

## Scholarship in the Information Age: An Interview with Isabella Guthrie-McNaughton

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*On Monday, the Institute for Christian Studies officially launched an Institutional Repository. Currently, it contains hundreds of items from published articles to theses and dissertations to newsletter archives to unique hidden gems of past scholarship, spanning from the 1960's to 2013. Though it already contains a substantial selection of scholarship, the Institutional Repository will continue growing to house hundreds more publications.*

*It is not easy work. To be made available for open access, copyright law requires permission from both the author and the original publisher. Once the permission is obtained, the publication is then scanned and formatted for ease of online access and settled into its digital home where it can be preserved long after the hard copy's pages turn to dust. Building the repository is painstaking work, but it yields fruitful and exciting results for the accessibility of important scholarly work. Not only that, it also digitally preserves fragile pages of the typewritten past.*

*To shed light on the importance of this endeavor and the implications of open access on academic publishing and the future of scholarship, we interviewed ICS's librarian Isabella Guthrie-McNaughton, who is the driving force and mastermind behind ICS's Institutional Repository.*

**Ground Motive:** Why is it important for scholarly publishing to move towards open access?

**Isabella Guthrie-McNaughton:** In many cases scholarly articles are published in journals that follow traditional publishing modes. The business models of these journals are usually subscription based so that the reader either subscribes to the journal by purchasing a set number of issues or volumes or accesses the journal through a licensed vendor through a library system. In many cases individuals are left without being able to access the journal article. In Canada, making research funded by one of the Tri-Councils (NSERC, SSHRC or CIHR) publicly available through open access is becoming one of the requirements to receiving a successful grant. However, I think one of the most important points about moving to open access is that publications will be accessible to anyone world wide who has access to the internet. Open access maximizes the reach of faculty and student research.

**GM:** Are there weaknesses in the current models of open access publishing?

**IGM:** One of the problems with the current model of publishing through open access is that in many cases the author pays the publisher in order to have his or her article published. At the moment scholarly publishing has been caught up in a variety of business models promoting both traditional means of publishing and open access models (Gold or Green). Until recently it seemed that publishers were not interested in open access. As more scholars in the science and medicine fields began to opt to publish through various open access models, traditional publishers began to see the need to offer open access publishing platforms. However, they are in

many cases applying a traditional business model to the open access system by transferring the traditional subscription based monies to monies obtained from the authors wanting to publish through open access.

**GM:** How will increased open access change the future of publishing? How many journals and institutions are moving toward an open access model?

**IGM:** I think that open access has already changed the future of publishing. As I noted in the first question, the publishing industry has been scrambling to catch up to the model of open access by trying to apply traditional business models. Open access isn't only affecting the economic aspects of publishing though. In Europe, where repositories are being set up to receive author pre-prints, a vetting system has also been put into place mirroring the peer-review process. Open access seems to be changing many facets of scholarly publishing. Many universities have implemented institutional repositories. Currently according to OpenDOAR there are more than 2,400 repositories world-wide. Not all repositories have been registered. The repositories hold digitized pre-prints or post-prints of faculty and student publications. In the case of open access journals, many traditionally published journals have moved to open access. Some have moved to Gold Open Access - meaning that rather than charge for a subscription, the publisher relies on grants, advertising, sponsorships and in some cases the author pays to be published in that particular journal. In Green Open Access the author puts his or her article into a repository in the pre-print or post-print version. Currently the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) indicates that there are 9919 open access journals, comprising 1,517,309 articles from 122 countries. The number of open access journals published is steadily growing.