Open Access Week: "Open for Whom?" Considered Through the Eyes of Personas

As Nick Shockey notes in his 2019 Open Access Week blog post, considering "open for whom?" as institutions transition to open knowledge sharing platforms is essential. Journals and repositories that support the dissemination of open access peer-reviewed articles or licensed or public datasets are often designed with academic users in mind. However users of these resources are varied and diverse, including researchers and research support staff, students, patients, and patient advocates. How can open access websites and repositories be designed and updated with a variety of users' needs in mind?
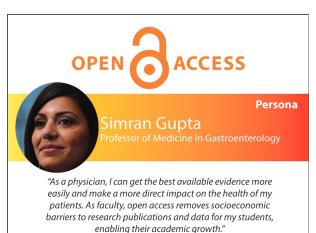
CTS-Personas

Serving a variety of users' needs was a primary motivator behind CTS-Personas, a project of the National Center for Data to Health (Grant U24TR002306). Through this project, conducted by librarians and informatics professionals from Northwestern University, Washington University, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and Oregon Health & Science University, one dozen employee roles in clinical and translational science, as well as two patients, were profiled through a combination of literature review and interviews. The project resulted in fourteen one-page profiles outlining responsibilities, goals, motivators, pain points, and the software usage of roles including various types of researchers, research coordinators and administrators, data analysts, and support staff.

The goal of CTS-Personas was to provide a tool that creators of software, educational, or communications resources could use in academic health centers and clinical research organizations to make those tools more relevant and useful to a diverse array of stakeholders. With this tool in hand, use cases and implementations can be created to demonstrate how a clinical research coordinator, a data analyst, a patient, or any other of the fourteen roles would interact with a software tool, an educational resource, or even an idea or initiative.

Using Personas to Demonstrate Roles in the Open Access Life Cycle

At Northwestern's Galter Health Sciences Library and Learning Center, we leveraged the Personas for our 2019 Open Access week programming. In addition to offering banners, buttons, and an open access quiz slideshow on the library's LED screens, we created tabletop posters outlining the way that four of the Personas both support and benefit from open access. Two researchers, one a **clinician-scientist** and the other a **community-engaged researcher**, support open access by utilizing OA repositories and advocating for open science and reproducibility. The researchers reap the benefits of open access in the form of increasing their dissemination to a wider community of researchers, and obtaining greater insights through sharing research results with a broader community.

The OA poster for a **college student** patient Persona outlines her difficulties in gaining access to resources behind paywalls. For her, open access publications provide a means to easily obtain trusted, peer-reviewed resources at no cost. The **librarian** Persona advocates for publishing through open access journals, since, as these journals increase in popularity, they allow for more trusted resources to be provided by the library through significant subscription cost savings. This in turn supports a cycle of increased information dissemination, as greater numbers of students have increased access to articles and other resources without the limiting factor of paywalls.

While open access publishing and data cataloging practices may appear to offer much upfront challenges without assurance of the benefits, the Personas use cases

help demonstrate in real and human terms the forms that such benefits may take. By using Personas to demonstrate the applications and benefits of open access, we are reminded of what diverse people in a variety of roles can gain from following the tenets and practices of open access. When considering "open for whom?", Personas use cases can be a great place to start.