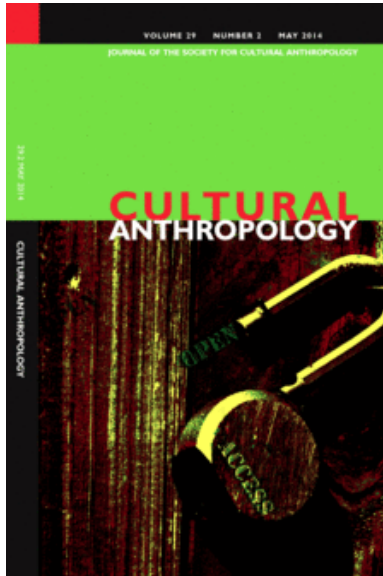


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Open Access -- A Special Half-Issue of Cultural Anthropology

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By Aaron Seaman



Along with its regular offering of original research articles (some of which are noted in an ‘In the Journals’ posting [here](#)), the journal [Cultural Anthropology](#) posted a special half-issue on open access publishing and its recent move to an open access format, appropriately entitled “[Open Access](#).” As current editors Anne Allison and Charles Piot note in their [introduction](#):

In assembling this half-issue on open access, we solicited articles from scholars we hoped might give a panoptic view of the complex, politically-charged terrain of open access (OA) today. We were aiming for bold, visionary pieces—articles that would make clear the stakes surrounding OA for the journal and the discipline. At the same time, we asked authors to assume that many today remain under-informed about open access—not only about its politics but also its defining features—and that this special issue might serve as a primer or go-to issue for the Society of Cultural Anthropology’s membership, and for the American Anthropological Association more broadly, as it considers future publishing options.

The issue consists of an interview with Christopher Kelty, four articles by Kevin Smith and Paolo Mangiafico, Ryan Anderson and Jason Jackson,

Ali Kenner, and Timothy W. Eifenbein, and a glossary of open access terms.

[Beyond Copyright and Technology: What Open Access Can Tell Us about Precarity, Authority, Innovation, and Automation in the University Today](#)
by Christopher Kelty

In this interview, we discuss what open access can teach us about the state of the university, as well as practices in scholarly publishing. In particular the focus is on issues of labor and precarity, the question of how open access enables or blocks other innovations in scholarship, the way open access might be changing practices of scholarship, and the role of technology and automation in the creation, evaluation, and circulation of scholarly work.

[Reason, Risk, and Reward: Models for Libraries and Other Stakeholders in an Evolving Scholarly Publishing Ecosystem](#)
by Kevin Smith and Paolo Mangiafico

Scholarly publishing, and scholarly communication more generally, are based on patterns established over many decades and even centuries. Some of these patterns are clearly valuable and intimately related to core values of the academy, but others were based on the exigencies of the past, and new opportunities have brought into question whether it makes sense to persist in supporting old models. New technologies and new publishing models raise the question of how we should fund and operate scholarly publishing and scholarly communication in the future, moving away from a scarcity model based on the exchange of physical goods that restricts access to scholarly literature unless a market-based exchange takes place. This essay describes emerging models that attempt to shift scholarly communication to a more open-access and mission based approach and that try to retain control of scholarship by academics and the institutions and scholarly societies that support them. It explores changing practices for funding scholarly journals and changing services provided by academic libraries, changes instituted with the end goal of providing more access to more readers, stimulating new scholarship, and removing inefficiencies from a system ready for change.

[Anthropology and Open Access](#)
by Ryan Anderson and Jason Jackson

In an article coauthored in interview format, the authors introduce open-access practices in an anthropological context. Complimenting the other essays in this special section on open access, on the occasion of Cultural Anthropology's move to one version of the gold open access business model, the focus here is on practical information needed by publishing cultural anthropologists. Despite this limitation, the authors work to touch on the ethical and political contexts of open access. They argue for a critical anthropology of scholarly communication (inclusive of scholarly publishing), one that brings the kinds of engaged analysis for which Cultural Anthropology is particularly well known to bear on this vital aspect of knowledge production, circulation, and valuation.

[Designing Digital Infrastructure: Four Considerations for Scholarly Publishing Projects](#)

by Ali Kenner

As we move discussions around publishing forward and adopt open-access models, social scientists need to consider how digital infrastructure opens and closes possibilities for scholarly production and engagement. Attention to changes in publishing infrastructure—which, like most infrastructure, is often rendered invisible—is needed, not only because it allows us to make sense of socio-technical transitions at various scales and for differently invested communities, but because we need more informed participants, users who can question the system in ways that make it more robust. This essay suggests that digital infrastructure design and development should be organized around (1) platform affordances, (2) support for labor, (3) emerging circulation practices, and (4) opportunities for collaboration. By tracing the long-term socio-technical work that made it possible for Cultural Anthropology to go open access earlier this year, this essay works to make visible some behind-the-scenes details to be considered when thinking about the future of scholarly publishing.

[Cultural Anthropology and the Infrastructure of Publishing](#)

by Timothy W. Effenbein

The transition of Cultural Anthropology to an open-access publication required that the Society for Cultural Anthropology take on the publishing responsibilities formerly fulfilled by Wiley-Blackwell. This entailed the expanded use of already established infrastructures, the development of relationships with

outside production vendors, registries, and archiving agencies, and designing for the long-term preservation of the journal's documents. By taking on these responsibilities, the Society of Cultural Anthropology has itself become a publisher.

[Glossary of Open Access Terms](#)

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