2015

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Article

Landscapes of Research: Perceptions of Open Access (OA) Publishing in the Arts and Humanities

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Abstract: It is widely known now that scholarly communication is in crisis, resting on an academic publishing model that is unsustainable. One response to this crisis has been the emergence of Open Access (OA) publishing, bringing scholarly literature out from behind a paywall and making it freely available to anyone online. Many research and academic libraries are facilitating the change to OA by establishing institutional repositories, supporting OA policies, and hosting OA journals. In addition, research funding bodies, such as the Australian Research Council (ARC), are mandating that all published grant research outputs be made available in OA, unless legal and contractual obligations prevent this. Despite these broader changes, not all scholars are aware of the new publishing environment. In particular, the rate of adoption of OA models in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) has historically been lower than Science, Technology and Medicine (STM) disciplines. Nevertheless, some local and international OA exemplars exist in HSS. At Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia, the faculty-administered environmental humanities journal, *Landscapes*, was migrated to the institutional open access repository in 2013. Subsequently, researchers in the Faculty of Education and Arts were surveyed regarding their knowledge, understandings, and perceptions of OA publishing. The survey was also designed to elicit the barriers to OA publishing perceived or experienced by HSS researchers. This article will present the findings of our small faculty-based OA survey, with particular attention to HSS academics (and within this

subject group, particular attention to the arts and humanities), their perceptions of OA, and the impediments they encounter. We argue that OA publishing will continue to transform scholarship within the arts and humanities, especially through the role of institutional repositories. The "library-as-publisher" role offers the potential to transform academic and university-specific publishing activities. However, the ongoing training of university researchers and personnel is required to bring into balance their understandings of OA publisher and the demands of the broader Australian and international research environment.

Keywords: open access academic publishing; humanities; social sciences; institutional repositories; Australia

1. Introduction

As a result of a variety of factors, including developments in communication technologies and impecunious library budgets, academic publishing has undergone rapid transformation, particularly during the last thirty years [1–4]. The OA movement has gained momentum during this time, as scholars, libraries, institutions, and funding bodies have continued to respond to the ethical inequities and technical limitations of subscription-based academic publishing paradigms. Between 1986 and 2004, print journal prices exceeded the inflation rate by nearly 300%, impacting upon library budgets and instigating a research "communication crisis," most strongly foregrounded in the disciplines of Science, Technology, and Medicine (STM, henceforth referred to as "the sciences") [5,6]. As the number of peer-reviewed journals held by libraries diminishes due to subscription costs, academics today are confronted by some of the same access-related issues outlined in the Budapest Open Access Initiative of 2002 [7]. For example, the "pay-to-read system" excludes those independent scholars, members of the public, and community and non-governmental organizations without the funds to pay for viewing, thus impoverishing and stifling scholarly activities throughout the research cycle [6].

The publishing crisis historically centered on STM disciplines, due to the high cost of producing and distributing peer-reviewed journals in the sciences. Although subsequent debates have similarly focused on the sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS, henceforth referred to as "the humanities" and including the creative arts) disciplines are not immune to current and future changes in scholarly publishing, which will most likely reach all disciplines as open access gains greater acceptance through the practice of self-archiving and further establishment of online journals. In humanities fields, there appears to be less awareness of open access as well as less support for the idea than in the sciences. As Martin Paul Eve comments, "the humanities still trail behind the sciences in open publishing" [6] (p. 1). Moreover, beyond disciplinary divergences, there exists an "open access divide" between academics who advocate the free sharing of research outputs and pedagogical materials, and those who resist it for a variety of reasons [8]. While the perspectives of open access advocates have been well-known since the inception of the movement [7], attitudes and understandings of OA publishing as held by scholars from different disciplinary, cultural, and experiential backgrounds are not as apparent. Indeed, Jingfeng Xia argues that "few studies have made an effort to focus upon OA

concepts and practices as understood by scholars, which demonstrates a critical research need that requires further attention" [8] (p. 119). Such studies would attempt to understand "how individual scholars perceive and participate in OA initiatives, which are influenced by their disciplinary norms, thematic research concentrations, roles in the OA undertaking, and cultural traditions and regional backgrounds" [8] (p. 113).

This article takes up Xia's call for further research into how OA is understood and regarded by scholars. It will explore disciplinary and attitudinal differences in open access acceptance by examining "concepts and practices" among humanities scholars and arts practitioners in a faculty at an Australian institution, Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Perth, Western Australia. The successes, challenges, and future prospects of the ECU initiative will be contextualized within the world of open access scholarly communication. The rapidly changing domain of OA in the humanities, the new forms of publishing that are available, including books, and the crucial role libraries are playing in the transformation of academic publishing will figure into this discussion. Trends in OA publishing in the humanities will be explored in relation to a case study of the ECU initiative, which is in its early stages, as well as new mandates by funding bodies such as the ARC (Australian Research Council) and NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) that stipulate research outputs be made openly accessible. In light of such mandates, how will humanities scholars respond to and negotiate open access as a philosophy and practice of academic publishing?

Following the migration of *Landscapes* to the ECU repository, academic staff and higher degree research students in the faculty were surveyed in order to gauge their knowledge, understandings, and perceptions of OA publishing, particularly the barriers they imagined, foresaw, or experienced. The small survey of humanities researchers at ECU was conducted with the expectation that greater understanding of their knowledge, practices, and behaviors related to open access, would help to guide the future of academic publishing within the faculty. This article argues that digital technologies have the capacity to bring new audiences to humanities scholarship and new publishing outlets for the researchers themselves, but that cultural, disciplinary, economic, and institutional contexts present impediments to the fuller acceptance of OA and the realization of its potential to transform academic publishing.

2. The Scholarly Communication Crisis and Trends in Open Access

The "scholarly communication crisis" (also known as the "publishing" or "serials" crisis) and the economically unsustainable trajectory of journal publishing have been well documented [1,2]. The primary triggers and implications of the crisis include the increase of journal subscription costs in excess of inflation; diminished university subscription rates as a result of the price barriers and reductions in library budgets; reduced public access to research results, especially where the research has been funded by federal or state agencies or where the potential public benefit is high; obstructions to access to those without university affiliations and researchers in economically disadvantaged countries or regions; and considerations of copyright, journal preservation, and the "publish or perish" demands of academic employment. This section will outline some of the primary historical moments in open access publishing, its ethos and purported advantages, and the major differences between "gold" and "green" OA routes [9] (p. 53), particularly concerning the role of institutional repositories. Bosch and Henderson's observation that the percentage of OA titles increased from 3% in 2013 to 5.4% of titles

in 2014 only reflects ISI indexed journals [10]. Nonetheless, although OA is gaining recognition across disciplines (and in fact constitutes an estimated 25 to 33% of active journals worldwide), traditional, pay-to-read, subscription-based models still account for the other 67 to 75% of academic publishing.

Philosopher and OA proponent Peter Suber [3] (p. 1) defines open access content as "digital, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. What makes it possible is the internet and the consent of the author or copyright-holder." In conjunction with rapid developments in communications technologies [4], the OA movement took shape primarily in North American and European countries in response to protracted publishing timelines and inflated subscription prices [8] (p. 125). In 2002, the Budapest Open Access Initiative first enunciated a vision of an alternate open access future for scholarly publishing [4,7]. The initiative aimed to facilitate the unrestricted availability of peer-reviewed research and to mobilise key players in the scholarly publishing landscape in adopting open access strategies. In the twelve years since the Budapest Initiative, a number of OA advocacy bodies have been established and OA mandates within institutions have been formulated. The US-based Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition [11] is an "international alliance of academic and research libraries working to create a more open system of scholarly communication". SPARC's agenda focuses on removing access barriers and enhancing research sharing through policy-level changes that foster open access. Included within SPARC's scope of open access content are journal literature, digital data, and open educational resources (OER). Similarly, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association [12] supports the interests of OA journal and book publishers across disciplines with the objectives of exchanging information, establishing standards, forwarding new models, facilitating completely open publishing routes ("gold OA" instead of "green OA," discussed below), educating the research community, and promoting innovation. OASPA organises regular conferences on open access publishing and publishes information guides for institutions considering open access routes. Of further note is Open Humanities Press, a scholar-driven open access publishing initiative envisioned by the founders of the OA movement and aiming to make leading peer-reviewed scholarly literature freely available worldwide [13]. With particular attention to Australia, the Open Access Support Group (AOASG) enumerates the benefits of OA publishing as increased exposure of research to members of the public, professional practitioners, policy makers, and researchers in developing countries, as well as higher citation rates, compliance with funding policies, and maximum value for taxpayers' money [14].

Since Budapest, scholars have written about the benefits of open access publishing. The advantages include greater research impact than pay-to-view articles [15]. Additionally, greater equity between institutions, scholars, and the public results from the reduction of barriers to reader access [4]. Moreover, OA has precipitated copyright transformations in academic publishing. For example, in 2003, 83% of publishers required copyright transfer, but this figure fell to 53% in 2008 [4]. Developments in Creative Commons licensing have allowed authors to retain ownership while opening new possibilities for the use of a work in the public domain [16]. Referring specifically to the Budapest Initiative era, Harnad [17] identifies six advantages to OA publishing: (1) *early advantage* (the early reporting of research, even in the pre-refereeing stage, ensures that new work can be built upon by other researchers sooner); (2) *Arxiv advantage* (centralised subject repositories as single "points of call" for locating research); (3) *quality bias* (higher impact articles are more likely to be self-archived); (4) *quality advantage* (the substance of the research, rather than access differences, is the criteria); (5)

competitive advantage (greater accessibility conveys competitive edge in terms of visibility and impact); and (6) *usage advantage* (OA articles are read more widely than pay-to-read content). Building upon Harnad's list, Weller [4] adds the advantages of increased citation numbers, decreased time to publication, fewer copyright limitations, and greater freedom to pursue alternative publishing methods. Higher exposure (citation rates, downloads, and views) translates to potentially higher impact [4] (pp. 147–149).

Alongside the work of scholars, initiatives, and advocacy bodies, of particular note during the last twelve years of OA publishing have been institutional policies mandating open access publishing of research. From national funding bodies to individual institutions of higher learning, open access mandates have become an increasingly standard expectation designed to maximize the potential benefit of research to the widest possible community. The U.S. National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Public Access Policy, passed in 2009, requires that all NIH-funded project investigators submit digital versions of peer-reviewed manuscripts to the biomedical and life sciences research repository PubMed Central (PMC). In 2014, the US Congress passed an OA policy requiring that affiliates of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) with research and development budgets in excess of $100 million per year provide free online access to their final peer-reviewed (*i.e.*, post-print) publications [10]. In Australia in 2012, the National Health and Medical Research Council also ratified an open access mandate [18]. In the interest of social wellbeing and greatest public benefit, the NHMRC requires that any research output in relation to a funded project be archived in an open access institutional repository within twelve months of publication, or published in a completely open access journal. However the NHMRC recognizes that existing legal and contractual obligations between authors and publishers need to be upheld.

On the heels of the NHMRC, in 2013 the Australian Research Council (ARC) introduced a comparable policy invoking the same terms and requiring that any outcomes from an ARC-funded project be made available in open access journals or archived in an open access institutional repository within twelve months of publication [19]. The ARC mandate aims to capture the public benefits of research funded by tax payers. A range of options for compliance include paying author-facing charges for publication in an open access journal or self-archiving, that is, depositing the article in an online repository. Edith Cowan University's Open Access to Research Policy reflects the ARC and NHMRC initiatives to enhance the benefit of research to the "physical, social and cultural health of the community" [20]. Passed in 2013, the policy supports the broadest possible dissemination of research to the community [20]. At ECU, the institutional repository is known as Research Online and is defined by the institution as a digital archive where ECU authors deposit research, including research outputs and data.

OA scholars distinguish between green, gold, gratis, and libre open access [6,9,21]. The terms "green" and "gold" OA denote the varieties of open access that exist. In short, green OA refers to open access material available via repositories, whereas gold refers to OA via the platforms of journals. For gold OA, authors publish in journals that make content freely available to readers; gold OA often involves article processing charges (APCs). In 2012, twenty-three percent of all scholarly articles published were gold OA [21] (p. 72). In contrast, green OA requires that authors lodge (in most cases) "post-print" versions of their works in a repository. A post-print is a version of the manuscript after peer-review and revision but before formatting and proofreading by the publisher [8] (p. 129). Post-

prints are available to the public without payment through a repository, sometimes after an embargo period. The practice of self-archiving, previously mentioned, pertains to the lodging of post-print research publications into a green repository [9]. Green OA enables researchers to publish in prestigious pay-to-read or subscription-based journals, or other journals of their choice, then making the peer-reviewed manuscript available in a repository.

Indeed, as Suber observes, most paywall-based, "toll-access" publishers and journals now consent to author-initiated green OA—marking one of the earliest successes of the OA movement [9] (p. 53). This is not to imply that gold OA is inherently inferior to traditional, pay-to-view journals; as many gold journals have gained standing in their fields, there is often less need for authors to opt for green OA. However, citation conventions can discourage and even prevent authors from citing green OA research lodged in an institutional repository if the version is not the publisher's final version and if it lacks page numbers, formatting, proofreading, a DOI (Digital Object Identifier), and other additions associated with copy-editing [6] (p. 2). Scholars also discuss the differences between gratis OA (removal of the pay-to-read barrier) and libre OA (removal of restrictions concerning use and reuse of the article) [21] (p. 16). The notion of libre OA reflects law scholar and political activist Lawrence Lessig's idea of "free culture." For Lessig [22] (p. xiv) free culture is maintained "by limiting the reach of those rights, to guarantee that follow-on creators and innovators remain as free as possible from the control of the past." In contrast to free culture, "permission culture," as Lessig further argues, is "a culture in which creators get to create only with the permission of the powerful, or of creators from the past" [22] (p. xiv).

3. Impediments to Open Access Uptake in the Humanities

This section will consider the major economic and disciplinary barriers to the acceptance of open access publishing in the humanities. In 2005, Peter Suber asked "why is open access moving so slowly in the humanities?" [23]. Despite advances in green and gold OA publishing in the humanities (including within this term, for the purposes of this article, the arts), his question remains relevant to the discussion of open access today. He notes that OA practices and philosophies took shape in physics and biomedicine, but have been slow to gain traction in the humanities [23]. In analyzing disciplinary contexts, Suber identifies a number of economic and cultural differences between the humanities and sciences that he considered to influence the rate of OA uptake in both areas. Other scholars, such as John Unsworth and Eelco Ferwerda, enunciate some of the long-standing disciplinary conventions, such as the privileging of the book form in the humanities, that limit the fuller uptake of OA paradigms. Particularly for the purpose of the *Landscapes* case study and ECU faculty survey presented later in this article, it is important to consider the term "humanities" to include arts-based or practice-led research, such as dance, music, acting, painting, photography, and creative writing, which present special considerations for open access publishing in the creative arts. While there have been obstacles to open access publishing in the humanities, scholars and editors are forwarding new models that are transforming the publishing environment and aligning to OA principles. Economic factors are a significant dimension of the difference. Ten years ago, as Suber noted, journal prices were much higher in the sciences (or STM fields). In a 2002 library journal pricing survey, median subscription costs for science journals were ten to twenty times greater than in the humanities. In 2014, the cost of

periodicals in the sciences still outstrips the humanities by approximately the same percentage range. The 2014 Periodicals Price Survey published in *Library Journal* indicates that the average prices for science, technology, and medical journals remain the highest of all academic subject areas. For example, in 2014 chemistry and physics periodicals cost $4215 and $3870 per title respectively, the most expensive of academic disciplines. Historically, the discipline of chemistry has had the highest priced serials; this cost structure has remained stable since Suber's reflections. Of all serials indexed by International Scientific Indexing (ISI), chemistry ranked highest at $4333 per title with physics at $3852. In comparison, the least expensive of all academic fields were language and literature serials at $358 per title and music at $300. This equates to ten to twelve times greater production costs in the sciences than in the humanities, roughly in line with the 2002 survey mentioned by Suber.

In terms of broader economic and funding patterns between disciplines, Suber [23] goes on to note that considerably more research is funded in the sciences than the humanities. In 2012, the funding of biomedical research associated with the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) reached $30 billion, while engineering research trailed behind at about $12 billion. In comparison, the social sciences received $1.5 billion in 2012 while humanities disciplines are not represented on the graph [24]. Recent analysis of research funding in the arts and humanities notes a sharp decline since 2009, most likely as a consequence of the global economic crisis [25]. Researchers compiled funding information from 2004 to 2012 that was categorized as "arts and humanities" in SciVal Funding, a major database collating grant figures from Australia, Canada, The European Commission, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. In 2012, arts and humanities research in all countries totaled $1.4 billion (in comparison to $30 billion spent on biomedical research in the United States alone in 2012 as stated by the AAAS study).

As a result of these disproportionate funding allocations between the sciences and humanities, there is clearly greater capacity in scientific research grant schemes to cover the author-facing or article processing charges (APCs) required by some OA journals. In comparison, there are fewer open access journals in the humanities and most operate without author-facing charges, which would by all accounts be financially prohibitive to funding-deprived humanities research projects. Since governments allot more money to scientific research, there is a compelling taxpayer-based argument in the sciences for open access to research outcomes with high potential public benefit [23]. The public's need for open access in the sciences can be more pressing as the research might be critical for improving issues of health, well-being, disease, and poverty. Indeed, greater public demand for open access scientific research figures into funding, policies, and incentives that inevitably support projects in these fields.

Higher rates of rejection in HSS serials mean that the cost of refereeing per accepted article is greater than in the sciences. Indeed, acceptance rates for top-tier humanities publications hover around 11%, far below comparable journals in the sciences, although this figure may be artificially low due to the very small sampling size of the study from which it comes [26]. However, it is clear that not all analysts agree on the low production costs of humanities journals. A report titled "The Future of Scholarly Journals Publishing Among the Social Science and Humanities Associations," written by Mary Waltham, published in 2009, and focused on open access trends for U.S. HSS journals between 2005 and 2007, concludes that the cost to publish in eight of the most prestigious journals in the humanities and social sciences is triple that of the sciences, with an average figure in 2007 of $9994

per article of the eight journals surveyed [26]. In addition to the low rates of acceptance, humanities articles are considerably longer than in the sciences, leading some scholars to imply that OA publishing might not be entirely feasible in HSS, unless supplemented by volunteer labor. However, we suggest that Waltham's arguably inflated indications of production costs might disregard the fact that the labor of refereeing is often included in the research component of academic workloads, hence not borne by the journal itself.

Additionally, we observe that humanities publications, such as *Landscapes*, might include primary sources, such as poetry, creative writing, illustrations, or photography, leading to costs related to copyright, where (in the rare case) the responsibility is not contingent on the author to seek permission from copyright holders. These factors suggest that, at least for top-tier humanities journals to cover costs by article processing charges (APCs), the fee would need to be higher than in the sciences—an exigency that does not align well with the relatively attenuated funding patterns in the humanities. Further in terms of disciplinary differences in rates of OA uptake, we suggest that the distribution of versions of an article (e.g., pre-print, post-print, or data in its raw form) to the public and to other researchers is a more accepted practice in the sciences than humanities. Some open access authors in the humanities could favor the gold, rather than green, standard. As a result, the embargo period for green (repository-based) OA in the humanities needs to be considered carefully by publishers and scholars; the demand for journal articles in the humanities decreases less rapidly after publication than in the sciences [9] (p. 155). In light of these challenges and considerations, Suber advises the use of journal management software, doing without copy editors, lobbying departments and universities to cover article processing charges as a research expense, and encouraging OA journals to explore alternate means of funding.

Between the sciences and humanities, there is also the difference of the monograph. In this regard, John Unsworth [27] describes "the crisis of audience" in the humanities, in which university presses struggle economically while print runs for scholarly monographs decrease. Whereas journal articles are generally the preferred research form in the sciences, books have historically been more integral to the humanities as indicators of achievement. The problem for open access is that humanities departments still privilege book publication as the primary agent of promotion and tenure. However, considering the typically low impact of scholarly books due to miniscule print runs and discipline-specific language that limits readership, scholars would be advised to turn to open access serials to increase the visibility of their research and to reach a wider audience. On an optimistic note, but in contradiction to Waltham's report described above, Unsworth observes that humanities journals are generally more economically viable than science periodicals. This provides another reason to foster OA journal development and, in particular, to explore OA monograph publishing in the humanities, especially in light of the 2014 Periodicals Price Survey which outlines the dramatic differences in cost structures.

In addition to differences of funding and conventions, important attitudinal distinctions impact on the reception of OA in the humanities. Eelco Ferwerda [28] (Slide 19) argues that humanities research is fundamentally different to the sciences. According to Ferwerda, humanities scholars often hold personal and professional characteristics that render them less enthusiastic about OA in general. Ferwerda argues that humanities publishing is "less about presenting a result; more about developing an argument." Hence, outputs in HSS tend to take a long form in which conceptual expression and use of language are as integral to the work as the content or findings of the research itself. Moreover,

especially in the arts, research is frequently more personal, involving a greater investment of the self and leading to a more connected, personal relationship to the output. As a consequence, within many forms of humanities scholarship (particularly in practice-led or arts-based research), there is greater vigilance around copyright and reuse of the work; more doubt about the value of material being made freely accessible; and deeper inscription of traditional mindsets of print or pay-to-read models over online and open access. These considerations also reflect the prioritization of the book in humanities scholarship. The impact of a book could arguably be lessened if research materials (*i.e.*, versions of book chapters) are already available free-of-charge online at the time of publication.

Notwithstanding sluggish acceptance amongst scholars, there are numerous examples of successful open access journals in the humanities. While some have survived the transition from print to online open access, others have been "born digital." Launched in 2011, *Aphra Behn Online: An Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640–1830* is a born digital, open access refereed journal in Early Modern (circa. 1500–1800) studies [29]. In her insightful case study of the journal, Laura Runge argues that a journal conceived in an online OA format should be free from some print-based limitations [29]. For instance, the higher rate of acceptance for OA journals on the whole might be due to fewer space constraints rather than differences in quality between print and open access. Moreover, OA can catalyze changes in academic publishing practices without sacrificing the reputation of the publisher, editorial board, hosting institution, or the field more broadly. One of the practices with the most potential for change through OA is peer review, as a measure of value and indicator of whether a submission should be published or declined. The *ABO* process is not double-blinded, but rather is designed to promote mentoring between the peer and the author. To this effect, reviewers remain identified by signing their reports. The author can contact the reviewer and collaborate further to improve the contribution. Runge also observes that, because citations are difficult to acquire in sheer quantities for humanities articles, site views or hits can be more accurate indicators of a work's impact. *ABO* is now hosted within an institutional repository, further demonstrating the important connections between academic libraries and open access publishing in the humanities.

Key transformations in OA publishing are occurring within the humanities as scholars increasingly forward the value of open access and negotiate the particular demands of implementing OA measures in their disciplines. As a traditional journal editor who supports OA publishing, Gabriel Egan [30] challenges the view held by some journal publishers that open access will ruin the academic journal business model or compromise the quality of humanities research. The journals, *Shakespeare* and *Theatre Notebook*, edited by Egan, are both successful low-cost traditional journals that offer green open access content and which have been managed by faculty staff. Egan argues that "open access is both desirable and inevitable since, as we move towards virtually cost-free digital dissemination, charging readers seems increasingly unjustifiable." While many publishers are touting the merits of gold OA, for some humanities journals green OA options might be the most advantageous option. For example, *Theatre Notebook* invites contributors to archive the post-prints of their articles (green OA) after a one-year embargo. As with many academic publications, the journal editors and peer reviewers receive no payment for their services and the online platform is funded by the hosting institution or scholarly organization, not the journal itself. Egan concludes by arguing that "scholarship ultimately belongs to the citizens who paid for its creation."

Other recent initiatives in open access humanities journals follow the "megajournal" model. Eve [6] (p. 7) defines a megajournal as "an online, multi-disciplinary, high-volume ('mega') academic publication venue ("journal") that reviews, publishes, and then hosts, in perpetuity, anticipated high-hundreds to potentially thousands of articles per year." The Public Library of Humanities and Social Science, modelled on the successful Public Library of Science or (PloS) and now known as the Open Library of Humanities (OLH), endeavors to "create a respected, international, prestigious, innovative, digitally preserved, open access academic megajournal and monograph platform for the humanities" [6] (p. 7). The Open Library of Humanities purports to offer a solution to the serials crisis through technical innovation coupled to academic rigor [31]. OLH adopts the model of PloS ONE, the flagship journal of PLoS, in which there are few disciplinary divisions and refereeing is carried out by experts in the subject area of the contribution. However, rather than an article processing charge, OLH proposes to use Library Partnership Subsidies in which libraries fund a publishing infrastructure rather than purchasing journals. Another example of a megajournal is *SAGE Open*, a gold OA journal using an interactive model and publishing research in humanities and social sciences [32]. Unlike traditional peer review models, *SAGE Open* accepts articles solely on the validity of the research methods used. This approach allows readers to assess the significance of the articles by using the journal's interactive comments tool. Eve terms this the "ready to publish" criterion in which articles are assessed by the editors and reviewers on the basis of accuracy, leaving the work's significance to be determined by the readership [31]. Evaluation of the technical soundness of a manuscript focuses on novelty, scholarly structure, referencing, and argumentation, rather than importance [6] (p. 8).

4. *Landscapes*: An International Environmental Journal

At Edith Cowan University, the Faculty of Education and Arts (FEA) environmental humanities journal, *Landscapes*, is an example of a mixed media online journal that began life as a gold OA journal hosted on a website external to the university. In collaboration with the journal's editors, in 2013 the ECU library initiated the migration of the journal to the institutional repository Research Online (RO) using Digital Commons, an open access institutional repository software developed by Berkeley Electronic Press. This section will briefly discuss the migration of *Landscapes* as a case study of OA journal publishing in the humanities, the role of academic libraries in supporting open access, and the benefits of OA to interdisciplinary humanities scholars working across various media, including textual, visual, and audiovisual modalities.

Reflecting Gabriel Egan's cost-free or cost-low OA humanities publishing models discussed previously, *Landscapes* has been a relatively stable and sustainable initiative now hosted by ECU's repository, edited by faculty members in the humanities, and refereed by experts in the highly interdisciplinary fields of environmental humanities, ecocriticism, and arts-based ecological research. The *Landscapes* example demonstrates how cooperation between academics, editors, library staff, and administrators can enhance the potential of OA publishing to bring wider audiences to otherwise sequestered, specialist research. Situating the journal within the faculty infrastructure and involving the expertise of the library have ensured the longer-term viability of the publication, as well as the archiving of older content. Moreover, the journal's editors and staff are more accustomed to the ethos and practices of OA since the transition and can now act and speak knowledgeably on behalf of OA

publishing within the faculty. Hence, the migration of *Landscapes* has resulted in the added benefit of better trained and more fully equipped OA advocates within the institution.

Landscapes is the refereed journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language (ICLL) based at ECU. It is one of the first interdisciplinary environmental serials and arguably one of the longest-lived e-journals based in Australia, publishing one or two issues per year since its inception. However, as it is a small faculty-based journal, *Landscapes* does not have an impact factor nor has it been listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ); the editors hope to introduce these improvements in the coming years, with the ECU Library's assistance, especially as the journal grows. First appearing in 2002, nevertheless, the journal has always been a vital digital complement to the work of the ICLL research group. The purpose of ICLL, founded four years earlier (in 1998), is to "promote research, teaching, scholarship and creative activity in all aspects of the interrelationship between landscape and language. The latter describes all communicative forms, verbal and non-verbal" [32].

In launching the journal in 2002, ICLL sought to provide a low- or no-cost, open access scholarly platform. The centre wished to disseminate research in the niche academic fields of ecocriticism, environmental humanities and landscape writing to international audiences, outside of the geographically isolated state of Western Australia. Although the journal publishes the work of ICLL members (most of whom have ECU affiliation) following peer-review procedures, the editors estimate that 75% of published material between 2013 and 2014 came from non-ICLL scholars, including those from Australia and New Zealand, Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East. Although outside the scope of our discussion, a topic for further research could be the "politics" of an institutional repository, like Research Online, that hosts material from scholars outside the institution. The *Landscapes* example could be said to contradict the typical role of institutional repositories in highlighting and disseminating the work of members of the institution. On the contrary, the *Landscapes* migration to a faculty infrastructure has further exposed the journal to non-ECU readers and contributors.

Moreover, because the center includes writers as well as photographers, painters, sculptors, sound artists, and filmmakers, a multimedia publication format was required—one which could easily accommodate text, images, and video but without incurring too many additional costs. The journal's Founding Editor Glen Phillips summarizes the multiple benefits of an online format as (1) affordability (for the journal and its readers), (2) accessibility (of content to a global audience), and (3) visibility (beyond the physical boundaries of Perth, Western Australia, one of the most geographically remote cities on earth). As part of its scope, *Landscapes* invites traditional academic and non-traditional creative works, including short stories, extracts from novels, poetry, images, video, and sound files, on the theme of "landscapes" [33]. The combination of research articles and creative works has been the journal's mark of distinction since its founding. A comparable journal is *Philosophy, Activism, Nature* (PAN), established in 2000 and previously available both on a subscription basis through Informit and as open access content through the Monash University repository [34]. As of 2015, the journal is transitioning to a non-university, open access platform. PAN also focuses on environmental humanities scholarship that crosses between literature, philosophy, and cultural studies, although its physical office and most of its editorial board members are based in eastern Australia.

In early 2013, *Landscapes* was migrated from an external website to ECU's institutional repository where it is now hosted (Figure 1). The advantages of the transition, from the perspective of the editors, included increased visibility (beyond its original external website), a more efficient journal management system (improved workflow) provided through Digital Commons, and improved reader confidence in clear association with the institutional repository. Prior to the migration, *Landscapes* existed separately from the university on a private website bearing annual costs for domain registration and website hosting services. Some of these fees were covered by the limited research funds of the editors themselves or by small and highly variable funding allotments obtainable annually through the faculty. The process of peer review, managed primarily through the email accounts of the editors, was inefficient and time-consuming. Uploading publication-ready versions of articles and creative content proved incommodious each time an issue needed to go live. With support from the faculty, the main editors were able to employ issue editors to assist with the labor of soliciting submissions, setting up quality peer review, ensuring that revisions were made, formatting text and referencing according to the journal's standard, uploading content to the website, and advertising the issue to contributors, other scholars, and simpatico research centers. However, as the editors lacked the expertise to manage sound and video contributions effectively, the multimedia aims of the journal were often sidelined in favor of easily produced and managed PDFs of research articles and creative writing.

Furthermore, after the editing process and the uploading of the journal content, the crucial phase of publicizing the new issue was often severely limited to email announcements to ICLL members and contributors, word-of-mouth to interested parties, and faith in the mysterious and hopefully fortuitous powers of online searches. The migration to ECU's institutional repository has greatly streamlined the behind-the-scenes operations of *Landscapes*. More specifically, the Digital Commons platform allows editors to generate a list of subject area experts from which to nominate article referees; to manage communications between reviewers, editors, and contributors; to provide updates on the status of submitted articles for the benefit of contributors; and to engage in user-friendly revision, editing, proofreading, and final publication processes. Furthermore, the Digital Commons platform's search engine optimization (SEO) optimizes discoverability of *Landscapes* content. In enhancing the visibility of journal content, the interoperability of the Research Online repository renders published research material more accessible to the public via other repositories, archives, and databases. Lastly, the built-in metrics tools allow editors and others to track the popularity of content through numbers of downloads and hits. The "Most Popular Papers" feature of the Digital Commons platform ranks content according to average number of full-text downloads per day since the publication of the item.

ECU's institutional repository, Research Online, was established in 2007 by the ECU Library. Research Online has since developed into a repository with a range of research outputs produced by ECU academic staff, researchers, and postgraduate students. As of September 2013 there were more than 11,600 metadata records in the repository and more than 3300 freely downloadable full text documents. The repository has received more than 1.25 million downloads. Research Online carries research theses, photographic galleries, conference papers, and ECU research publications. Full text documents, including open access journal articles, are integrated into the Digital Commons Network, which provides access to documents from all institutions using the Digital Commons platform.

Before the migration of the journal, statistics on downloads and hits were not readily available. Now, based on Digital Commons data, the number of full-text downloads is known to vary from 400 to

800 per month. As the former journal platform did not have usage statistics, of course it is not certain that the new platform usage is higher after migration. However, we do offer 2013–2014 statistics to indicate the overall trends the editors have noted within those years. In September 2014, the journal received 486 full-text downloads, while in June 2014 the figure was 773. Comparatively speaking, there were 5257 total downloads (November 2013), 3418 downloads (July 2013), and 2864 downloads (June 2013) since migration, indicating an upward trend. Despite the spectrum of content published by *Landscapes*, the most downloaded items are refereed articles (6380 downloads between February 2013 and November 2014), followed by poetry (2409 downloads) and non-refereed articles (1514 downloads). Since its migration in 2012, the journal has registered 12,651 total downloads of 219 total documents across 11 issues published. In February 2013 there were 310 downloads, increasing 16 fold to 4971 by November 2013 and 41 fold to 12,651 as of November 2014 (see Figure 2). Metadata page hits increased 20 fold from 131 to 2587 during the same period (see Figure 3). These statistics suggest a consistent increase in impact since migration to the institutional repository. The greater visibility of the content to the public, signified by steadily rising number of downloads and hits, is an outcome of the transition from an independent hosting service to the Digital Commons platform used by ECU's Research Online. As of 2015, the *Landscapes* journal plans to continue using traditional peer-review methods, rather than testing new ones, although the platform does offer the potential for experimentation with new forms of academic review yet to be explored by the editors. Its current business model stands as a free (for contributors and readers), open-access, scholarly journal supported by the Faculty of Education and Arts and the interdisciplinary CREATEC Research Center.

Figure 1. Snapshot of *Landscapes* within Edith Cowan University's institutional repository (Research Online) using Digital Commons as the host.
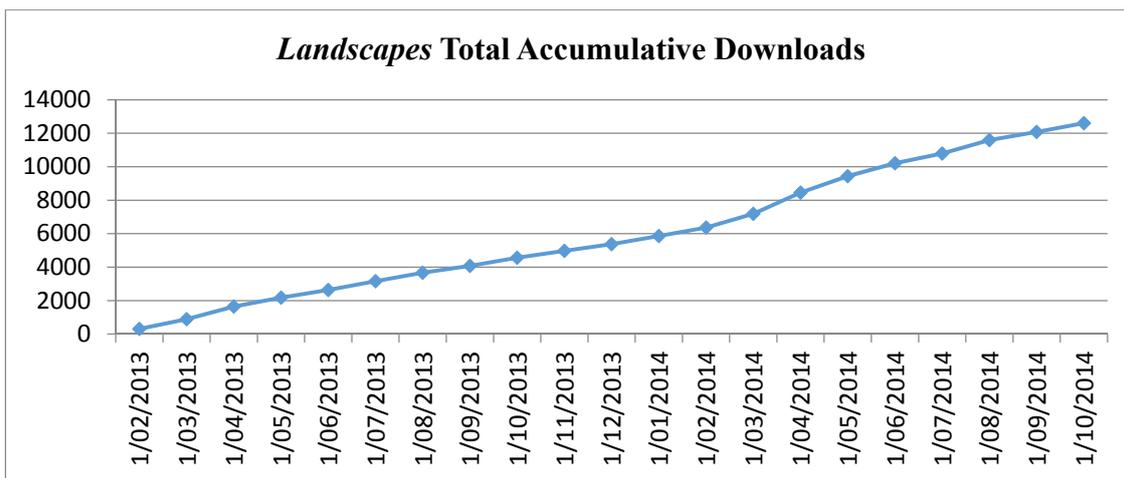
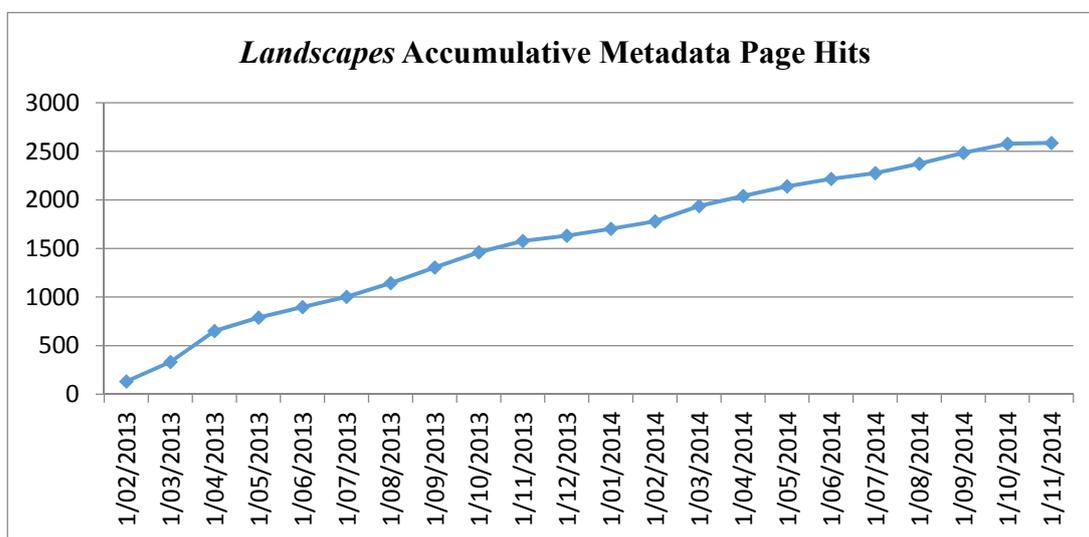**Figure 2.** Landscapes Total Accumulative Downloads.

Figure 3. Landscapes Accumulative Metadata Page Hits.

The *Landscapes* case study underscores the vital role of libraries in promoting open access in the humanities. A report on a roundtable commissioned by SAGE and the British Library suggests that academic libraries are well-placed to support open access publishing, particularly through institutional repositories [35]. *Landscapes* affirms SAGE's assertion. An institutional repository is not only a digital collection that captures and records the research outcomes of university members and communities, providing a central location for research published in a range of outlets [36] (p. 2). It can also be a publishing and archiving platform for university-based journals such as *Landscapes*. The SAGE report recommends the evolution of academic libraries and librarian skills to accommodate the needs of users and researchers in the open access era. As OA grows, the key roles of libraries, including managing institutional collections, advising on data collection methods, and reporting on usage of resources, will also need to evolve. In addition to managing infrastructure and budgeting to ensure OA, libraries will need to continue to invest in open access training in order to manage resistance and misconceptions among researchers and to foster open access innovation in their departments and disciplines. As research becomes more freely available and not constrained by institutional subscriptions, there will be

a stronger rationale for libraries to collaborate in developing OA best practices in particular disciplines, especially in humanities fields where uptake has been slower [35] (p. 15).

5. Survey of Open Access Perception among Faculty Researchers

Shortly after the successful migration of *Landscapes* to ECU's repository, researchers in the Faculty of Education and Arts, including staff and postgraduates, were surveyed for their perceptions, understandings, and misconceptions about open access journal publishing in their fields. The researchers involved in the migration wanted to know about the broader OA arts and humanities context in which the journal is situated. The aim of this section is to report on the results of the small, faculty-specific survey in relation to broader trends and challenges in OA journal publishing today. The institutional community that usually publishes in *Landscapes* were included in the population surveyed. However, future surveys will focus on the journal itself and the community of users. The ECU survey was inspired and informed by two previous studies—one international and one based in Western Australia. The first was conducted by Taylor & Francis. In 2014 the company surveyed authors published in its journals during 2012. Key survey questions were grouped under five major themes: Attitudes and Values, Licences, Article Submission Practices, Open Access Services, and The Future [37]. Respondents ranked their responses according to a Likert scale of 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. Within the Attitudes and Values section of the survey, 49% of authors strongly agreed (option number 5) that open access makes possible broader circulation of research than subscription models. Moreover, 35% strongly agreed (option number 5) that open access results in greater visibility, but only 15% strongly agreed that OA stimulates innovation. Contrary to these positive perceptions, 27% agreed (option number 4) that OA journals are of lower quality than their pay-to-read counterparts, 24% agreed OA journals have lower production standards, and 25% were not aware of the general benefits of OA (option number 3).

The second model for the ECU survey was Gauging Open Access Awareness, which aimed to understand the extent of OA journal publishing awareness among researchers and faculties at the University of Western Australia (UWA) in Perth [38]. The survey was designed to identify potential obstacles to OA advancement within the university, as well as common misreadings of open access by researchers, including postgraduates. The UWA results point to a general lack of awareness of OA practices, but a willingness to explore OA publishing options, with 93% of respondents in favor of openly accessible research that adheres to publishers' protocols. For 14% of the researchers, open access was an entirely unfamiliar term. Only 30% indicated that they understood the core concepts and practices of OA. Across the UWA, awareness of OA was greater among mid and late career researchers and less developed among early career researchers (usually within five years of receiving their doctoral degrees) and postgraduates. The top three benefits listed by researchers were higher research impact, greater dissemination, and greater public access to research within specialist academic areas. 76% had not previously published in an OA journal, while mid and late career researchers were more likely to have published open access. Moreover, only 18% budget for OA article processing fees and 71% did not actively search for material in repositories, indicating that open access did not significantly factor into their research practices. The major barriers noted in the UWA survey included lack of broad awareness of OA, a belief that OA journals do not provide high enough impact, the

limitations of article processing fees, and unfamiliarity with existing OA processes and models. It was also apparent that researchers did not completely understand the difference between a research repository and a subscribed database.

The ECU survey was implemented to begin to understand how HSS researchers perceive and engage with OA journal publishing, to gauge differences in knowledge and awareness of OA publishing across the creative and performing arts, humanities, social sciences and education, and to identify some of the barriers to OA in these areas. The survey was advertised via faculty bulletins, email lists, seminar presentations, and word-of-mouth during the first six months of 2014. The survey administrators used Qualtrics software. University ethics clearance was granted in order to collect the data. Anonymous respondents were asked to identify the school with which they were associated. In total, there were 44 responses to the survey—representing about 20% of the academic staff and postgraduate research students in FEA. There are four schools within the Faculty of Education and Arts: Kurongkurl Katitjin Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research, the School of Communications and Arts (SCA), the School of Education (SoE), and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). Of the four schools, SCA and WAAPA have the highest number of humanities, creative and performing arts, and practice-led researchers. 31% of researchers came from SCA and 22% from WAAPA, with the highest percentage of responses to the survey from SoE (40%). Hence over half of the survey respondents were working in the HSS and creative arts fields of particular interest to this article (see Figure 4). The small percentage of respondents denoted as "other" in Figure 4 were faculty librarians.

The second question allowed researchers to describe their disciplinary backgrounds in a free text format. 37% of respondents were from education, including TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), science education, assessment, and educational technology (Figure 5). 21% identified as performing arts researchers, comprising dance, theater, directing, acting, and other specializations within WAAPA. The additional fields represented were creative writing, design, library studies (the background of faculty librarians), media and cultural studies, music (which could be grouped under the broader field of performing arts), photomedia, and visual arts. In total, 61% of survey respondents had disciplinary backgrounds in arts, humanities, and social sciences.
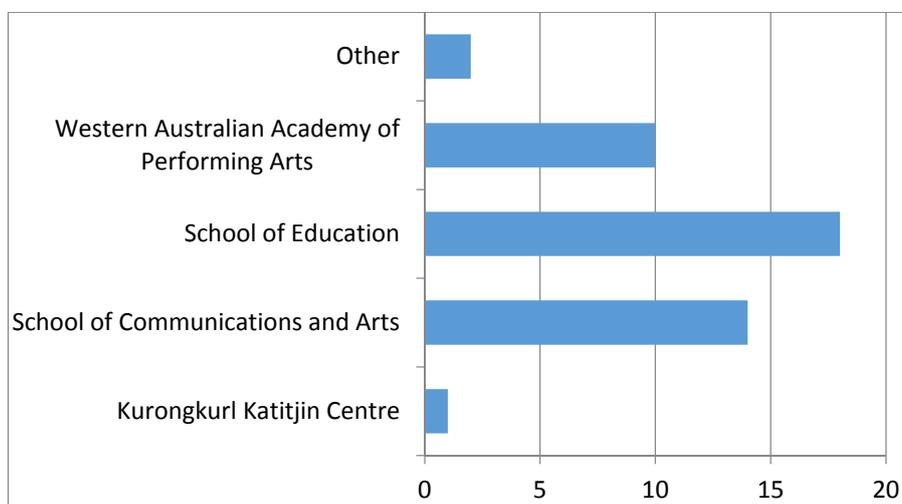

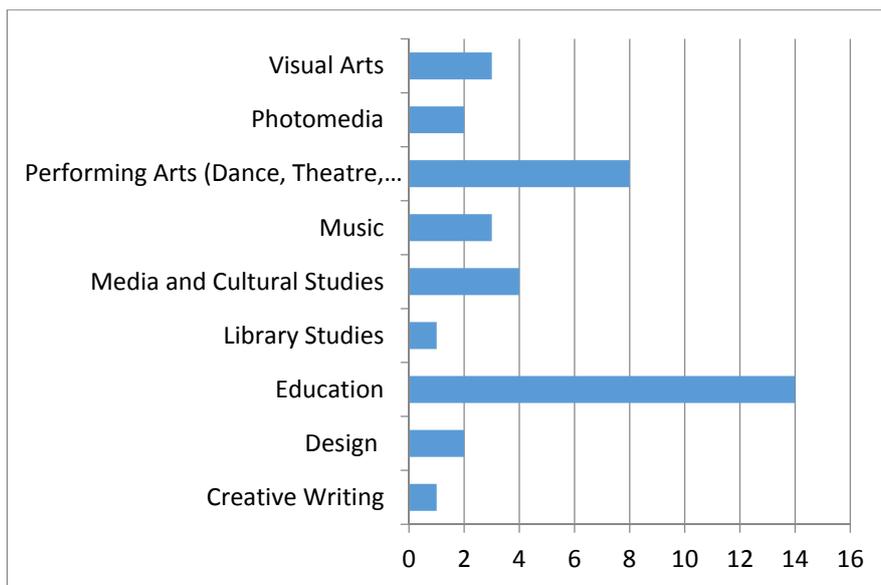**Figure 4.** Affiliations of Faculty Respondents.

Figure 5. Disciplinary Backgrounds of Respondents.

The survey then prompted researchers to identify their career stages: higher degree by research student, early, mid, and late career researcher (Figure 6). 71% of respondents were postgraduate research students, 7% early career, 14% mid-career, and 8% late career. The considerably higher proportion of postgraduate respondents could be attributed to the diligence of research supervisors in promoting the survey to their students or to "survey fatigue" among staff researchers, prompting the latter to ignore requests to participate in the project. It would be valuable, in subsequent studies of OA publishing, to focus on the differences between academic staff and postgraduate research students (also known in Australia as higher degree by research students or HDRs) by surveying the latter group only. Indeed, we expect that the obstacles faced by HDRs will differ from the barriers facing academic staff, especially those already having PhD degrees and, hence, substantial experience with academic research.
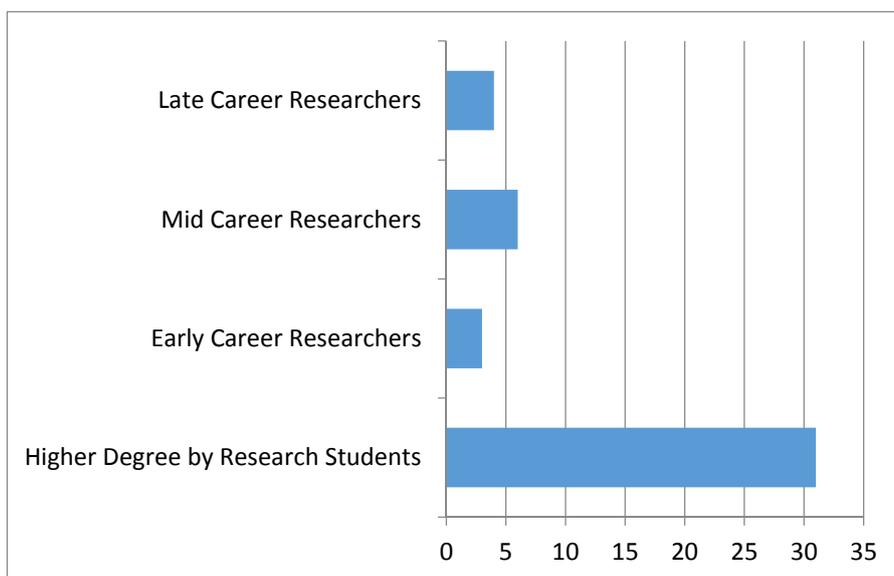

Figure 6. Career Stages of Respondents.

66% were aware of open access, while 34% had never heard of the concept before (Figure 7). The latter figure is greater than that of the UWA survey that indicated 14% unfamiliarity with open access. The higher percentage in the ECU survey should be attributed to the high ratio of postgraduate respondents. 8% believed that open access publications are not peer reviewed, 8% indicated that all OA journals charge publication fees, and 15% considered OA publications to carry less prestige than subscription-based counterparts. However, despite the low general awareness of OA among respondents, 76% noted correctly that open access content can be viewed online without needing a subscription service. A small percentage (2%) believed that OA publications do not publish the final version of a work, as a rule, and that OA outlets are mainly for second-rate work. Moreover, 75% believed that their fields of research benefit, or would benefit, from having OA access journals (Figure 6). These benefits included greater visibility (82%), quick publication turn-around times (34%), and equity of access (68%). Some of the comments about perceived benefits include research is "more easily accessible to practitioners (in the creative arts and design fields)," "provides a location for research not fitting into any particular 'stream'," "raises the profile of creative research," and "benefits the creative arts more directly."
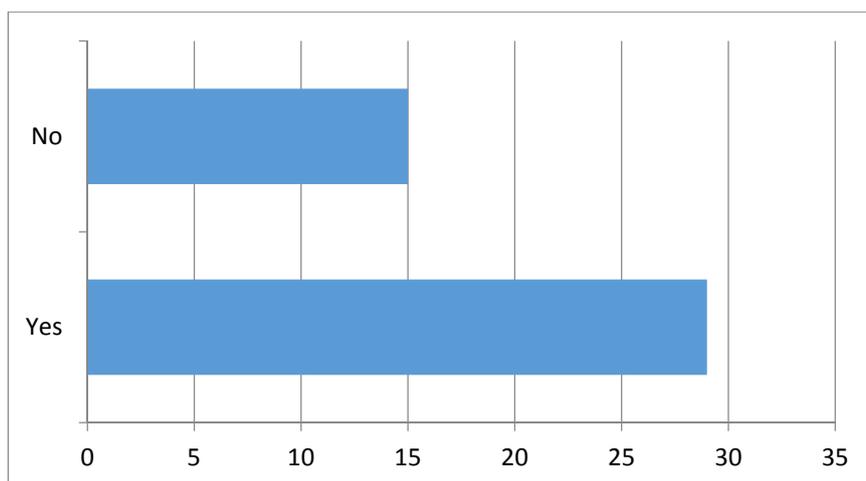

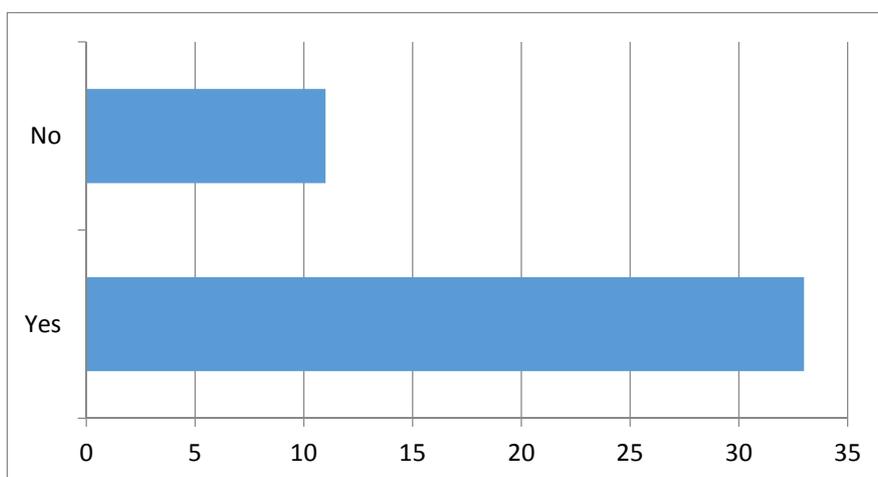**Figure 7.** Awareness of Open Access.

Figure 8. Perceived Benefits of OA to Field of Research.

Although support for open access was evident, the survey indicated a significant lack of experience in navigating OA principles through the publication of research articles (Figure 9). 86% have never published in OA journals and 100% have never published in a journal requiring an article processing charge. The need for more knowledge about OA before researchers could delve more deeply into this form of publishing was apparent in the comments received from respondents, presumably HDRs or Early Career Researchers: "I need a better understanding of process and what it means," "haven't published at all yet," "my research is underway, and not ready for publication," "unsure," "new to this," "not there," "I don't know how to do it," " have not had the opportunity," "I haven't published yet," and "with my limited publishing profile, I have no preference. The opportunity for publishing in a strictly free and online journal has not arisen." Other responses noted a slight resistance to OA in the faculty or that OA publishing is only for experienced academics or postgraduates on an academic career track: "My supervisors have advised against this" and "I have found doing a PhD enough of a challenge and, because I am not considering an academic career, it seems unnecessary." Finally, other researchers did not equate OA publishing with practice-led research outputs: "My research is in practical music performance."
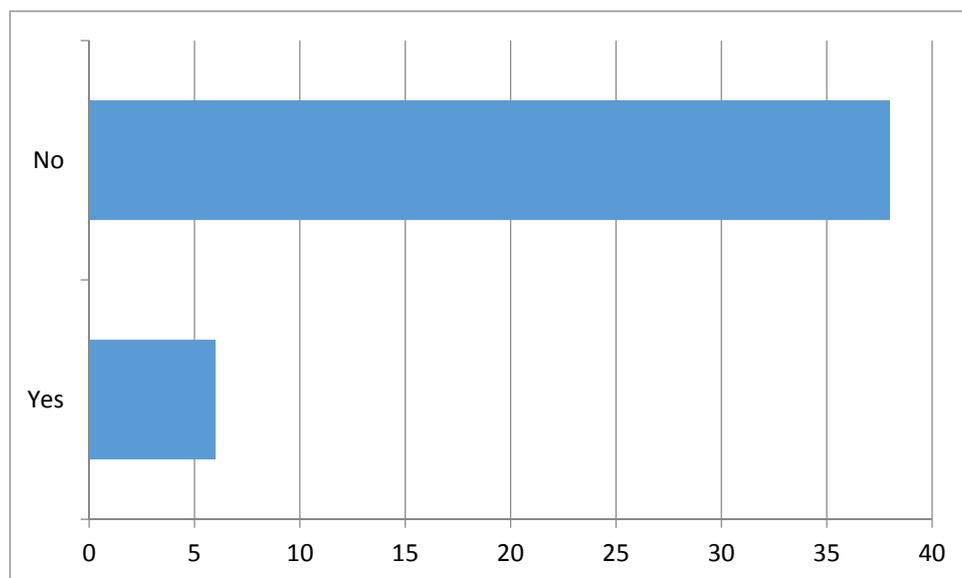

Figure 9. Experience Publishing in OA Journals.

In terms of the perception of quality in OA publishing, 9% considered OA journals of lower quality than subscription publications, 46% of equal quality, 0% of higher quality, and 45% were unsure (Figure 10). Of the 14% of researchers who had previously published in OA journals, 66% regarded the peer review process as rigorous and 34% considered the process average (that is, comparable to subscription-based counterparts in their fields), while none of the researchers described the peer review as inferior to subscription journals.
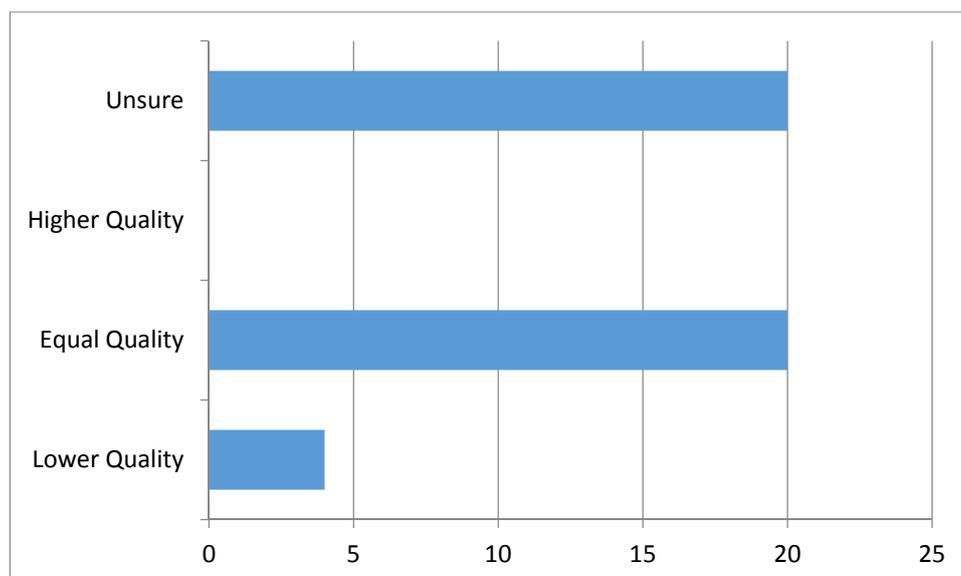
Figure 10. Perception of OA Quality.

The final question of the ECU faculty survey allowed respondents to write freely about their perceptions of OA publishing. Many wrote in support of open access in principle and noted the failure of the traditional academic publishing paradigm. One respondent commented that "I think the existing model of scholarly publishing is failing, and that new models including open access need to be explored." Another argued that "producing a high-quality open access publication would work toward dispelling the myth that open access is inferior." Yet another respondent wrote that "it would be of great benefit to see open access publishing more widely adopted, freely available, and located within a distributive system network." One researcher strongly advocated the ethical implications of OA: "If universities are to continue to be publicly funded then I see no reason to charge for access to research." Some of the practice-led respondents reported a lack of clarity around the role of creative work in OA publishing: "I'm unsure about the impact on creative work. Journals do advertise for creative research, not just academic papers. In that case, all sorts of issues come into play regarding exhibition opportunities and copyright." Still other respondents implied their abiding faith in traditional research models, although such views could be argued to constitute a minority in the faculty: "My perception of the quality of open access journals does not seem to match the perception of the wider academic field. Having Routledge or Taylor & Francis as a journal publisher still packs a greater punch."

In contrast to the small-scale study presented in this article, the European Union's PEER (Publishing and the Ecology of European Research) project conducted a broader examination of OA practices and attitudes, focusing particularly on researcher interactions with repositories and archiving practices. Rhe project, which ended in 2012, involved publishers, libraries, repositories, and researchers (both as authors and readers of journal content). In addition to analyzing OA behaviors in the medical and physical sciences, the study investigated the social sciences, humanities, and arts (SSHA), finding that SSHA authors were not inclined toward self-archiving and were "more likely to have a version of their journal article deposited by someone else" [39] (p. 344). In other words, the deposit of their article was often mediated. Moreover, in comparison to other disciplines, SSHA authors tended to access an institutional repository via Google Scholar or a researcher's webpage

during the process of writing an article. SSHA authors considered the article version important and were suspicious of versions in a repository, unless the final published article was clearly available. Considering the PEER study, the behaviors and perceptions of ECU researchers in relation to the repository, Research Online, should be the subject of further research.

6. Conclusions: Perceptions of Open Access in the Humanities

This small survey of ECU faculty researchers on the whole indicated limited knowledge about open access practices and outlets, but great support for the philosophy, tenets, and ethos of the OA movement. As many of the respondents were postgraduate researchers, the process of conducting the survey instilled better awareness of OA. However, more education around OA is required in order to foster engagement with OA publication in the fields represented within the faculty, particularly the creative arts, humanities, and social sciences. Seminars and workshops are not the only forms that OA education and training should take. ECU's participation in global events, such as Open Access Week each October, can help to raise awareness. The university conducted successful OA Week events in 2013 and 2014 OA and invited high profile visiting scholars on campus. Planning is underway for further OA Week activities in 2015. The mentoring of postgraduate and early career researchers by staff with practical experience in OA is another vital dimension of enhancing an OA research culture within the faculty. Moreover, a faculty-based journal such as *Landscapes* provides an in-house tool for engaging researchers at all levels in open access, building awareness and skills through participation in the journal as editors or contributors. Academic and research libraries are well poised to contribute to OA awareness among researchers through repositories, such as Research Online, and faculty-hosted publications. Further research on perceptions of OA should include focus groups and interviews in order to understand in greater detail the particular needs of humanities, social sciences, creative arts, and practice-led researchers. A university-wide survey would, moreover, enable a comparison of understandings between faculties, particularly in light of ECU's support of OA publishing since the ARC and NHMRC mandates.

Key changes will continue to impact OA in the humanities. Firstly, one important future area of OA research relates to scholarly monographs. Considering the importance of the book to humanities scholarship, it is likely that changes in monograph publishing will affect HSS fields. While it is beyond the scope of this article to address the perceptions of OA monograph publication, it is worth noting that open access development in HSS will most likely next be driven by this modality. A report by the British Library asserts that "open access for monographs is not only possible but necessary" [40] (p. 7). The Knowledge Unlatched Pilot project aims to redress the unsustainability of HSS monograph publishing and the fact that e-book publishing still largely involves the use of paywalls and subscriptions [41]. Secondly, it is conceivable that within ten years, all major research funding bodies will mandate OA publishing for grant-funded work. In Australia, the Australian Research Council mandate will be of ongoing relevance because it is the chief funding body for humanities researchers and includes books as research outputs. Thirdly, as institutional repositories and collections evolve with national and international transformations in publishing, postgraduate and early career researchers will need to understand the benefits and limitations of OA publishing. As Cameron Neylon [42] (p. 3) suggests, the next ten years of the open access landscape will be very interesting.

Author Contributions

The research and writing of this manuscript was shared equally between the authors.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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