonated strongly with these faculty members, as many of them had already been approached by predatory publishers. This topic created an easy segue into a broader conversation about the pros and cons of “open.” Conversely, newer faculty members – those who were still in the midst of the P&T system or hadn’t even started the process yet – generally started from a more open-minded position. They were more eager to discuss open access issues, perhaps because they grew up with completely different technological opportunities. Leveraging their open-mindedness and enthusiasm was a powerful strategy. Creating awareness in this subset of faculty may bring the most change to the system over time.

**The War on Learning: Gaining Ground in the Digital University**  
by Elizabeth Losh



Losh

**Sin Yee Koh reviews The Unruly PhD: Doubts, Departures, Detours, Departures, Other Success Stories.**  
by Rebecca Peabody



### Latest on Audible Impact



### Recent

**How to write a killer conference**



Gaining a better understanding of the divisions and departments on our campus – and getting a better feel for how P&T works in each – has been crucial. The stakes and politics of research and scholarship are different depending on the discipline and the department, and understanding them more thoroughly was critical in creating an engaged community. As a result of co-facilitating these FLCs for two years, we learned a tremendous amount that we hope to use in the future. We learned not to overestimate faculty awareness of things like institutional subscription costs, the scholarly publishing lifecycle, and journal economics. Perhaps our most profound realization was that we had been asking faculty to advocate for change in a system that they only knew in part – as authors, editors, and reviewers. Cultivating awareness of the entire scholarly communication landscape created stronger faculty advocates for change.

Featured Image credit: [Tufts University Hirsh Health Sciences Library](#) by Kthorn01 (Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0)

*Note: This article gives the views of the authors, and not the position of the Impact of Social Science blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please review our [Comments Policy](#) if you have any concerns on posting a comment below.*

### About the Authors

**Jennifer Bazeley** is the Interim Head of Technical Services at Miami University Libraries. In this role she oversees the library’s materials expenditures and coordinates all aspects of electronic resources purchased by the library. She is an active member of the library’s Scholarly Communication Committee. Her research interests include the role of libraries in scholarly communication, improving technical services workflows, and analyzing e-resource usage data.

**Jen Waller** works in the Miami University Libraries’ Reference and Collection Services unit as the Interdisciplinary Librarian and Scholarly Communication Liaison. In this role she provides library services to interdisciplinary programs and initiatives across campus and manages the Library’s scholarly communications programs and services, including open access advocacy, author rights, copyright, and new forms of information dissemination and scholarly publishing.



### Share this:



**abstract:**  
The first step towards an engaging presentation

January 27th, 2015



The importance of meta-analysis and systematic review: How research legacy can be maximized through adequate reporting

January 26th, 2015



Book Review: The Sustainable Economics of Elinor Ostrom: Commons, Contestation and Craft.

January 25th, 2015

Visitors yesterday

1,832	Unique Visitors
-------	-----------------

Powered By Google Analytics

## Related

Miseducation of Scholarly Communication: Beyond binaries and toward a transparent, information-rich publishing system  
In "Academic communication"

Research and teaching staff in developing countries rate the value of libraries higher than in the West  
In "Academic communication"

Academics must be applauded for making a stand by boycotting Elsevier. It's time for librarians to join the conversation on the future of dissemination, but not join the boycott.  
In "Academic Publishing"

---

November 4th, 2014 | [Academic communication, Higher Education, Open](#)

[Access](#) | [2 Comments](#)

---

Share This Story, Choose Your Platform!

---

[< Previous post](#)

[Next post >](#)

---

## Related Posts

---

---



## 2 Comments

**Teaching Communities of Faculty About Scholarly Communication** November 6, 2014 at 11:17 pm - [Reply](#)

[...] by Jennifer Bazeley and Jen Waller originally appeared on the LSE Impact of Social Sciences blog as “Faculty Learning Communities are a positive way for libraries to engage academic staff in scholar...and is reposted under the Creative Commons license (CC BY [...])



**Jennifer Bazeley** November 11, 2014 at 2:22 pm - [Reply](#)

A more detailed article on our use of FLCs and scholarly communication was published in the open access journal “Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication”, volume 2, no. 3, and is available at <http://jisc-pub.org/jlsc/vol2/iss3/8/>.

## Leave A Comment

Name (required)	Email (required)	Website
-----------------	------------------	---------

Comment...

**POST COMMENT**

- Notify me of follow-up comments by email.
- Notify me of new posts by email.



Visit our sister blog  
LSE Review of Books



Visit our sister blog  
USA Politics and  
Policy



Visit our sister blog  
British Politics and  
Policy



Visit our sister blog  
European Politics and  
Policy

---

Copyright 2011 LSE Impact of Social Sciences

This work by [LSE Impact of Social Sciences blog](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported](#).

☺