

## How Library Stuff Works Videos: Information has Value

Sam is a young leader and activist in the LGBTQ community.

He wants to start a healthcare blog that provides information and support for other youth who identify outside of the gender binary.

Sam has searched the internet and found a lot of really great information on government and news websites, but he has encountered a problem. A pay wall problem.

While the popular sources of information that he has found freely on the web are useful, much of the scholarly literature that exists on his topic is blocked by paywalls. These paywalls are put in place by the journal publishers to control who can access the information contained within their journals and this access isn't cheap.

As McMaster students Sam and you have better access to scholarly literature than most people. McMaster Libraries spent 10.4 million dollars in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, of which 81% was allocated to serial and e-resource subscriptions. The average price for a science, technology or medical journal is \$5,105 USD per year and with the conversion to the Canadian dollar well, you can do the math!

In a world of information, it seems like the answers to our questions are always a Google Search away and sometimes they are.

Yet in this world of easy file-sharing, information has also unnecessarily been turned into a commodity.

This commodification prevents certain groups of people from obtaining the information that they need. It also controls who is and who is not represented in our scholarly networks of information, often silencing voices of people who belong to systemically marginalized groups.

As information literate scholars, we are aware that information has value: as a commodity, as a means of education, as a means of influence and as a means of negotiating and understanding the world around us.

So what can we do? Well, we can first become mindful that the creation and dissemination of information is controlled by legal and socioeconomic processes, such as journals charging sky-high rates for access.

As creators and users of information, we can take time to educate ourselves on our rights and responsibilities when participating in a community of scholarship. From understanding the concept of intellectual property and how it is used, justifying the commodification of information, and choosing to publish open access so our work is available to everyone.

We can also show the value of information by properly citing our research. Proper credit and attribution is important since the author has put a lot of time, effort and money into creating the research we use to support our arguments.

So make sure that you know where your information is coming from, be consistent and be accurate.