

ScholCom 202X

What is ScholCom 202X?

In ScholCom 202X, you'll take on the role of a new scholarly communication librarian at a small public university somewhere in the US in the "distant future" of the year 202X.

You'll be given a number of scenarios derived from activities and questions a real scholarly communication librarian might expect to receive. These scenarios fall into four general areas: copyright; publishing; institutional repositories; and open access.

After reading each scenario, you'll be given a chance to consult your "augment," a smartphone-like device which contains a very brief annotated list of some relevant sources. In the PDF/print version, these sources are listed below the scenario text, and are open access whenever possible.

After you've read the scenario text and consulted these sources (or not), put yourself in the place of the librarian in the game and think about how you would respond. Would you try to help just the person you're currently talking to, or would you rather build resources and develop strategies that could make the question easier to answer the next time it comes up, and potentially even reach and educate people who don't know the questions to ask in the first place?

As you think through each scenario, ask yourself how you would balance the desire to do a good job against the threat of overwork. You're welcome to write out what you would do, or just think about it. The scenarios can also be used to role play in a classroom setting, with one student taking on the role of the librarian and the other the role of the person who needs their help.

ScholCom 202X is also available as an online text game, putting you more directly in the role of Lovelace University's newest scholarly communication librarian. In the online version, you'll be given several choices to choose from for each scenario and an interactive 'calendar' that fills up as you decide how to respond to the questions and problems you're faced with.

You can access the online version of ScholCom 202X here: <https://github.com/scbaker/ScholCom202X>.

A Note about Pronouns

In the fictional world of ScholCom 202X, the default pronouns are they/them, and Mx. (as opposed to Mr., Mrs., or Ms.) is the default form of address. In ScholCom 202X, it's considered rude to assume someone's pronouns. It's only when you have information about a person's pronouns that you can switch to something else — and in some cases, they/them is still correct.

In the real world, things are more complicated than that, and using they/them to refer to everyone is not recommended. However, you still shouldn't assume people's gender identity, and asking people about their pronouns — or offering up your own when you introduce yourself — is an inclusive, welcoming habit.

If you're not familiar with they/them pronouns, or with the idea of pronouns and identity in general, Shige Sakurai maintains an excellent set of resources at [mypronouns.org](https://www.mypronouns.org/they-them): <https://www.mypronouns.org/they-them> (ScholCom 202X is not affiliated with mypronouns.org)

Introduction: Welcome to the Ranganathan Library

The building in front of you has red brick walls, a garden visible on its gently sloping, south-facing roof, and a multi-storey bank of solar energy producing, heat-absorbing windows. It boasts other amenities, as well, like configurable study spaces and peerless connectivity.

One thing the building *doesn't* have — unlike many in the year 202X — is hundreds of the advertising embeds that choke your neural augment's feed everywhere you go. Instead, this building only has one embed: a succinct, yet smartly curated list of the services available to the students, faculty, staff, and extended community at Lovelace University.

No doubt about it. You're standing before the front doors of the Ranganathan Library, ready to start your first week at your first full-time job as a scholarly communication librarian.

It's hard to believe, really. Not too long ago, you weren't sure you'd ever even finish library school, let alone find a job. You've worked part time for more than a year, staffing info desks and shelving books, even volunteering with the local history association.

Along the way, you've confirmed what you already knew. You have an abiding fascination with the production, publication, and preservation of knowledge.

And now here you are, ready to share your expertise. (Of course, you're not empty-handed. Before you left home, you loaded a healthy amount of resources and publications to your neural augment's storage chip. You know, just in case.)

You take a deep breath and enter the Ranganathan Library's main lobby.

Behind you, the windows are partially obscured by a kinetic light sculpture, which covers the floor in flickering shadow. The wall opposite appears to display a tasteful array of art from diverse artists — but this isn't your first rodeo, and you're pretty sure they're well-disguised augment embeds rather than the real thing.

Before you can examine them further, a person standing at the bottom of the library's main staircase lifts a hand in greeting and walks over to you. You recognize them as Mx Porter, the library director.

They shake your hand firmly. "It's good to have you here with us. Let me give you the tour."

You've already been shown around briefly when you interviewed, but now you'll be less nervous, able to take it all in.

Half an hour passes in the blink of an eye, and Mx Porter delivers you to your new office. "I'm sorry it's not much," they say. "It used to be a server closet, actually, back when we still needed that much room for those. But they did such a nice job with renovations you can hardly tell!"

Your office is a literal closet.

Well, that's okay. You can cover it with an overlay to make it look nicer in other people's augments.

Besides, it's still *your office*.

"I'll leave you to it, then," Mx Porter says. "Oh, but first, a word of advice. Everyone you meet will probably ask you about something or another — that's the nature of academic library work! — so try not to overcommit. It's important to balance sharing your expertise and your service with the amount of work and time one individual can reasonably provide."

"Burnt out librarians don't help anybody. Just ask Ralph here. He used to be human, but after five years as our scholarly communication librarian, this is all that's left." They gesture to a pile of discarded computer peripherals (is that a *Zip drive*?!) and an ancient CRT monitor that somebody's drawn a frowny face on using blood-red permanent marker.

Mx Porter laughs. "Well, don't stretch yourself too thin, okay? You're welcome in my office any time."

They leave you to get organized, and you start setting up your space and getting access to all the systems you'll need to do your job: email (still unescapable, even in 202X), the local network, credentials for the library's public feed interface.

You eat lunch, then spend a few hours meeting some of the other people on campus you'll be working with. Before you know it, the day's over. As you leave for home, you realize you're looking forward to what the next day will bring.

Introductory Resources

Association of College & Research Libraries. (2016). *Scholarly communication overview*. Scholarly Communication Toolkit. Retrieved November 9, 2020, from <https://acrl.libguides.com/scholcomm/toolkit>

This resource from ACRL provides information about the various aspects of scholarly communication, with sections on scholarly publishing; copyright; access to research (i.e. open access); repositories; and research data management. This overview page provides a basic summary of what scholarly communication is and how it fits into the publishing cycle and academic libraries. The guide also includes links to additional resources, including self-directed workshops, books and articles, and other websites.

Calarco, P., Shearer, K., Schmidt, B., & Tate, D. (2016, June). *Librarians' competencies profile for scholarly communication and open access*. Association of Research Libraries. https://www.coar-repositories.org/files/Competencies-for-ScholComm-and-OA_June-2016.pdf

Produced as part of an ARL task force to identify e-research and scholarly communication librarian competencies, this document identifies four key categories of scholarly communication and open access library work: scholarly publishing services; open access repository services; copyright and open access advice; and assessment of scholarly resources. The document also lists core competencies for each of the above areas, and suggests that scholarly communication librarians need a "broad perspective" and must understand both "traditional (commercial, society) and open access" publishing models, as well as intellectual property issues and scholarly publishing economics.

Finlay, C., Tsou, A., & Sugimoto, C. (2015). Scholarly communication as a core competency: Prevalence, activities, and concepts of scholarly communication librarianship as shown through job advertisements. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 3(1), 1236. <https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1236>

Finlay, Tsou, and Sugimoto analyze nearly 600 job descriptions from primarily academic libraries dating from 2006 to 2014, finding that responsibilities related to and titles involving scholarly communication

and terms increased during the period studied. They note that "repositories, open access, copyright, authors' rights, and intellectual property" are the concepts these jobs typically focus on.

Hackstadt, A. (2020). Leadership, development, and expertise: A qualitative content analysis of scholarly communication librarian position announcements. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 8(1), 2376. <https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.2376>

Hackstadt analyzes 100 position descriptions for scholarly communication librarians, drawing out common roles and responsibilities. These include: institutional repository management; leading scholarly communication education and outreach efforts; serving as an expert on matters of copyright, fair use, intellectual property, open access, and publication; and developing a scholarly communication program or infrastructure, either from the ground up or by building on existing work. Hackstadt notes the "boundary spanning" nature of scholarly communication, and that librarians working in this area often need to cultivate qualities of leadership and innovation--an especial challenge for people of colour and non-male librarians, who report being expected to work harder in leadership roles, and having to navigate "gendered and racialized expectations" to do their job.