

RANDY J. OLSEN  
*University Librarian*  
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Jennifer McLennan  
Director of Communications, SPARC  
21 Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 800  
Washington DC 20036

Colleagues:

Included in your ARL packet you will find a DVD containing selected student submissions to the 2008 SPARKY contest. As you know, this contest is intended to stimulate student awareness of and interest in open access issues. As you watch last year's award winning entries you will realize just how successful this initiative has become.

On behalf of the SPARC Steering Committee I invite you to support student engagement in open access by taking three steps. First, share one or two SPARKY videos with appropriate student groups on your campus as a way of opening the dialogue about open access. Second, add the SPARKY videos to programming shown in your library or other venues on campus. In my library, the SPARKY videos have attracted more attention than any other videos shown on our public screens. Third, consider syndicating the SPARKY contest at your school.

At BYU we took this third step last year and the experience was remarkable. Although our contest was open for less than a month, we received seven submissions prepared by 58 students. The night we screened the entries I invited the video producers to introduce their works. In every case the students spoke articulately, even passionately, about open access and it was obvious that they had become conversant with all of the issues we as librarians care so much about. By the end of the evening I felt that our investment in the awards—an iTouch and two fifty dollar checks—was money well spent.

Best wishes for moving the SPARKY initiative forward at your institution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy J. Olsen", written over a white background.

Randy J. Olsen  
University Librarian