

PANEL - Open Access: What's in it for me?

Background

The 2016 Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications is a landmark for the open access movement in Canada. It stipulates that peer-reviewed journal publications arising from Tri-Agency funded research must be made freely accessible within 12 months of publication. This and other open access policies emphasize the societal advantage of openly accessible research, but how does the researcher benefit?

Summary

Panelists will highlight the benefits of open access as well as other open research practices, with a focus on the perspective of graduate students and early career researchers. One benefit is the increased impact of open access publications compared to subscription-based publications, as shown in citation-based studies as well as altmetrics such as download reports available through Western's institutional repository, Scholarship@Western. Another benefit is enhanced collaboration, encompassing not only open access publishing but also open data practices, both of which enable researchers to more readily learn from and build off of each other's work. Finally, authors benefit from retaining rights to their work, which includes various open access publishing options as well as negotiating greater control over their research post-publication.

Interdisciplinary Reflection

Open access is particularly valuable for interdisciplinary researchers insofar as it makes research easily discoverable. This allows for cross-fertilization across disciplines, since researchers are more easily able to access, read, and build on work in other areas. Librarians often select journal subscriptions that support active research in a particular discipline, but open access journals are available to all, regardless of an institution's research focus.