

Report on Open Access Publishing at the College of Education,  
Health, and Human Development, University of Canterbury, New  
Zealand

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## Summary

Open access publications are those where following the publication itself, the publishers allow anyone to access the article or publication to read, or download without any restriction. It is believed that publishing in open access journals can increase the visibility of the publication, although uncertainties prevail. In a bid to improve the PBRF ratings, the College research committee in its monthly meeting agreed to organise an Open Access Seminar in the college.

The seminar was organised on 4th of June, 2015, Thursday. Four speakers were identified. They were: Peter Lund and Anton Angelo from the University of Canterbury Central Library and Research Unit, Peter Binfield from PeerJ, and Virginia Barbour from Australian Open Access Support Group. The topics of the seminar included a brief introduction to open access publishing and the state of the scenario in NZ and Australia and exploration of the issues around green and gold open access, and future directions as to what can be done to increase participation in open access. The seminar was also designed to be an open to all, and free flowing discussion.

This seminar followed a format of webinar and on the spot presentations, questions and answers. A web based page was set up using the openly accessible Adobe Connect "room" where participants could connect even if they were not able to attend in person. Dr Binfield and Barbour were overseas speakers and they connected using the webinar (Adobe Connect). Mr Lund and Angelo were local speakers and they came to the meeting hall directly and spoke. A resource website was set up and the event was recorded for later viewing. The event was publicised across the university and through online channels.

About 30 individuals attended the meeting in person, and ten participants joined online. Mr Lund introduced the concept of open access at the University of Canterbury, and introduced the concepts of gold and green open access; Mr Angelo introduced the concepts of creative commons, and Drs Binfield and Barbour discussed models of open access and the situation in Australia. The floor was open for questions, and clarifications and discussions from the audience participation.

Key takeaway lessons from the seminar included: at the University of Canterbury, scholars are active in publishing in Open Access channels; green open access is popular in Australia and in New Zealand; newer channels and novel publishing models utilising the Open Access formats are emerging and becoming popular; while some reservations about quality in open access exist, quality of peer review in OA journals were at par.

## Introduction

In a recent meeting of the research committee of the College of Education, Health and Human Development ("College"), the committee members discussed ways of increasing the performance based research funding (PBRF) rating of the college as a whole and ways of rapidly publishing in high impact journals. This discussion led to a suggestion that publishing in Open Access Journals may be beneficial in achieving shorter publication time turn around. Open access publishing refers to those channels of publishing where the articles or research information do not reside behind a pay wall and anyone can read them. While the publication itself is free for browsing and download for the end users, in some instances, the authors are required to pay money to get published (Suber, 2002) .

In general, it is believed that articles published in open access journals eventually reach a larger audience and have higher impacts compared with articles published in toll-based journals (Harnad, Brody, & Hilf, 2004) . It is also believed that publishing in open access journals may lead to shorter period of peer review times and faster publishing turnaround. Given the nature of funding for open access journals ("author pays" model where the authors are required to pay for publication costs or article processing charges (APC), doubts exist as to the overall quality of papers published in open access journals versus publishing in the traditional closed format toll-based journals (Antelman, 2004). These issues were discussed in the college research committee meeting and in the end, it was decided to organise an Open Access Publishing related seminar at the College.

The purpose of this seminar would be to discuss various issues related to publishing in open access. Specifically, it was decided that in this seminar, invited speakers would discuss available models of publishing in Open Access journals and repositories. Members of the audience would ask questions – this seminar was proposed to be an interactive platform for dissemination and discussion of ideas around open access publishing. There was emphasis on how this process might lead to shorter publishing turnaround. This seminar was proposed to be organised at the College on 4th of June, 2015 and the seminar was decided to be made accessible to all PBRF eligible members of the staff of the College as well as widely to the PhD students and indeed any interested person to attend. Dr Kathryn MackInven (KM) and Dr Arindam Basu (AB) would be convening the event.

## Organisation of the Event

In organising the seminar, the convenors considered the best time for the seminar, format of the seminar, and the need for dissemination of information. The research committee members thought that the best time

to organise might be around lunchtime as this time would likely to be free for most staff who can travel to the College campus for the meeting. It was decided to provide food and refreshments for the attendees. Using the University of Canterbury's confluence wiki system a website was set up so that attendees and others can learn more about the seminar following organisation of the seminar. The information wiki is available at the following page: Open Access Publishing Seminar

The speakers were selected from within the University and from outside based on their expertise and reputation within the Open Access community. At the university of Canterbury, Peter Lund, who was then the research support official at the library agreed to talk about the experience of Open Access in New Zealand and share data on the use of Open Access at the University of Canterbury. Anton Angelo, also from the research support office, at the library of the university agreed to discuss two important aspects of open access publishing - the various models of creative commons licensing and the use of green open access - where scholars publish in pre-print servers. The creative commons licensing refer to a model of usage and dissemination rights, where the authors decide to either waive their rights of ownership of the intellectual work that they have done and decide to "give it away" to the community or to the readership to "use it in whatever derivative manner" or to retain some rights of ownership (Lessig, 2004). As considerable uncertainties exist in the usage and meaning and use of creative commons licensing issues, Anton's topic was thought to provide important perspective to the issue of open access and was considered fit for presentation.

From outside of the university, the convenors invited two professionals - Dr Peter Binfield and Dr Virginia Barbour. Dr Binfield is the co-founder of the PeerJ publishing platform. The PeerJ platform is a new format of publishing of scholarly article and follows an open access process (Binfield, 2014). In this model, the author groups need to pay a one time fee for publishing in PeerJ and the preprint repositories are free. Dr Binfield has also extensively written on open access journal and publishing. Dr Virginia Barbour is the chairperson of the Australian Open Access Support Group. She agreed to discuss her experience in Australia and how Australian academics are using open access publishing. Dr Binfield and Dr Barbour thus brought in an in-depth "from the field" experience to the seminar.

After selecting the speakers, venue, and time for the seminars, the convenors sent out invitations about this seminar and contacted the relevant online forums where the news of this seminar was disseminated. The news and invitation for this seminar was distributed through the University of Canterbury's internal news media dissemination channels and newsletters. In addition, the news of this seminar was disseminated using the CC-NZ (the creative commons New Zealand) online discussion group. Several people, outside of the university, who accessed the online webpages and announcements, expressed interest to attend the seminar but it was impossible for them to attend in person. Therefore, in addition to the face to face seminar, an electronic version of the seminar was also planned. Initially, it was planned to host the session using Skype.



Figure 1: Open Access Publishing Resource Page

Later, a different system based on a more comprehensive system of showing video, audio, and presentation and document sharing system was adopted.

The video, audio, and document sharing system that was adopted for this seminar was based on the University of Canterbury based Adobe Connect System. In addition, Skype was used as well as backup in case there were errors in connection. In addition, video recording of the sessions were also arranged. The video was later processed and uploaded to youtube for wider dissemination. The youtube video is available at the following location: YouTube Video

## Lecture Notes from the Speakers

The seminar was scheduled on 4th June, at the College between 11 AM and 1 PM. About 30 people attended the seminar and about 10 more people logged in at the Adobe connect webpage and participated in questions and answers. After a brief introduction from one of the convenors, the sequence of the presentations was as follows: Mr Peter Lund, Dr Peter Binfield, Mr Anton Angelo, and Dr Virginia Barbour. The floor was afterwards kept open for questions and answers.

Peter Lund in his opening speech discussed the importance of open access and the contribution of open

access publishing to the scholarship at the University of Canterbury. He narrated anecdotes about the impact of open access publishing on articles that scholars at the University have written. He described the difference between different forms of open access, namely the green open access where authors publish in pre-print repositories – where the publications are not peer reviewed for quality control or inspection for their factual and scientific accuracy. The other model of open access publishing is gold open access. In gold open access model, the article or the report is published in peer reviewed journals and undergoes strict quality control through the process of peer review. In his presentation, Peter Lund mentioned about the growth in open access publications. Mr Lund also mentioned that the University of Canterbury were in the process of establishment of grants or funds to enable researchers at the UC to publish in open access publications to cover the costs of publications. Peter Binfield explained the model of Peerj and the benefits that open access publishing using the Peerj model can bring forth. In the PeerJ model of publishing, the publications can be both preprint (hosted in the peerj preprint servers) or gold open access, where the articles are published in peer reviewed journals and they undergo usual peer review process. Anton Angelo in his lecture described the different "flavours" of creative commons licencing and addressed concepts of creative commons licencing. These licencings range between authors having fine grained control over the contents through complete liberation of the authors' rights so that anyone accessing these sources can modify and use them. In the questions and answers during his presentation, it was mentioned whether these settings of creative commons could be changed after publications, and it was noted that these were not amenable to change, and need to be set the first time they were set for an individual publication. Finally, Virginia Barbour mentioned the role of open access and how open access was being used in Australia and possibly in New Zealand. She mentioned that the green model of open access, where articles were published in preprint archives were popular modes of adoption in Australia and possibly in New Zealand as well. After the lecture notes, the floor was open for discussions, and several key questions were raised. One of the major issues of concerns from the audience was whether publishing in open access compromised with the quality of access. The speakers were unanimous in expressing the view that publication mode was unrelated to the academic quality of an article that was published. Another question that was raised in the audience discussions was about the speed of peer review and whether the speed of peer review was related to open access publications. While it was observed that peer review process was often faster for the open access journals as compared with the closed access or toll-based access journals, there was a need for systematic study to test whether this was true.

## Lessons from the Seminar

This seminar was productive in several counts. As a result of this seminar, a set of core resource was made available to anyone who'd like to learn more about open access publishing and learn about open access. Second, a video was made available both on the resource page as well as on video that would enable anyone to view and watch the proceedings of the day and learn more about not only open source publishing, but also the ongoing efforts at the University of Canterbury. Third, anecdotal evidence indicate that several academics have considered publishing in open access journals or putting their work in open access repositories.

Beyond establishment of the resources, the seminar encouraged academics to publish in open access journals and repositories. It also allayed and addressed concerns of academics about the association between open access publishing and quality of studies that would otherwise be available on non-peer reviewed or toll based accessible journals. Finally, the format of this seminar provided a model where an academic seminar can be organised using both offline and online resources available within the university with minimal costs.

In summary, this was the first open access publishing seminar organised at the University of Canterbury. It was well attended and raised several interesting issues about the value of open access and the need for initial selection of the status of setting the access control as far as creative commons based licencing is concerned (understanding the issues around creative commons is important), and there may not be real basis of the perceived lack of quality and open access mode of publication. As open access publication will become more popular, seminars such as this can provide important archives of existing knowledge at different time points and have archival value.

Subsequent to this seminar, the committee members were briefed about the organisation of this activity and the effort was appreciated. The committee also acknowledged the contribution of Mr Peter Lund, Mr Anton Angelo, Dr Peter Binfield, Dr Virginia Barbour and Senior Lecturer Lawrence Walker, who organised with the online component of the Adobe Connect software.

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