

Bringing Open Scholarship and Open Education to the Public through an Academic/Public Library Collaboration

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What was the project?

A series of workshops to teach members of the public about the academic publishing environment and how to access scholarly material without an institutional affiliation.

Background

- Accessing scholarly material without an institutional affiliation is really expensive.
- Many researchers don't have institutional affiliations (e.g. non-profit groups).
- Other people without institutional affiliation (e.g. medical practitioners) need to keep up with current research.
- A workshop on this topic for students at the University of Guelph was successful.

What did we do?

- Developed a partnership between the University of Guelph Library and Guelph Public Library to co-develop a workshop aimed at the general public.
- Ran a workshop called "*Think Like A Scholar: How to find free and Open Access scholarly resources*" at Guelph Public Library and 10C Shared Space.

What was in the workshop?

- Scholarly Publishing 101. (What is scholarly publishing? Why does it matter?)
- Research resources available through Guelph Public Library.
- Copyright. (e.g. Why can libraries copy articles for interlibrary loan?)
- Searching for scholarly articles. (How to find articles on specific topics.)
- Why does it cost so much to access articles and where does the money go?
- How to access articles without an institutional affiliation. (Alumni/community access, repositories, ILL, social media, etc.)

Did you talk about Sci-Hub?

- Yes. And Library Genesis and other methods of dubious legality.
- A section called "Is it Legal?!" discussed legal aspects of posting and accessing scholarly material.

Results

- Over a dozen attendees (including current students, graduates, members of public).
- Slides have over 100 downloads and were shared by local independent research organizations.

What challenges did we face?

- We didn't know how much attendees would know about academic publishing.
- There was some difficulty in meshing public/academic content. (We provide different types of services in different ways.)
- Not overpromising the help we could provide. (e.g. The public library can ILL items but someone looking to do a full literature review might overwhelm them.)

What could be done differently next time?

- Targeted outreach. (Reach out to specific community groups and organizations.)
- More emphasis on search techniques. (Requested by attendees.)
- Remember to print the assessment forms.

What's next?

- Continued partnership between both libraries.
- More workshops in 2020: *Copyright for Everyone* and *Think Like a Scholar*.

Resources

- Slides from "*Think Like a Scholar*" workshop: <https://zenodo.org/record/3375672>
- FORCE2019 presentation on workshops: <https://zenodo.org/record/3497096>
- This poster: <https://osf.io/2y4gm/>