The Public Knowledge Project and Open Journal Systems

The Public Knowledge Project (PKP) is a research and development devoted to improving the public and scholarly quality of academic publishing, led by John Willinsky, Khosla Family Professor of Education at Stanford in partnership with Simon Fraser University Library. PKP develops (free) open source software tools for scholarly publishing, as well as conducting research into the impact and value of open access. PKP has also worked with INASP (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications) and other organizations that have been developing the scholarly publishing capacity of the global south, by providing the software to run African Journals Online and similar systems in southeast Asia. Its flagship software – Open Journal Systems (OJS) – is a complete, management and publishing platform for peer-reviewed journals. Its Open Monograph Press (OMP) provides a similar service for both monographs and edited volumes.

OJS and OMP can be downloaded for free and installed on a local web server. They offer a flexible, easily configurable editor-operated workflow. They have been designed to reduce the time and energy devoted to the clerical and managerial tasks associated with editing a journal or publishing a book, while improving the record-keeping and efficiency of editorial processes. They seeks to make publishing process more transparent, improving indexing, and enrich the reader's learning and experience.

While OMP is being used by a number of presses, including the Smithsonian Institution, it is OJS that has had a much larger impact worldwide. In 2014, over 9,800 journals around the world used OJS to publish at least 10 articles, and 42 articles on average (with 11% using the subscription module, according to a 2010 study). Cumulatively, over 2.3 million scholarly articles have been published via OJS since its first appearance almost 15 years ago. OJS is available in over 25 different languages with translations contributed by a very active user community. OJS includes the following features: 1. It is installed locally and locally controlled. 2. Editors configure requirements, sections, review process, etc. 3. Online submission, double-blind review, and management of all content. 4. Subscription module with delayed open access and non-open access options. 5. Comprehensive indexing of content. 6. Reading Tools for content, based on field and editors' choice. 7. Email notification and commenting ability for readers. 8. Complete context-sensitive online Help support. 9. Payments module for accepting journal fees, donations, etc.