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## Open Publish

Open access to scholarly research

Bobby Graham

### **Abstract**

The National Library of Australia is trialling the Open Journal Systems (OJS) digital publishing software to advance their understanding of managing an online open access journal publishing service. Findings from the project will be used to inform the development of a sustainable business model for hosting an online, open access journal publishing service at the Library.

The trial is being conducted in conjunction with the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) to migrate their peer-reviewed journal, JASAL, to an online format. In addition, the OJS software will be used to examine issues related to persistent citation and preservation of journal articles.

This paper highlights the process of working with the JASAL editorial team, using OJS to assist with every stage of the refereed publishing process, from submissions through to online publication and indexing. The process includes the integration of past issues into OJS as well as the publication of the current journal in both print and digital format. The trial is available at <http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/index>

### **Keywords**

Journals, open access publishing

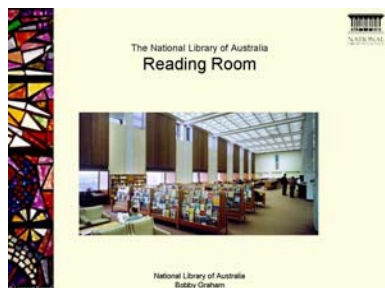
## Introduction



The National Library of Australia together with the Association for the Study of Australian Literature is trialling an online open access journal publishing service. Our intention is to better understand what it means to host such a service.

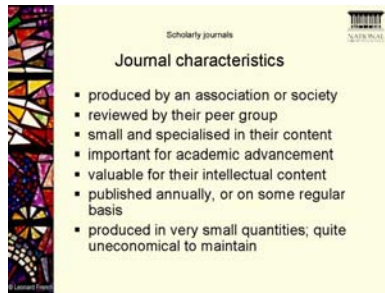
This paper highlights the process of working with the association to migrate their scholarly journal, JASAL, to an online format. The open source system we are using for this trial is called Open Journal Systems. The service delivery is called Open Publish. I will focus on the management and implementation of this online journal.

## Scholarly journals



The National Library holds a vast collection of books, journals, newspapers and other objects. Thousands of users access information both online and in print format. In the Reading Room, there is a range of books on the display shelves. Amongst these is a selection of journals.

What distinguishes scholarly journals from other books?



- Journals are produced by a scholarly association or society.
- The articles are reviewed by their own peer group.
- The focus of the content is specialised.
- The readership is small.
- Journals are the lifeblood of the academic community, both in terms of their intellectual output and their importance to academic advancement.
- They can be published annually or on some other regular basis.
- They are produced in very small numbers and for that reason can be uneconomical to maintain.

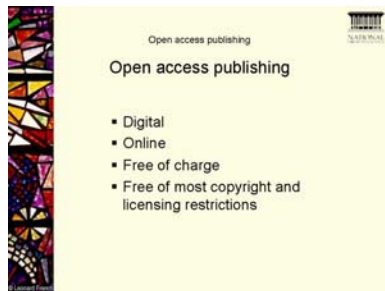
## New publishing models

These issues create an opportunity for a new model for scholarly publishing. This model could address the following:



- The growth of scholarly output.
- Academic output needs to be both accessible and sustainable in the future.
- Global access to the intellectual property within the content.
- An opportunity for users to review and comment on the writing.

Open access publishing offers an alternative model. Open access publishing has flexible and scaleable characteristics. Essentially, an open access publication is:



- in digital format
- available online
- accessed free of charge
- generally free of copyright and licensing restrictions. We chose the Creative Commons license which grants users the ability to share and use our content for non-commercial purposes as long as the original material is attributed to the content creator.

## Open access publishing and the Library

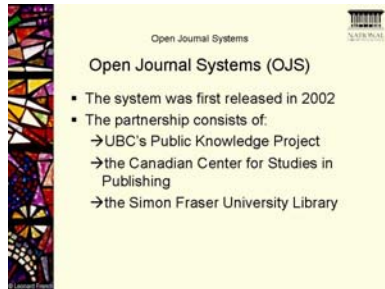


Why is the Library interested in open access publishing? The Library's objective is to establish 'new ways of collecting, sharing, recording, disseminating and preserving knowledge'. We want 'to ensure our relevance in a rapidly changing world, [by participating] in new online communities'. For these reasons, the Library decided to engage in an open access journal publishing trial, called Open Publish.



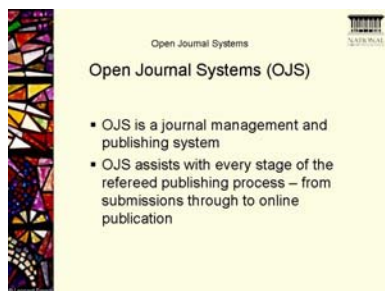
Open Publish is a pilot project to help the Library understand how to host an open access journal publishing service. For the purposes of the trial, we are using software called Open Journal Systems (OJS).

## Using OJS



The OJS system was first released in 2002 as a research and development initiative of the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The development is currently overseen by a partnership consisting of the PKP, the Canadian Center for Studies in Publishing and the Simon Fraser University Library. Many associations and societies are already using this software to publish their journals. At the time of writing, more than 800 journals, worldwide, are using OJS to manage their online journals.

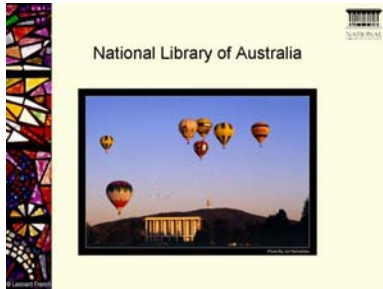
So what precisely is OJS and what does it do?



- OJS is a journal management and publishing system.
- It assists with every stage of the refereed publishing process, from submissions through to online publication.
- It is locally installed and locally controlled; editors (not IT staff) configure the requirements, the sections, and the review process.
- The submission and management of all content is online.

- For those choosing to use it, there is a subscription module with delayed open access options.
- There is comprehensive indexing of content as part of a global system.
- OJS includes Reading Tools for content, based on the subject field and editors' choice.
- Users communicate via email notification, which includes a commenting ability for readers.
- There is context-sensitive online Help support as well as a user support forum.

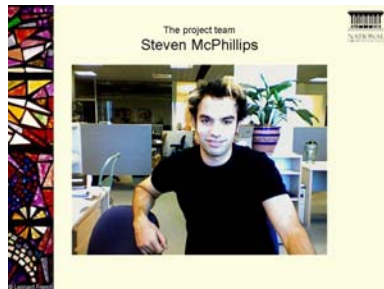
## Working with ASAL



Our process started in October 2005 with a serendipitous meeting between the Library and the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. This academic association promotes Australian writing. They aim to increase awareness in the wider community by holding regular conferences and publishing a journal called JASAL. This journal consists of essays, based on the conference papers, and book reviews. The association publishes the journal annually, and prints a very small quantity of books.

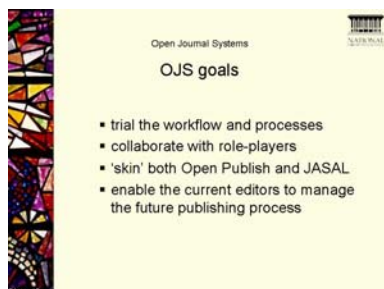
At the time of the meeting with the Library, the association recognised that their publishing model is not sustainable. They were keen to try out new methods of production and dissemination. The Library was keen to participate as they saw this as an opportunity to acquire content at the time of creation. The Library also felt it has a role in hosting scholarly Australian online journals that may not have a natural home elsewhere.

## The goals



The parties agreed to run a trial using the OJS software. Our project team was Susan Lever, Journal Editor, my colleague Steven McPhillips, the System Administrator and myself as the Journal Manager. Initially the three of us met twice to set up the process; Susan and I spent a few days working together. For the rest, we managed at a distance using email and the telephone to communicate.

We set ourselves some modest goals.



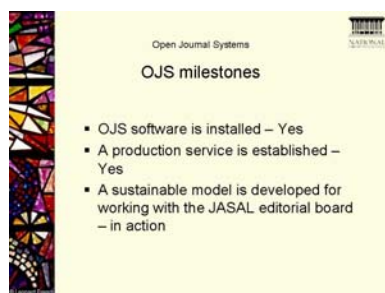
We decided to upload one previously published JASAL volume to test the OJS workflow and processes.

We invited members of the association to take part in the process. They collaborated by taking on editorial roles such as Author, Reviewer, Copy Editor and Proofreader. We worked at a distance over a dispersed area with participants in Ballarat, Perth, Hobart, Wagga Wagga, Sydney and Canberra.

The the Library, we decided to 'skin' both Open Publish and JASAL. We commissioned a designer to deliver a basic banner design. We specified something simple and sustainable to cater for any future journals.

We worked towards enabling the current editors to manage the process. Our plan was to have one volume online by February 2006, in time for the ASAL Executive Meeting and Conference. As it happened, we managed to upload all four back issues by that deadline. At the meeting we demonstrated the site and ran a workshop for the then editors, Barbara Milech and Philip Mead. After the meeting, they took over from the project team. Their goal was to publish a new journal using OJS to manage the process. We set ourselves a target to have that published in time for the association's July 2006 conference.

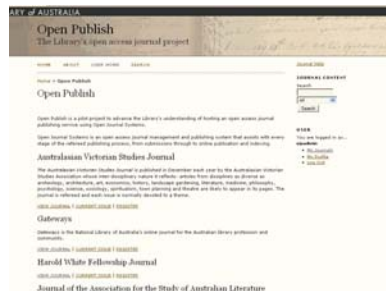
## The milestones



We had three milestones along the way. The first was to install the OJS software on a Library server. The second was to establish a production service. The third was to develop a sustainable model for working with the JASAL editorial team. We comfortably reached all three milestones and even took on two further journals as part of the trial process. We subsequently extended the trial to two Library journals: *Gateways* and the Harold White Fellowship Journal.

## The process

So what did we achieve? At this point we should look at the service itself.



JASAL is one journal within the Open Publish trial. As mentioned earlier, we decided to re-‘skin’ the site by applying a simple banner colour. We did this in order to maintain the style and integrity of the site for future journals. If the journal has a layout editor as part of their team, they can customise and develop further the ‘look-and-feel’ of their particular journal.



A user has quite a bit of information available from the Home page. The ‘About’ section provides detail on the people, policies, submissions and other aspects of the journal. This would be of interest to a user considering submitting an article or a review. All the content within these sections is customisable and is uploaded and managed by the journal editorial team.





The 'Search' facility offers a free text search across all articles within this particular journal. There is an advanced search function, either by various categories, or by date or by index term. Users can search across the complete journal by three means: by issue, by author and by title. Open access publishing enables deeper and wider access than would be the case if one were working with a print document only.



The 'Current' tab takes the user to the current table of contents. At JASAL, each journal article is available in pdf format. The editorial team could also publish the articles in HTML or any other format they prefer.

Access to the management of JASAL is password restricted to the editorial team, but we should have a look at that zone in order to examine the workflow.

The Journal Manager has most privileges in the system. He or she is responsible for the initial 'Setup' via the 'Management Pages'.



The setup pages are divided into five sections:

1. Details
2. Policies
3. Submission
4. Management
5. The Look

The Journal Manager can upload information to these sections at any stage, but some categories or areas need to be completed at the start of a journal's life.

The Journal Manager can create new 'Users', choosing from a list of ten 'Roles'.

Once the journal is set up, the Editor can manage the workflow and processes. He or she would do that via two sections:



- 'Submissions' for the editorial process; and
- 'Issues' to publish the articles.

Within Submissions, the Editor has control of each article through four management sections:

- Summary
- Review
- Editing
- History.

When it comes to publishing the journal, the Editor can create an issue. He or she can

- schedule submissions to that issue
- notify users of the issue
- move between future and back issues as required.

The management systems within the OJS software are rigorous and disciplined. Each article has version control. All correspondence and records are archived. Articles cannot be published unless they've gone through all stages of publication. Every step and stage has been carefully considered. Consequently the system can be overwhelming initially, but the developers have provided an excellent manual, called *OJS in an Hour*.

## User experiences

We were pleased with the way all the collaborators engaged with the system. Even though for many of them this kind of workflow and process was new and strange, they all rose to the challenge. Once we published JASAL online, we received positive feedback from various users:

Peter Kirkpatrick, President of ASAL, had this to say:

'I am writing to thank . . . the National Library profusely for your commitment to bringing . . . JASAL online through the Library's website. This is a major achievement for us, one that will take the study of Australian writing to an even greater audience.'

Dr Russell Smith, Lecturer in English, The Australian National University, gave us a practical example of the benefit:

'I'm just writing to let you know how much I have appreciated the online version of JASAL. I taught Gail Jones's *Black Mirror* in a course last semester on Contemporary Australian Writing, and put up links on the course website to Paul Genoni's and Tanya Dalziell's articles in JASAL. Several students used the material in interesting ways in their essays.

'Please pass on my thanks to everyone involved in putting JASAL online – it's a really valuable resource and something we all hope to see more of in academic publishing.'

## Conclusion

By the time of writing, JASAL had 200 registered users. The editors have successfully published a new edition. By mid-2007 they will have published their next two editions. There is talk of a third edition of JASAL this year. New members have signed up to the association. I think it is fair to say that the association has been revitalised by this process.

### So what did we achieve?



- At the Library, we gained a better understanding of what it means to host an online journal management system
- We worked collaboratively to learn the system.
- We worked successfully at a distance.
- We managed the process with very small team at very little expense to either the institution or the association.
- We met all our milestones and exceeded our goals
- We kept the technology away from the users.

Our combined creative management, together with a disciplined implementation process, has made us a winning team.