

ALCTS EXCHANGE 2017 | Day 1, Centering the Margins of the Scholarly Record: Librarians, Social Justice, and Scholarly Communication

>> Harrison Inefuku: Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining our presentation centering the margins of a scholarly record, librarians, social just and scholarly communication. My name is Harrison Inefuku, and I am co_lead of the department at Iowa State University.

>> Charlotte Roh: And my name is Charlotte Roh. I'm a scholarly communications librarian at the University of San Francisco, not U.C. San Francisco or San Francisco State, but the small Jesuit University located right next to golden U park.

>> Harrison Inefuku: Today we're presenting on barriers in publishing __ we present systemic barriers that push voice representing diversity to the margins of the scholarly record. The scholarly record is dominated by white male voices located in North America or western Europe. Thus, we are considering diversity broadly. We've broken down our definition of diversity into two groupings. We have diversity of identities, where we include race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, nationality and language, and diversity of thought, which includes academic discipline, methodology and theory approaches, writing style and language.

>> Charlotte Roh: And of course there's an intersectionality of these diversity, which I'm sure you're all aware.

>> Harrison Inefuku: We're also positioning scholarly publishing, academic publishing at the intersection of academia, publishing and librarianship. So academia provides us with materials to be published, and required for scholarly publishing, including editing and peer reviewing. Librarianship represents the market for scholarly publishing, and as library publishing efforts develop, librarians are joining the publishing industry as mechanisms to disseminate scholarship. And barriers and gate keepers that work to inhibit diversity in the scholarly record. Can exist in any or all three of these areas.

So to provide an example of how a barrier impacts diversity in the scholarly record, Charlotte will examine racial and ethnic diversity in these areas.

>> Charlotte Roh: So one of the things that's been written about quite a bit is racial and ethnic representation in the scholarly record, and it's something that you can look at in terms of gender, in terms of international representation, in terms of who gets published and who doesn't get published. Just today, I saw a __ I'm trying to scroll through to the next slide. Just today I saw an article about peer review in indigenous cultures and how it's so hard for indigenous voices to be taken seriously in the academic record, and that western scholarly voices within the institution has to be cited. And sometimes those voices are not as informed as a primary sources of some information. And that's a problem, because if you look at the race and ethnicity of full_time faculty, and this is from the National Center for Education Statistics, the U.S. census, basically. You'll see that 72% of full_time faculty are white. And I'll say briefly that you might not experience this on your campuses, because adjunct and non_tenured or term faculty are frequently more people of color or women.

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So that's also an imbalance that needs to be addressed. But here you'll see that this imbalance is something that's not a surprise to the faculty when you show them this slide, they're not surprised at all. They're familiar with this. However, a statistic that they're not familiar with is the race and ethnicity of representation in mainstream publishing. You'll see actually that the percentage of white professionals is actually higher than faculty. 89%. Black and African_American, 1%. Hispanic and Latino, 3%. Asian and native Hawaiian is 5% and biracial and multicultural is 2%. This is from the publishing industry survey. And this is more authoritative. It's the benchmark, the Lee and Low survey. And it's something that this survey, when it was done, the publishing companies themselves participated, and it's still pretty high. 79% white. 4% black and African_American. 6% Hispanic and Latino or Mexican. 7% Asian native/Hawaiian, and here you'll see 1% native American and Alaska and 3% biracial and multiracial, which is pretty horrible, but not as horrible as scholarly publishing. Which has been 90% white or Caucasian. And this is a study out of New York. Al Greco is a long_time scholar and he's only recently begun to look at the demographics of scholarly publishing and communication professionals, so that's something that we need to look at more closely. This is actually intended to be an international study, but it was only offered in English. So I don't know how accurate you can say that the international representation is. I will say that I took the study and when I took it, the category of Asian was not offered, and as an Asian_American woman, I said hey, so I worked in publishing for a number of years, why is it not offered, and they had to change the survey as part of my response. So a representation problem means that some of the data being collected is also problematic.

And then finally, of course, we have librarianship. The third piece of that publishing puzzle. And this is librarianship in higher education. From the American Library Association and it's 86% white, which is almost as bad as scholarly publishing. Worse, actually, than the representation of faculty who are white.

Anybody have any questions or comments at this time? I feel like I've thrown a lot of similar slides at you.

Okay. So we're going to look at these all together. As I said, these are similar. And I want you to hold this in your head as you think about the process of publishing and of academia and how we think about peer review, and how these people in scholarly publishing, including librarians, are actually the gate keepers. The editors are the ones that go out to conferences, and ask faculty authors if they would like to publish, right, librarians are the people who are doing the selecting. What does this mean for representation?

>> So that was an example of how the lack of race and ethnic diversity in scholarly publishing can serve as a gatekeeper barrier to diversity in the scholarly record. We'd like to open it up to you, the audience, to take a couple minutes to brain storm what other barriers do you see in scholarly publishing that might limit diversity in the scholarly record. So just take a few minutes if you're in a group, talk to

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the members of your group, and feel free to enter in your answers in the chat window below the slides to respond.

>> Charlotte Roh: Karla so much of what is published is who knows who, and I think a lot know that. I talk to graduate students who don't understand that submission to a press or a publisher is only one step of the networking process. That when they go to conferences and there's a booth there, that means that there are representatives from that publisher there.

I think I saw also mentorship up there and we've seen some research saying that people of color with certain names that are, quote unquote, ethnic, actually have a harder time getting mentorship.

>> Harrison Inefuku: If we can have about another minute to type in your final answers. Yeah, and there's a lot of good things out there that, and I'll move forward to a list that Charlotte and I brainstormed before this session, and there's a lot of answers that you came up with duplicate what we have here. So definitely the lack of mentorship came up. We can look at the university organizational structure in terms of where programs that deal with diversity are located. A lot of the times we look at identity programs such as gender studies, LGBT studies, race and ethnic studies, and these are programs that are kind of overlaid on a departmental structure. So a faculty member, say, in African_American studies might have his tenure and promotion be based in an academic like history or anthropology that might not be familiar with his or her work or research or other that they published in.

Again, it's who you know in publishing. So we look at the make_up of editorial boards, the make_up of peer pools and the lack of diversity in academia kind of leads to the lack of diversity in these areas, so you'll see a lot of the times there's just ___ there's a tendency to not publish in a lot of different subject areas. So you'll see a lot of these global talk to your medical journals, for example, publish research that is considered important in the North while not publishing a lot of research that's concerning tropical diseases or other problems from the global South, for example.

>> Charlotte Roh: And I'm sure we don't have to think hard to find examples of this in librarianship. I, for example, at my last institution, was at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the W.E. Dubois library. The library was named after W.E. Dubois, who is amazing, and he was full of allies for the very strong historically important African_American studies department, but we did not have a single African_American librarian. There was no actual representation among our demographics. And that's not to say that the library itself was unsympathetic, but western Massachusetts was a primarily white area, so it was sort of the demographics that led to a lack of representation that did not serve the student body and our cataloging and description indexing and search well.

>> Harrison Inefuku: And so we'd like to give you an opportunity to look at some of the barriers you've come up with, or the barriers that we're able to see here, and think for a minute on how that barrier works to inhibit diversity in the scholarly record, and again, we'd like you to please enter in your

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answers in the chat window that appears beneath our PowerPoint slides. And we'll have about another three minutes to think about this.

>> Charlotte Roh: Seems like many people are typing. I don't know if things are a little __ multiple attendees are typing at the bottom, but only Karla's note __ oh, some people are in the general chat as well.

I will say as head of cataloging at my current institution, I had a conversation about how white privilege was rejected for the second time as an LOC subject heading. And wasn't really sure why, because it seemed like a common enough search term as well as a specific topic of scholarship study and popular culture. So people who are looking for white privilege, they won't be able to find it as a subject heading. So examples abound. And I know we have some public librarians signed up for this session as well. And I used to work, actually, in K_12 textbook creation, and one of the things that happens is that when textbooks are done and they're being vetted for accuracy, they get sent to academics. They get sent to historians, who then vet the textbooks to see whether they're correct. And so the K_12 market also experiences the impacts of whose voice is being prioritized.

>> Harrison Inefuku: And Lynn has pointed out the language of publishing, I think definitely scholarly publishing is dominated by English language journals. I think recently, China and India have entered in to, like, the top three in terms of sources of scholarly articles. And for them English is probably their __ not their first language. And for scholars who have to translate their thinking in to English, and are to publish, not only do they have those language barriers, but the translation that is required to move from their native language in to English might lose a lot of the nuances that they have in order to publish in what's considered a top tier international journal.

>> Charlotte Roh: And there have been actual studies about how if you're not speaking academic English properly, then your content itself is being judged more negatively. Which is sort of horrifying if you're in a field like international infectious diseases.

>> Harrison Inefuku: And definitely our roles __ sorry. Looking at our roles in libraries of publishers __ sorry, as purchasers, what types of topics are we purchasing, when we're making cancellation decisions, are we just looking at circulation data in order to make those cuts? We could also consider who we're purchasing from. So do we include women and minority_owned businesses when we're considering vendors to purchase from? If we're buying international publications, are we buying it directly from those international publishers, or are we using larger conglomerations that distribute books.

So that was a great conversation. So thank you for that.

So why does diversity matter? You know, barriers to diversity in scholarly publishing, makes it more difficult for members from underrepresented groups to reach tenure and promotion. It can lead to

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homogeneity in the scholarly record, omitting subjects and perspectives from the scholarly record. It creates a scholarly record that does not reflect our students, the public or society, and it limits the amount, subjects and types of information available for public policy making. So these are some of the consequences to lacking diversity in publishing. It hits different groups at different levels.

This is a recent example of this kind of ___ going back to ___ so a book review was published in the American Historical Society and it's been getting a lot of publicity as an example of racial gate keeping in academia. So the book making the unequal metropolis, school segregation at its limits was reviewed by a University of Delaware who was criticized for reviews. His review was criticized by many, and it's specifically outlined how a book review acts as a barrier to diversity and she writes, quote, it is an act of both racism and sexism to publish this review without editorial comments and it's racist because this review implies there is a science of racial indifference that Ericson legitimately did not take into account. It is sexist because he handed over a published book of a junior, untenured faculty member to a white male senior scholar in the field to review when there are plenty of available evidence that he would not be able to offer an accurate and fair review. Unquote. So the review takes a critical look at the work of this untenured faculty member while the selection of the person who had conducted the review is based on the reputation and past performance. So that selection was done a little ___ I would say it was done uncritically. And so the result happened where you have a scholar whose views have been dismissed by any white supremacists reviewing the works of an untenured minority faculty member. It could affect things like purchasing, it could affect the practice of the untenured faculty member's opportunity to gain promotion and tenure and if it wasn't for these others who called out the American historical review for their selection of reviewers, it could have negatively impacted Dr. Ericson's career.

So now that we've ___ sorry.

>> Charlotte Roh: And if someone's looking for a more thorough book on this, there's a book called "Written/unwritten." It's edited by Patricia Matthew and I'll put a link in the chat.

>> Harrison Inefuku: Thank you, Charlotte. And so now that we've gone over barriers of scholarly publishing, we would like you to take a minute to consider what libraries can do to increase diversity in the scholarly record, and what libraries can do to make diverse voices in the scholarly record discoverable and accessible. So we have a couple minutes for this. And again, please enter your responses in the chat window below the PowerPoint slides.

>> Charlotte Roh: These are really great. Thank you for your comments.

>> Harrison Inefuku: Okay. We'll have a few moments to wrap this up.

>> Charlotte Roh: Some of your responses tell me that you guys are already thinking about this and doing some of this, which is amazing. Good to hear we're not trying to make change in isolation.

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Okay. Well, so here's a slide that Harrison and I put together for some examples of how you can encourage diversity in the scholarly record, and some of this matches what you guys have said in the chat. But some of you guys have really gone beyond what we've listed here to include diversity representation and inclusion and collections development policies and open access from the global South and discovery systems targeting to minorities in both the hiring process and the editorial boards, peer reviewers pools, education, I saw some education on implicit bias, and I'll say, not just implicit, but sometimes explicit, based on some of the mistakes we've seen just over the last year and how things are framed.

And also, a kind of outreach the librarians do because we're constantly ambassadors for our profession, and I think in the context of that, we can do different kinds of education as well. And see this __ both as cataloging and as an information literacy moment. What I like to do sometimes when I'm talking to faculty of color is I say hey, so when you publish your book, make sure you look at the catalog and that it's correct, information about it is correct. It's never occurred to them to question how their own books are being cataloged, and that's some of the things I face with faculty of color. And to think of themselves not just as authors, but as part of the system, just as we as librarians are part of the system.

And I think we're almost done.

>> Harrison Inefuku: Yep. So these are just some quick take_away questions for your institution. And these are available in the PowerPoint slides. And unfortunately, we don't have any time for questions, but feel free to contact Charlotte or I. Our E_mail addresses are here, and you can also ask your questions on the ALCTS Exchange forums.

>> Santi Thompson: All right. Well, thank you, Harrison and Charlotte for that really engaging conversation and thanks, everyone, for participating.