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Knowledge Unlatched and University of Michigan Library announce collaboration to advance Open Access

Knowledge Unlatched (KU), a not-for-profit company based in England, and University of Michigan Library (U-M Library), a major research library based in Michigan, are pleased to announce that they will collaborate to study and overcome remaining obstacles to the spread of Open Access scholarly publishing in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Under the arrangement, U-M Library will provide a North American base for KU which has recently also established presences in Germany and Australia.

“I’m delighted that KU can benefit from the rich and diverse experiences and programmes that are part of University of Michigan Library, source of major initiatives such as HathiTrust and home of Michigan Publishing,” said Dr. Frances Pinter, founder of Knowledge Unlatched.

KU will have an office within the University of Michigan Library and Charles Watkinson, Associate University Librarian for Publishing and Director of University of Michigan Press, will join the Board.

“As Open Access moves from theoretical exploration to practical implementation, there is a need for sustained effort and collaboration to maximize its benefits. KU is one of the most promising funding models out there and we are very excited to have an opportunity to support it,” said Charles Watkinson.

Among the initial issues KU and U-M Library will collaborate to focus on are:

- Identifying the most meaningful indicators of Open Access impact and reach and finding ways to aggregate, analyse, and communicate such information to authors, publishers, libraries, and funders.
- Increasing the discoverability of Open Access content, through traditional information supply chains as well as the open Web.
- Raising awareness of Open Access policies and frameworks around the world, not just in North America, in a digital environment where authors and publishers are increasingly global players.

While Knowledge Unlatched is known as an innovator in the world of Open Access books (now moving from front list to also including backlist titles), the initiative is looking forward to also applying its distinctive, library crowd-funded model to journals. Because of a lack of funders willing and able to pay author charges, Humanities scholarship is in danger of being deprived of the benefits of Open Access dissemination without such interventions.

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