Cultivating a Protective Hedge for the Vineyard

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Director, ATLA
NFAIS 2017 Open Access Conference
OUTLINE

• SETTING THE TABLE – RESEARCHERS AND LIBRARIAN PERCEPTIONS
• HOW IS THIS INFLUENCING OUR CURRENT APPROACH
• FINAL REFLECTIONS
RESEARCHERS: ITHAKA S+R

- Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Religious Studies Scholars (Feb 8, 2017)
- Research Completed in 2016
- Ethnographic Study of the changing research methods and practices of active religious studies scholars in the United States
- Collaborative project: Interviews were conducted by staff at 18 institutions and at ATLA
- Report, authored by Danielle Cooper and Roger Schonfeld
  
# 13 LOCAL REPORTS

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<th>Institution</th>
<th>No. Interviews</th>
<th>Faculty of</th>
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FACULTY PERCEPTION OF OA: AWARENESS / UNDERSTANDING

• Often Limited Understanding:
  • Some needed the concept defined for them
  • even at institutions where faculty had published in OA, peer-reviewed publications, they found that the interviewees did not understand the basic characteristics of scholarly OA.

• Often Incorrect –
  • Many think Online = Open

• Unsure of legal implications – viewed as complicated
FACULTY PERCEPTION OF OA: OBJECTIONS

• Audience: Interested in the audience the publication reaches, intentionally know that they will be part of a specific conversation. Perception that OA journals don’t have defined audience.

• Tenure / Perceived Quality:
  • “won’t count towards my portfolio” – Vanderbilt
  • University Press (presumably traditional subscription) provides “instant credibility” – Temple
  • In most fields of theology and religious studies, OA journals have not gained the respect of the tenure and promotion process – Emory
  • Interviewees did not show much willingness to challenge tenure and promotion process – Columbia
  • “I’ve been told not to” – Baylor
  • Some didn’t pass judgement – admitted they didn’t have enough info – Asbury

• Habit – many had established relationships with traditional, subscription publishers

• Funding – Perception that the APCs are expensive, typically not covered by grants / institutions
FACULTY PERCEPTION OF OA: GOOD NEWS – SOME FAVORABLE

• Engaging with the public viewed as a public service – Vanderbilt
• Generally viewed favorably – access to information – BYU
• Helps extends the scholarly conversation beyond Europe and North America – Emory
• OA may help scholars find a wider audience for research – Harvard. Baylor
• “Faculty support the idea of open access and believe that freely available scholarly content is a good thing” – Temple
• Theme that publishing in OA may be something they would do once they had tenure
LIBRARIAN SUPPORT FOR OA

• Libraries' commitment to OA publishing: Libraries promote OA publishing as a viable alternative to traditional print publishing to deans and administrators (Columbia)

• Harvard’s commitment – DASH: Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard (OA repository)

• Education and outreach efforts to foster greater awareness, understanding, and promote discoverability (Temple & Yale)

• ATLA – recurrent theme in feedback from members, “please more open-access titles.”
ATLA PRODUCT OFFERINGS

• ATLA Manages the editorial Scope:
  • ATLA Religion Database® (ATLA RDB®)
  • ATLASerials® (ATLAS®)
  • ATLA Catholic Periodical and Literature Index® (ATLA CPLI®)

• Partner Products
  • Old Testament Abstracts (OTA)
  • New Testament Abstracts (NTA)
REVIEWS PROCESS FOR ADDING TITLES
INITIAL STAGES

• Editorial quality of the journal – demonstrate the hallmarks of good scholarship
• Editorial scope of the journal – published research covers areas of the discipline we have identified as strategically important for additional coverage
• Editorial scope of the journal – published research fills general gaps or extends the coverage of the discipline in our databases (evaluate level of current need / interest)
REVIEW PROCESS FOR ADDING TITLES
SUBSEQUENT STAGES

• Steps are not necessarily limited to OA journals; these are more important as a result of OA
• Editorial board – Is it real? Status of the members?
• Peer-review process – Is it clear & well-defined? Validate that the stated process is followed?
• Articles – staff complete a closer vetting of the quality of the articles. Concerns about plagiarism? Are the author real? If there are any concerns, possibly reach out to a few authors.
• Industry Lists – Data point, not definitive
  • Beall: Previously, checked Beall’s black list
  • DOAJ: Viewed as a white list
RESULTS FROM THE PAST 5 YEARS

• ATLA RDB
  • Added 217 new titles to the index
  • 82 are OA, of those close to 60 are also Peer-reviewed

• ATLA CPLI
  • Added 59 new titles to the index
  • 25 are OA, of those 15 are also Peer-reviewed
HIGHLIGHTS

- Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies (Nigeria)
- Melilah – Manchester Journal of Jewish Studies (UK)
- Journal of Childhood and Religion (US)
- Anabaptist Witness (Brazil)
- Australian eJournal of Theology (Australia)
- Hispania Sacra (Spain)
- Teología y Vida (Chile)
REFLECTIONS

• Carefully curate the titles we add to the database (regardless of business model)
• Actively adding OA titles for the past 5 years
• Believe that this is enhanced visibility helps support OA
• Considering the feedback from the scholars in the Ithaka study, there is more to be done
  • Outreach and advocacy to tenure and promotion process
  • Demystify OA
  • Can we simply the process for scholars?
  • Are we speaking and participating in the right venues … go where the scholars are and present
CONTACT INFORMATION

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