Thanks very much for coming this morning. I know from the volume of email I’ve received in the past few weeks that many of you consider this to be a highly topical and pertinent session. The impetus for this session was that discussion of open access or OA publications, those that are freely available to readers without barriers of price and permission, has largely focused on their adoption in the sciences. Yet open access presents a multitude of opportunities for visual arts scholarship, even considering the discipline’s need for the inclusion of rich media content.

We also wanted to discuss what OA is and what it isn’t. Even though journal prices have risen four times faster than inflation since the mid-1980s, the purpose of OA is not to punish or undermine expensive journals, but rather to provide an accessible alternative to take full advantage of new technologies for widening distribution and reducing costs. Moreover, for researchers themselves the overriding motivation is not to solve the journal pricing crisis but to deliver wider and easier access for readers and enhance impact for authors.

Tracy Bergstrom
Special Collections Librarian
University of Notre Dame