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Open Access: Student Edition

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Open Access: Student Edition

Abstract

This week, October 21-27 2013, is Open Access Week! Does anyone know what ‘open access’ is? If you dissect the term, it sounds like being able to get to something that was previously closed. But what does the phrase “open access” refer to opening? government? college education? scripts for this season of the Walking Dead? [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Barbara Holley Library Intern, Open Access

Disciplines

Library and Information Science | Scholarly Communication

Comments

The Interns at Gettysburg College’s Musselman Library captured their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Over time the blog has featured Fortenbaugh, Smith, and Holley interns. They shared updates on semester long projects, responded to blogging prompts, and documented their individual intern experience.

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Blogging the Library

The Interns @ Gettysburg College's Musselman Library

Open Access: Student Edition

October 23, 2013

By: Stephanie Bowen

This week, October 21-27 2013, is Open Access Week!

Does anyone know what 'open access' is? If you dissect the term, it sounds like being able to get to something that was previously closed. But what does the phrase "open access" refer to opening? government? college education? scripts for this season of the Walking Dead?



Don't be an information zombie.
Learn about Open Access!

From an academic standpoint, we're talking about open access to information- "[the free, immediate, online access to the results of scholarly research, and the right to use and re-use those results as you need.](#)" It's a pretty sweet idea. Scholarly research freely available to the public in order learn from and build upon it. It seems like common sense, so what's the big deal?

The Publisher Blockade



The stalwart blockade of publishers

Believe it or not, access to scholarly information is stymied by a fierce blockade of publishers, shooting down attempts to use their hallowed knowledge by jacking up journal prices. I'm not being dramatic- [numbers don't lie](#). As a student, faculty or staff member at an academic institution, the library pays your passage through this publisher blockade, but that does not mean we agree with it.

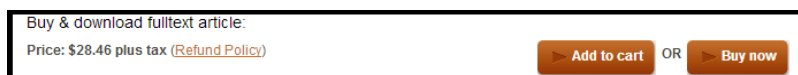
Universities & college, publishers, public and academic libraries, cities and countries- even the United States government- have acknowledged the need for open access publications and archives. Institutions no longer want to provide passage through the publisher blockade. They want to dismantle it- in a way they're sticking it to the "man" and by "the man" I mean the publishers. They are devising ways for scholarly research to be freely accessed and publicly evaluated.

Why should I care?

During my internship, I've spent a good deal of time trying to translate all my new library knowledge into something students can relate to. I'm a recent college graduate, and most days I still think like a college student. I'm going to capitalize on that and explain why open access is important and cool.

Unpredictable Access

Eventually there will come a time in your life where an academic institution will not be there to shepherd you through the publisher blockade. Finding appropriate, scholarly research will become difficult and the day will come when you hit one of these boxes.



You will then proceed to slam your head against your laptop for twenty minutes, cursing your empty bank account and longing for your college years - the good old days of access. Believe me, I speak from experience.

Fear not frustrated researcher, open access will light the way. You benefit from open access to information every day without even realizing it. You see the results when you conduct Google Scholar search. Those full text PDF articles are the product of open access journals and repositories. But if you know that open access journal and repositories exist, you can cut out all the face-palming by going straight to them.

There are many open access options. Musselman library has its own open repository called [The Cupola](#). It is meant to provide access to scholarly and creative work . The library not only supports open access to information but acts upon its beliefs. Currently, there are 124 faculty members represented in the Cupola that means the chances of finding an article by your professor is quite high. So the next time you're taking a Facebook break or stuck in a research slump, check out the Cupola.

You can participate!



The Almetric donut of scholarly awesome-ness

A new research tool that goes hand in hand with open access is called 'altmetrics.' There are number of ways publishers measure a journals impact upon the academic community, which have not been updated to reflect the changing mediums of information.

Almetrics uses an article's online activity to measure its impact. It considers things like: How many people shared/liked/commented on this article in social media? Who interacted with this article? How many blog posts reference it? Is getting media attention? One way the variety of activity can be presented is by using media donuts like the one pictured. The more variety of color, the more diverse the attention.

When you see an article you like - tweet it, like it, reblog it, post it. You are contributing to the altmetric donut and furthering research.



For more information on Open Access week visit: <http://www.openaccessweek.org/>
<http://blogging.musselmanlibrary.org/2013/10/>