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Pop!

Issue N°1

Issue N°2

Issue N°3

About

Pop! ■ Issue N°3 ■ Introduction

# Introduction

## *Engaging Open Scholarship*

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Over the past decade, open scholarship has become a key component of our increasingly networked world. Open scholarship encompasses open access to research, open datasets of academic and government material,

and open educational resources. Proponents for open scholarship assert that in order to reach its full potential research output needs to be widely accessible to many different communities, instead of locked behind paywalls or presented in unfindable or incomprehensible formats (Eve 2014; Fitzpatrick 2011, 2019; Willinsky 2006). This idea is gaining prominence in institutional, governmental, and international contexts as public calls for accountability grow and library budgets shrink due to mounting costs of research access.

For several years now, the Implementing New Knowledge Environments (INKE) Partnership<sup>1</sup> has considered the concept of *open social scholarship*: “academic practice that enables the creation, dissemination, and engagement of open research by specialists and non-specialists in accessible and significant ways” (INKE Partnership n.d.). Open social scholarship builds on the already complex and layered concept of open scholarship. This mode of engagement recognizes that scholarly communication is more than the mere reproduction and sharing of data, and pushes into spaces of *social* connection and engagement. Open social scholarship takes seriously the possibilities of engaging across publics and working alongside those who are not always considered to be authoritative knowledge creators. And yet, as Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren F. Klein remind their readers in *Data Feminism* (2020), even activities like crowdsourcing can be fraught with challenges around who does and does not have the time—and thus, resources—to participate (180). Charlotte Roh, Harrison W. Inefuku, and Emily Drabinski suggest “scholarly communications is a series of material practices that could be constructed otherwise—rooted in equity and justice rather [than]

colonization and dominance” (2020, 49). This transformative time for scholarly communication raises questions around what should be left behind in the transition from closed, academic-only publishing to more openly accessible and collaborative methods, while also acknowledging and drawing on the social aspects of much pre-digital scholarship (see, e.g., Benkler 2006; Bollier 2006; Borgman 2007; Burke 2000, 2012; Siemens 2002). Open social scholarship provides opportunities to reimagine what research and scholarship might be for a present and a future facing significant challenges. The current problematizing and reimagining of scholarly communication is crucial, and reflects an evolving and emerging set of values also connected to open social scholarship as an idea and mode of activity.

In December 2020, participants at a Canadian–Australian event called *Engaging Open Social Scholarship* considered many of the issues, concerns, and hot topics at work in open social scholarship. This combined event built on previous years’ meetings and discussions of both the INKE Partnership and the Canadian–Australian Partnership for Open Scholarship (CAPOS).<sup>2</sup> *Engaging Open Social Scholarship* represented the second annual gathering of the CAPOS group and the eighth annual winter gathering of the INKE Partnership. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic, *Engaging Open Social Scholarship* was an online event spanning three days. This format allowed for over 200 students, librarians, researchers, and administrators from around the world to discuss current and future endeavours in, and strategies for, open social scholarship, including specific deliberations on scholarly communication, open access, and community engagement. Event presenters

hailed from Australia, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, with registered attendees from all of these nations as well as Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Egypt, India, Lebanon, South Africa, and Turkey. Such a global constituency provided multiple perspectives on open scholarship considerations across geographic contexts. This special issue is representative of some of the key event proceedings and discussions from *Engaging Open Social Scholarship*.

The INKE Partnership is a North American-based research network with the goal of fostering open social scholarship, as noted above. For over a decade, the INKE Partnership has brought together experts and leaders with the aim of realizing open, inclusive, and publicly engaged scholarship that serves both academic interests and society at large. This group includes researchers, partners, librarians, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and research staff from across Canada as well as Australia. Coordinated by the Canadian Social Knowledge Institute (C-SKI)<sup>3</sup> at the University of Victoria, the INKE Partnership works to address challenges with scholarly communication by providing broad access to research, community training, public engagement, and policy recommendations. This public-facing work helps to make open social scholarship in Canada both viable and usable.

CAPOS is a collaboration between Canadian and Australian researchers, policy makers, libraries, computing organizations, research groups, and postsecondary institutions to advance the understanding of, and resolve crucial issues in, the production, distribution, and engagement of scholarship that is open and digital. This partnership draws on both countries' posi-

tive track records of participating in and influencing the international consideration of open social scholarship issues. CAPOS works towards implementing elements of open scholarship policy and practice from the international sphere in national, regional, and local contexts—work that is possible because of the complementarity of governmental and academic institutional structures and legal frameworks in Canada and Australia. In sum, CAPOS aims to make open scholarship more efficient and more impactful for the specific national contexts of Canada and Australia, while feeding back into and participating in larger, global conversations around the creation, sharing, and preservation of research outputs.

INKE Partnership and CAPOS goals and objectives run through this special issue, and the 10 articles included can be grouped into the following categories: *Activities & Initiatives*, *Community Standards & Approaches*, and *Proposals for Change*. These categories are representative of key elements of open social scholarship. Some authors discuss ongoing projects, studies, or initiatives they are undertaking in open, digital contexts, while others comment on current or proposed methods that increase the efficiency or breadth of our shared work. Still other contributors reflect on their visions for the future of open scholarship. The first grouping, *Activities & Initiatives*, brings together authors who undertake open social scholarship on the ground. [Chris Adamson](#) argues for the value of public scholarship in contemporary academia and provides insight into a public scholarship workshop he coordinated with colleagues at the University of South Dakota. In their paper, [Rachel Starry and Krystal Boehlert](#) describe the history of a digital scholarship

event series hosted virtually by the authors' home institution (University of California, Riverside). The authors outline the evolution of the series as they attempted to build community remotely during a pandemic, incorporate participants' feedback, and plan future iterations of the series. [Geoffrey Rockwell](#), [Kaylin Land](#), and [Andrew MacDonald](#) explore Spyral, a notebook environment that allows scholars to combine code, step-by-step instructions in unstructured text, and research outputs for others to learn from and replicate. They also discuss how this notebook model promotes collaboration in a way that challenges the idea of scholarship as a solitary endeavour. In his contribution, [Mark Turin](#) traces the history and open-access approach to monograph publication of the Open Book Publishers' World Oral Literature series. In the process, Turin details some of the exploitative and otherwise problematic practices of certain academic presses before concluding with a call for open, equitable, and innovative forms of publication.

The second cluster, *Community Standards & Approaches*, presents work on how open scholarship is undertaken and where there is room for improvement. [Lisa Goddard](#) discusses Persistent Identifiers (PIDs), which are used to provide stable references to an individual's research publications. She glosses key features, well-known examples of PIDs, and some of the primary benefits and challenges associated with identifiers from a variety of research environment perspectives. In their paper, [Luis Meneses](#), [Lynne Siemens](#), [Ray Siemens](#), and [William R. Bowen](#) consider best practices for large-scale digital, collaborative projects, providing concrete examples. In "Political Economy and Diplomats of Open Social Scholarship," [Shawn](#)

[Martin](#) addresses the problem of governance in the field of scholarly communication. He brings theoretical approaches to regulation, professional communication, and diplomatics (from history, sociology, and information science, respectively) to bear on current bibliodiversity conversations and practices.

The third grouping of papers, *Proposals for Change*, draws together papers that examine where and how open social scholarship could evolve. [Danny Kingsley](#) argues that there are insufficient training opportunities in the realm of open scholarship. One strategic approach to this issue, Kingsley argues, would be to develop an international curriculum that standardizes open scholarship skill training, with a focus on reproducibility as well as research quality and integrity.

[Amanda Lawrence](#) takes issue with the term *grey literature*, arguing that it is too general and too broad to be useful. Such generic categorization is a challenge to the viability of varied knowledge outputs, claims Lawrence, since “without appropriate terminology for this diverse publishing ecosystem it is overlooked and therefore not managed effectively and efficiently with appropriate standards and infrastructure.” Reflecting on her featured talk from *Engaging Open Social Scholarship*, [Roxanne Missingham](#) suggests that graduate theses and dissertations should become much more prominent in the current digital scholarly communication ecosystem, including through open access publication.

As the contributions included in this special issue demonstrate, there are many different facets of open social scholarship. Across CAPOS and the INKE Partnership, researchers, librarians, academic staff, students, and emerging scholars are considering what it



means to do their work more openly and more socially. In *Generous Thinking*, Kathleen Fitzpatrick writes: “Making our work more available is the first step in creating a richer connection with readers outside our inner circles, readers who might not only care about what we do but be encouraged to support it” (2019, 137). The contributors included here take availability and access seriously and build off of such availability and access to foster those richer connections across and among varied communities. Such commitment is critical for an increase in engagement with open social scholarship, now and in the future.

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#### Notes:

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1. For more information on the INKE Partnership see [inke.ca](https://inke.ca) . For the proceedings from previous gatherings see

Arbuckle, Hendery, Meneses, and Siemens 2020;  
 Arbuckle, Meneses, and Siemens 2019; Meneses,  
 Arbuckle, and Siemens 2019; Huculak 2019; Arbuckle,  
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 Siemens 2015; Arbuckle, Crompton, and Mauro 2014. ↩

2. See [inke.ca/canadian-australian-partnership-for-open-scholarship/](https://inke.ca/canadian-australian-partnership-for-open-scholarship/) for more information on CAPOS. ↩  
[10.54590/pop.2021.001](https://doi.org/10.54590/pop.2021.001)
3. See [c-ski.ca](https://c-ski.ca) . ↩

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