Library as Journal Publisher: Partnering with Faculty

Wendy Robertson

University of Iowa

© 2010 Wendy C Robertson

Creative Commons License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License.

Comments

Slides include speaker's notes

Hosted by Iowa Research Online. For more information please contact: lib-ir@uiowa.edu.
I am a former serials cataloger, and former electronic resources librarian in acquisitions and in IT. I am currently in a digitization department where I deal with a variety of materials, including local ejournals. You can find the presentation at the URL above. The flashdrive includes a separate document that we are using and continually modifying to gather needed information. I will not be referring directly to it, but will discuss much of its content. Feel free to use the form as a starting point and edit as needed locally.
This is what I will be discussing. Note that I won’t be discussing software. A variety of software exists to manage journals and it will take care of the basic display and technological issues as well as editorial workflow. Options include open source (like Open Journal Systems) and hosted (like bepress), which we use.
I think libraries should be involved with publishing journals. There are titles of local or regional interest and some published by small societies with whom we can partner. We can also offer new options for people to create journals, highlighting the work of our institution and providing opportunities for scholars and students.
Research from 2005 indicates there are thousands of small publishers with 1-3 titles, many of these existing only in print. We are increasingly in a world where if it isn’t online it doesn’t exist. These titles remain at risk for marginalization. As libraries cut low use titles, the entire support structure for these small societies may dry up and we could lose much of this scholarship.
John Wilkin talked about the Hathi Trust at an ALA midwinter presentation. Hathi Trust is far larger in scope than a small journal publishing project, but his ideas still resonate. He stated “I think most of us would agree that performing the curatorial work needed to ensure the permanence of current and future published information is a central and unifying challenge for us, and particularly for research libraries.”

“…performing the curatorial work needed to ensure the permanence of current and future published information is a central and unifying challenge for us…”

“The effort is premised on the belief that libraries are a valuable and indeed essential part of the global information space, and that we will only continue to be so if we take active responsibility for moving our content, services and values into this information ecosystem.”


He continued by stating that creating Hathi Trust “is premised on the belief that libraries are a valuable and indeed essential part of the global information space, and that we will only continue to be so if we take active responsibility for moving our content, services and values into this information ecosystem.” I think his statement of library values and responsibilities is great and that all libraries should do what they can with these efforts.
Journals are the primary mode of communication in many fields and hold an important secondary position in fields still focused on the monograph.

The Center for Studies in Higher Education at UC Berkeley just issued a report called “Assessing the Future Landscape of Scholarly Communication”. This report makes it clear that publishing in traditional journals remains a central part of faculty publication and the tenure process.

Now I’ll talk specifically about things you should do and think about when you work with journal publishing.
Look at other sites as you develop your program.

Before you begin a journal publishing program, look at other sites to get ideas for what you will support and what type of information you should provide. Read their policies, look at the types of things they will do and the kind of information on the sites.
Think about what you will do, and what assistance you can give. This may differ for existing print or electronic vs. new titles. Consider what type of publications you will support—scholarly, literary, student, non-scholarly. Consider if you will only support titles with complete institutional affiliation or if you will also work with societies.
Will you only work with Open Access titles or will you also work with subscription titles? We reluctantly agreed to subscription titles as long as they became OA after a moving wall of no more than 24 months. Our goal is to transition the journals from subscription-based publishing to Open Access.
Standardize your policies and basic set-up as much as possible, while allowing journals to have their own look and feel.

Craft standard language that can go on every journal, including article submission agreements and general use of the content and site. This is a really good time to look at other sites to adapt existing language. Look not only at libraries that work with publishing and Open Access titles but also look at commercial publisher sites. Your software probably also has basic templates, so familiarize yourself with what information goes where most easily. You may also want to decide how different you are willing to let the titles look vs. having a more standardized appearance.
You should have default language that you suggest to editors for copyright. You want a couple of options, one for creative commons and one for copyright. You may want to run your proposed wording past your legal department. If you have a scholarly communications group, be sure to involve them, although they typically think about copyright from the author’s perspective, not from the publisher’s.
Another policy you will want to make clear for all titles is what can be put in a repository. Even OA titles should make this clear. Encourage allowing the publisher’s version (with an embargo if necessary).
Do your homework before meeting with the editors, looking at their websites and at journals in their field, and start gathering basic information for the site.

When you start working with specific editors, look at a variety of titles in that field. Also look at the faculty member’s, department’s and society’s web pages to learn as much as you can. Before the first meeting with the editors, fill out your local version of the form I previously mentioned as best you can. If you are moving an existing title online, you will have different concerns than when working with new editors. Use the form to guide your conversation, but don’t ask the editors all the questions. Don’t ask them to fill out the form either. They may not have thought about all the issues of producing a journal and they may not answer your questions directly.
It is important to involve your subject specialists. They may already have a relationship with the future editors and are great resources regarding norms for that field. You should at least let them know of the pending project as a matter of courtesy. They should be involved in promotion of the service as well as identification and prioritization of possible projects. Journal publishing will hopefully be seen as a standard library service and not an add-on done by one department.
Gather as much information as possible from the editors so that you can set things up for them and ensure the site includes necessary information.

You should consider it your responsibility to make sure that the journals include all the information needed for a good title. Things like contact information and editorial boards must be made clear on the site.
Talk to editors about general goals for journal.

Make sure the editors are clear on the aims of their journal, who the audience will be and who is publishing it. The editors may be part of multiple units and so may not have a completely clear vision for the title. If it is published by a department or society, you may need to include specific branding on the title.
Talk to the editors to make sure they have a realistic idea regarding the effort required to produce a quality journal.

Make sure the editors have really thought about the effort of editing and don’t just want one to start a journal because others have one. Look for some implication they will take it seriously. The goal isn’t to scare them off, but you do want to avoid journals that only exist for an issue or two before the editor loses focus. This is particularly important for student titles.
Clearly communicate what you will do and what is their responsibility. Their responsibilities may include asking for submissions, reviewing content, checking for plagiarism, copy editing and formatting content, grouping articles into issues, posting content, and publicizing the journal. You may want to give them information about publication ethics or links to sites that define an editors role and responsibility.

Also, if print will exist, make sure they know that the electronic version should come out no later than the print version (and likely earlier) and that the electronic version should include all content of the print, including letters to the editor. Information should be consistent between the two formats for citation. While this is the editor’s responsibility, but you need to ensure editors understand expected practices.
Editors may not have solid ideas up front regarding the design, but they know what they don’t like.

The design of the site can be one of the harder things to work out since the look and feel defines so much about a journal. The editors may not have solid ideas up front, but they will know what they don’t like. If you use an existing site for guidance, make sure they aren’t about to redesign it. A journal also may be able to hire a designer to help with their logo and their look and feel. A recent graduate can often be found for low cost because they want the experience and credit.
Learn what special pages of content may be needed for the individual needs of the journal.

You don’t want to force all the journals into exactly the same structure. Each journal has a different personality, including unique content needs. Find out what they want. This likely will be influenced by what they already have or are doing. The special content could be an RSS feed from a blog or even something like a zotero group showing recent publications.
One example is that the Medieval Feminist Forum needed a page with information for book reviewers and a listing of books that are available to review. Similarly, Walt Whitman Quarterly review needed an announcements page.
Poroi wanted a journal level page for contributors since many of the contributors have written for more than one issue.
For the Walt Whitman Quarterly Review, they had an out of date page listing book reviews. We created a page that pulls all the reviews and lists them on a separate page.
Be sure the preferred citation style for submissions is clear. Look for existing standards in the field for submissions.

Talk to the editors about how formatting for initial submissions and final submissions. Some OA titles ask authors to do most of the formatting so articles are publication ready. It may be helpful for the journal to post a template authors can use. Be sure their preferred citation style is clear. Citation formatting may be aided if people submit files from a citation manager. Look at other publications for existing guidelines/standards in the field.
Subscription titles are more complex. We are still working out some of the details. Make sure it is clear how to set up subscriber access and who to contact. Ask electronic resources staff to make sure everything is clear. Also remember that subscriptions mean licensing and standard expectations like perpetual access, grace periods and usage statistics.

Regarding perpetual access, can you give subscribers access to only the issues they paid for or is it all or nothing? For our titles, it is all or nothing, but with a moving wall, so we have decided we will not turn off institutional access until the last issue they paid for has become OA. We have also stated there is a 90-day grace period for renewing subscribers and that we don’t provide usage statistics. You may want to keep all institutional subscriptions on the same cycle to make things easier. For MFF we had 2 institutions on an odd renewal cycle so we extended their subscriptions to make our lives easier.
Regarding licensing, you probably want to follow SERU guidelines so you don’t need to deal with lawyers.

Also, you may be able to convince them to make some of the content OA right away, such as book reviews and announcements.
If you are able to digitize back volumes, pay particular attention to color pages and illustrations. Remember, you may not have the rights to scan the back content, particularly if there are illustrations. If the back content is already online, be sure to follow UKSG’s “TRANSFER Code of Practice.”
Work with your catalogers on article metadata and consider if subject work is appropriate.

If there are back issues, that also means article level metadata for back issues. Even if you aren’t scanning the back content, you should include their contents. If you are lucky, you can get metadata from the editors, but cataloging staff will need to review it. You also may want to add subjects or keywords to the metadata, especially for titles that will not be available full text. We are doing a small amount of this with Dada/Surrealism. This title is particularly close to the Libraries’ interests as we house the International Dada Archive.
Do not overestimate how much the editors know about MSWord and Adobe Acrobat, let alone Adobe InDesign or XML.

Do not overestimate the editor’s ability to use word and acrobat, let alone something like InDesign or XML. Find out if there are institutional resources to train them, or decide if you can help them. At a minimum they should have a word template to give the articles a consistent look and feel. We have created basic word templates for a couple of titles. In another case, the editors had a graduate student create a layout for the articles using InDesign.
Remind the editors to include journal citation information in the article footer and header, as well as a link back to the journal site. They should make sure that an isolated printout or download of an individual article can be easily reconnected with the journal. Remind them about branding other materials as well, such as supplementary video, images or spreadsheets.
You should do all the general set up for editor and ask them for input—don’t expect them to do anything but respond (and do the actual editing of the journal).

The whole process will go much more smoothly if you do as much set up as possible and then show it to the editors. We have had better luck getting editors to respond to something we have written than having them draft text. It saves everyone’s time if you focus your expertise on the general title set up and let them only worry about the content for their specific title.
Review the site from a variety of perspectives, including author, reviewer, indexer, ERM librarian, and instruction librarian.

When you think everything has been set up, review the site from variety of perspectives, including potential author, reader, indexer, and subscription agent. Ask additional people including the subject specialist, serials and electronic resources staff to look at the site.
There are several other things you should do for each title. Make sure the title has an ISSN. If it is a transition to online, you should request an e-ISSN. If the content has moved to more controlled software and involves a URL change, report this change as well.
Pay attention to metadata fields and how they will be exposed through OAI and potential harvested into WorldCat.

Review all the metadata fields and how you are mapping them to Dublin Core and exposing them for OAI harvesting. You may or may not have a lot of control over this, but you should at least understand what is happening. You should also make sure the data is being harvested as many places as it should be, which now includes getting it into WorldCat. Article metadata may also be submitted to DOAJ.
Think about other features that would enhance the site, such as ISBNs for reviewed books.
After the title is set up, submit it to Directory of Open Access Journals if appropriate. DOAJ journals must only be OA scholarly titles, with no embargo period. You can only submit a title after at least 5 articles have been published. You should also ensure it is cataloged locally and in OCLC, which will happen when it is assigned an ISSN. Notify link resolvers, including SFX, Serials Solutions and TDNet. You may even want to post a spreadsheet of all your titles following the KBART recommended practice. If it is a subscription title or if it was print and is now online, notify subscription agents and institutional subscribers (you should expect the editors will contact individual subscribers). If it is a migration from an old site, may wish to archive the old site (publicly on wayback machine if possible). The history of books and publishing is important here, so we make sure to archive early ejournals.
We still have several things on our to-do list. Properly archiving titles (and making this clear on the sites) is high on my to-do list.
Another thing I really should have in place is DOIs. I’m not sure how this will fit into the workflows and whether the editors will need to do something additional (or if we will do batch revision of issues).
You should keep up with new developments. This is a great way to include your serials cataloging, acquisitions and electronic resources staff in conversations. They learn of different trends and standards and they can make sure you are aware of them. Our editors are not demanding new features, but we should keep up with developments and lead the way as necessary.
Some of the things we would like to move towards include use of Creative Commons attribution license for OA titles, which is one step required to receive a SPARC Europe seal. Our one title in DOAJ is going to discuss this. We would also like to consider offering articles in a mobile-friendly format. This might simply be a reflowable pdf, but it might also be the ePub format, which is used by several devices, including the iPad. Other things to consider include citation linking and using XML and then outputting as PDF and XHTML. Our medical title might be the first to go this direction. We also would like to have more of the metadata available for possible repurposing in other ways.
This is a new experiment for me. I have started a zotero group which includes all the resources I used in this presentation. You are welcome to look at it or even join the group. I plan to add more things to the group as I find them and would love for this to be a collaborative project.
Questions?
What have I forgotten about?

wendy-robertson@uiowa.edu
This presentation by Wendy Robertson is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 United States License.