

Are we walking the talk? Tensions between librarians' values, academic freedom and open scholarship.

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Open access - the practice of freely sharing scholarly outputs online -- is steadily garnering support across the research community. At academic institutions, libraries are usually the standard-bearers for this trend, advancing open scholarship by providing services, infrastructure and funding - for example, employing scholarly communication experts, operating institutional repositories, and funding open access publication costs. This investment in personnel and resources reflects a shared priority of advancing more equitable systems for creating and sharing knowledge. Our professional organizations publicly espouse these values and engage in advocacy to advance open access projects and uptake. At an institutional level, library workers often lead the development of campus open access policies which encourage or commit researchers to publicly share their work. In Canada, nine academic institutions and ten libraries/librarian councils have adopted open access policies.

Despite this wealth of activity and public professions of support for open scholarship, it is unclear whether academic librarians in Canada actually practice what we preach. Most of the open access statements/policies adopted by libraries merely encourage workers to make their scholarship freely available. Anecdotal evidence indicates a minority of us are actually archiving our work in institutional repositories or publishing in open access journals.

This paper will provide preliminary results from a survey exploring how Canadian academic librarians' professional, personal and collective values impact our publishing practices. In particular, results from this study will indicate how academic freedom provisions -- articulated in collective agreements, institutional policies and by professional organizations including CAPAL and CAUT -- may affect whether we choose to support open access with our words and actions. Academic freedom is usually appreciated as a protective measure, guarding librarians and faculty against repercussions for work or speech which may be viewed as controversial. Independently choosing how to disseminate research is often a key tenet of academic freedom policies. Accordingly, librarians may experience tension between our personal/professional support for the principle of open access and our will to exert academic freedom and publish where we please -- including closed-access venues. This discordance not only affects our own scholarly practices but should also be acknowledged within librarians' continuing efforts to encourage faculty to embrace open access.