An Overview of Open Access Publishing

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Outline for Today’s Talk

- Brief biography: My interest in this topic
- What is open access publishing?
- What makes open access possible?
- How is open access funded?
- What is “predatory” publishing?
- How do librarians and publishers perceive open access?
- Where can you learn more about open access?
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Brief Biography
What is open access publishing?

- A publishing process that makes a scholarly article or book freely available online to all interested readers. A 2015 estimate states that 12% of all scholarly articles are open access.

- Requirements to fully read an open access piece: Internet connectivity, capability to find an item of interest, and the ability to comprehend the material.

- These materials are “peer reviewed” by scholars in a given field, to ensure that the methods are sound and conclusions reasonable.

- Open access material is available to anyone online, not only to affiliates of a particular library.
What is open access publishing?

A Very Brief Introduction to Open Access
by Peter Suber

Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. What makes it possible is the internet and the consent of the author or copyright-holder.

In most fields, scholarly journals do not pay authors, who can therefore consent to OA without losing revenue. In this respect scholars and scientists are very differently situated from most musicians and movie-makers, and controversies about OA to music and movies do not carry over to research literature.

OA is entirely compatible with peer review, and all the major OA initiatives for scientific and scholarly literature insist on its importance. Just as authors of journal articles donate their labor, so do most journal editors and referees participating in peer review.

OA literature is not free to produce, even if it is less expensive to produce than conventionally published literature. The question is not whether scholarly literature can be made costless, but whether there are better ways to pay the bills than by charging readers and creating access barriers. Business models for paying the bills depend on how OA is delivered.

There are two primary vehicles for delivering OA to research articles: OA journals and OA archives or repositories.

- **OA archives or repositories** do not perform peer review, but simply make their contents freely available to the world. They may contain unreviewed preprints, refereed postprints, or both. Archives may belong to institutions, such as universities and laboratories, or disciplines, such as physics and economics. Authors may archive their preprints without anyone else's permission, and a majority of journals already permit authors to archive their postprints. When archives comply with the metadata harvesting protocol of the Open Archives Initiative, then they are interoperable and users can find their contents without knowing which archives exist, where they are located, or what they contain. There is now open-source software for building and maintaining OAI-compliant archives and worldwide momentum for using it.

- **OA journals** perform peer review and then make the approved contents freely available to the world. Their expenses consist of peer review, manuscript preparation, and server space. OA journals pay their bills very much the way broadcast television and radio stations do: those with an interest in disseminating the content pay the production costs upfront so that access can be free of charge for everyone with the right equipment. Sometimes this means that journals have a subsidy from the hosting university or professional society. Sometimes it means that journals charge a processing fee on accepted articles, to be paid by the author or the author’s sponsor (employer, funding agency). OA journals that charge processing fees usually waive them in cases of economic hardship. OA journals with institutional subsidies tend to charge no processing fees. OA journals can get by on lower subsidies or fees if they have income from other publications, advertising, priced add-ons, or auxiliary services. Some institutions and consortia arrange fee discounts. Some OA publishers waive the fee for all researchers affiliated with institutions that have purchased an annual membership. There’s a lot of room for creativity in finding ways to pay the costs of a peer-reviewed OA Journal, and we’re far from having exhausted our cleverness and imagination.

For a longer Introduction, with live links for further reading, see my Open Access Overview, [http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm](http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm).
What is open access publishing?

An old tradition and a new technology have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. The old tradition is the willingness of scientists and scholars to publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of inquiry and knowledge. The new technology is the internet. The public good they make possible is the world-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature and completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds. Removing access barriers to this literature will accelerate research, enrich education, share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge.

For various reasons, this kind of free and unrestricted online availability, which we will call open access, has so far been limited to small portions of the journal literature. But even in these limited collections, many different initiatives have shown that open access is economically feasible, that it gives readers extraordinary power to find and make use of relevant literature, and that it gives authors and their works vast and measurable new visibility, readership, and impact. To secure these benefits for all, we call on all interested institutions and individuals to help open up access to the rest of this literature and remove the barriers, especially the price barriers, that stand in the way. The more who join the effort to advance this cause, the sooner we will all enjoy the benefits of open access.

The literature that should be freely accessible online is that which scholars give to the world without expectation of payment. Primarily, this category encompasses their peer-reviewed journal articles, but it also includes any unreviewed preprints that they might wish to put online for comment or to alert colleagues to important research findings. There are many degrees and kinds of wider and easier access to this literature. By "open access" to this literature, we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited.

While the peer-reviewed journal literature should be accessible online without cost to readers, it is not costless to produce. However, experiments show that the overall costs of providing open access to this literature are far lower than the costs of traditional forms of dissemination. With such an opportunity to save money and expand the scope of dissemination at the same time, there is today a strong incentive for professional associations, universities, libraries, foundations, and others to embrace open access as a means of advancing their missions. Achieving open access will require new cost recovery models and financing mechanisms, but the significantly lower overall cost of dissemination is a reason to be confident that the goal is attainable and not merely preferable or utopian.
What makes open access possible?
How is open access funded?

- Subscription/licensing revenues are not available, as the content is free for everyone to read.

- Publishing still has costs, which must be paid somehow.

- One common model, in the US and Europe, is the “article processing charge” (APC). This is a direct payment from the author to a journal to cover costs of facilitating peer review and making accepted articles available.

- Another common model is for government or grant funded subsidies to publishers to make article content open access. One example of this is the Latin American open access consortium SCIELO, which has existed since 1997.
What is “predatory” publishing?

- A “predatory” publisher (a term coined by academic librarian Jeffrey Beall) accepts author payments, but does not perform any peer review. This is a scam.
- Predatory publishers exploit the willingness of authors to pay directly for publication. A reputable open access publisher does not extort payment in this way, and does provide legitimate peer review.
- Predatory ≠ Open Access
Librarian views of open access

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What is Open Access?

Here’s what it means to me. It’s a system of free, unfettered access to scholarship, learning content and data in a way that allows it to be widely shared so that all who wish to gain access to it may do so, free of paywalls, access fees, subscriptions or other barriers. Ideally, that content is for more than viewing. The system promotes re-use, re-mixing and re-distribution. An open access scholarly communication system requires a radical departure from what we have now. What open access isn’t are systems that demand authors pay thousands of dollars to publishers in order to set their articles free. What open access isn’t are content systems that claim to be open but bundle in pay-for-access code only resources [see: openwashing].

We can see what an open access system looks like when publishers commit to making their journals freely accessible. Take for example, the research journal College & Research Libraries, published by the Association of College & Research Libraries, a membership organization of 12,000 academic librarians. Several years ago, ACRL committed to “walk the talk” of open access and eliminated journal subscriptions. Now, all of ACRL’s journal publications are completely open, including access to back files. To no one’s surprise, the quality of their journals is strong and in high sought out by potential authors. What makes it possible are members’ dues. Open access does not equal free. But if
Publisher views of open access

Publishers Support Sustainable Open Access

Publishers are committed to the widest possible dissemination and access to the content they publish. We support any and all sustainable models of access that ensure the integrity and permanence of the scholarly record. Such options include "gold" open access, whereby publication is funded by an article publishing charge paid by the author or another sponsor, a subscription-based journal, or any one of a number of hybrid publishing options. Most publishers now offer open access options and publish open access journals, and work closely with funders, institutions and governments to facilitate these developments. Gold open access provides one approach toward our shared goal of expanding access to peer-reviewed scientific works and maximizing the value and reuse of the results of scientific research.

We believe that authors should be able to publish in the journal of their choice, where publication will have the greatest potential to advance their field. Institutions and funders have a key role to play in ensuring that public access policies allow for funding of peer reviewed publication and publishing services in whatever journal that an author chooses. Publishers look forward to working with all stakeholders to achieve this goal and to advance scholarly communication.

Signatories as of 1 June 2016:
This list will be updated regularly as further publishing organisations sign the statement.

- ACSESS - Alliance of Crop, Soil and Environmental Science Societies
- American Chemical Society
- American College of Chest Physicians
- American Geophysical Union
- American Institute of Physics
- American Physical Society
- American Physiology Society
- American Psychological Association
- American Psychiatric Publishing
- American Society for Microbiology
- Association of Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
- BioScience
- BioMed Central
- Brill
- CABI
- Chemical Rubber Company
- Crelly
- Current Science Group
- De Gruyter
- Elsevier Science
- Foundation for the National Institutes of Health
- Foundation for Applied Molecular Evolution
- Frontiers in Physiology
- Gaia Group
- Geophysical Monographs Series
- John Wiley & Sons
- Leviev
- Magazines for Libraries
- Nature Publishing Group
- National Academy of Sciences
- Nature and Science
- Open Access Alliance
- Public Library of Science
- Royal Society
- Science Direct
- Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
- Springer
- Taylor & Francis
- Wiley
- Wiley Online Library
- World Scientific
Where to learn more

- Scholarly Kitchen (Publisher Perspective): https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/
- SPARC (Advocate Perspective): https://sparcopen.org/
References to items discussed in talk


- Global academic publishing market, including open access content: http://www.markwareconsulting.com/the-stm-report/

- Predatory publishing: https://library.bc.edu/newsletter/?p=163

- Open access funding models: http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/OA_journal_business_models
Thank you!

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