

# **“Publishing Freedom of Information Requests: The Open Government Records Plug-in For OJS”**

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- Encouragement for academics and academic institutions to participate in making academic knowledge (e.g., scholarly output, data) more widely accessible to public
- Appeal to
  - self-interest (e.g., “get your work out”),
  - collective-interest (e.g., “good for society”),
  - ethics (e.g., “it’s the tax-payer’s money”)
- However, how to avoid promoting risks?
  - E.g. graduate student & pre-tenure faculty: reputable journals? academic development?
  - E.g., investment in short-lived OA journals

# What about...

- What about making accessible the wealth of public knowledge already available through...

*Freedom of Information Legislation*

# Unless you are Swedish...

- Unless you are Swedish, you or your parents were born in a nation where public officials were authorized to withhold records from the populous.
- 1966/1970 in the US/Norway... Freedom of Information

**The last twenty-five years have witnessed a freedom of information revolution!**

- 1983 FOI in Canada, Australia, 80+ countries!  
(p.s. Sweden... FOI since 1766!)

# Design and Research Question....

- *Can Open Journal System* be used to make knowledge held by government more accessible to the public?

(Knowledge here means knowledge of government and knowledge developed by government)

# OGR...

- Open Government Records (OGR) Plug-in
- Support users to make freedom of information requests
- Publish the text of requests
- Publish the disclosed records

# Case Study: Public Servant Curriculum

- Gov't made curricula for public servants
- Very little academic literature on it in education, curriculum studies, or public administration.
- Using OGR to acquire documents about it
- Result: Egad! Lots of it

# Summary

- OJS is limited for publishing freedom of information requests/responses.
- Custom software is needed
- Growing interested in FOI + Internet
  - MySociety (UK)
  - VisibleGovernment.ca (Canada)

# Summary

- Let's remember that knowledge in gov't institutions matters for the same collective and ethical reasons that drive open access.
- Therefore, collective/ethical reasons for OA in academics are less compelling (“could ends be achieved through open government?”)
- We will be better served if knowledge in/of gov't institutions is included as “public knowledge”