

Are we ready for a Scholarly Commons?

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Buckminster Fuller: “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete”.

Open Access and Open Science practices are becoming better known and understood by increasing numbers of researchers, and many useful, laudable tools and services are being developed to solve specific issues for particular domain groups. However, the question of how these efforts fit together remains largely unaddressed. This is why we propose the idea of scholarly commons, setting principles for open, inclusive and reproducible scholarly communication that researchers and all others involved can ascribe to. It can be used as a framework guiding research practices and the development tools and systems supporting these practices.

In this session, we will present the scholarly commons with its principles and operationalizing rules. We show its origins and context, such as the other charters in scholarly communication.

We will explicitly address the difficulties encountered, shortcomings in the process and skepticism about the outcomes. We want to invite feedback from the audience as to the significance, utility and desired future direction of the scholarly commons. Particularly: can the principles be seen as a catalyst for change and if so, how do we proceed?

We believe that formulating these guiding principles so they are easily communicated, understood and widely endorsed is particularly critical as existing entities start to develop business models around pre-prints, workflows and other services. If the community as a whole can clearly articulate what scholarship in the 21st century should be, then these products and services can be used to support the commons, rather than work against them.

The plenary will also serve as an introduction to several additional workshops that are being planned around specific activities in the commons program.