




2015

Website Review: PLOS

Carrie B. Levinson

Touro College, carrie.levinson2@touro.edu

Author(s) ORCID Identifier:

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7257-6250>

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Recommended Citation

Levinson, C. B. (2015). [Review of the website PLOS]. *Public Services Quarterly*, 11(4), 272-273.

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PLOS (Public Library of Science)

<http://www.plos.org>

Visited: Summer 2015

Reviewer: Carrie B. Levinson, Project Manager Librarian, Touro College

PLOS (Public Library of Science) is a non-profit organization, co-founded by Stanford University School of Medicine professor Patrick O. Brown and University of California, Berkeley professor Michael B. Eisen, whose mission is to promote research in science by using innovative publishing methods and breaking down barriers to access. This philosophy permeates throughout its site, where PLOS publications and the platform they are published on are open access or open source. Articles have a CC-BY (Creative Commons) license applied to them, allowing reuse without permission or fees. While there are a number of resources throughout the site, the ones that are probably most relevant to academic public service librarians are the journals, which this review will concentrate on.

PLOS has several peer-reviewed journals: *PLOS ONE* (an interdisciplinary journal within the sciences and medicine), *PLOS Biology*, *PLOS Medicine*, *PLOS Genetics*, *PLOS Computational Biology*, *PLOS Pathogens*, and *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*. Clicking on any of these from the main PLOS page will open up a new window to that journal. Each journal has a standard layout, but each has its own special twist (for example, *PLOS Pathogens* features “pearls”, which are concise articles on a relevant topic). The layout is large and easy to read, but there are a lot of different boxes featuring research, which can be a bit overwhelming. There is a browse link and search box at the top, so if clicking on each box is cumbersome, these may be welcome options. Once an article is opened, the words “open access” and “peer-reviewed” are

prominently displayed, so students who are looking for scholarly research do not have to do any guesswork. Citations can be generated as well.

In Short: PLOS is a fantastic multidisciplinary site for open access, peer-reviewed scientific and medical research. It shows that open educational resources can be extremely high-quality and accessible to a wider audience. The scholarship will be useful to undergraduate and graduate students doing research papers.

Highly recommended.