

Publishing Open Access on the Tenure Track: Observations from the Trenches

Erin Renee Wahl



Presentation Trajectory

- Define the importance of this experiment.
- How I developed my rules.
- Observations regarding the publication process and my own work.
- What is has been like going through tenure with this goal.
- What we could do to make it better.



Land Acknowledgement

New Mexico State University honors Native American knowledges and worldviews based on intimate relationships to the natural world. The genesis of the Southwest Indigenous Peoples, including the Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache, established their guardianship of the lands now occupied by New Mexico State University. As the state's Land-Grant University, we acknowledge and respect the sovereign Indian Nations and Indigenous Peoples. We pledge to have a meaningful and respectful relationship with the sovereign Indian Nations, Indigenous communities, and Native American Peoples within the institution.

"Labor Acknowledgement: We must acknowledge that much of what we know of this country today, including its culture, economic growth, and development throughout history and across time, has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and their ascendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking of their people, chattel slavery, and Jim Crow. We are indebted to their labor and their sacrifice, and we must acknowledge the tremors of that violence throughout the generations and the resulting impact that can still be felt and witnessed today" (Stewart, 2021).

**What does this
mean for us?**



Open Access: What is it?

- Free. Free to all. No charges.
- Tiered open access.



And why did I make this choice?

- A belief in sustainability in academia and in libraries.
- Rising costs of subscriptions to journals and databases.
- Belief in freedom of information for everyone; not just those that attend a university.
- Equity in information access.



The Rules

1

Only publishing in open access peer-reviewed journals that were fully free, with no author processing charges, etc.

2

If a submission call was for my main area of interest in research I could respond to it.

3

Books and book chapters do not count, but I get bonus points if I manage that as well.

7

After I achieve tenure, I can publish wherever I want.

4

These publications do NOT have to be exclusively library journals. I can look for interdisciplinary options where applicable.

5

If no open-access, peer-reviewed journal will take my article I may submit to a regular peer-reviewed journal. But first I must exhaust my open-access options to the best of my knowledge, including potentially rewriting and reworking to fit in adjacent publications.

6

If I am invited to contribute to a co-written article of which I am NOT the primary author I will encourage my co-authors to choose an open access publication. I will, however, defer to the decision of the writing group overall.



How I did it...

- Created a robust list of LIS open-access publications.
- Monitored listservs within and adjacent to the LIS community for special issues in my research areas that were also open access.
- Familiarized myself with creative commons licensing.
- Familiarized myself with copyright.



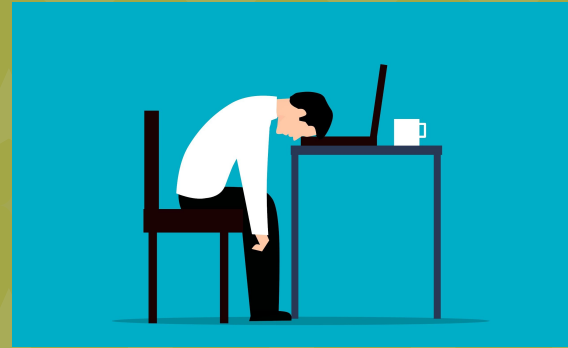
Observations of Journals

- Though there are a very respectable number of open-access, peer-reviewed journals for libraries, not all fit my areas of research.
- COVID-19 happened 3 years into my tenure track progress. Although this threw off many publishing schedules, it also caused a large number of journals to shift their status, or curate open-access issues relating to COVID-19 solutions in libraries. A problem actually became an opportunity.
- There is no one standard for open access journals and sometimes the varied formats can cause problems such as absent editors, missed issues, etc.



Observations of my own Work

- Keeping an updated list of open access journals was imperative.
- Check your library catalog...often, and supplement it.
- A relationship with the editors was important.
- Understanding yourself as a Researcher.



What it feels like...



What it *could* feel like...



What can librarians & archivists do?

- Change tenure policies to prioritize open access publications as much as (or more than!) subscription journals.
- Create mentoring opportunities at open access journals, especially for first-time authors (think *In the Library with a Lead Pipe*).
- Reach out to potential authors at all career levels and encourage them to submit to your open access journal.
- Make sure your journal is picked up by library discovery services.

What do you think?



**I go up for tenure in
September 2023.**



Thank you!

Erin Renee Wahl

University Archivist
Assistant (for now...) Professor

Email:

ewahl@nmsu.edu

Happy to provide updates on my article
when I begin writing it later this year.

