



**Navigating Support Models for OER Publishing: Case Studies
from the University of Houston and the University of
Washington**

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Title: Navigating Support Models for OER Publishing: Case Studies from the University of Houston and the University of Washington

Abstract:

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to describe programs that support Open Educational Resources (OER) publishing in academic libraries. Insights, opportunities, and challenges are shared in relation to the broader Open Education movement.

Design/methodology/approach: This paper provides two case studies describing the development of OER publishing programs at large, public research universities - the University of Houston and the University of Washington. Each program takes an Author DIY approach to publishing support and is in the early years of supporting OER adoption and creation.

Findings: These case studies demonstrate the need for a greater focus on decision making and workflows. They illuminate challenges and opportunities for librarians supporting OER initiatives, including adapting existing models of OER publishing, navigating institutional culture, moving OER programs beyond affordability, and how to sustain and scale OER programs with shifting institutional support.

Originality/value: OER is an emerging program area within academic libraries, and much of the focus has been on outreach and advocacy around affordable alternatives to commercial textbooks. Little has been written about programmatic initiatives to support OER publishing.

This paper adds unique examples to the OER literature and raises new questions around support for OER publishing.

Introduction

Open Education is a relatively young movement, with significant events in its early history taking place in the late-1990's and early-2000's (Bliss and Smith, 2017), yet it is quickly growing and holds boundless potential for higher education. Although many definitions exist for Open Education (Open Education Consortium, n.d.-a; Weller, 2014), it is generally accepted to encompass the resources, tools, and practices that allow for greater access to education, often emphasizing free access to and the ability to share and build upon educational resources (Open Education Consortium, n.d.-b; SPARC, n.d.).

Open Educational Resources (OER) are a key component of the Open Education movement, as they are educational materials that are in the public domain or released with an open license that permits "no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions" (UNESCO, n.d.). The use of OER in higher education results in financial benefits for students due to removing the costs of textbooks (Allen, 2018; Hilton III *et al.*, 2014), pedagogical benefits connected to the abilities to curate, adapt, and customize OER (Ikahihifo *et al.*, 2017; Watson *et al.*, 2017), and positive impacts on learning outcomes, including increased engagement, improved grades, and lower drop, fail, and withdrawal rates (Colvard *et al.*, 2018; Jhangiani *et al.*, 2016).

Academic libraries are often the drivers of OER initiatives (Wesolak *et al.*, 2018), and as Open Education starts to move into the mainstream of academic librarianship in the United States, new models for supporting the adoption and creation of OER are being developed. Library publishing is an emerging and innovative area with various models for publishing forms of scholarship such as journals, monographs, data sets, visualizations, and more (Bonn and Furlough, 2015; Sandy and Mattern, 2018; Schlosser, 2018). However, fewer established models exist to guide academic libraries in supporting OER publishing, especially within institutions that do not have established library publishing programs from which to draw upon existing expertise and publishing services. “OER publishing” is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor, as it can encompass faculty-authored and student-authored works in many formats, such as open textbooks, modular resources, ancillary materials, lab manuals, multimedia, or any other educational materials (Open Textbook Network, n.d.-a; Mays, 2017).

This paper shares two perspectives on developing OER publishing programs - at the University of Houston (UH) and the University of Washington (UW). Both are large, public research institutions that are new to OER support and have funding and staff resources dedicated to their respective OER programs. The case studies below illuminate the similarities and differences in their approaches to developing OER publishing support. The authors hope that these perspectives add to the growing body of knowledge around OER publishing, especially the challenges of doing so at institutions that are new to OER support. Each of these case studies are based on the authors’ first-hand knowledge from leading and assessing the OER programs at each institution.

Literature Review

For this literature review, the authors sought to identify sources that specifically discuss OER publishing in academic libraries from a programmatic perspective, rather than those that primarily address the publication of individual OER. The most common services identified for OER publishing are funding, a publishing platform, project management, and coordinating peer review services (Batchelor, 2018; Bjork, n.d.; Fisher, n.d.; Morgan, 2018; Pitcher, 2018; Ross *et al.*, 2018; Smith, 2018; Sutton and Chadwell, 2014; Waller *et al.*, 2018). Additional publishing services include print-on-demand, copyright assistance, editing or copyediting, graphic design, typesetting or formatting, marketing, obtaining an ISBN and/or DOI, and proofreading (Bjork, n.d.; Fisher, n.d.; Morgan, 2018; Pitcher, 2018; Ross *et al.*, 2018; Sutton and Chadwell, 2014; Waller *et al.*, 2018). Although there are not many examples in the literature to draw from, it was common for established OER publishing programs to offer a wide range of services, such as at Oregon State University (Fisher, n.d.; Sutton and Chadwell, 2014), Humboldt State University (Morgan, 2018), the State University of New York (Pitcher, 2018), and the University of Oklahoma (Waller *et al.*, 2018). Others take a more minimal approach to publishing support (Batchelor, 2018; Bjork, n.d.) or do not provide detailed information about the publishing support provided (Ross *et al.*, 2018; Smith, 2018).

The Open Textbook Network (OTN) (2019) describes two approaches to OER publishing: a “Publishing Program,” in which robust publishing support is provided; and “Author DIY,” wherein the library may provide a grant and a publishing platform, but the bulk of the publishing process is managed by the authors. In this article, the authors use the term “publishing program” broadly to encompass either of these approaches, and use “Author DIY” as needed to specify the

more minimal approach. The OER publishing program at Portland State University (Bjork, n.d.) has implemented something similar to the Author DIY approach, as it provides author funding, author support via a project manager and copyright assistance, and a publishing platform, but does “not provide copy editing, proofreading, layout/design or peer review services” (p. 25 of 66). The University of Texas at Arlington (McGrath, 2018) takes what could be described as a scaled-back approach to publishing support, as “the library itself serves more as a facilitator than as a publisher” (p. 36).

Developing OER publishing workflows is a challenge, especially in early stages of an institution’s involvement in an OER initiative. In response to her experience customizing an existing open textbook, Walz (2018) said “It is an understatement but hardly a surprise to say that we struggled with workflow, tools, workload, and essentially inventing a publishing processes. For a new type of project the problems we encountered are not entirely surprising—but they certainly challenged our expectations” (p. 271). While newer programs are more likely to still be developing publishing workflows, McGrath (2018) notes that Open Education in general is new for academia, and in her evaluation of six OER publishing programs at various stages of establishment, each had “yet to solidify their workflow” (p. 51). Waller et al. (2018) provide an example of workflow development over time. They describe the steady evolution of the Alternative Textbook Grant at the University of Oklahoma, which lead to a suite of services to support OER creation, including a workflow for authoring and publishing, cover design, assigning a DOI and ISBN, and utilizing the services of a project manager and of a subject specialist librarian.

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3 A common issue in regards to OER publishing programs in academic libraries is sustainability,
4 which includes concerns around funding, staffing, and time. For example, the University of
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6 Massachusetts Amherst made recommendations for ensuring sustainability of their Open
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8 Education Initiative, which included increased funding for open textbook creation, and providing
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10 faculty with release time to produce open textbooks (Smith, 2018). To create a sustainable model
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12 for the Open SUNY Textbooks program, Pitcher (2018) identified a need to hire an administrator
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14 to coordinate several aspects of the program, including copyediting, peer-review, and print-on-
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16 demand. A primary barrier to sustainability at the University of Guelph is the time-consuming
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18 nature of supporting OER creation, especially when considered in addition to the OER librarian's
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20 responsibilities around OER outreach, advocacy, and education (McGrath, 2018). When
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22 significant resources are required to sustain a program that results in limited output and cost
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24 savings for students, some libraries may determine that there isn't a strong argument for
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26 continued OER publishing support (Morgan, 2018). Essmiller et al. (2019) underwent a
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28 performance improvement process in order to develop a sustainable OER program; by
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30 establishing the OER program's alignment with the mission and values of the institution, and by
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32 identifying gaps between the current and desired states of the program, they were able to secure
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34 support and resources that contribute to its long-term sustainability.
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44 Publishing platforms are often an integral part of OER publishing programs in academic
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46 libraries, and the availability of such infrastructure contributes to the sustainability of a program
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48 (Essmiller *et al.*, 2019). In a survey of thirty-three U.S. higher education institutions, Nyland
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50 (2019) found that word processing tools were the most common technology used by faculty to
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52 author their own open textbooks, followed by the Learning Management System (LMS),
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Pressbooks, and web authoring tools, such as WordPress. Many examples of OER publishing programs found in the literature use Pressbooks as the publishing platform provided by the institution (Fisher, n.d.; McGrath, 2018; Ross *et al.*, 2018) or provided in collaboration with partners such as the Rebus Community (Batchelor, 2018; Smith, 2018). Pressbooks is a book production software built on WordPress that offers plans for educational institutions to meet the needs of OER creators, with features such as LMS integration, institutional branding, and user training (Pressbooks, n.d.). In an analysis of institutions that use Pressbooks for their OER publishing programs, McGrath (2018) found that “a major draw of Pressbooks is its ability to centralize OER production” (p. 45) on campus, suggesting that the publishing platform used can have significant impact on the workflow and level of support provided.

Although this literature review did not specifically seek out examples of collaborations between libraries and university presses, it is clear that this can be a crucial partnership that enhances the ability to provide a full range of OER publishing services (Morgan, 2018; Pitcher, 2018; Sutton and Chadwell, 2014). Other campus units also support OER publishing, such as at the University of Saskatchewan where the library, the information technology unit, the distance education unit, and the bookstore all contribute to supporting OER publishing platforms (Ross *et al.*, 2018).

Several institutions make use of external partnerships, such as with the OTN and the Rebus Community, to support their OER publishing programs (Batchelor, 2018; McGrath, 2018; Smith, 2018). The OTN is a membership-based community that advances Open Education by supporting an Open Textbook Library, connecting a community of Open Education leaders, and providing training programs around OER, including OER publishing (Open Textbook Network, n.d.-b). The Rebus Community supports collaborative OER publishing by providing a platform

for authors to create and manage their open textbook projects, including the abilities to seek contributors and guidance from a broader community, and by offering professional development related to OER publishing (Rebus Community, n.d.).

This review of existing literature shows that the development of programmatic support for OER publishing in academic libraries is relatively new, and services to support OER authors are dependent on the context for OER initiatives, existing organizational support for publishing, and availability of resources, including staff and funding. Publishing support for OER is emerging, and can take different forms and involve a range of services. The case studies described below add to the body of literature on the development of publishing services, and address how these services mirror and differ from the sustainability challenges found in the literature review examples. The case studies also allow space to question the role of traditional publishing services in OER programs, and adapt existing models for leading these programs in academic libraries.

Case Study: The University of Houston

Background

The University of Houston (UH) is a public, R1 institution located near downtown Houston, with total enrollment of more than 46,000 students in Fall 2019 (University of Houston, 2019). The OER program at UH is relatively new and experienced significant growth early on. Brought on by advocacy for textbook affordability from the Student Government Association (SGA), the establishment of an OER program received support and funding from the Provost, who tasked the University Libraries with development and implementation of the program. UH joined the

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3 OTN, and in spring 2018 hosted an on-campus workshop led by the OTN to introduce UH
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5 faculty to the benefits of open textbooks (Open Textbook Network, n.d.-c). A Provost-appointed
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7 committee, comprised of faculty, librarians, and the SGA President, developed the UH
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9 Alternative Textbook Incentive Program (ATIP), which also launched in spring 2018. A new
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11 full-time position of Open Educational Resources Coordinator was created to lead the UH OER
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13 program, and was filled after the launch of the incentive program. This position is part of the
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15 Libraries' Liaison Services Department, which includes subject liaison librarians and functional
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17 specialists.
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24 ATIP is a main component of the OER program at UH. This program provides monetary awards
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26 to instructors who adopt, adapt, or create open or alternative resources to replace required
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28 commercial texts in their courses. The awards range from \$500 to \$2,500 and can be used for
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30 any purpose, including purposes not related to the alternative textbook project. As the primary
31
32 goal of the OER program from its inception was textbook affordability, ATIP encourages
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34 instructors to adopt not only OER, but also library-sponsored resources or other online resources
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36 that are available to students at no additional cost. This places the focus of ATIP on eliminating
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38 textbook costs for students through adoption of a variety of resources, whether or not they are
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40 openly-licensed.
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47 In the first year of ATIP, sixteen alternative textbook projects were awarded with
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49 implementation to take place in the 2018-19 academic year. Of the sixteen inaugural projects, six
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51 were self-publishing projects where the instructor authored an open textbook or other resource
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53 which they made freely-available to students. Those who create original content as part of ATIP
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are strongly encouraged, but not required, to publish their work with a Creative Commons license. The six projects were a mix of self-published textbooks hosted on the faculty member's institution-provided website, self-published resources freely shared with students in the Blackboard LMS (but not open to those outside of the class), and a newly-created website for the self-published content.

Implementation

The UH Libraries (UHL) does not have an existing publishing program. Therefore, those creating open or alternative course materials had to be comfortable completing this work with minimal publishing support from the Libraries. The many publishing services *not* provided by UHL for OER creation include: project management, peer review, editing, proofreading, layout and design, book cover creation, obtaining an ISBN, and marketing. However, in response to faculty interest in OER creation, the OER Coordinator has made incremental enhancements over the past two years to the publishing support offered through the OER program. Learning about the Author DIY approach (Open Textbook Network, 2019) provided an appropriate framework for thinking about OER publishing, as the UH OER program offers funding via ATIP and access to a publishing tool, but does not provide robust publishing support.

In summer 2018, the OER Coordinator and Digital Scholarship Coordinator began investigating publishing platforms for OER and digital research projects. After conducting an environmental scan, requesting demonstrations of a shortlist of platforms, and evaluating the available options, they selected Pressbooks as the best-suited platform for OER publishing. Key benefits of

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Pressbooks that led to its selection for UH include the provided maintenance (such as backups, security, and updates), staff and user training, multiple format exports, interactive content (practice questions, annotations, etc.), and the ability to import and adapt existing OER.

Having access to a publishing platform such as Pressbooks solves several problems for faculty in the OER authoring process. Some common questions include: “What format(s) can/should my OER be?” (PDF, Word document, web, etc.) “How can I best deliver it to students?” and “Can I make edits and updates to my OER over time?” With Pressbooks as an available tool, faculty can see a clearer path towards publishing their OER and can take advantage of features they may not have otherwise been able to (such as incorporating interactive elements). In 2019, the OER Coordinator began promoting Pressbooks as an OER authoring tool in relevant faculty consultations, held a faculty training webinar led by Pressbooks staff, and made heavy use of Pressbooks Premium Support for technical help. Pressbooks is now integrated into ATIP as a recommended platform for those creating OER.

Support provided to faculty during the OER publishing process is currently done almost entirely via individualized consultations on a case-by-case basis. Discussion points in these consultations often center on Creative Commons licensing, copyright, and Pressbooks. For example, consultations often focus on understanding the nature of Creative Commons licenses and the differences between them in order to understand how the faculty member can use and modify existing OER, and to be able to select a license for their own work. Fair use of copyrighted materials is a frequent topic, especially when a combination of OER and non-OER materials are being used to replace the traditional textbook. When discussing Pressbooks during faculty

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3 conversations, it is typically at an introductory level - for example, explaining the platform's
4 utility for OER creation, showing examples of how others have used the platform, and a brief
5 tour of key features. These are the primary areas where UHL is equipped to provide ad hoc
6 support for OER creation, due to the OER Coordinator's specialized knowledge of Creative
7 Commons licenses, the availability of a UHL Copyright Team to respond to copyright queries,
8 and access to Pressbooks Premium Support (as part of the UHL paid Pressbooks plan) for
9 advanced technical support.
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21 *Lessons Learned and Next Steps*

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26 Through leading and assessing the UH OER program for two years, and working closely with
27 faculty interested in OER, a number of themes emerged to the OER Coordinator related to OER
28 publishing:
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- 35 ● When faculty cannot find suitable OER in their discipline, they may consider the
36 possibility of creating their own materials without understanding how they can utilize and
37 adapt existing OER in doing so, indicating that additional education is needed in this
38 area.
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- 44 ● Many faculty OER authors are interested in incorporating interactivity, such as practice
45 questions and web annotations, want to be able to provide print copies of OER, and are
46 concerned about ensuring accessibility for all students.
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- 51 ● Most faculty OER authors do not adhere to the structural components of a traditional
52 textbook, and do not express a desire to develop a textbook as the format of their OER
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- Faculty prioritize meeting the immediate needs of students in their courses, rather than releasing a highly-polished product; in this sense, OER are often continual works-in-progress, as faculty complete their work enough for student use, but “completeness” is a moving target due to constant updates.
- Some faculty create resources that cannot be technically considered OER because they are not openly-licensed; instead, they are delivered through the LMS with the intent of replacing the textbook. This presents an opportunity to transition existing course materials into OER.

A lesson learned through this experience is the significant amount of time and resources involved in supporting OER publishing, even at the basic level offered at UHL. Professional development for the OER Coordinator to get up to speed, faculty consultations, and the research required to adequately respond to some questions all take more time than originally anticipated when the OER program was launched in 2018. Although having a recommended and supported authoring platform, such as Pressbooks, helps in many aspects of the faculty experience, it also means an increase in time spent supporting the platform via training and technical support. Taking stock of the time and resources invested at the Author DIY level of OER publishing, it became clear that UHL does not have the capacity to continue increasing the level of OER publishing services offered.

In addition to capacity concerns, investing heavily in OER publishing does not necessarily align with the mission of the broader UH OER program. The UH OER program was founded in response to student concerns around textbook affordability, and thus has always centered

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3 affordability as a goal, rather than placing the strongest focus on openness or contributing to the
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5 open ecosystem. OER publishing often meets the need to develop open content for niche areas
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7 with lower enrollment; however, an aim of the UH OER program, being situated in a large public
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9 university, is to impact a high number of students with OER adoptions that replace commercial
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11 textbook adoptions. In order to scale up high-impact OER adoptions, it is important to balance
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13 these needs and recognize when OER publishing projects are not among the higher priority
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15 activities for UHL to put significant resources behind.
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21 Moving forward, UHL plans to continue supporting and making iterative improvements to its
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23 Author DIY model of OER publishing. This will allow UHL to support OER publishing as one
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25 piece within its broader OER program, without needing to significantly scale up to be more
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27 analogous with full-service publishing programs. Continuing to offer Pressbooks as a publishing
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29 platform is important to this plan, as is streamlining and enhancing the available support. For
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31 example, the ad hoc consultations covering Creative Commons, copyright, and Pressbooks can
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33 be offered as group training sessions in order to reach a broader audience. OER publishing
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35 activity has initiated conversations with multiple campus units (such as the UHL digital research
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37 services department, instructional designers, the bookstore, and the university press) and the
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39 OER Coordinator plans to further explore potential collaborations to support OER publishing.
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41 Additionally, an ever important consideration is to clearly communicate the level of support that
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43 is offered in order to create clear expectations and understanding by all involved.
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51 **Case Study: The University of Washington**

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Background and Implementation

The University of Washington (UW) is a public, R1 institution with campuses in Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma. Seattle is the largest of the campuses, with a total enrollment in Fall 2019 of 32,570 undergraduates and 15,533 graduate students (University of Washington Office of Planning and Budgeting, 2020). The Seattle campus of the UW Libraries started addressing support for OER in 2015, through the formation of an OER Task Force and membership in the OTN. This group was charged with reviewing existing open textbook initiatives and recommending a course of action for campus OER strategies going forward. Task force members explored the national OER landscape through conferences and readings, and sought information about institutional infrastructures for supporting OER through a survey distributed to OTN members. They also participated in advocacy efforts around open textbook legislation initiated by UW students and the Washington Public Interest Research Group (WashPIRG).

A formal UW Libraries OER Steering Committee was formed in Fall 2015, chaired by the Associate Dean of Research & Learning Services, and Director of Learning Services, and included representation from faculty, the University Bookstore, University Press, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Accessible Technology Services, Center Teaching and Learning, and Learning Technologies, as well as a student representative from the Associated Students of the University of Washington (ASUW). Committee co-chairs met with student members of WashPIRG and ASUW outside of the committee, to further a connection with students around OER, and harness momentum that already existed around student-led open textbook affordability efforts. In 2016, the UW Libraries hosted OTN leaders for on-campus training for UW faculty.

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3 This same year, the UW Libraries rolled out their first Open Textbook Pilot Project, providing
4 stipends for faculty to adapt and create OER, after receiving funding through the Friends of the
5 Libraries. The project utilized a new membership in OTN and the Rebus Community's support
6 in authoring new open textbooks.
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14 Through the steering committee's conversations and outreach efforts, they found that UW
15 faculty were well aware of the high cost of textbooks and the resulting financial burden placed
16 on students. Previous textbook affordability efforts, and the political climate around the 2016
17 presidential election, aided in raising awareness around college affordability. While this
18 awareness seemed to incentivize UW faculty towards OER, they seemed less receptive to the
19 idea of adopting and remixing existing OER, citing the lack of quality content in their subject
20 area, a hesitation around remixing as a legitimate practice, and lack of time, as primary factors.
21 At the time, many of the success stories around library-led OER efforts came from community
22 colleges whose efforts focused on textbook affordability and replacing commercial textbooks
23 with open ones. While this didn't resonate with faculty at the UW Seattle campus, steering
24 committee members heard from faculty who were interested in authoring and publishing new
25 openly licensed resources for their courses. Through their leadership in supporting OER
26 initiatives, the steering committee co-chairs decided that future work should place an emphasis
27 on supporting new pedagogical models that promote openness, strengthening interested faculty's
28 ability to author OER, and building community to support OER beyond the Libraries. In 2017,
29 the Steering Committee was awarded internal funding to support another round of faculty grants
30 for OER creation.
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In the summer of 2018, the UW Libraries created its first Open Education Librarian position (.5 FTE) to lead advocacy efforts and provide support for OER adoption and creation. This new role, situated in the newly-formed Learning Services department of the Libraries' Research & Learning Services, was split with librarian liaison duties supporting a large campus department. The start of this new position coincided with the Steering Committee's selection of four awardees of open textbook faculty grants, and the beginning of a two year pilot of the Pressbooks publishing platform. Pressbooks came with robust support, updates and external hosting, and was intended to provide an out-of the-box and easy to administer tool for faculty OER authoring. With limited internal staffing to support new technology in the Libraries, the Open Education Librarian was solely responsible for setting up, managing and supporting the Pressbooks network. After a soft rollout of the platform in October 2018, the Open Education Librarian began offering a regular series of workshops for UW instructors. These workshops emphasized Pressbooks as a tool for OER creation and remixing, and included examples of OER at other institutions across disciplines. In 2019, two librarians from the UW Bothell and Tacoma libraries became network managers for Pressbooks, and worked collaboratively with the Open Education Librarian to provide training on the platform.

The four recipients of the faculty open textbook awards were selected by the OER Steering Committee using a rubric that scored applications on areas including: potential cost savings for students, potential for adoption, openness, stated learning outcomes, innovation in teaching and learning and feasibility of project completion. The grant was set up such that each awardee would receive \$1000 after completing three milestones: 1) signing an agreement that their work would be published in an openly licensed format 2) attending training on OER, Pressbooks and

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3 Creative Commons and 3) final deposit of open textbook into the UW Libraries Institutional
4 Repository. The four faculty grantees came from departments across the institution, and their
5 projects included a language learning textbook, converting existing instructor-created materials
6 into an open textbook, and an openly licensed instructor's guide.
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19 The UW Libraries chose the stipend approach because it seemed to speak to demonstrated
20 faculty interest in OER authoring, and because it was a model successfully used at other
21 institutions. At the time, the stated commitment to faculty awardees was limited to an Author
22 DIY approach, which consisted of providing: the Pressbooks platform for authoring, and training
23 and consultations on the platform and open licenses. Without an existing publishing program at
24 the UW Libraries (and with no plans to establish such a program), there wasn't an expectation
25 that Libraries staff would provide help with project management, proofreading, copyediting or
26 other elements of textbook design for the award winners. While the previous open textbook
27 publishing pilot had resulted in a successful open textbook, it was understood that the UW
28 Libraries was still in a learning phase regarding how to support faculty authoring of OER, and
29 that it would likely require leaning on staff from departments outside of the Libraries, including
30 those in instructional design and teaching support, for guidance. Additionally, starting in early
31 2018, the University of Washington Press joined the UW Libraries and began reporting to the
32 Vice Provost of Digital Initiatives and Dean of University Libraries. This move signaled a
33 potential for collaboration and partnership around digital publishing, but how this might be
34 directed towards OER projects was not yet clear.
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Through her work with the open textbook grant awardees and other faculty interested in Pressbooks and OER authoring, the Open Education Librarian saw a number of themes repeated:

- Instructors want support in understanding how to design open textbooks as teaching tools that reflect their own instructional style.
- Instructors are motivated and engaged when they see a wide range of OER examples (beyond textbooks) and are specifically interested in learning from others who have tested these resources in their own classroom.
- Instructors want guidance around how to involve students in the process of OER authoring, how student authoring will impact their own assessment of student work, and how to publish materials that will continue to iterate over time based on class feedback
- Instructors are interested in getting recognition for this work, and having their work used in classrooms beyond their own institution.
- Instructors need guidance around open licensing, and regularly bring up concerns around their work being unfairly re-used, or mis-used. Additionally, some instructors voice a desire to not be locked down to a specific authoring platform, and to have clarity around who “owns” their work in the context of university-owned platforms.
- Instructors want their OER to include interactive elements that reflect in-class activities they have developed with students, and to be able to integrate these elements with the campus LMS.
- Instructors want an easy-to-use OER publishing platform that allows for open sharing (and collaborative authoring) beyond the institution.

While some of these themes could be addressed through the development of more robust training and programs over time, the path to supporting others was less clear, and challenged assumptions around the viability of an Author DIY publishing model. In early conversations with the 2018 faculty grant awardees, it became clear that there were varying understandings and expectations regarding the output of these projects, and what constituted an “open textbook”. One project shifted from being faculty-authored openly licensed course materials to one in which an existing course assignment was redesigned to become a collaborative, student authored book. This project entailed library support beyond DIY publishing, including consultations and training for students on Pressbooks, as well as a workshop on their rights and responsibilities as open authors, provided by the Copyright Librarian and Open Education Librarian. While this wasn’t originally anticipated, it provided an opportunity for the Libraries to think about OER authoring support beyond textbook publishing, in particular how to address student agency in the authoring process. As anticipated, moving these projects along and coming to a shared understanding required skills and expertise beyond the Libraries. It involved leaning on campus instructional design staff to help guide conversations with faculty around assignment redesign and how these projects might work with the existing course LMS. If the UW Libraries continues to pursue a faculty OER grant model, having a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding expected deliverables, requiring one-on-one interviews with applicants, and better understanding instructor’s pedagogical objectives with OER will help clarify ahead of time what kind of support is needed. These models are recommended by the OTN (Falldin and Lauritsen, n.d.), the Rebus Community (Ashok and Wake Hyde, 2019), and training at the Library Publishing Forum (Open Textbook Network, 2019).

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Some faculty grant awardees sought assistance from campus and departmental support staff, with whom they had existing relationships, to help with project management, media creation and copyediting. In the future, it will be helpful to have a better understanding ahead of time regarding complementary services that exist for faculty in their own departments or professional networks, and make use of those to scaffold library OER services. It also became clear that having a 1-year time frame was not realistic for faculty to complete these projects, and as a result deadlines had to be extended.

Being new to OER, the Open Education Librarian had to get up to speed on the OER landscape, existing models of providing faculty support, and institutional priorities around the role. In order to build capacity for this work, she aimed to build connections with colleagues within and outside of the libraries around OER and open pedagogy, which refers to teaching practices that encourage students to participate in the co-creation of knowledge, by building upon and creating new OER (Wiley and Hilton, 2018). This resulted in the development of a series of discipline-specific workshops designed to engage subject librarians at the UW around OER. These workshops included: clarifying definitions of OER as distinct from open access, discipline-specific examples of open pedagogy, hands-on time creating OER and an overview of critical issues in the Open Education movement. In addition to alleviating the siloing of OER work, the workshops were intended to draw connections between information literacy instruction and supporting students as OER authors. They also helped increase understanding of OER beyond textbook affordability, and resulted in the production of new OER created collaboratively between librarians, faculty and students at the UW.

Without a provostial mandate requiring a focus on affordability, the UW Libraries has developed an OER program iteratively, based on lessons learned regarding faculty receptivity to OER adoption and creation. Not being bound to affordability as the sole incentive for OER initiatives has provided the UW Libraries the freedom to shape a program that promotes access as well as agency over course material selection and design. However, this work is being done from the ground up, with incremental developments to funding and staff support. Given current limits on staffing, forming a program within a newly reorganized Learning Services department, the "payoff" for OER services will be slower and less immediately impactful for student textbook affordability. While affordability is named as a goal of the 2018-2021 Libraries Strategic Directions (University of Washington Libraries, 2018), the Libraries is still in the process of defining how this fits into an overall OER services support model, and have plans underway to work with the course reserves system to identify ways in which expanded textbook purchasing for library collections could contribute to greater affordability for students. In the future, the Libraries may consider a tiered approach to faculty stipends that would provide rewards for remixing. A more comprehensive study identifying high enrollment courses and those requiring high cost textbooks would help in making more targeted decisions around addressing affordability within the OER program.

Discussion

Both of these case studies provide an overview of OER initiatives with a focus on library support for faculty authors. Each raises questions around an Author DIY model of OER publishing support, publishing OER that fall outside the traditional textbook, and the importance of

communicating the benefits of OER beyond affordability. Both institutions are in the process of modifying and defining their publishing initiatives and are still learning the best path forward for this work. The following discussion highlights some of the shared questions and challenges noted by these institutions, and their implications for efforts going forward.

Adapting existing models

As more institutions consider supporting OER publishing, it is necessary to consider how existing publishing models do or do not fit the needs of your students and faculty, and what level of publishing services your institution has the capacity to support. Although many institutions approach OER publishing similarly to traditional book publishing - providing editing, proofreading, book cover design, and more - this full-service model can and should be adapted to meet local needs as well as the unique considerations of OER. Those considering supporting OER publishing can turn to existing resources to help shape local programs: *Authoring Open Textbooks* (Falldin and Lauritsen, n.d.), *The Rebus Guide to Publishing Open Textbooks (So Far)* (Ashok and Wake Hyde, 2019), and *Self-Publishing Guide* (Aesoph, 2018).

Adapting existing publishing models presents opportunities to experiment as well as implications for decision-making and workflows. For example, campus OER leaders may need to determine when an OER is considered “published,” especially in programs where the library does not facilitate peer review, editing, proofreading, and other traditional publishing services. OER are often in a state of continual improvement, and may be products of open pedagogy projects that engage students in collaborative authorship. Publication traditionally means that a work is ready

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3 to be shared and promoted. If faculty want recognition for their OER publications, what are their
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5 attitudes around having “incomplete” OER publicized in the same space as those that have gone
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7 through a more traditional review process? These considerations impact decisions such as how
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9 an OER will be promoted by the library (via the publishing platform website or other
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11 mechanism), whether an OER should conform to an accessibility review before being
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13 “published” or promoted by the library, and when it is reasonable to publish a new edition.
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19 As libraries navigate these decisions, it is important to clarify what levels of publishing support
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21 are and are not being offered, and share these widely, even outside of MOUs made with faculty
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23 recipients of OER stipends. Naming the services attached to publishing support that is provided
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25 by librarians doing this work can also help address the issue of invisible labor. When OER
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27 publishing services are provided in collaboration with library and campus colleagues (for
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29 instance those in scholarly communication or instructional design), it is important to come to a
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31 shared understanding about service delivery, and have that made widely available on the library
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33 website. With OER publishing platforms such as Pressbooks, this may involve collaboration
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35 around user policies and terms of service.
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42 Discussions around OER publishing often center around open textbooks as the default format for
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44 OER. Open textbooks provide a helpful framework when thinking about publishing, however,
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46 OER publishing programs often must consider support for a variety of non-textbook formats,
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48 including modular learning objects, media, ancillary materials, and student-created content. Non-
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50 textbook formats may introduce new complexities, especially if there is not an existing roadmap
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52 to follow. Additionally, library-hosted OER publishing platforms require policy considerations
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that include author access to the platform after leaving the institution, as well as preservation and maintenance of OER. Ultimately, each OER publishing project may have different needs and require different types of support.

Navigating institutional culture

The work of Open Education can be seen as fitting between the established programmatic areas of scholarly communication, instruction, and access services within academic libraries. OER advocacy and support for related practices are clearly tied to the academic library’s mission to provide access and equity to students, but where OER work sits within the organization can impact how this work is supported and viewed. Library publishing programs in research libraries generally focus on open access journal publishing, raising awareness of scholarly communication issues, and supporting digital scholarship, all areas that focus primarily on research output. Pedagogical support is often provided within the framework of information literacy instruction, with responsibilities distributed amongst subject liaison librarians. Efforts to alleviate textbook affordability for students have historically fallen under the work of course reserves programs. Each of these established areas have some overlap with Open Education, but may be siloed across the institution. And support for teaching and learning services may take a back seat to those focusing on research output in larger academic research libraries. Developing support for OER publishing requires working across these silos, legitimizing the importance of OER within both an access and teaching framework, and navigating shifting definitions, often in new roles that are not seen as fitting neatly within an established department.

Beyond affordability

At UH and UW advocacy around textbook affordability has convinced many faculty of the benefit of solutions that help save students money. This is reflected in national trends showing that the majority of faculty believe that textbook costs are too high and that institutions should embrace OER (Lederman, 2018). While outreach focusing on textbook affordability helps get faculty “in the door,” a significant amount of the work operationalizing OER at these institutions involves consulting with faculty on authoring platforms and licensing, working across departments to provide support for open pedagogy, and developing long-term programmatic strategies for OER at the institutional level. As awareness of OER grows it will be important to move beyond textbook affordability advocacy as the primary strategy for our work.

As models for open textbook publishing become more common, it has been noted that the length of time it takes to complete writing a textbook is often longer than initially thought. Grant programs may be set up to have a completed textbook in one year, but this is challenging and often impossible. Results won’t be immediately apparent due to the extended timelines necessary for OER publishing; this can be particularly challenging for newer library initiatives that may demand a quicker demonstration of impact in order to make the case for continued funding of publishing platforms, grants, and staff. Although student cost-savings from OER adoptions is a common assessment measure, institutions that move towards supporting OER publishing will need to look to other ways of demonstrating impact, for instance, innovation in teaching and learning.

Sustainability

The Open Education movement is young, and academic libraries are in the early years of figuring out how to best address support for the creation and adoption of OER, as well as textbook affordability for students. Like many academic library OER programs, the institutions described in these case studies are taking an iterative approach, responding to changes and needs that have been learned along the way.

While textbook affordability may be the original driving mission for OER initiatives, the expansion of this work beyond affordability speaks strongly to the need to define and formalize support for faculty innovation in teaching and publishing. Librarian positions that are designed to support OER involve many different facets of work: instructional support for faculty, campus advocacy around textbook affordability, championing “open” practices, supporting and managing publishing platforms, making recommendations regarding course materials (and how to search for them), advocating for stronger metadata standards to improve OER findability, and providing support on copyright and licensing. These tasks require working across the library organization, and institution, and being of service to faculty and students in all disciplines and departments. As institutions develop programs to support OER use, it is important to name and recognize the labor involved in this work, in order to prevent staff burnout and allow for incremental change.

Conclusion

Academic libraries are increasingly launching OER initiatives to advance textbook affordability and support student success, often including services to support OER creation and publication. These case studies address the development of OER publishing services at two similar institutions, and provide insights, opportunities, and challenges applicable to the broader Open Education movement. Based on these examples, the following recommendations can be made for libraries interested in establishing services for OER publishing on their campus.

- **Have a clear understanding of the institution's priorities for OER.** Examining how OER initiatives are tied to the institutional mission and strategic plan will inform these priorities and how OER initiatives are shaped, both in the context of lowering course materials cost for students, and in empowering instructor agency through new forms of teaching.
- **Understand how campus partners can support OER publishing goals.** Support for OER publishing will be strengthened by collaborating with and leveraging the expertise of campus units outside of the library. For example, those who maintain the LMS and advise faculty in instructional design may play important roles in design and distribution of OER course materials. Additionally, campus and library policies regarding privacy, storage capacity for published works, accessibility of course materials, and copyright ownership will need to be addressed. Establishing guidelines and policies early on regarding these issues, and having a clear understanding of who will help shape these policies, will help set up an OER program for greater success.

- **Consider what model of service your OER program has the capacity to support, and how to best position staff to work cross-departmentally.** Supporting OER adoption, adaption, and creation involves working across institutional silos. When establishing OER roles and programs that include publishing, it is important to identify connections to existing library units such as collections management, course reserves, scholarly communication, and information literacy instruction. Consider how you will develop service models and how support for OER publishing may be made more sustainable by training across the library organization.
- **Utilize national trends as well as campus-specific assessment data to help shape the direction of your OER publishing program.** A clear understanding of faculty needs, preferences and motivations around OER will inform the type of support that is needed for OER publishing. Consider how you will demonstrate the success of your OER program, the extent to which success will be determined by student cost savings and/or innovation in teaching, and how the outcomes of OER publishing projects can impact future support for OER staffing and funding.

Given that there are relatively few established models to guide academic libraries in supporting OER publishing, more dialogue and the development of best practices are needed in this area. In particular, best practices are needed for how to balance the complexities of supporting publishing in an open landscape with the urgency of addressing textbook affordability. Additional research is needed around faculty preferences for OER publishing services. While some publishing projects may require an OER that is peer reviewed and edited, some faculty simply want to

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3 create resources to meet an immediate student need. Future research could explore how academic
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5 libraries lacking the capacity to replicate traditional publishing services can support and promote
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7 the creation of OER, especially when OER are continually-evolving. Finally, more attention is
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9 needed on how academic libraries' support for student-authored OER intersects with established
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11 information literacy instruction programs.
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17 This paper provides two case studies of developing OER publishing programs at large public
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19 research universities, with implications for this growing area of practice. Academic libraries at
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21 similar institutions may traditionally place a greater emphasis on support for research than on
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23 teaching and learning. As they continue to establish and develop OER programs, it will be
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25 important to examine how support for teaching and learning through open publishing impacts
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27 them as organizations. Programs that take an Author DIY approach to publishing will need to
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29 consider aligning goals with institutional priorities, defining support that speaks to faculty needs,
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31 developing services iteratively, and leveraging cross-departmental support.
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