



*Article*

**Open Scholarship for Open Education:  
Building the *JustPublics@365* POOC**

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**Abstract**

This article outlines the collaboration between librarians at the Graduate Center Library of the City University of New York (CUNY) and *JustPublics@365* (<http://justpublics365.commons.gc.cuny.edu/about/>), an initiative designed to open scholarly communication in ways that connect to social justice activism, part of which involved producing an open, online interdisciplinary course with a geographical focus on East Harlem. This Participatory Open Online Course, or POOC, was developed locally without a licensed provider platform or licensed scholarly content. It was designed to be open to CUNY students, to citizens of East Harlem, and to a global public with an interest in social justice. Counter to the trend in most Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the POOC creators wanted assigned readings for the course to be open. Librarians identified open access course material and assisted assigned authors in self-archiving their work in open access contexts according to publishers' standing policies. In the end, 76 of 117, or about 65%, of the identified course readings were available in open access journals or archived in open repositories either permanently or for the duration of the course. In order for open online courses to deliver high quality education, supporting texts and other works must be open and available to every reader. The success of open online education is fully intertwined with the expansion of open access scholarship.

## MOOCs and Libraries

Higher education is being disrupted by Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), or so some would have us believe. The *New York Times* dubbed 2012 “the year of the MOOC” (Pappano, 2012). The *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education* ran stories on MOOCs regularly throughout most of 2012, 2013, and 2014. Leading private and public universities have invested funding and focus on MOOCs suggesting that open, online teaching and attendant technologies may reinvent higher education (Heller, 2013) and even end global poverty (Friedman, 2013). These idealistic forecasts, however, are predicated on the condition that MOOCs can extend higher education, without payment or condition, to the people who might apply such learning to transform lives and society.

Canadian educational technologists Dave Cormier and George Siemens coined the term “MOOC” in 2008 (Cormier and Siemens, 2010). Since that time, different kinds of MOOCs have emerged. Connectivist MOOCs, or cMOOCs, are designed to foster community, connection and peer-to-peer learning; these are generally produced using locally designed, and often, open-source platforms. The second, and much-hyped and well-financed xMOOCs, supported by providers such as Udacity and Coursera, extend lecture videos (and sometimes reading materials) to those who register for courses (Wiener, 2013). However, xMOOCs tend to restrict their course materials to those who are officially enrolled; typically, course reading materials are not available to readers outside the course, thus rendering a significant redefinition of the word “open” (Otte, 2012). The participatory, open online course we created is more aligned with cMOOCs than with xMOOCs.

The application of licensed content of any kind is arguably incongruent with the aim and purpose of a course with “open” as part of the acronym. Licensed access, even if freely available to online course attendees, requires some form of registration. Clay Shirky asserts that the real revolutionary benefit of new cultural and education technologies is openness (Parry, 2012), yet current xMOOC models that keep course materials behind registration walls, building potential for revenue-generation, compromise this benefit. The recent partnerships between Elsevier and edX (Elsevier, 2013) and between Coursera and Chegg, consolidating textbooks by Cengage Learning, Macmillan Higher Education, Oxford University Press, SAGE, and Wiley (Doyle, 2013) point to a trend in xMOOCs of educational enclosure rather than openness (Watters, 2013). xMOOC models currently amount to a shaded variation on current higher education models providing licensed academic content to a defined and regulated student audience.

Three major xMOOC service providers have entered the market: Udacity, Coursera, and edX. Udacity and Coursera are for-profit enterprises assembling “open” course content in commercial software. EdX is a not-for-profit platform developed by Harvard and MIT with an initial investment of \$30 million, offered to university partners to share the revenue they generate (Kolowich, 2013). All these platforms are designed to extend the reach of higher education by delivering courses online to great numbers of students including those in untapped, often geographically disparate markets, and at lower, “affordable” costs. Subsidized by universities and their software providers, xMOOCs are

intended to lower costs to student consumers, yet still return profits for universities and their xMOOC providers through an as yet to be determined revenue-generating model.

Libraries have traditionally offered faculty copyright advice and supported courses with reserve software and scanning services, shepherding extension of licensed-library content for exclusive use by university-affiliated student users. Under current licensing models, this content cannot be extended to the massive, unaffiliated, undefined, and unregistered body of MOOC enrollees without tempting lawsuits. As illustrated in the Georgia State University case, publishers will sue universities providing traditionally-enrolled students access to course reserve readings, even if the published readings are password-protected and selected according to reasonable interpretations of fair use guidelines (Smith, 2013). Though universities may open courses to anyone with an Internet connection and a willingness to participate, the vast majority of supporting course content – including books, book chapters, articles, and films – cannot be distributed freely and openly. University libraries may own the supporting content, but its distribution is limited by contract to a local, limited, defined, and regulated set of university affiliates. Texts supporting open online courses must be either published open access with copyright owner consent or licensed explicitly for open online use (Fowler & Smith, 2013).

Kendrick and Gashurov discuss several potential models for MOOC enrollment and revenue-generation that offer tiered access to licensed textbooks and course-supporting material. Licensed textbooks and journals inaccessible to non-paying customers might be free or discounted for “premium” paying MOOC customers, for example (Kendrick and Gashurov, 2013; Courtney, 2013). Coursera provides access to a limited set of online licensed resources, just like libraries do, to expand access for their registered MOOC students. This access is supplied at a cost to the course provider, and it is limited to a pale fraction of scholarship available to traditional university-affiliated students through course reserves and, increasingly, through open access scholarship.<sup>1</sup> The Coursera and EdX licensing models require universities to subsidize registered MOOC students’ access to a licensed body of scholarly work, under defined terms, for a limited amount of time. University-supported Coursera and EdX are poised to expand MOOC student access to academic content, but only within limits. MOOC course offerings may be massive and online, but if the course content is not also open and sustained without regulation or payment, the transformative potential of the project is eviscerated.

Open access scholarship, in contrast to traditionally published and licensed scholarship, is available to all interested users. Any reader, in any location, can discover and read open access work using any Internet browser. Open access scholarship comes in two varieties. There is “gold” scholarship, published in completely open access journals. And there is “green” scholarship, self-archived in open access repositories or on author websites. Both gold and green open access works are accessible by anyone, and can be read by any student, free of charge, in conjunction with any course. Only open access publishing will expand the quality and variety of academic works available to the

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Dramatic Growth of Open Access Series* <http://poeticeconomics.blogspot.ca/2006/08/dramatic-growth-of-open-access-series.html>

Web-browsing worldwide public. Open access scholarship, currently estimated at no more than 25% of scholarly output (Gargouri et al., 2012), must form the backbone of the project for MOOCs to realize their much-touted potential to expand and to transform higher education. Securing scholarship in open access contexts must go hand-in-hand with MOOC-building. They are two logical, inseparable parts of the same project to enhance global public access to higher education.

### **CUNY and *JustPublics*@365**

*JustPublics*@365 (<http://justpublics365.commons.gc.cuny.edu/about/>) *Reimagining Scholarly Communication for the Public Good* is a project to connect scholars and research with citizens and social justice activists. As an element of the project, our Participatory Open Online Course (POOC) engaged graduate students in community-based participatory research (CBPR) with activists in the New York City neighborhood of East Harlem. This course, titled #InQ13, *Reassessing Inequality and Reimagining the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* posed the question: How do digital technologies augment the way we both research inequality and resist its corrosive effects? The course featured a variety of live and video-recorded lectures, assigned readings, and a series of assignments. An array of invited interdisciplinary faculty participated as online lecturers and discussants; many of them were also authors of course readings.

The City University of New York (CUNY) is the public university system of New York City. With 24 institutions across New York City and about 270,000 degree-credit students and 273,000 continuing and professional education students, it is the third largest university system in the United States, and the nation's largest public urban university. The Graduate Center (GC) is CUNY's principal doctorate-granting institution offering more than 30 doctoral degrees in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences with significant research on global and progressive policy issues. CUNY provides high-quality, accessible education, and a mission befitting the *JustPublics*@365 project.

Following from its goal to engage students both affiliated and unaffiliated with the Graduate Center, the #InQ13 course could not use the CUNY and GC course delivery platforms with students and lecturer-participants without CUNY affiliation. Library-licensed academic works—journal articles, books, book chapters, and other media—could not be extended to audiences other than GC-affiliated students without violating library license agreements. Using licensed readings, or tiered access to them, to support the #InQ13 course violated the social justice principles of the *JustPublics*@365 project. From the outset, there was little question that the readings assigned for the #InQ13 course had to be open access. Course access to scholarly work was considered within the larger framework of increasing public access to academic work and furthering the public good.

### **Building a POOC, Building OA Scholarship**

At the March 2013 University of Pennsylvania conference *MOOCs and Libraries: Massive Opportunity or Overwhelming Challenge?*, Jennifer Dorner, Head of Doe/Moffitt Library Instruction and User Services at UC Berkeley, recognized MOOCs as “a real opportunity to educate faculty about the need for owning the rights to their content and

making it accessible to other people” (Howard, 2013, para. 9). Librarian-faculty collaboration in MOOC-building also involves conversation with authors about transforming scholarly communication. We called upon activists, artists, and academic authors who participated in our open online course, as well as the authors they cited, to make their work open access. MOOCs offer authors unique opportunities to widen readership and to raise the profile of their work. Prompted by the potential to increase exposure (and perhaps sales), several book publishers prompted by their authors proved to be willing to make traditionally published works open access, at least temporarily and in part, if they were assigned for our course. Our cMOOC-like project achieved results similar to the xMOOC content licensing, only without the licenses.

Making course readings open access required a great deal of work with divisions of labor and responsibility. These divisions of labor, fuzzy at first, became clearer as the course progressed and as librarians worked with instructors to review course readings. In a conventional course, one instructor selects readings to teach a small group of students. In this unique participatory course, a 20-member team was required to produce the course, with 2 instructors, for thousands of potential students, both enrolled at the Graduate Center and not enrolled, participating from geographically dispersed locations. While all embraced open access to scholarly and artistic works as a worthy goal, none were experienced in the mechanics of open access discovery, identification, permissions seeking, and posting. To accomplish this, the principle investigator of the *JustPublics @365* project approached librarians to join the effort.

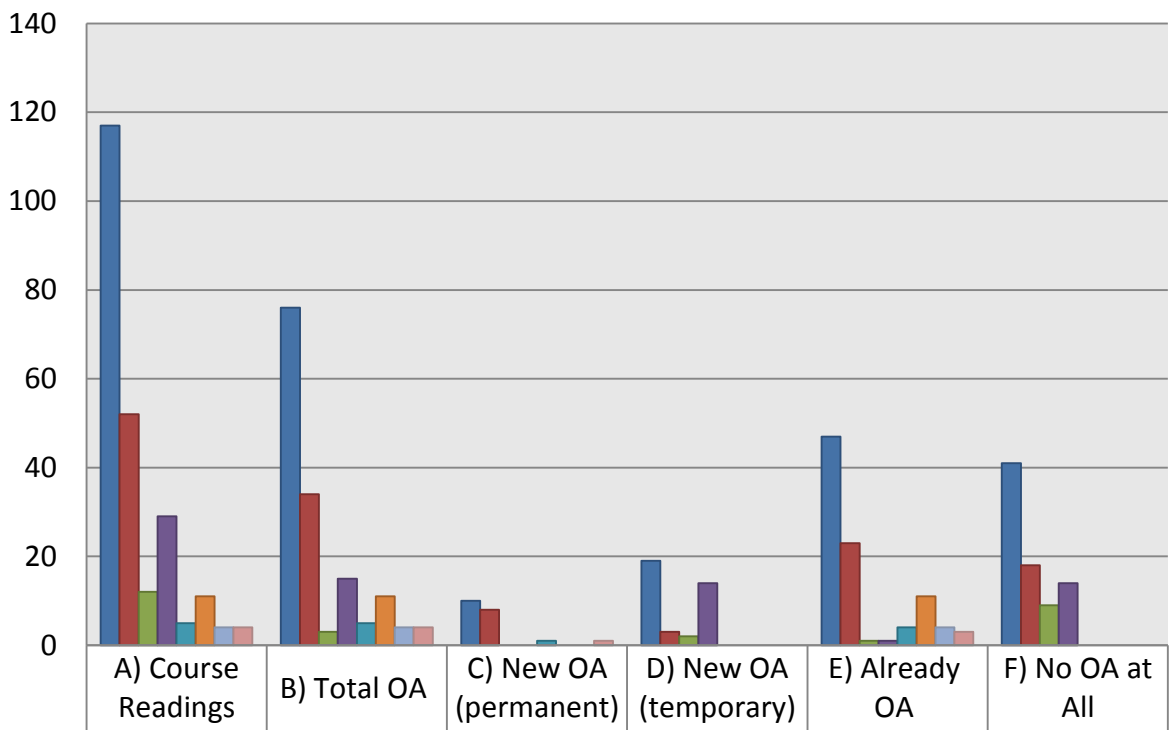
Course instructors provided librarians with an initial “wish list” of readings for the course, selected for content only, without consideration of licensing restrictions. This list totaled 117 articles, book chapters, websites, blogs, films, and entire books. From this list, 47 works, or about 40% were already open access. Librarians confirmed that the articles in this batch were published in entirely gold open access journals by checking the Directory of Open Access Journals (<http://doaj.org>). We reviewed the remaining list to determine what steps were necessary to obtain key readings in open access formats.

A numerical overview of our efforts is below (see Figure 1). Column E profiles the initial 47 works that were open access when librarians received their titles on the course syllabus. Column B represents the initial 47 works, plus those for which librarians’ efforts were able to make either temporary or permanent open access, equaling 76 titles. Librarians added temporary open access works by requesting items from publishers, who made them available temporarily, for the length of the course (column D, New OA, temporary) equaling 19 titles. Librarians added permanent open access works by communicating with authors to secure titles in open access repositories or author websites (column C, New OA, permanent) equaling 10 titles. Forty-five percent, or 41, of the wished-for postings could not be secured in open access locations (column F, No OA at All).

**Figure 1. POOC Assigned Readings: Open Access Successes**

Note:  
 Row A =  
 C+D+E+F  
 Row B = A-F

Other  
 Formats  
 include:  
 Archival  
 Finding Aids,  
 and Reports



	A) Course Readings	B) Total OA	C) New OA (permanent)	D) New OA (temporary)	E) Already OA	F) No OA at All
All = 65% OA	117	76	10	19	47	41
Journals = 65% OA	52	34	8	3	23	18
Books = 25% OA	12	3	0	2	1	9
Book Chapters = 52% OA	29	15	0	14	1	14
Film = 100% OA	5	5	1	0	4	0
Websites = 100% OA	11	11	0	0	11	0
Blogs = 100% OA	4	4	0	0	4	0
Other = 100% OA	4	4	1	0	3	0

**Conversations with Copyright Owners**

The course design included at least a dozen internationally renowned scholars as guest lecturers. Several had authored key texts for the course assigned as either book chapters or as entire books, none of which were published as open access texts. In order to make these crucial books and book chapters open access, librarians had to collaborate with publishers to obtain the necessary permissions.

Early in the term, #InQ13 course coordinators approached filmmaker Ed Morales (Morales & Rivera, 2009) about his and Laura Rivera’s documentary film, *Whose Barrio?: The Gentrification of East Harlem*, requesting that he post it free online for the course’s second module. Unlike most academic authors, Morales retains the copyright

for his work, and he was also a guest for the course. He readily complied with the course organizers' request, posting his film to be viewed free, open, and online via the Internet Movie Database (<http://IMDB.com>). Morales' eager participation was early inspiration to at least attempt to convince book authors and publishers to make their work openly available.

Librarians contacted book publishers and copied authors and guest lecturers (often the same person) on the correspondence. This collaborative request proved to be compelling to a few publishers, but an impressive few. Of the 19 publishers contacted, three understood the nature of our request and seized the opportunity to offer open, unlimited distribution of materials for the duration of the course. All publishers who agreed to collaborate provided free online access for a defined period of time with course traffic directed to, and access governed by, publisher websites.

The collaborating publishers were the University of California (UC) Press, New York University (NYU) Press, and University of Minnesota (UMN) Press. UC posted the introduction and chapter 3 of Dávila's (2004) *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City*. Prior to our request, the University of California Press featured the book's introduction on its website, as a teaser. UC also posted 2 chapters of Pulido, Barraclough, and Cheng's (2012) *A People's Guide to Los Angeles*, and chapter 5 of Wilson Gilmore's (2007) *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. NYU Press provided Londono's chapter (2012), "Aesthetic Belonging: The Latinization and Renewal of Union City, New Jersey", from the anthology *Latino Urbanism: The Politics of Planning, Policy, and Redevelopment* edited by Diaz and Torres. UMN offered the biggest win as measured by pagination, posting the entirety of Katz's (2004) *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives* in downloadable PDF format and also through a link on the UMN website. Publishers kept all links live from the time we reached agreement through the end of the semester-long course.

Some publishers did not respond while others declined our invitation to participate. One book publisher responded with a course pack license agreement requesting a fee to permit 57 pages to be copied no more than 20 times. Subsequent attempts to clarify indicated that the publisher either misunderstood the request or was at a loss about how to respond.

In yet another challenging situation, an author-lecturer believed she retained copyright and the authority to self-distribute requested chapters of her forthcoming book. She assured course organizers that the publisher's correspondence confirmed permission to post chapters on the course website. However, later review of the email correspondence revealed a misinterpretation of the publisher's meaning. The publisher had, in fact, withheld permission to post the work. We took the posted chapters down when we discovered the error.

When publishers refused to make readings open online, and when instructors deemed the work essential reading, librarians inserted a WorldCat.org link to the course syllabus, directing POOC students to libraries and interlibrary loan networks first, and to booksellers second. WorldCat.org directs readers to local library holdings or to

interlibrary loan services. Libraries' resource sharing ethic, manifest in increasingly efficient article delivery through interlibrary loan networks – is a forbearer of the open access publishing movement.

### **Self-Archiving Articles**

CUNY is just rolling out an institutional repository, which is vital to support the open access infrastructure that our POOC required. In November 2011, CUNY's University Faculty Senate passed a resolution calling for an institutional repository where faculty could self-archive their work open access. In response, the CUNY Office of Library Services with the University Faculty Senate convened a task force to develop a repository (Cirasella, 2011). In October 2012, the task force forwarded specific recommendations outlining a plan for implementation of a CUNY-wide repository. In 2013 the CUNY Graduate Center licensed Digital Commons software to provide a platform for a Graduate Center repository called CUNY Academic Works that opened mid-2014 (<http://works.gc.cuny.edu/>). A CUNY-wide repository is pending launch.

Nevertheless, librarians were successful in working with CUNY and non-CUNY authors to self-archive their scholarship in green open access repositories. The SHERPA/RoMEO tool (<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo>) was essential in this effort. It lists the green open access policies, covering over 22,000 academic journals. Publishers offer wildly varying terms of format and embargo policies for author self-archiving. SHERPA/RoMEO reported in 2001 that 94% of the titles covered offered some form of author self-archiving after embargoes that ranged from zero to 24 months (Millington, 2011). Some publishers allow pre-peer-reviewed versions only to be archived; others insist that authors archive only peer-reviewed versions as long as the publishers final PDF is *not* used. Still others require self-archiving of *only* the publisher's PDF. SHERPA/RoMEO also notes when publishers specify the type of repositories authors may employ for self-archiving. For example, some restrict postings to temporary repositories; others to personal author websites or institutional repositories; others say non-profit repositories are permissible under standing policy. It is not always clear what these publisher-generated and applied terms mean.

In cases where authors were permitted to self-archive but had not done so because they had no author website, subject repository, or institutional repository, we created a temporary site to satisfy our needs and the publisher's requirements. We set up a #InQ13 course repository site in the Community Texts section of the Internet Archive (<http://archive.org>), an open repository for researchers, historians, scholars, the print disabled, and the general public. This arrangement allowed course organizers to post material on behalf of authors without requiring the authors to do the posting themselves. We discovered in our initial review that one course author-lecturer had material posted there. This inspired us to use it when authors were eager to have their work made available openly online, but they had no place available or they were unable to post the works themselves because they lacked support or technical know-how. When Sherpa/RoMEO standing policies indicated that "non-profit" repositories were acceptable locations for author work, we left the work up in the #InQ13 permanently. Otherwise, we removed materials we posted there upon the course's completion because we did not have explicit author or publisher permissions to keep the works



there. We placed eight journal articles permanently in the #InQ13 Community Texts section out of 18 journal articles and book chapters we uploaded for course support. We did not review and could not remove author postings that had been placed there by others prior to our course.

In reviewing the course lists, we discovered that scholarship is sometimes posted openly, without regard for publishers' restrictions. Posting policies are not at all immediately obvious to authors or to faculty forming syllabi. We also learned that while author self-archiving is allowed by hundreds of traditional academic publishers, the opportunity to self-archive is not at all ubiquitously understood or acted upon by authors. In conversation with librarians, though, the authors inevitably became at least aware of and in some cases, expert in, publisher's policies as it applied to their published work.

Many faculty were disappointed by the publisher restrictions we encountered. This gave us the opportunity to discuss the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Author Addendum that offers a range of options and prepared author-publisher contracts for academic authors to apply to retain rights to published academic work.<sup>2</sup>

### **What about the rest?**

As hard as we tried, we could not do it all. Forty-one of 117, or about 35%, of course readings and materials could not be placed in an open access repository. In some instances, authors did not engage in any conversation, so we could not post their work at all. Some authors could not self-archive their work because they could not find a version of their work in what SHERPA/RoMEO designates as a pre-print (meaning pre-refereed) format – SHERPA/RoMEO's yellow category. Many authors have not kept a personal archive of draft versions, or they have lost track of them and did not want to scour their files for requested work in the midst of a busy academic term. One author had a pre-refereed version on hand, but she declined to post it because she valued the improvements made by peer review. One author voiced concern about multiple formats of a single work being available, one from the publisher and another from a repository posting, because she thought that competing versions might generate confusion.

Some authors also chose to assume the risks of posting articles in violation of publishers' standing policies. One author of a heavily cited article believed that he retained copyright to all versions of his work. The article originally published in a journal that SHERPA/RoMEO indicated did not condone self-archiving except in pre-refereed versions. The canonical article, restricted as it was, was already readily available anyway in several places in publishers PDF format. Course organizers left it to students to find the article by searching the Web on their own. Since it was not posted according to SHERPA/RoMEO's representation of publisher's standing policies, the course did not link to it.

Not insignificantly, nearly every author was challenged to locate pre-peer-review versions of work. Many of the faculty authors were not familiar with the term "pre-peer-

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sparc.arl.org/resources/authors/addendum>

review version” and once they learned of it, some were not inclined to make such versions public, favoring the publisher’s PDF version of their article for course assignments and peer-to-peer sharing. Drafts of articles published several years ago were often lost in personal archives requiring both motivation and excavation to surface and publish it via green open access.

## Conclusion

During the spring 2013 term, the POOC received 6,000 visits and 24,000 page views, with visitors averaging almost six minutes on the site – a fairly low number of visitors as MOOCs go, but a very high level of engagement for each visitor as reckoned by Google Analytics. Readers discovering the site continue to view the recorded lectures and archived readings posted in spring 2013.

This course would be difficult to replicate because it involved many unique conditions. First, the custom-built POOC was initiated with grant funding and university support. And the POOC was exceptionally labor intensive for the small staff of librarians, scholars, and graduate students supporting the project. Second, authors of many of the readings were accessible to the librarians and course coordinators. Finally, members of a local community participated fully in course activities.

The final syllabus of the #InQ13 course featured 117 assigned supporting works, 65% of which were ultimately made available in open access contexts. The course generated rich discussion among librarians, organizers, and author-lecturers about the vagaries of licensing and copyright, prompting some to consider the benefits and the imperatives of open access scholarship for the first time. Nearly all the course author-lecturers are engaged with social justice issues or community activism of some kind, and they are quick to understand open access scholarship as an essential element of open online education.

Our conversations suggest that faculty authors must understand the terms of academic publishing and distribution in order to prepare and self-archive their work in green open access repositories and to negotiate terms with publishers that maximize access to it. Scholars attempting to connect their work to online audiences can be surprised to find how thoroughly their scholarship is out-of-reach to non-academic readers. Our POOC was a productive platform through which to introduce the concepts of open access publishing to faculty and authors.

Scholars often assume that the work they place in reputable journals is positioned for wide public readership, sometimes mistakenly equating the prestige of a journal with the journal’s distribution and accessibility. Working with enrolled students in closed access courses, faculty have not encountered the challenges of availing work to global, undefined public audiences.

Why are academic library users not hyper-aware of licensing and copyright terms of their publication? This question requires more exploration. Subscription-based publishers often allow, but do not promote author self-archiving opportunities. In addition, libraries make licensed article retrieval as seamless and transparent as

possible to licensed users, rendering invisible the copyright and licensing issues governing scholarly publishing. Faculty searching within university IP-space, and those at home using proxy servers, are guided without interruption through pay walls to library-licensed content. Librarians must now expose those seams and mechanisms to demonstrate that readers without university affiliation are blocked from the scholarly work that university-affiliated readers can freely access.

MOOCs offering restricted or tiered access to licensed scholarship are not, in fact, “open,” and they bear little potential to transform higher education by massively extending its reach. A successful expansion of online higher education to wider public arenas following the cMOOC model requires a robust infrastructure of open access scholarship. Expansion of open online education and open access publishing are essential parts of the same project. Libraries working with faculty form the bridge connecting these efforts together.

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