Product Vision

The OpenScholar web content publishing application empowers scholars, as well as academic programs and departments, to create, publish, and maintain academic websites. The platform is uniquely tailored to the needs of the scholarly community, and places an emphasis on features that benefit the majority of users. It is stable, responsive, and user-friendly for both administrators and end users. It is an open source platform with a wide range of contributors, and is easy to support and maintain.

While the above describes the general vision for the product, below are more specific goals:

November 2015 (~6 months from now):

We will focus on upgrading the site administrator/editor experience. The goal will be to make it so that a person with no knowledge of OpenScholar can quickly, and without training or reading separate documentation, create a great website and use all features we offer to continuously improve it. There should be no frustrations, no dead ends, almost no latency, and a beautiful end result. We will also make it possible, and easy, to capture vastly more information from the user (e.g., easy to curate groups of publications, hand curated ‘see also’ references, and places for extra comments and text), which will create considerable added value of OpenScholar sites compared with others, and some reason for better loyalty to the product.

An improved user experience will increase adoption, will ensure continued use of our platform, and will enable users to produce quality websites with reduced effort. An upgraded site administrator/editor experience includes focusing on improving our user interface and reducing latency in every place we can. It also includes a focused approach to improve the usability of managing widgets, features, and processes that site administrators/editors use to build and maintain their sites. We will also work on converting existing themes to the newer responsive format. Further, we will supplement the current theme options with newer, modern looking, responsive themes for public use.

8-10 months from now:

We will upgrade our theme architecture, providing a more robust experience where users will be able to interact fluidly with existing themes and make custom/unique changes to layouts,
colors and font usage through wysiwyg style editing. We will also work on increasing the sharing of custom theme work within OpenScholar, making sure that our themes are, and continuously remain, at least at the cutting edge of the best sites on the web.

Additional Future Goals:

- Improve site portability and reliability by adding versioning, backups, and site imports.
- Continue to improve the overall speed and reduce latency of the application.
- Offer more service and web integrations to make OpenScholar websites more useful and powerful.
- Improve accessibility of our sites; including our administrative interfaces.
- Add to site flexibility by adding layouts, enabling widget embedding within the wysiwyg, and creating new display options.
- Further integrate with Harvard authorization services, and generically with other authorization services, to allow for flexibility and a choice in authorization options.