

Canadian Content in a Digital World

Submission from the Canadian Research Knowledge Network

The Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) is pleased to offer the following observations and suggestions in response to the consultations currently in progress by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage regarding Canadian Content in a Digital World.

The Canadian Research Knowledge Network is a partnership of 75 Canadian universities, dedicated to expanding digital content for the academic research and teaching enterprise in Canada. Through the coordinated leadership of librarians, researchers, administrators and other stakeholders in the research community, CRKN undertakes large-scale content acquisition and licensing initiatives in order to build knowledge infrastructure and research and teaching capacity in Canada's universities.

A national and bilingual organization, CRKN's vision is to be a catalyst for innovation and development; we achieve this vision by creating the greatest possible impact in support of Canadian research, scholarship, creative activity and knowledge transfer by working creatively and collaboratively with other stakeholders.

On behalf of its members, CRKN respectfully brings the following points to the attention of the Government of Canada:

Regarding Principle 1: Focusing on Citizens and Creators

Pillar 1.1: Enabling choice and access to content:

Open Access is the free, immediate, online availability of research articles, coupled with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment.¹ Ensuring Open Access to scholarly works produced in Canada enables citizens to choose the content they want; currently, access to the majority of academic research, including made-in-Canada scholarship, is restricted to those who are affiliated with higher-education institutions. Citizen researchers who are not affiliated with a college or university are forced to pay to access this research, which significantly limits their ability to further their own knowledge, create new knowledge, develop innovative practices and contribute to social change.

¹ Open Access as defined by SPARC: <http://sparcopen.org/open-access/>

Pillar 1.2: Supporting our creators

Maintaining Canada's balanced copyright legislation supports creators and permits use and re-use of creative works by the Canadian education community. Fair dealing is a fair and responsible approach to ensuring content is used responsibly for educational and research purposes in a digital world. Likewise, the current term of copyright – the author's life plus 50 years – is an ample reward for creators (and their great-grandchildren).

Regarding Principle 2: Reflecting Canadian identities and promoting sound democracy

Pillar 2.1: Redefine Canadian Content for contemporary Canada

Canadian content includes scholarly work authored and co-authored by scholars working at Canadian higher education institutions. In the digital age, scholarly works are no longer limited to articles as the only kind of research output: innovative researchers in the digital social sciences and humanities are discovering new methods of creating and producing research outputs, including book chapters, exhibition catalogues, textual datasets, book reviews, images, video and audio files, and much more. These scholarly productions represent the Canadian experience from many cultural points of view including those of our indigenous peoples, and in both official languages. Supporting the work of academics in Canada, from production and access to dissemination and preservation, is a vital component to ensuring Canada continues to be a significant contributor at the global level.

Pillar 2.2 Strengthen the availability of quality information and news in local markets

Scholarly information is quality information. Canadian academic research is an authoritative, peer-reviewed source of information that presents and discusses new and established ideas from many different perspectives. Responsible journalists rely on academic research to strengthen their stories through evidence, which then encourages thoughtful and informed discussion among citizens. Access to quality information is necessary to help citizens separate quality information from inaccurate information, and to promote evidence-based decision-making and sound democracy.

Regarding Principle 3: Catalyzing economic and social innovation

Pillar 3.1: Positioning Canada as a culture and digital content leader

Building exceptional cultural industries and supporting the growth of creative enterprises as part of Canada's innovation agenda includes supporting Canada's scholarly publishers. Many scholarly publishers have received support through the Canada Council for the Arts Book Publishing Support Grants; however, this grant program has not evolved to recognize digital content. For titles to be eligible for the grant, they must "have a print run of at least 350 copies (print-on-demand titles are

eligible if you can demonstrate that 350 copies have been printed)."² This restriction is a disincentive for publishers to produce born-digital titles, and contradicts the goals Canadian Heritage describes in the consultation paper entitled "Canadian Content in a Digital World: Focusing the Conversation."³

Open Access publishing is an example of economic and social innovation. While Open Access provides free and immediate availability of online research articles, providing open access from a business and operations point of view requires investment in the publisher. Publishing quality content requires expertise and effort on behalf of the publisher; as members of the creative economy, publishers have the right to operate sustainably so they can continue to contribute to the economy and society. Scholarly publishers require financial support and incentives so they can move from the traditional subscription model, which was appropriate in a print-based world, to an Open Access model, which is required in a digital world.

Pillar 3.2: Leveraging Canada's national cultural institutions

Supporting Canada's national cultural institutions is necessary to ensure that Canadians and the world has access to Canadian content. In addition to supporting content creators and ensuring access to made-in-Canada content, preserving our content for the long term is crucial to our future success. Library and Archives Canada "preserves and makes accessible the documentary heritage of Canada. It also serves as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions."⁴ Preservation of both physical and digital content is mandatory; in a digital world, preserving online and Internet content means meeting the challenge of constantly changing technological and social environments. Heritage Canada's investment in preserving Canadian content will provide a return on investment in the long term only through continued support of Libraries and Archives Canada.

Pillar 3.3: Promoting Canadian content globally

Canadian scholarship is more successful when it has access to the global scholarly research community. Collaborating across multiple borders is a standard practice among academic researchers, as they are keenly aware that working with colleagues from diverse backgrounds results in greater creativity and increased innovation. An example of successful global collaboration to promote Open Access is the SCOAP³ partnership⁵, a consortium of over three thousand libraries, key funding agencies and research centers in 44 countries and 3 intergovernmental organizations who work with leading publishers to convert key journals in the field of High-Energy Physics to Open Access at no cost for authors. CRKN represents Canada in this partnership. This model successfully

² Canada Council for the Arts, Book Publishing Support: Block Grants - <http://canadacouncil.ca/council/grants/find-a-grant/grants/book-publishing-support-block-grants>

³ Government of Canada Consultation Paper, Canadian Content in a Digital World: Focusing the Conversation - http://www.canadiancontentconsultations.ca/system/documents/attachments/e328d01aaa5d8b25b5b2e769f0f3ccb59f63893e/000/004/022/original/PCH-DigiCanCon-Consultation_Paper.pdf

⁴ Libraries and Archives Canada: Our Mandate - <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/about-us/Pages/our-mandate.aspx>

⁵ SCOAP³:Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics: <https://scoap3.org/>

demonstrates how investing in publishers to cover the costs of Open Access results in providing global, barrier-free access to scientific content.

Open Access content receives more citations than restricted content in the global academic community. In a compilation developed by SPARC Europe, a significant number of studies demonstrate that Open Access scholarly articles receive more citations than those that are restricted behind a pay wall.⁶ This means that more people, worldwide, have access to Canadian research when that research is open. Creators benefit and are more likely to have successful and viable careers in a digital world when their work is globally accessible, facilitating further research and innovation through partnerships.

Thank you for providing CRKN with this opportunity to contribute to this important consultation.

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⁶ The Open Access Citation Advantage Service is hosted by SPARC Europe at <http://sparceurope.org/oaca/>