



Will Academic Library Publishing Break OER? A Diffusion of Innovations Study

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries are among the organizations advocating for open educational resources (OER), often playing a key campus role in education, advocacy, and support of their creation and publication. Publication of OER resonates with the role of the academic library. Because “incongruence in perceptions” (Chena 2019: 24) can cause difficulties and unforeseen challenges with implementation and use of OER, organizations involved in OER initiatives need familiarity with how OER and organizational values align. The goal of this exploration was to investigate how academic libraries enact academic library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process of OER in higher education. Data collected in this single case study research project was analyzed through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The findings from the study suggest that, if academic libraries are to enact the creation and publication of OER in ways appropriate to their conception, those involved will need to be intentional about ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER. Future suggested research includes a multiple-case study comparative research study looking at academic library publication of OER, exploration of how opinion leaders and attributes of innovations impact academic library publication of OER, and investigation into the impact of organizational structure on the diffusion of OER creation and publication.

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Academic institutions and organizations are expanding their support for the creation and publication of open educational resources (Hess, Nann, & Riddle 2016). Enticed by both the trending nature of open educational resources (OER) and the potential they have for innovative pedagogy and affordable education (Soper, Wharton, & Phillips 2018), an array of organizations including “individual institutions, private funders, and government” (Hess, Nann, & Riddle 2016) are providing incentives for the publication of OER. However, the high levels of perceived compatibility between these organizations and OER may lead to their incorrect development and implementation (Rogers 2003).

Perceived compatibility is an attribute of innovations that affects the adoption and diffusion of an innovation (Allan & Wolf 1978); high levels of perceived compatibility “with a previously introduced idea” (Rogers 2003: 244) can lead to misadoption. The perceived compatibility between an innovation and the “previously introduced idea” (Rogers 2003: 244) can cause difficulties and unforeseen challenges with implementation and use of the innovation as well as changes to the organization itself (Rogers 2003). For example, a university might implement development of OER in order to enhance the reputation of the institutional brand (Sandy & Mattern 2018). By contrast, others consider development of OER in terms of serving the common good and democratizing access to knowledge (Lauritsen 2019).

Some institutions and organizations supporting the creation and publication of OER have incorporated partnerships with for-profit entities (Chtena 2019). For example, a prominent open education conference featured commercial, for-profit publishers as part of a keynote panel billed as exploring the future of learning materials. However, the high-visibility inclusion of commercial publishers in a discussion of the sustainability of OER resulted in a backlash on Twitter and other online discussion boards from people who questioned the appropriateness of the presence of commercial publishers at an OER scholarly conference (Jhangiani 2019). This phenomenon may illustrate what diffusion experts have claimed: that although perceived compatibility is an attribute that affects the adoption and diffusion of an innovation, high levels of perceived compatibility “with a previously introduced idea can cause overadoption or misadoption” (Rogers 2003: 244).

The first author is the OER Librarian at a land-grant university located in the Midwestern United States. The university is a doctoral granting university categorized as very high research, and as of Spring 2021, had an enrollment of over 35,000 students in distance and face-to-face undergraduate or graduate programs. The university’s academic library identified OER as a priority in their 2014 strategic plan and in October 2018 hired the author as OER Librarian to help transition a number of ongoing OER projects into a sustainable OER program (Essmiller, Thompson & Alvarado-Albertorio 2020).

In this professional role of OER Librarian the first author was involved working with the Scholarly Services Librarian to create a replicable workflow for library support of the development and publication of OER. While developing the workflow a discussion arose that gave cause to consider whether publication of OER should mirror publication of open access scholarly work. Academic library publishing is described by the Library Publishing Coalition as college or university library led actions supporting the “creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly creative and/or educational works” (Sandy & Mattern 2018). In *Made With Creative Commons*, Stacey and Pearson (2017) discuss differences in how “the commons, market and state manage resources differently” (p. 5). They describe maximization of participation as a key characteristic of commons resource management since resources in the commons could be “used and contributed to by everyone” (Stacey & Pearson 2017:14). This is arguably in direct conflict with the use of peer review, a core process of scholarly communication in which “professional experts” (Tennant et al. 2017) determine whose work is suitable for publication. Until this point, the focus had been on designing a replicable workflow for OSU Libraries’ publication of OER. The different values of market and commons however led to a reconsideration of the appropriateness of traditional library publishing practices for the publication of OER. Libraries and OER each have a commitment to improved access to information and the community construction of knowledge. While these shared values can be considered beneficial, they might also be seen to be overshadowed by other values which diverged. This realization provided motivation for this research because it was deemed that in order to design an effective workflow it was first

necessary to better understand how the values of library publishing aligned with those of OER. It was necessary to examine an academic library with an established OER publishing program and develop familiarity with how they enacted their OER publishing program.

The goal of this paper is to share findings from a single qualitative case study research project undertaken to investigate how academic libraries enact academic library publishing programs and the ramification that has in the diffusion process of OER in higher education. The study asked “What are the differences, if any, in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER vs. how the Midland State University Library publishes other work?” Data collected in this single case study research project was analyzed through the lens of diffusion of innovations theory. The findings from the study suggest that, if academic libraries are to enact the creation and publication of OER in ways appropriate to their conception, those involved will need to be intentional about ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER.

ACADEMIC LIBRARY PUBLISHING

Academic library publishing has provided a place for works and content “routinely ignored by other scholarly publishers” (Sandy & Mattern 2018: 345). Much as academic libraries have historically helped users “with their unmet information needs” (Hawkins 2019: 4) the academic library is able to address unmet publication needs. In publishing faculty preprints, graduate student theses and dissertations, and publication of conference volumes or festschriften (all types of publication representative of work which has either already undergone peer review or fits a niche need), material published by the contemporary academic library is distinguished (Schlosser et al. 2017) in its production of a “broad range of creative and intellectual outputs” (Sandy & Mattern 2018: 345). This may also include materials whose publication process has been less traditional, such as “books, newspapers, etc., for public sale or distribution” (Sandy & Mattern 2018: 340), as well as work which traditional commercial publishers determine “too long, too short, too esoteric, too expensive, too complicated or just too strange” (Sandy & Mattern 2018: 345). Academic libraries are unrestricted by the need to appeal to a commercial audience, a characteristic which frees them to publish high quality content despite unconventional subject matter, limited readership, or logistical publication challenges (Sandy & Mattern 2018).

Increasing cost and access restrictions have “encouraged libraries to explore alternative options for sharing scholarly research” (Sandy & Mattern 2018: 339). Academic library publishing is becoming acceptable and recognized as an alternative to challenges associated with traditional methods for the publication of scholarly communication (Reed & Jahre 2019; Sandy & Mattern 2018). As academic library publishing becomes more common, the question that arises is, do academic libraries publishing OER do so using the same processes they use to publish scholarly communication? Is there a way to determine if academic libraries should publish OER differently than they publish scholarly communications?

Academic libraries are among the organizations advocating for OER, often playing a key campus role in education, advocacy, and support of their creation and publication (Bell 2018; Lashley et al. 2017; Reed & Jahre 2019; Sandy & Mattern 2018). Publication of OER resonates with the role of the academic library (Bell 2018; Hess, Nann, & Riddle 2016; Jung, Bauer, & Heaps 2017; Kleymeer, Kleinman, & Hans 2010; Reed & Jahre 2019). Throughout history, library patrons have copied, annotated, and otherwise interacted with library resources in ways strikingly similar to the 5Rs some consider definitive of OER (Battles 2004; Lankes 2011; Wiley & Hilton 2018). Anderson et al. (2019), contextualizing the academic library’s role in supporting and publishing OER, found publication of OER to be a continuation of the academic library’s role in “embrac[ing] open and accessible information sources for users” (p. 2). Hess, Nann and Riddle (2016) suggested academic library publishing of OER can provide a bridge between formal and informal learners, helping facilitate “inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all” (Miao et al. 2019: v).

Academic libraries are entering the OER publishing arena for a variety of reasons (Bell 2018; Lashley et al. 2017; Kleymeer, Kleinman & Hanss 2010; Reed & Jahre 2019; Sandy & Mattern 2018). These reasons include the existence of already established publishing infrastructure in academic libraries, perceived alignment of academic library mission with OER, institutional reputation, and as a response to commercial publishing (Bell 2018; Hess, Nann & Riddle 2016;

Lashley et al. 2017; Kleymeer, Kleinman & Hanss 2010; Reed & Jahre 2019; Sandy & Mattern 2018). Publication of OER by the academic library is logistically convenient (Kleymeer, Kleinman & Hanss 2010), and librarians have the know-how to navigate the increasing number of repositories and platforms hosting OER to help instructors find suitable, quality course materials (Hess, Nann & Riddle 2016). While the use of existing academic library publishing infrastructure is convenient, one question that arises is, does publishing through existing infrastructure result in changes to OER? Moreover, with many academic libraries publishing OER, how are academic libraries ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER?

The literature reveals tensions relevant to academic library publication of OER. These tensions result from traditional academic library practices as well as the academic library's role in service to its affiliated university. The UNESCO Guidelines on the Development of Open Educational Resources Policies identified "equity, inclusion, collaboration and respect for diversity" (Miao et al. 2019: v) as values core to the development and use of OER; however, library knowledge structures have failed to "accurately and respectfully organize library materials about social groups and identities that lack social and political power" (Drabinski 2013: 97). Universities affiliated with academic libraries claim commitment to excellence when describing the work of their students and scholars, using rhetoric which heightens "narratives of scarcity and competition" (Moore et al. 2017: 1), themes antithetical to those employed in reference to OER (Stacey & Pearson 2017). Finally, academic library publishing of OER motivated primarily by an emphasis on textbook affordability may fail to attend to critical ethical and pedagogical concerns (Chena 2019).

ACADEMIC LIBRARY PUBLISHING OF OER

In the cases described below, responsibility for OER support, advocacy, education, and oversight of publication falls within the academic libraries' scholarly communications divisions (Hess, Nann & Riddle 2016; VanScoy 2019) which are already "maintaining the infrastructure to shift to OA [Open Access]" (VanScoy 2019: 4), suggesting that "in the world of higher education teaching, OER is the corollary to OA in scholarship" (p. 4). In academic libraries, there is a perceived overlap between OER and Open Access (OA) (Bell 2018; Reed & Jahre 2019).

Kansas State University Libraries have been involved in academic library publishing since 2006 (Schlosser et al. 2017). Publishing is organized in a central academic library publishing department with a strong emphasis on open publishing. In 2013, the Kansas State University Libraries began the K-State Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative in response to concerns about the financial burdens students were experiencing (Delimont et al. 2016; Lashley et al. 2017). The Kansas State University Libraries include expansion of their OER publishing as a stated goal, with an immediate goal of 3–5 OER publications completed by the end of 2020 (Schlosser et al. 2017).

The Michigan State University Course Materials Program operates as part of the MSU Libraries to "assist faculty with the entire process of course pack creation and production" (Smeltekop 2014: 26). The program developed in answer to concerns regarding the amount of material in commercially published course packs which went unused by faculty; the packs aim to balance the cost of materials and the "pedagogical value of that content for faculty and students" (Smeltekop 2014: 26). The Course Materials Program originally operated independent of the Library but was rolled under the umbrella of academic library partnerships when the on-campus printing program with which it was originally affiliated was eliminated (Smeltekop 2014). Partnership with the Library is seen to have strengthened the program's ability to serve the campus, in particular as subject librarians lend expertise to content procurement and development and the academic library environment facilitates meaningful engagement with faculty and students (Smeltekop 2014).

The Open SUNY textbook publishing program was created by the Geneseo Milne Library in direct response to financial challenges experienced by the institutions and their students (Pitcher 2014). The SUNY Geneseo Milne Library is affiliated with a four-year liberal arts college. The Library used a \$20,000 grant awarded by the SUNY Instructional Technology Grant program to "create an open publishing system" (Pitcher 2014: 22) which would fold into the academic library's "existing infrastructure" (p. 22) and faculty relationships. Grant funding was used to fund financial incentive for open textbook authorship, peer review, and to establish an "editorial

and review system for authors, reviewers, and librarians” (Pitcher 2014: 22). The Open SUNY Textbook program sought to create and publish open textbooks in partnership with faculty and students, and the development of a replicable infrastructure and process framework for use by others working toward similar goals (Pitcher 2014).

Oregon State University is a land grant institution whose open textbook publishing program began as a partnership between the “Oregon State University Libraries and Press and the Open Educational Resources and Emerging Technologies unit of Oregon State University’s Extended Campus” (Sutton & Chadwell 2014: 34). The Oregon State University Libraries and Press operate and publish independently within the same organization but are brought together in the publication of open textbooks “in an innovative way that leverages their shared expertise” (Sutton & Chadwell 2014: 35). Publication of open textbooks is considered in alignment with the “shared mission of academic libraries to remove barriers to the free flow of information in support of teaching and learning” (Sutton & Chadwell 2014: 35) as well as Oregon State University’s land grant mission which includes a commitment to increasing access to higher education for communities across the state (Sutton & Chadwell 2014).

The Temple University Library’s Alternative Textbook Project (Allen, Bell & Billings 2014) partners the institution’s Teaching Learning and Technology Roundtable to provide financial incentive and platform support encouraging faculty to develop and adopt “alternatives to textbooks” (Walz 2015: 26). The University of Massachusetts Amherst Library, identifying OER as appropriate for inclusion in their “scholarly communication portfolio” (Allen, Bell & Billings 2014: 4), appealed to the faculty commitment to student success in an effort to transform campus textbook practices. The involvement of Temple University Library and the University of Massachusetts Amherst Library in OER publishing grew out of their each having played “a transformative role in shaping the campus conversation on access to research” (Allen, Bell & Billings 2014: 2).

METHODOLOGY

This project used a single holistic case study research design to explore the question “What are the differences, if any, in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER vs. how the Midland State University Library publishes other work?” The context included one case, the Midland State University Library, as the unit of analysis (Yin 2019). Selection of Midland State University Library was guided by the common case rationale, in which a case is selected based on insights about “social processes related to some theoretical interest” (Yin 2019: 50). The Midland State University Library was representative of the “circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation” (Yin 2019: 50), in this case, the typical academic library publishing house. Data was gathered through document analysis and interviews.

The Midland State University Library is an academic (four-year research) library publishing program actively providing support and infrastructure for the development and publication of OER. The library is the main campus library of a public institution, which offers undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degree programs. It is a primary stakeholder in the publishing process, empowered to set policy regarding its publishing practices. The Midland State University Library’s publication of OER has support from administration, faculty and instructors, and students. Broad support generated from multiple sectors suggests an established program that can take risks, has autonomy in setting its own goals, and can determine for itself metrics for evaluation of success (Kleeymeer et al. 2010).

The three library faculty interviewed for this project were the Scholarly Communications Librarian, the OER Librarian, and the Dean of Libraries for Midland State University. The limitation to three was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and is discussed in further detail in the limitations section of this paper. The faculty member initially contacted for an interview was the head of Midland State Libraries’ Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship (CADS). Additional interview participants included a recently hired scholarly communications librarian whose responsibilities include administration of the Midland State Open and Alternative Textbook Initiative (OATI) Grant, and the Dean of Midland State Libraries.

Participants were interviewed online via Zoom. The questions were “based on components of diffusion of innovations theory” (Walker 1999:6) and served as a means for the participants to share their perceptions regarding the attributes and value of their personal experiences

with Midland State Library academic publishing and their perceptions regarding the attributes and value of Midland State Library publishing of OER. The data from each data source was analyzed using an iterative process of open and axial coding, which facilitated discernment of regularities and patterns in the data (Merriam & Tisdell 2016). The data from all three interview participants was then analyzed using a six-step process for thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Using the process of thematic analysis detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006), the data were analyzed throughout the process of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell 2016). The data analysis used a systematic process of data collection and analysis at the level of the information source while the data collection process was underway, with patterns and regularities identified at each step of the analysis informing the following step of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell 2016). Patterns and regularities from this thematic analysis were organized into themes which were responsive to the research question. One theme which emerged resonated with literature describing academic library publishing of OER, confirmed overlap between how the library publishes OER and non-OER academic material. A second theme identified library collaboration with faculty and students throughout OER creation and publication projects.

PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS

The interview participants are described in more detail below. They each selected a pseudonym for use in this write-up, and were invited by the author to revise the descriptions during member checks.

Participant 1. Aaron is a white male who started working for Midland State Libraries in Fall 2015 and holds the rank of assistant professor. He is the scholarly communications librarian and director of CADS. The Center provides library and technical support for Meadow Press and M-Rex. Meadow Press is the OA publishing arm of Midland State University Libraries, and M-Rex is the Midland State institutional repository into which faculty, students, and others in the Midland State University community can place their open access scholarly publications.

Participant 2. Hazel Grace is a white female who started working for Midland State Libraries in Spring 2020 and holds the rank of assistant professor. She is the scholarly communication and copyright librarian and is faculty in the Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship. In her role with CADS, Hazel Grace provides faculty support and instruction regarding copyright, scholarly publishing, and OER. She helps lead the Midland State Open and Alternative Textbook Initiative, serving as the Libraries' point person in OATI administrative and creative partnerships with faculty and students.

Participant 3. Deanne is a white female who started working for Midland State Libraries in 2004 and holds the rank of professor. She is the Dean of Libraries for Midland State University. In her role as Dean of Libraries, she is responsible for administering the libraries in alignment with Midland State policies and procedures.

LIMITATIONS

This study had two main limitations with potential impact on the study findings and the ability to effectively answer the research questions posed. The first limitation is in regard to the use of a single case. Single case studies are often found in OER research literature, but findings of a single case study research project do not generalize to a broader population nor are they effective for testing hypotheses. This single case study research project has provided data for those seeking understanding of Midland State Library publishing; although the findings can be used to generate hypotheses and questions to be explored in future projects, this study does not suggest that its findings are applicable to other academic library publishing programs.

The second limitation is in relation to restrictions in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the then-emerging COVID-19 pandemic, Oklahoma State University prohibited any out-of-state travel related to the institution during the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2020 semesters. During that same time frame, the Oklahoma State University Office of Research Compliance prohibited gathering data through direct face-to-face interaction. Additionally, many academic libraries provided only distance services in Spring and early Summer 2020,

and once physical Library services resumed in late Summer 2020, many academic library faculty continued to work from home. As a result, interviews for this study that were originally intended to take place face-to-face were conducted virtually, and member checks and follow-up conversations took place over email. A strength of the original study design was the in-context study of Midland State Library publishing practices. Changes imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic changed the context of the study from on-site at Midland State University to virtual interviews undertaken from both the author's and participants' homes. While the context in which the data was gathered was similar to the context in which Midland State Library faculty members were interacting with each other at the time of the interviews (they were working from home), it does not accurately represent the context of their interactions absent the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews on the physical campus of Midland State might have yielded more contextual information, and interactions taking place between Library faculty not also making their way through a global pandemic might have produced richer experiences specific to academic library publishing.

FINDINGS

The purpose of this paper is to share findings from this case study research project which answer the question “what are the differences, if any, in how the Midland State University Library publishes OER versus its other academic library publishing?” Analysis of data responsive to this question led to the identification of two themes. The first theme indicated that there is overlap between how the library publishes OER and non-OER academic material. The second theme identified library collaboration with faculty and students throughout OER creation and publication projects.

When discussing Midland State Library publication of OER and its other academic library publishing, Hazel Grace stated, “It’s weird, because there’s some overlap.” The overlap results from use of much of the same infrastructure, including platforms and personnel, to enact both OER publishing and other academic library publishing. Hazel Grace described considering “how we see Meadow Press and this OER initiative blending,” stating, “They overlap quite a bit and then they don’t.” Deanne said, “There is kind of an overlap between the open textbook [initiative] and Meadow Press ... some of the textbooks that the faculty have done through the open alternative textbook initiative” are published on Meadow Press. Hazel Grace mentioned the possibility that the overlap caused some confusion, saying, “OER and OA mean different things inside and outside the library and inside and outside of higher ed.” Aaron, however, said, “The open alternative textbook has done great at getting that message out” regarding distinguishing between open access and OER.

The collaboration between the Midland State Library, faculty, and students through which the Midland State Library enacts publication of OER stands in marked difference to how the Library enacts its other academic publishing. Where the Library’s other academic publishing generally includes works that have undergone creation and external review separate from Library processes prior to publication, the Library is involved throughout OER creation and publication projects. Hazel Grace said, “OER are published really through the grant,” and since “these are grant funded and associated with the institution,” she feels a responsibility for making sure they are “truly open.” According to Deanne, the OATI grants provide “summer money,” an incentive described by Hazel Grace as “supplemental summer pay” for faculty who might not otherwise be able to devote time to creation of the resource. The student/faculty review panel that selects OER grant recipients is coordinated by the Library and described by Hazel Grace as “five or six of us sitting down and really looking at what’s being offered.” The Library’s direct involvement throughout OER creation and publication projects positions Midland State as being “on that cusp of really making OER at some point the norm rather than the exception,” according to Aaron, who continued to say, “I think, at least, that’s the future that I hope we’re building towards.”

There are also differences between Midland State Library publication of OER and the Library’s other academic library publishing regarding how, when, and where the work is considered published. Non-OER Midland State Library publications are housed on Meadow Press or the Midland State Research Exchange, platforms optimized to facilitate discovery and collect and communicate usage statistics. Deanne said, in reference to work published on Meadow Press,

“We keep good stats on usage of the titles on Meadow Press, so we can tell you how your book has done with actual data.” Hazel Grace described OER, seen as primarily pedagogical resources, as published “not like a traditional, I wouldn’t even call it published and say, they’re launched into the classroom.” Some OER projects completed through the OATI are housed only in faculty Canvas accounts. Hazel Grace hopes some of those projects will be published in the Midland State Library Pressbooks instance by faculty who want the material provided for their course but don’t “need to go ahead and have a lot of exposure.” The Pressbooks option is presented by Hazel Grace to faculty as available for OER publication “with never going that extra mile to have it formally published.” Faculty who wish to have their completed OER projects published on Meadow Press may do so. Meadow Press has a specific section devoted to open and alternative textbooks. Hazel Grace said her goal once a publishing coordinator is hired would be to encourage sharing of “as many of these open, alternative resources that are actual OER ... on a better platform than just in the classroom” so they would be available for use by others beyond “the walls of Midland State.”

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study found that there are both similarities and differences in how the Midland State Library publishes OER versus its other academic library publishing. As noted in the literature, there are instances when the boundaries between OER and other academic library publishing are blurred (Baker & Ippoliti 2019). There is overlap between Midland State Library publishing of OER and other scholarly materials that aligns with the perceived overlap between OER and OA discussed by Bell (2018) and Reed and Jahre (2019). Differences exist, however, between the findings of this study and the way the perceived overlap is addressed in the literature. While the literature explored for this dissertation research study discussed perceived overlap between OER and OA in the library itself, those interviewed for this dissertation appear to be speaking of the overlap as perceived by those outside the Library rather than within the Library publishing program itself.

The differences in Midland State Library publishing of OER versus its other academic publishing were found to be primarily because of the OATI grant. The Library’s role as administrator of the OATI grant positioned it as directly involved in the OER creation and publication process. The OER projects are funded by and directly associated with the institution throughout the creation and publication life cycle, which makes them different from academic work that has undergone external peer review and is published as part of Midland State Library’s other academic publishing. Literature describing academic library publishing of OER frequently describes the role of grants and financial incentives in helping sustain OER publishing programs (Allen, Bell & Billings 2014; Delimont et al. 2016; Lashley et al. 2017; Pitcher 2014; Schlosser et al. 2017; Smeltekop 2014; Walz 2015), but this has not yet surfaced in the literature as a meaningful difference in how OER publication differs from other academic publishing.

This study found that Midland State Library publishes OER using many of the same processes they use to publish scholarly communication. While the use of the existing academic library publishing values, competencies, and infrastructure is convenient, one question that arises is, do these overlaps in publishing result in changes to OER? Moreover, with many academic libraries publishing OER, how are academic libraries ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER? According to Diffusion of Innovation Theory, as organizations adopt and implement innovations, “both the innovation and the organization change in important ways” (Rogers 2003: 403). It is possible the overlap found in the ways the Midland State Library publishes OER and non-OER materials may result in unanticipated consequences (Rogers 2003).

Midland State Library publication of OER began in 2014 when the Meadow Press added solicitation of monographs to its publishing practices. Meadow Press publication of monographs at that time included books or textbooks labelled OER, but that inclusion was not in response to a clearly-documented problem or need. This study found that, according to the interview participants, Midland State Library publishes OER because doing so through the Library is logistically convenient, it aligns with the land-grant mission, and because it enhances institutional prestige. It appears publication of OER is seen as compatible with Meadow Press, an innovation whose implementation was originally in response to a problem or need related to the absence of a Midland State University Press. The perceived compatibility between Midland

State Library publishing of OER and the “previously introduced idea” (Rogers 2003: 244) of OA publishing through Meadow Press could cause difficulties and unforeseen challenges with implementation and use of OER (Chtena 2019) as well as changes to the organization itself (Rogers 2003). This has implications for OER and academic libraries publishing OER.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OER

Overlaps in Midland State Library publishing practices for OER and non-OER materials may lead to unforeseen changes in OER. A conceptualization of OER developed by David Wiley, a prominent figure in the OER movement, helped shape understanding in terms of users’ ability to legally retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute the materials (Wiley n.d.; Wiley, Bliss & McEwen 2014). OER that Midland State Library considers published is housed primarily on Meadow Press. Users may legally retain, reuse, and redistribute materials on Meadow Press; however, the platform does not readily facilitate revision or remix. OER that Midland State Library considers launched is housed in faculty Canvas accounts. These resources may be available for access and legal interaction through Canvas Commons but are not by default accessible to those without Canvas accounts. Use of these platforms inhibits others’ ability to customize OER for localized use, something seen as a key characteristic of OER (Wiley, Bliss & McEwen 2014). Use of existing publishing platforms may be convenient, but academic libraries considering doing so for publication of OER may find that they are producing work more akin to the work already published rather than implementing an innovative practice or idea. Producing and publishing work that is inaccessible to users outside a given system is not a practice or idea new to higher education. Making work free and editable by those within the given system is still denying access to those outside the given system. It may look like OER to those in the system, but to those outside the system for whom the barriers prevent access, it very clearly is not.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Rogers (2003) stated that organizations may change as they adopt and implement innovations. Implementation of an OER publishing program has resulted in change to the Midland State Library. As the OER publishing program has grown, the Midland State Library expanded its publishing team to include someone whose role is specific to the support of services related to OER creation and publication. The addition of this position increases the Library’s ability to attend to the specifics of OER. As is evident by the changes being introduced by Hazel Grace, having a publishing team member whose role and research are specific to OER allows for separation of OER from other publishing practices. Workflows can be designed that complement goals unique to OER publication. Platforms can be incorporated that facilitate iterative sharing and modification of OER. There may still be overlap, but as Hazel Grace stewards the OER publishing program, she can ensure that OER are not being changed to conform to publishing practices associated with existing ideas, such as OA publication. Those changes include the addition of Pressbooks, a publishing platform specifically designed to facilitate widespread, customizable access to created materials. Hazel Grace is also planning development of a creation and publication workflow for OER that is separate and distinct from the workflow used for Library publication of non-OER materials.

The main implication suggested by this study’s findings is that, if academic libraries are to enact the creation and publication of OER in ways appropriate to their conception, those involved will need to be intentional about ensuring enactment of the values foundational to OER. This can perhaps be accomplished by development of familiarity with how OER and academic library values align and how the characteristics of OER can help achieve those values in unique ways. As that familiarity is developed through assignment of someone whose role is stewardship of the academic library OER publishing program, academic libraries may need to reconsider the platforms on which they publish OER as well as the workflows through which they support their creation.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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10

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