

Wikis, Q&As and Cookbooks

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Last week I attended the Transforming Scholarly Communication workshop in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The main goal of the workshop was to come up with practical recommendations for the topics #resources #review #literature #media #recognition and #platforms:

This workshop strives to be different in one important way—rather than focusing on utopian visions for their own sake, we will focus on the existing and newly developed technologies designed to enhance scholarship and scholarly communication in order to determine factors for their success and their potential.

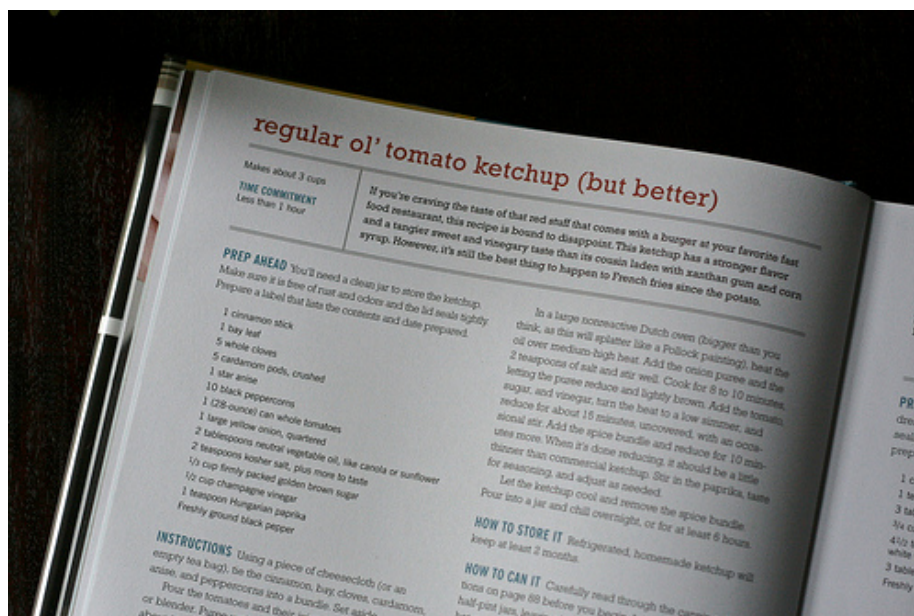


Figure 1: Ketchup Recipe by Chiot’s Run on Flickr

The workshop started with product demos (18 demos in a little over three hours!), we then spent two half days working in smaller groups on one of the six topics

above. I was assigned to the **#recognition** group, and we started with a very open discussion about recognition, reputation, altmetrics and related topics. The work was much more focussed on the second day, where we produced a draft text with practical recommendations.

We all reported back to the whole group in the plenary discussion the second day, but unfortunately didn't have much time (and energy) left to discuss the reports of the other topic groups in more detail. It was suggested that we create a Wikipedia page summarizing our reports, so that researchers interested in new scholarly communication tools would have a starting point.

I personally felt that most reports (including our own) had too much detail information – they are great resources of information, but are probably overwhelming for the average researcher. I therefore thought that a good alternative to a wiki page would be a Question & Answer site similar to the hugely popular Stack Overflow and Quora. Even simpler would be a book in the Cookbook or Recipes format so popular with programmers. The book would be a collection of solutions for many of the small problems we face in scholarly communication today. We probably need hundreds of recipes, to start this off I today wrote a recipe for creating a researcher profile page (very much based on our topic report).