

IPC Salon: Open Access week

By Allison Trumble.

To celebrate Open Access week this year, BCLA's Information Policy Committee hosted a salon with Brian Owen. Owen is the Managing Director for the Public Knowledge Project, which developed Open Journal Systems, an open source publishing platform for scholarly journals. He is also the Associate University Librarian for Technology Services and Special Collections at Simon Fraser University Library and in 2012 he chaired the joint CARL/CRKN Open Access Working Group.

The salon

About a dozen people met on the evening of October 23rd at the Heartwood Community Café in Vancouver (formerly Rhizome, where previous salons had been held) to hear Owen speak about the challenges of funding and sustaining open access initiatives, and to participate in the discussion.

Open Access in scholarly publishing

The conversation was quite lively and jumped around to various issues and challenges that the Open Access movement faces. Partly because of the background of the guest speaker, but also because of where the movement has been most active, much of the discussion about Open Access focused on the world of scholarly publishing. Owen had brought along several of his colleagues from the Public Knowledge Project, who were able to weigh in about technical and administrative aspects of PKP.

Open Access & Open Source Software

One of the main points that Owen touched on was the connection between the Open Source Software movement and the Open Access movement. Many of the Open Access projects that are currently

moving forward are built upon open source software, and would likely not be possible without it. Open source software has in many cases been quite successful in sustaining projects over the long term, but often funding remains quite fragile and precarious.

Funding Open Access

Owen was clear to point out that there is still no surefire model of funding OA projects. If there is such a thing, it has yet to be tried, so he emphasized that experimentation with different funding models should be encouraged at this juncture – it's still not evident what will or won't work over the long term.

The future of Open Access

This was a big takeaway from the evening: that the future of OA is very much up in the air. The forms we are still trying to define and understand now – things like electronic journals, mega-journals and repositories – are ever changing and may in the future become even more difficult to distinguish from one another. New forms and funding models will continue to emerge, and by encouraging creativity within library systems hopefully we librarians can contribute to some of those innovations.

Future salons

The Information Policy Committee plans to hold more salons in the new year, so keep your eye on the IPC listserv for announcements.

Allison Trumble is the Salon coordinator for BCLA's Information Policy Committee. She is also an MLIS candidate at the iSchool at UBC and is currently on a co-op placement at UBC's Koerner Library.