My Experience of UKSG 2022 - Chloe Bolsover, early career professional

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Due to unforeseen circumstances, my experience of **UKSG** as an early career professional was a virtual one, but it was still highly enjoyable. The team at UKSG were incredibly understanding and helpful. I was switched almost seamlessly to attend the conference as a virtual delegate. From the comfort of my own home, I was able to watch high quality live streams of events and be able to contribute by asking questions through the virtual chat. In the following report, I will discuss some of the sessions that I attended.

I was very much interested in **Chris Bourg**'s plenary session talk: *Advancing openness and equity in scholarship*. I agreed with many of its key points, as I feel that in order for more universities to be able to follow Open Science practices, discipline-specific plans must be adopted. Department-level plans acknowledge the different approaches to Open Science and enable critical discussion between libraries and academics. Following on from this, Rachel Bruce's talk, *From open access to open science* discussed how Open Science should be designed in an inclusive way. This is important in terms of developing such practices in the Global South.

I was curious regarding the speakers' views on how Open Science practices (or indeed Open Research) should be adopted to include all disciplines. The focus on Open Science has been towards STEM subjects which prioritise the immediate sharing of outputs to advance research. Chris and Rachel both agreed that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied and that practical workarounds should be considered. Certainly, open access monographs and the advancement of digital humanities provide avenues in which Open Science practices can be further explored. However, I feel that a shift in perspectives within disciplines is necessary to facilitate the sharing of outputs more openly. In my work, I have experienced some concerns from academics regarding CC licences and the sharing of third party content. Despite the best

efforts of scholarly communication professionals, advocacy and awareness is still needed to encourage Open Science to flourish within all disciplines.

It was fascinating to hear about open textbook initiatives. The breakout session- *Open textbook publishing 101-* presented by **Mira Buist-Zhuk** and **Margreet Nieborg** provided an insight into how such approaches can be adopted by university libraries, such as the **University of Groningen**. Certainly, the pandemic highlighted the need for online, educational resources to be made openly available. I worked in a school library for a period of time and there was a push for more electronic resources to be purchased. Despite this, the rising costs of educational materials means that this is not always possible in terms of small library budgets. Openly available textbooks creates a level playing field for educational institutions. I really liked how at Groningen, resources are made available on an open source platform. This creates the infrastructure needed for other institutions to host textbooks on their own platforms.

I was aware that **Peter Barr**'s breakout session was potentially polarising. The talk, *How do you make Library acquisitions truly ethical?*, raised many questions within scholarly communication but also librarianship as a profession. It made me reflect on the fundamental principles of librarianship and whether they are realistic or indeed noble. Peter highlighted how the professional ideals that exist within libraries can be exploitative and cause employees to work above and beyond their pay grade. I agree with this as the public perception that librarians are super heroes can have harmful consequences. The talk also discussed the extent to which transformative agreements are ethical as well as how realistic it is for libraries to boycott and lobby such deals. My main takeaway from the talk was that libraries can be restricted in terms of driving radical change to be independent from the current publishing system. Indeed, I agree that the objectives of the parent organisation and leadership of libraries are primary factors in influencing an alternative ecosystem.

One lightning session which has changed my perspective on scholarly outputs was **Toby Green**'s talk (*Wait! What? There's lots of vital stuff missing from the scholarly record!*). I was inspired by the way in which it was presented through a Twitter thread. Through this medium, the content of the talk was able to be shared in an open and accessible manner. I realised that all scholarly activity, including blog posts, podcast series, and video resources should be considered as legitimate. Different disciplines have varying forms of outputs that institutional repositories need to be able to accommodate. For example, in my current role I have created metadata records for art projects, web resources and images. Thus, I agree with Toby that this type of content should be made available on a platform where it can be indexed. Currently, outputs which are not traditional articles, book chapters and conference proceedings are not accounted for in institutional metrics and benchmarking. However, I anticipate a future where they will become more prominent and so sessions like the one I attended are important.

Finally, the breakout session presented by **Lola Harre** (*Octopus: creating a new primary research record*) provided a fascinating insight into the recently launched open publishing platform. For me, it is an exciting initiative which aims to share new research in full, in detail as it happens. It enables Open Research practices as publishing research in the eight types means that methodologies used are easily accessible. Despite the promising developments surrounding **Octopus**, I remain a little sceptical about the potential level of engagement academics will have with the platform. This extends beyond their awareness of the service, but the way in which disciplines publish outputs. Octopus appears to be geared towards STEM subjects where there is somewhat of a drive towards publishing outputs openly, as well as making methodologies, software, and data available. This links back to the discussion in the first talk I attended where I probed the speakers to consider how Open Science should be approached in a multi-disciplinary

manner. Not all disciplines may be willing to trial Octopus, and so further initiatives must be developed to accommodate a range of scholarly activity and publications.

I would like to thank UKSG for giving me the opportunity to attend the conference, as the experience and knowledge gained has been brilliant. I anticipate that I will be applying what I have learned to my upcoming dissertation for my MA in Library and Information Services Management. I wish to further research open access publishing in the Global South. Talks like **Rachel Bruce**'s provided interesting points on inclusivity which I would like to expand my knowledge on. I truly appreciated being able to attend UKSG as an early career professional. The sessions I attended provided me with valuable insights and knowledge into the future of scholarly communication and collection development within academic libraries. My perceptions on the principles of librarianship were challenged and I found myself deeply reflecting on what it means to be a librarian.