



Annual Report 2020

Introduction

Research

Software

Support Services

Community

Sustainability

Thank you

**Making
knowledge
public.**

INTRODUCTION

Open to Change.

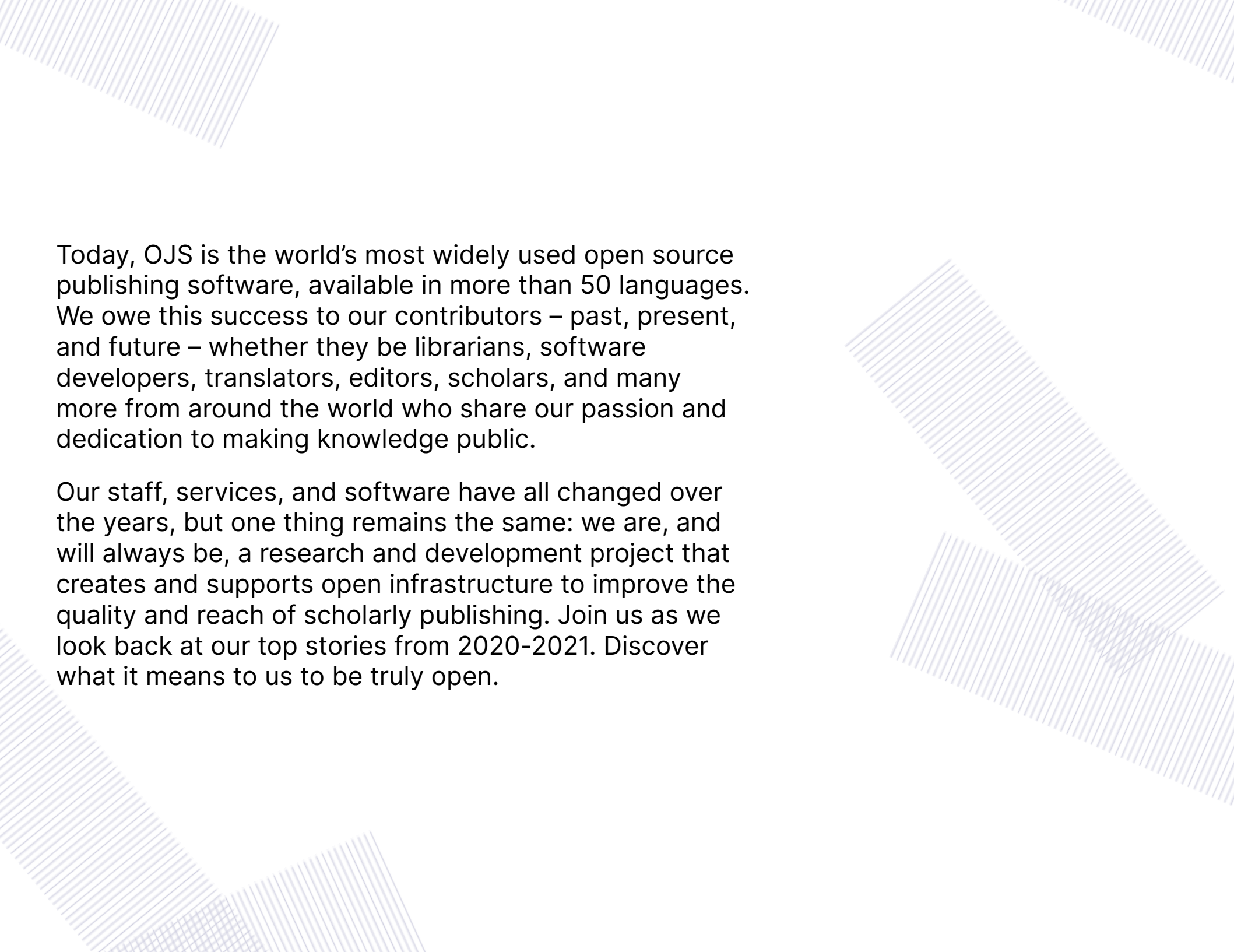


The Public Knowledge Project is a multi-university initiative developing (free) open source software and conducting research to improve the quality and reach of scholarly publishing.

Photograph by Jason Nugent.

Our Story

The Public Knowledge Project (PKP) was established in 1998 as a research project. Years before “open access” became a common phrase, PKP was trying to solve the problem of cost as a barrier to creating and consuming scholarship online. Our team of scholars and students pursued this goal for nearly three years before, in 2001, Open Journal Systems (OJS) was born.



Today, OJS is the world's most widely used open source publishing software, available in more than 50 languages. We owe this success to our contributors – past, present, and future – whether they be librarians, software developers, translators, editors, scholars, and many more from around the world who share our passion and dedication to making knowledge public.

Our staff, services, and software have all changed over the years, but one thing remains the same: we are, and will always be, a research and development project that creates and supports open infrastructure to improve the quality and reach of scholarly publishing. Join us as we look back at our top stories from 2020-2021. Discover what it means to us to be truly open.



“Allow me to welcome you to PKP’s 2020 Annual Report. In this year like no other, we have found ourselves part of a global movement in which the whole world seemed to move as one in response to the pandemic, from sheltering in place to wearing masks. We have also seen the world rise up against acts of racial injustice, with Black Lives Matter taking on the scale of a mass social movement. We have also witnessed science opening up in unprecedented ways to address the novel coronavirus, with an entire literature made open access, the rapid emergence of a biomedical preprint culture, and the development and testing of multiple COVID-19 vaccines in record time. Change is afoot on many fronts. And PKP has been no less a part of this change, part of this opening. PKP’s first major installation of Open Preprint Systems was employed by SciELO to lead in Brazil’s preprint pandemic research efforts; PKP’s support for the Subscribe to Open approach to open access has helped this model draw the attention of publishers and granting agencies as a viable alternative to traditional subscriptions, as well as to read and publish agreements; PKP’s leading contribution to the emergence of a class of “diamond journals,” which are distinguished by neither charging readers nor authors in a publication process has been noted, with diamond journals particularly consistent with global equity concerns in scholarly publishing; and among the new OJS diamond titles that launched this year is The Word: The Stanford Journal of Student Hip-hop Research. It all speaks to a world a little *more open to change* in facing the challenges that lie ahead. Research and scholarship are only one part of this opening, but the part to which we look forward to contributing on this global scale.”

– **John Willinsky**

Founder and Director, Public Knowledge Project



“In last year’s Annual Report I observed that ‘as a project that is non-profit, university-based, and academic-led, PKP needs to demonstrate that it operates efficiently, effectively, and responsibly.’ As Chair of the Advisory Committee, I am gratified to say that even through the many difficulties and uncertainties of the past year, PKP has demonstrated these qualities time and again. Throughout the pandemic PKP and its committees have discussed how to best support the project’s core mission in the face of such uncertainty and anxiety. PKP has real partners in this effort: the community as a whole has demonstrated clear support, whether through the Advisory and Technical committees that help chart PKP’s directions; through the numerous interest and working groups that contribute so much in terms of code, documentation, translations and best practices; to individual voices on the forum helping out and just getting the work done. I take heart that in these tumultuous and challenging times, the community has stepped up and provided stability, confidence and support.”

– Allan Bell

PKP Advisory Committee Chair

Associate University Librarian, Digital Programs and Services, University of British Columbia

RESEARCH

We research open.

When PKP was founded, a major barrier to connecting the academy to the larger world was restricted access to research through print publications and subscription paywalls. Our research continues to identify those barriers, providing solutions and proposing models that facilitate open access on a global scale.

Photograph by Jason Nugent.



Copyright Reform to Sustain Open Access

Professor at the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University, John Willinsky is building a case for legal reform and has embarked on a two-year investigation to prove that American copyright law violates the U.S. Constitution. Copyright, he's discovered, is a barrier to open science - and he's willing to take on Congress to change such. Of particular note:

- MIT Press will be publishing Restoring Copyright's Ability "To Promote the Progress of Science," which is the result of an Arcadia Fund grant (manuscript [here](#)).
- Research on copyright for assigned readings on Canadian university syllabuses was presented in a [Factum](#) (April 28, 2021) presented to the Supreme Court of Canada in York University v. Access Copyright, with a number of university libraries expressing interest in piloting the research's proposed "3-step syllabus rule" employing [Open Syllabus](#).

ScholCommLab

In 2020-2021, PKP Associate Director of Research Juan Pablo Alperin continued his work examining incentives in academia through the study of review, tenure and promotion (Niles et al, 2020; McKiernan et al, 2019; Alperin et al., 2019; Alperin et al., in press; Morales et al, under review), on scholarly impact measures based on social media (Moscrop et al., 2020; Enkhbayar et al, 2020), and started a new project on the role of research in health communications (Fleerackers, 2021). He also continued publishing on the use of digital tools in higher education classroom settings (Kalir et al., 2020; Morales et al., under review) and on scholarly communications issues more broadly (Malički et al., 2021; Rozemblum et al., in press).

OJS Global Upgrade for a Technically Sustainable Future

PKP has been developing and expanding an initiative to upgrade Version 2 OJS platforms around the world to Version 3, beginning with 140 Moroccan journals (which will involve a pre/post study of global presence, citation, collaboration, submissions, and rejections rates) and to include Latin American and Indonesian initiatives. This work will ensure that OJS users across the world benefit from all the new features and stability of OJS 3, including increased indexing capabilities, better accessibility and readability on the web and on mobile devices, and better functionality overall for readers. This work will be informed by research undertaken by Saurabh Khannah, PhD candidate in Education Policy at Stanford University, on the global usage of OJS, OPS and OMP (see [v.2/v.3 map](#)).

Subscribe-to-Open (S2O)

This model for flipping subscription journals to open access, first proposed by PKP in [2017](#) and now endorsed by [Plan S](#) as worthy of support, is being [piloted](#) by seven publishers covering 74 journals, with increases for 2022 and 2023 under discussion.

SOFTWARE

We develop open.



For more than twenty years, PKP has been developing open infrastructure that improves and adapts with the changing scholarly publishing ecosystem. We believe that scholarship is best when it is diverse and global, and we build software to support those aims.

Photograph by Jason Nugent.

Open Preprint Systems

In 2018, PKP announced a working partnership with SciELO to build the open source software necessary to host preprint servers. With specifications and seed funding from SciELO, along with a generous donation from a Stanford University donor, Open Preprint Systems (OPS) was developed and released in English, Spanish, and Portuguese on February 28, 2020 alongside OJS/OMP 3.2. Development continued through the spring of 2020, and SciELO publicly launched its preprint server on April 7 2020 - crucially, just in time to support the urgent need for research activity on the Coronavirus and resulting pandemic. As of the publication date of this annual report, SciELO has just passed a major milestone, with 1,002 preprints published on its server. And PKP is also seeing a lot of interest in OPS to deliver regional and discipline-specific preprint services to communities around the world.

Accessibility

Release of the accessible Default theme front-end as part of OJS 3.3 was a major milestone in the past year.

This work builds on a multi-year effort undertaken by PKP and our external accessibility consultant that included an initial audit, remediation of identified issues, and subsequent audit of the OJS public interface.

Accessibility issues identified in the audit report, completed tickets and ongoing work can be viewed in the [PKP Accessibility Github Project](#).

With the help of the Accessibility Interest Group, PKP also conducted its first round of usability testing with users of assistive technologies and non-English speakers. We are committed to continue including a diverse group of users in our ongoing UX testing. We also have a new guide, [Creating Accessible Content: A Guide for Journal Editors and Authors](#), available in the documentation hub. If you would like to contribute to this work, [please contact us](#).

Translation

In January 2020, PKP began using Weblate, “a web tool designed to ease translating for both developers and translators” to translate PKP software. Since making this change, we have had a huge increase in translation contributions. To date, we have 159 active Weblate users, and an active translation community.

The translation project for OJS currently contains:

2199

strings

55

languages

89%

complete

SUPPORT SERVICES

We serve open.

The passion and expertise of our team has, since day one, been an integral part of our success. In addition to providing paid consultation and hosting services, PKP supports and serves scholarly publishing around the world through strategic projects, online engagement, documentation, and education.

Photograph by Jason Nugent.



Coalition Publica

Coalition Publica is a partnership between long-standing collaborators Érudit and PKP to establish a national infrastructure dedicated to the digital production and dissemination of research results in the Canadian humanities and social sciences (HSS). It is funded by two Canadian Foundation for Innovation grants: Major Science Initiatives Fund (2017-2022) and Cyberinfrastructure Initiative (2017-2020).

Coalition Publica is focussed on three key activities: **1)** developing a support program for Canadian scholarly journals in the humanities and social sciences; **2)** aligning Érudit and PKP's technological developments to create a national production, dissemination, and research infrastructure offering a comprehensive range of scholarly publishing services to the Canadian community; and **3)** organizing research activities focused on the evolution of the scholarly publishing sector.

In 2020-2021, Coalition Publica's national campaign was a great success: the annual objective to include 25 new journals (5 more than the previous year) was reached very quickly and a waiting list was established for 2022. Coalition Publica also developed a response to the COVID crisis, which included working with journals to temporarily remove moving-wall subscription protection to content, and gathering and presenting timely and relevant Open Access articles from within the Canadian SSH context.

The Coalition Publica Metadata Working Group also delivered a best practices guide for OJS metadata for journals, and a technical recommendations report to PKP and Érudit with suggestions to improve metadata quality in their respective systems. You can expect to see the best practices guide released in the coming months, and improvements to our national infrastructure over the next months and years.

Finally - The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) awarded Coalition Publica a major directed grant, the Pan-Canadian Knowledge Access Initiative (PCKAI), in the fall of 2020. This grant was awarded based on our success so far in developing major national scholarly publishing infrastructure. More information on the grant can be found in this report's sustainability section.

Community Support

As our community grows, so too does our expertise. PKP staff and community members are available online when you need help, have a question, or just want to reach out.

PKP offers multiple types of free support to its user community, with community members themselves playing an active and valuable role.

In PKP's Documentation Hub you can find complete user guides on all of our software applications and major plugins, plus developer documentation, publishing best practices resources, and video tutorials. PKP's documentation is created, maintained, and managed by the Documentation Interest Group (DIG), which is composed of PKP staff, development partners, and community members.

In 2020 the DIG created and updated an enormous amount of documentation.

New guides:

- [Journal Policies and Workflows Guide](#)
- [PKP Preservation Network Guide](#)
- [PKP Software FAQ](#)
- [Creating Accessible Content Guide](#) (in partnership with the Accessibility Interest Group)
- [Learning OPS](#) (in partnership with SciELO)
- [Google Scholar Indexing Guide](#) (in partnership with Google Scholar)

Significant revisions to existing guides:

- [DOAJ Application Guide for OJS Users](#) – updated for new application process
- [ORCID Plugin Guide](#)
- [PKP Translating Guide](#)

With the release of OJS/OMP/OPS 3.3, all of our documentation was updated to explain changes and new features, and we produced an [introduction to OJS 3.3 video](#).

In addition, PKP community members translated the Creating Accessible Content Guide, the DOAJ Application Guide, and the Google Scholar Indexing Guide into Portuguese and the guide to Upgrading from OJS 2 to 3 into a Spanish. A team of student interns translated Learning OJS, the Administrator's Guide, and a number of PKP School video tutorials into French. Expect more documentation translation in 2021 when we launch our new documentation translation tool.

From April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, the PKP Docs Hub (launched in 2018) continued to thrive, including visits from hundreds of countries:

259.6K

page views

52.3K

users

6

new guides

COMMUNITY

Community makes us open.



Behind PKP is a vibrant, passionate, and international community who help to make our software better, together. Their voices and contributions are everything to us, and we endeavour to find ways to actively support, educate, and engage them.

Photograph by Jason Nugent.

“We are committed to bringing our expertise and strengths to this collaboration. Our common goal is to create sustainable and innovative tools for open access. We are grateful that PKP is a strong proponent of free software, and we will contribute to the further development work. Our OJS-based services will benefit from working closely together.”

– **Marco Tullney**

Head of Publishing Services, TIB

Events

The past year was a strange, difficult year for events. With the pandemic really starting in March 2020, What initially looked to be a few weeks of stay-at-home orders gradually morphed into a summer and then a year of closed borders and local lockdowns, and our usual habit of meeting in-person at conferences evaporated completely. While PKP is a largely remote team, and we were perhaps more prepared than most to work from home and attend online learning and conference events, the transition was still difficult. We missed the opportunities to travel, to see our colleagues (and to meet new ones), and to exchange ideas in the easy way that can only be done in person.

Nevertheless, we were active in the online space, and participated eagerly where opportunities manifested. We were out in force at a number of events, including Library Publishing Forum's virtual 2020 conference, an early adopter of the online format in May 2020; the OASPA 2020 online conference; the Creative Commons Global Summit; and many other conferences, webinars and online sessions.

We deeply miss the human interaction of previous conferences, and while we aren't going to be hosting a scholarly conference of our own this year, we are already looking ahead to the possibility of regional sprints through 2021 and 2022 - health and safety depending.

Development Partners

Our Development Partners are the bedrock of our PKP community, and we are honoured to see their number grow by one in 2020 with the addition of Technische Informationsbibliothek (TIB) in Hannover, Germany. In addition to providing significant in-kind and financial contributions towards PKP's development of open source scholarly publishing software, TIB will serve as a member of PKP's most senior community-based group, the PKP Advisory Committee. It will be joining Simon Fraser University, Stanford University, the University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, University of Pittsburgh, and the Ontario Council of University Libraries.

Community Forum

The PKP Community Forum continues to be an active and vibrant hub for software technical support, discussing new features, and building connections among diverse members of our global community.

17,100 posts were created on the Forum in 2020, with an average of 38 per day. This includes new questions and responses to questions. 9,300 engaged users were active, or an average of 25.5 per day, and 1,700 new user accounts were created.

Forum statistics from April 1, 2020–March 31, 2021:

43.8k

visits

17.1K

posts

941

new contributors

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustaining open.

Our future depends upon strengthening ties and support from others committed to alternative models of scholarly publishing. In 2020, we continued to rely on four major revenue sources: community contributions, PKP Publishing Services revenue, research grants, and support from our administrative home, SFU Library.

Photograph by Jason Nugent.



COVID and Economic Uncertainty

Despite economic uncertainty across the world due to the pandemic, we saw growth in both our community contributions, through SCOSS and elsewhere, and in our Publishing Services revenue. At the beginning of the year we weren't sure if this would be the case, and had prepared for a tougher financial year overall, with the possibility of a deficit. Thankfully this has not been the case - in part due to a lack of travel expenses, but also due to continued community support via SCOSS; our growth in Publishing Services; and our success in partnership with Érudit, as Coalition Publica, on the Pan-Canadian Knowledge Access Initiative.

Despite our relative financial stability in the face of uncertainty in 2020, we are working with as conservative a financial approach as possible through 2021. We don't expect to see the full economic effect of the current pandemic until this year or possibly next. We are thankful as always for the support the community continues to provide, as it has allowed us to focus on what we do best.

SCOSS

The Global Sustainability Coalition for Open Science Services (SCOSS) was formed in early 2017 with the purpose of providing a new coordinated cost-sharing framework for enabling the broader open access (OA) and open science (OS) community to support the non-commercial services on which it depends. In its pilot funding cycle, more than 1.5 million euros were been pledged by some 200 institutions worldwide to help secure the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and SHERPA Ro/MEO.

In 2019, SCOSS launched its second funding cycle. PKP was selected as one of three vetted services – along with the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB)/Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN) and OpenCitations – to be presented to the SCOSS international scholarly community for funding.

SCOSS selected PKP because of our ambition to scale up our hosting and publishing services. PKP Publishing Services was created in 2007 to cross-subsidise the development of our open source software. In order for these services to continue to offer a sustainable future, we need to expand and grow our business acumen. Our fundraising goal is to raise €734,647 towards operational costs including marketing and business development.

Pan-Canadian Knowledge Access Initiative

Coalition Publica, PKP's partnership with the Érudit Consortium, was awarded the Pan-Canadian Knowledge Access Initiative in the fall of 2020. the PCKAI will support Coalition Publica's efforts to improve Canadian journals' interoperability and compliance with international standards, will support the outreach and support efforts of the PKP and Érudit teams, and will also improve researcher access to the Coalition Publica data corpus (with a particular aim of supporting student researchers through subsidiary grants).

The award was granted following an evaluation conducted by a committee composed of experts in the social sciences and humanities research and library communities. With funding of \$1M per year for the next three years, SSHRC's support complements Coalition Publica's infrastructure funding already provided by the Canada Foundation for Innovation's Major Science Initiatives program.

PKP Publishing Services

While anyone can install and use PKP's free and open source software, PKP Publishing Services (PKPPS) provides hosting and support to publishers who lack the technical resources to self-host. All revenue generated by PKPPS is used to fund the development of PKP's free software and services, which benefit the entire global user community. PKPPS also provides training, custom development, custom theming, and migrations.

In 2020 PKPPS experienced significant continued growth, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic to scholars, publishers, and educational institutions. 156 new OJS journals joined PKPPS's hosting service – a 92% increase in new journals from the previous year. This brings our total hosted journals and presses to 719 and includes 58 journals of the University of British Columbia Library, the growing journal program of Hong Kong Baptist University, the historic GEUS Bulletin, and the beautiful Lucerne Open Serials journal cognitio.

In addition to providing hosting services, PKPPS resolved 2,205 support issues, welcomed Kate Shuttleworth and Lin Zhang to the support and administration team, launched a Publishing Services client quarterly newsletter, and began a project to upgrade all hosted OJS 2 installations to OJS 3.

In 2021-2022 we look forward to expanding our sales and marketing efforts to further grow PKPPS, offering multilingual support and training, and continuing the OJS 2 to OJS 3 upgrades project.

PKP Publishing Services at-a-glance:

715

Hosted installations

392

Total active clients

62

New clients this year

Financial Statements

PKP's financial management utilizes SFU's financial system and therefore adheres to all standard institutional budget procedures and policies. The fiscal year is April 1-March 31. All budget amounts are in Canadian dollars.

Revenue

	2019-2020	2020-2021
Publishing Services	\$784,603.05	\$832,859.84
Grants	\$428,632.21	\$486,105.74
Development Partners/Sustainers	\$270,130.67	\$428,112.60
SFU Library (in-kind)	\$107,230.89	\$97,210.50
Total	\$1,590,596.82	\$1,844,288.68

Expenses

	2019-2020	2020-2021
Administration	\$1,242.51	\$2,527.04
Infrastructure	\$93,165.19	\$130,527.72
Community Support/Outreach	\$114,091.25	\$39,684.36
Personnel	\$1,381,869.53	\$1,569,684.78
Total	\$1,590,368.48	\$1,742,423.90

THANK YOU

The future is open.



We really weren't sure how things were going to work out at home, or internationally, this year. But we made such incredible progress, and provided so much needed support to research worldwide. This was a PKP community effort through and through. For those of you who sustained us and worked with us in this past year of change, and who are there for the coming years, we thank you.

Photograph by Jason Nugent.

Contributors

Our thanks to the many individuals and institutions who contributed gifts of time including translators, writers, sprinters, developers, and testers. In particular, we would like to thank members of our committees (Advisory, Technical, and Members) and interest groups (Documentation Interest Group and Accessibility Interest Group).

Sustainers

PKP sustainers provide financial support on a renewable, annual basis. Sustainer levels are determined by the amount of financial contribution. In 2019, the SCOSS program added a new, special/campaign category to our sustainer program. Thank you to the following institutions for their contributions:

Platinum Level (\$15,000+)

- French National Fund for Open Science (FNSO) *SCOSS
- University of Toronto

Gold Level (\$10,000 – \$14,999)

- Indiana University
- SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online)
- University of Guelph *SCOSS via CRKN
- University of New Brunswick
- Western University *SCOSS via CRKN
- York University

Silver Level (\$5,000 – \$9,999)

- Dalhousie University *SCOSS via CRKN
- KU Leuven Bibliotheken *SCOSS
- National Library of Sweden *SCOSS
- Royal Danish Library *SCOSS
- Ryerson University *SCOSS via CRKN
- Ubiquity Press
- Université de Montréal *SCOSS via CRKN
- Université du Québec à Montréal *SCOSS via CRKN
- Université Laval *SCOSS via CRKN
- University of Calgary

- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Manitoba
- University of Miami
- University of Ottawa
- University of Queensland *SCOSS via CAUL
- University of Saskatchewan *SCOSS via CRKN
- University of Sydney *SCOSS via CAUL
- University of Victoria
- University of Windsor

Bronze Level (\$2,500 – \$4,999)

- Biteca
- Carleton University
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University *SCOSS via CRKN
- McMaster University

- Memorial University of Newfoundland *SCOSS via CRKN
- Ohio State University
- Queen's University
- Thai-Journal Citation Index Centre
- Universitätsbibliothek Mannheim *SCOSS
- University of Arizona
- University of Groningen
- University of North Texas
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- University of Texas at Austin
- Wilfrid Laurier University

Supporters (\$500 – \$2499)

- Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
- AgroParisTech *SCOSS
- Brock University *SCOSS via CRKN
- Griffith University *SCOSS via CAUL

- Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)
- MacEwan University *SCOSS via CRKN
- Mount Royal University
- Ontario Tech (UOIT)
- Penn State University
- Queensland University of Technology
*SCOSS via CAUL
- Université de Poitiers *SCOSS
- University of Canterbury *SCOSS via CAUL
- University of Florida
- University of New South Wales *SCOSS
via CAUL
- University of Waterloo
- Zentral und Hochschulbibliothek Luzern

Development Partners

The following institutions provide significant financial and in-kind support for a renewable three year term. Development Partners also play an important role in PKP's governance, serving as members of the PKP Advisory Committee and on additional committees and interest groups. We gratefully appreciate the time, funding, and passion these institutions bring to our team:



**Ontario Council of University
Libraries**



Simon Fraser University



Stanford University



**Technische
Informationsbibliothek (TIB)**



University of Alberta



**University of British
Columbia**



University of Pittsburgh

Financial and in-kind contributions help fund PKP's research, software development, and support services. Become a member our established and much appreciated community and help us continue to develop and improve open access/open science infrastructure well into the future. To make a pledge, please [contact us](#).

Public Knowledge Project

© 2021 Public Knowledge Project.

Content on this page is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license.

**Making
knowledge
public.**