



A day in the life of a Co-ordinator, Scholarly Communications Amy Buckland

I work in the Digital Initiatives (DI) unit of the Library at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and a recent reorganization means that I have a much more focused portfolio, supporting scholarly communication, library-based publishing, data management, copyright and digital humanities. It also means that most of my major projects for the summer require me to use the phrase 'culture change' on a daily basis.

I'm fortunate to be part of a pretty vast network of 'librarylanders' involved in scholarly communication and research data issues, and trust them to point me in the direction of new developments, especially those of the culture change variety.

On a typical day I wake up. Sometimes it's after nightmares of monsters, sometimes it's wondering what the post of the day will be on a certain blog. Often it's after dreaming about a world where taxpayer-funded research is accessible and easily found by said taxpayers. More often than not, I wake up after having been up very late reading a report on the future of scholarship in the academy (sometimes written by 'futurists' as opposed to folks who actually, ummm, will be working in the future) so I need coffee. All of it. [Note to self: buy more coffee.] I spend some time triaging e-mail for the day, and mentally preparing a 'must do' list.

During my commute to the office, I listen to podcasts like CBC's Spark, Jesse Brown's Canadialand, Marc Maron's WTF, or QI's No Such Thing As a Fish. I could probably make the case that all of the podcasts inform my work life (tech, media, new cursewords, random trivia) but really I listen to them because I'm a sucker for learning, and because there's always someone on the metro car making a weird noise and I just need to block it out.

211 After running through Twitter and Friendfeed, I check out the usual suspects in the blogosphere – Kevin Smith, Michael Geist, Gavia Libraria, Library Babel Fish – and more. At this point I am probably wound up about the state of scholarly communication (I have been told I'm fuelled by rage) and in dire need of more coffee. Fortunately for me, DI has invested in an espresso machine just 25 metres from my office, so I can easily refill.

In my role as repository manager, I work with our Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Office to ensure that all graduates can easily find their dissertation in eScholarship@McGill shortly after graduation. Today this means helping a student who was told by a university press that they would not consider working with her to publish her first monograph unless her dissertation was embargoed for at least five years. We discuss the issue and I point out that the beauty of university presses is their ability to transform the dissertation into a great book, which in no way would compete with the availability of the original research. I encourage her to push back on this request from the publisher.

Currently, one of my major projects is to build the Office for Copyright Compliance (OCC) for the University. This has been ongoing for over a year, and we're getting to the good part – hiring someone to lead the office. Campus interviews usually take up almost a full day, including a job talk by the presenter, meetings with various committees, and the standard lunch/dinner with administrators just to make sure folks can handle socializing. No such luck today, though, so I eat lunch at my desk and catch up on some reading in preparation for meetings this afternoon.

Building the OCC means being oh-so-familiar with the Canadian Copyright Act, and liaising with other universities across Canada to learn how they are supporting the expanded user rights for research and education that arrived in late 2012 when the Act was modernized. Daily e-mails/instant messages with colleagues at other institutions help me ensure that our public information is in line with other universities, and keep me up to date on some pending court cases (like Access Copyright v York University) that could affect us.

As part of the team working on a research data repository for the University, at some point during my day I either have a meeting or work on a strategy/policy document. Fortunately we are far from the bleeding edge (bruising edge?) with regards to data services, so I'm able to chat with colleagues at other institutions for advice and best practices. Since we know what technology we're going to be using, I'm able to talk with folks who have already built a similar repository, and get the dirt on the implementation. This helps build realistic timelines and gives me a heads up for possible roadblocks.

At various points during the day, I might also meet with a researcher to help him build an editorial board for a scholarly journal the library will publish, answer a few copyright questions referred to me by liaison librarians, outline the monthly events I am proposing to celebrate something 'open' in the coming academic year (be that open access publishing, open data, open educational resources, or open source technology), represent the library at a meeting on digital humanities initiatives on campus, or work virtually with a colleague at another institution on a presentation for an upcoming conference. (The breadth of my portfolio gives me the opportunity to attend endless conferences a year.) I probably also spend some time searching and chatting on the internet too.

All of my workday is in support of open scholarship. I left publishing to become a librarian because the changing landscape of scholarly communication inspires me, and I see so many leadership opportunities for libraries. I am very lucky to be paid to help with the coming revolution.



An important aspect of Amy's work is comparing and sharing notes with colleagues in other institutions in pursuit of best practice

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"I left publishing to become a librarian because the changing landscape of scholarly communication inspires me"



The signs on Amy's office door are testament to her determination and dedication to her main cause: that of open scholarship

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