



EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: OPEN ACCESS

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In assembling this half-issue on open access, we solicited articles from scholars we hoped might give a panoptic view of the complex, politically-charged terrain of open access (OA) today. We were aiming for bold, visionary pieces—articles that would make clear the stakes surrounding OA for the journal and the discipline. At the same time, we asked authors to assume that many today remain under-informed about open access—not only about its politics but also its defining features—and that this special issue might serve as a primer or go-to issue for the Society of Cultural Anthropology's membership, and for the American Anthropological Association more broadly, as it considers future publishing options.¹

We feel that the authors have delivered on this agenda, and brilliantly so. They have written smart, informative pieces that bring readers into the open access conversation, while also providing thought pieces about OA's politics and possibilities. Ryan Anderson's interview with Jason Jackson goes over the fundamental issues in a way that only these two longstanding OA warriors are able to do. The articles by Ali Kenner and Tim Elfenbein, *Cultural Anthropology's* former and current managing editors, provide a ground-up view of the journal's transition to open access, carefully documenting the steps taken and obstacles encountered. Their focus is on the building of infrastructure, an under-appreciated aspect of OA publishing—the information and Internet infrastructure that enables *Cultural Anthropology* to publish on its own. Since university libraries are at the

center of the open access discussion, librarians have often been leading advocates of the open access movement. University libraries not only shoulder the increasing financial burden of the current system of commercial publishing but also have a constitutive interest in the future of knowledge preservation. We thus asked two Duke librarians, Paolo Mangiafico and Kevin Smith, to weigh in from the standpoint of the library and they have provided a piece that is sure to become a classic—one that is visionary in advocating for open access while also sketching the larger ecology of scholarly publishing today. Chris Kelty, one of the leading OA talking heads in anthropology, expands our field of vision once again by placing open access into the larger political-economic context of the neoliberal university, while also raising significant questions about open access and scholarly authority.² For those not yet initiated into the arcane terminology of OA, we have included a short glossary of key terms at the end of the section.

Cultural Anthropology's experiment with open access is very much a work in progress. While we have been able to build the infrastructure that enables us to publish on our own—and to do so relatively quickly and easily—we now face the task of making it technologically and financially sustainable, while holding onto longstanding standards of excellence. We feel much urgency in this task, and invite you to join us in making it a success.

NOTES

1. We would like to thank former *Cultural Anthropology* editors Kim and Mike Fortun for their tireless efforts in promoting open access.
2. For those seeking additional resources, the interview with Alex Golub on the *Cultural Anthropology* website covers basic and some complementary ground in a smart, informative way. See “Bonus Extended Interview with Alex Golub on Open Access.” <http://culanth.org/fieldsights/492-can-scholarship-be-free-to-read-cultural-anthropology-goes-open-access>.