

Open Access in Canada – Overview and Update

By Ana Rosa Blue.

The stellar line-up of panelists for this session comprised of:

- Heather G. Morrison, Project Coordinator, BC Electronic Library Network;
- Andrew Waller, Serials Librarian – Collections Services, University of Calgary Library;
- Donald Taylor, Acting Head, Document Delivery Services, SFU Library;
- Devon Greyson, Information Specialist, UBC Centre for Health Services and Policy Research.

They presented a broad overview of open access and Open Access initiatives across Canada, including the latest on funding mandates, academic library support for open access, and a special focus on health librarianship.

Each panelist brought a unique perspective on this topic. The Open Access movement is defined as a "...worldwide effort to provide free online access to scientific and scholarly research literature, especially peer-reviewed journal articles and their preprints." (Suber 2009)

It was so exciting that four passionate advocates of this movement were amongst us during the BCLA conference in Burnaby in April! The one-hour and fifteen minutes, however, was not nearly enough time to do justice to this fascinating subject. Following is a very brief synopsis of the session.

Heather Morrison is a well-known open access advocate and author of the scholarly blog *The Imaginary Journal of Poetic Economics*. She discussed the interesting difference between what is "Gratis," meaning 'free to read' and "Libre," meaning 'free to reuse'. Heather is currently working on a forthcoming book, *Scholarly Communications for Librarians* (Chandos Publishing).

Don Taylor is the electronic resources librarian at Simon Fraser University. He manages most aspects of the e-journals collection, including the e-journals database, licenses, and statistics and has similar responsibilities for e-books. He also looks after the

licensing of databases and has a keen interest in usage statistics. Don discussed Canadian Open Access mandates, especially as they relate to health sciences funders.



Donald Taylor, Devon Greyson, Andrew Waller and Heather Morrison. Photo by Sandra Wong.

Andrew Waller regularly speaks and writes on Open Access and other topics, including e-journal licensing and management; the USA PATRIOT Act and related legislation; and systematic downloading. Andrew is the "Licensing & Access" editor for *The Serials Librarian*. His presentation focused on the University Response to Open Access. The idea of 'Open Access', as we know it, comes out of a university milieu, where the inclination has been to support, promote and create Open Access content.

Devon Greyson is a faculty member in the women's studies program at Capilano University, and adjunct faculty at UBC's SLAIS. An active member of the BCLA Information Policy Committee, Devon writes for the Social Justice Librarian blog and will be taking over as President of the Health Libraries Association of BC just as this issue of the BCLA Browser is rolled out.

Devon's presentation focused on the uniqueness of health information within the whole Open Access movement. There is a moral imperative for Open Access coming from various sectors: the consumer

health movement and government accountability being just two of them. Devon concluded by pointing out the trends to watch in this fascinating area.

This fascinating session was sponsored by the Health Libraries Association of BC, the BCLA Information Policy Committee and the BCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee. The enthusiasm of the presenters for the topic was intoxicating, and the audience was left hungry for more. It is hoped that, in the future, more in-depth presentations on Open Access can be organized on this ever-growing and important topic.

The PowerPoint presentations to this session are available at: <http://eprints.rclis.org/16087/>

Bibliography

Suber, Peter. *Open Access timeline*. February 9, 2009. <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/timeline.htm> (accessed June 9, 2009).

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