Open Access in Canada: A Strong Beginning

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Scholarly open access (OA), one of CLA's information policy advocacy areas, has reached critical momentum in Canada. New initiatives are being announced regularly in all areas of the open access movement, including OA publishing, repositories and mandates. Established projects are becoming regularized and growing. Most of these initiatives are library-based or are connected to libraries in some way. This article presents some examples of these activities, along with progress highlights from the past year.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

OA publishing
Publishing is perhaps the heart of the open access movement: a move from research that is published only for the privileged to access, to research that is published under a model that allows free access (and often more liberal licensing terms) to publications. OA publishing can be done either under the "gold" model – journals are published OA – or the "green" model – journals allow OA archiving of article copies. Open access publishing continues to grow both in size and stature.

In gold OA news, *The Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ)[1] grew at a rate of two new journal titles per day in 2009.[2] As of this writing, the DOAJ indexes 136 scholarly research journals from Canada.

The 2008 Impact Factor rankings by Thompson Reuters (released in 2009), showed a record five OA journals at the top of their disciplinary rankings. Four of these were from the Public Library of Science (PLoS) collection; the founder and publisher of the fifth, the *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, is Toronto-based Gunther Eysenbach. PLoS, continuing to show innovative leadership, began releasing some article-level impact metrics of their own, such as page views and press coverage.

There have also been the rare instances of backsliding away from full gold OA in the face of uncertain economic times and business models. A notable Canadian example is that of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, a free online access pioneer, which announced that beginning in January 2010 a portion of the contents would be free to read only after a 12-month embargo.[3]

Gold OA is only half of the OA story. Green OA archiving has received a large boost from the dramatic increase in research funder policies requiring authors to provide OA to their peer-reviewed articles, and from the growth of institutional and subject-based repositories in which to archive publications.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Open access repositories
A core component of the green arm of the open access movement, OA repositories (OARs) may be institutional repositories (IRs) or disciplinary repositories that make the fruits of research from many different institutions in one broad subject freely available online. IRs are connected to an organization, usually a university, and frequently run by the university's library.

At this point, we know of just over 1,560 open access repositories worldwide, located on every continent but Antarctica and featuring content in dozens of languages.[4] In Canada, there are currently 51 registered repositories, of which 31 are part of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) institutional repository project.[5]

There were a number of important developments in OARs in Canada in 2009. In June, Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) announced the establishment of their institutional repository, one that is a first of sorts. Thought not the first non-locally maintained university IR in Canada (McMaster, Western, and Ryerson universities have hosted repositories, using the Digital Commons software from the Berkeley Electronic Press), the WLU IR is the first Canadian iteration of the OA publisher BioMed Central's Open Repository service. In October, during Open Access Week, PubMed Central Canada[6] was launched. This disciplinary OAR will help provide access to openly available Canadian medical research alongside the very large and highly popular U.S.-based PubMed Central.

OA policies and mandates
Policies encouraging or requiring OA have emerged as a key tool in the open access movement. Policies phrased as "requests" or "encouragement" may prove to be stepping stones on the path toward mandatory OA policies on the part of both research funders and research-conducting institutions. In the past year, OA policies – and particularly ones that mandate OA to research outputs – have proliferated in Canada and around the world.

Motivators for OA policies are numerous, but most policies aim to increase access to information and improve the impact of research findings. One of the key arguments for open access to publicly funded research is precisely that it has been funded by the public, who should not have to pay again to view the results.

The SHERPA JULIET list of funder OA policies[7] includes 14 research funder policies in Canada, making Canada second only to the United Kingdom in number of policies. Nearly all of these Canadian funder OA policies are in the biomedical and/or health disciplines. Five of these funder policies were new in 2009, more than any other country added in that year. The emerging Canadian standard for such funder policies appears to be that set by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). This standard requires that a version of any peer-reviewed research publication be made freely available online within six months of publication. Canada's other two major research granting councils, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), have not yet

adopted policies requiring OA to funded research. However, SSHRC adopted open access in principle in 2004, and has supported open access journals through Aid to Scholarly Journals grants.

University-mandated OA policies, on the other hand, have not caught on as quickly in Canada as in many other countries – notably Finland, where 26 science universities adopted a joint OA policy last year.[8] The Registry of Open Access Repository Material Archiving Policies lists several Canadian institutional policies of different flavours.[9] Among those requesting or encouraging self-archiving of published research articles are all staff at the University of Ottawa and Athabasca University, as well as York University's librarians and archivists. Queen's University is among those institutions that require all dissertations to be deposited in their institutional repository. Libraries and Cultural Resources at the University of Calgary is one of the few academic departments in the country with a self-imposed mandate ("commitment") to provide OA to outputs.

Library OA initiatives

Libraries and librarians have been involved in many of the activities described above, but these represent only a portion of what the library world has done to support open access. New responsibilities and entire job descriptions in academic libraries have emerged, including terms such as "scholarly communication," "digital scholarship" and "institutional repository."

A few academic libraries have established funds designed to cover publication fees that some gold OA publishers charge authors.[10] Some university libraries are also experimenting with models for developing new, closer relationships with university presses, enabling both to better work together on OA-related projects.[11]

In Canada, an outgrowth of sorts from library–press relationships is the Synergies project,[12] designed to support the digital conversion of Canadian humanities and social sciences journals. Although the Synergies project is not specifically designed as an open access initiative, some of the journals will be fully or partially OA and the project is fostering awareness of OA.

Not content with OA just for journal articles, libraries and their collaborators in the open access world are expanding the range of content being made openly accessible. For example, they are publishing open monographs and OA educational materials, as well as developing standards for open data.

Library associations have been involved in open access as well. CLA and the British Columbia Library Association both passed resolutions in favour of OA in recent years. CLA has also developed a position statement on open access and an open access interest group,[13] and taken steps to make at least some of its own publications openly accessible. In addition, CLA has been actively involved in funder open access policy consultations in Canada. For example, CLA contributed a strong pro-OA statement to the consultation process that led to the CIHR open access mandate policy. Open access is consistent with the basic library value of access to information.

Looking south across the border, library associations in the U.S. have likewise been advocates for OA policy. The American Library Association has published educational materials and calls to action regarding the pending Federal Research Public Access Act, which would require public access to the results of research funded by major U.S. government agencies. The Obama administration appears responsive to the call for openness to government information, and its Office of Science and Technology Policy recently hosted an online forum on this topic. The library sector was well represented at the forum, with submissions by the Association of Research Libraries, the Association of College and Research Libraries, and many individual librarians, including university library directors.

Conclusion
Much is happening in the area of open access these days; it is a growing and evolving movement. Canada is an important player and a leader in some ways, such as in research funder mandates. However, more could be done here to fill repositories with content, and many Canadian universities have barely broached the topic of open access. Still, these are the early days of the open access movement, and it is certainly fair to say that OA in Canada appears to be off to a strong beginning.

Notes

1. Lund University Libraries Head Office, "Directory of Open Access Journals," website content, 2010 (www.doaj.org).

2. Heather Morrison, "Dramatic Growth of Open Access: Dec. 31, 2009 New Year's Eve Edition," The Imaginary Journal of Poetic Economics blog, website content, December 31, 2009 (http://poeticeconomics.blogspot.com/2009/12/dramatic-growth-of-open-access-dec-31.html).

3. Glenda Proctor, "No longer free for all," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 181(11) (2009), p. E245 (www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/181/11/E245).

4. For more details, see *Open*DOAR: The Directory of Open Access Repositories website (www.opendoar.org), or the ROAR: Registry of Open Access Repositories website (roar.eprints.org).

5. Canadian Association of Research Libraries, "Canadian Institutional Repositories," website content, n.d. (www.carl-abrc.ca/projects/institutional_repositories/canadian_projects-e.html).

6. See the PubMed Central Canada website (http://pubmedcentralcanada.ca).

7. See the SHERPA JULIET website (www.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet).

8. Peter Suber, "Open Access Policies at Universities**,"** *SPARC Open Access Newsletter* 141 (January 2, 2010) (www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/01-02-10.htm).

9. EPrints ROARMAP, "ROARMAP (Registry of Open Access Repository Material Archiving Policies)," website content, n.d. (www.eprints.org/openaccess/policysignup).

10. In Canada, there two such funds, the Open Access Authors Fund at the University of Calgary, which is nearly two years old, and the Author Fund at the University of Ottawa, which was announced in December 2009. Information about the Calgary fund is at available at the University of Calgary library website (http://library.ucalgary.ca/services/for-faculty/open-access-authors-fund-0). Information about the Ottawa fund is available at the University of Ottawa website (www.oa.uottawa.ca/uo-initiatives-afund.jsp?language=en).

11. In some situations, presses are officially joining with libraries, as part of a broader organization, such as at the University of Calgary, or as part of the library itself, such as at the University of Michigan.

12. See the Synergies website (www.synergiescanada.org).

13. The open access position statement is available at the CLA website, under "Position Statements" (www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Position_Statements). More information

about the CLA Open Access Interest Group is available at the CLA website, under "Interest Groups" (www.cla.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Open_Access_Interest_Group&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=6309).

Table 1: Basic Open Access Resources

Basic Open Access Resources
Peter Suber's Open Access Overview: www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm
SPARC "Open Access 101" video: www.vimeo.com/6973160
CARL Open Access webpage: www.carl-abrc.ca/projects/open_access/open_access-e.html

Table 2: Different types of OA

	Gratis	Libre
Green	Free to read; archived in a repository	Free to read and reuse; archived in a repository
Gold	Free to read; published that way	Free to read and reuse; published that way

Adapted from a conceptual model by Peter Suber and Stevan Harnad (www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2008/08/greengold-oa-and-gratislibre-oa.html).