

Managing the Transition to Open Access Publication

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Preamble

In a meeting on April 5th, 2013, organised by the European Physical Society, representatives from a number of Learned Societies met in Strasbourg, France in order to discuss and formulate conditions for a transition towards Open Access publishing that both respects the need to make publically-funded research results freely available whilst at the same time maintaining peer-reviewed high-quality journals, secure archiving, and a strong and successful international scientific enterprise.

The present paper which has been drafted from this meeting has since benefitted from the input and support of further societies organised in the Initiative for Science in Europe. The paper is addressed to all stakeholders in scientific publication and aims to both raise awareness of a number of important issues, and to make specific recommendations that the signatories believe are necessary for Open Access publishing in science to be successfully implemented.

Introduction

1. Scientific publishing is in a state of rapid evolution, and an increasing number of existing and new journals are offering Open Access publication, which aims to provide readers with free access to the results of publically-funded research.
2. The principle of making scientific knowledge widely available is to be strongly supported. Yet at the same time, the transition from traditional models of scientific publishing based on journal subscriptions to models based on Open Access has consequences with potential to impact on science in many ways. These include: the quality of published scientific research; the environment for scientific research and scientific researchers; the long-term sustainability of high-quality journal publication.
3. Learned Societies play an essential role in scientific publishing through many different activities, including: the provision of community-driven oversight; guaranteeing scientific quality in the published record of science; ensuring fairness in addressing the needs and concerns of researchers.
4. In this context, the Learned Societies and other signatories below have established a series of recommendations to ensure that the transition to Open

Access publishing is implemented in such a way as to ensure that the scientific community continues to benefit from a sustainable publishing enterprise whilst keeping the quality of scientific publishing at the highest level. The recommendations are addressed to all stakeholders in scientific publishing.

Definitions

5. Gold Open Access describes a model where published articles are made immediately available on the website of a publisher with no charges to the reader. In many cases, Gold Open Access is subject to payment of a fee known as an Article Publication Charge, also known as an Article Processing Charge, referred to hereafter as APC, whose cost is usually met on behalf of authors by universities, research institutions or other funding bodies. Gold Open Access is in contrast to the traditional publication model where a library or a reader pays a journal subscription fee, and authors usually publish for free with no obligatory additional charge.
6. Hybrid Open Access is a model where subscription-based journals also offer the possibility to authors to publish individual articles under a Gold Open Access model subject to payment of an APC.
7. Green Open Access refers to the case where authors “self-archive” their results by placing an article on an institutional or other repository where the article will be freely available, sometimes, but not always, after an embargo period. Generally the article that is deposited is a peer-reviewed post-print. The final version of record of the publisher can in some cases also be made freely available under Green Open Access, but in this case an embargo period usually applies.

Recommendations for Conditions that the transition to Open Access must respect

Open Access publication must maintain high quality in the published record of science

8. The peer review of scientific results is the established benchmark of quality for journals and is vital as a pre-validation step prior to publication of research results. The combination of peer review and editorial policy

ensures that published papers meet quality standards by: containing sufficient detail to ensure other scientists can reproduce results and ensure accuracy; placing work in context with reference to state of the art; demonstrating originality; using unambiguous style and notation, *etc.*

9. There is consensus amongst the scientific community that the implementation of Open Access must maintain high quality peer-review and editorial processes in order to maintain the published record of science at the highest possible level.
10. In some fields there is the tradition to post pre-prints of non-peer reviewed work on Green Open Access repositories prior to, or in parallel with, submission to a peer-reviewed journal. In such cases, the non-peer reviewed nature of such work should be clearly identifiable to a reader.

All researchers, irrespective of career stage and geographical origin must have equal opportunity to publish in the most reputable journals.

11. Any transition to Open Access must maintain freedom for individual researchers to publish their results in the way that they judge most beneficial to scientific progress.
12. Open Access APCs should not present a barrier to researchers submitting their work to the most reputable journals. Employers such as Institutions and Universities, as well as Research Funding Agencies and Research Councils *etc.* should aim to ensure that researchers with limited access to grants under individual control still retain freedom to publish in journals they judge most appropriate. Funds available for APCs should not be entirely under the control of university or institutional administration, but should include provision for scientists to select themselves the most appropriate journals in which to publish their work.
13. The need for centralised management of funds allocated for open access charges must be balanced with the need to ensure academic freedom. For example, the scientific independence of young researchers may be endangered if publication decisions are made by an institutional hierarchy. Particular care must be taken to ensure fair treatment of early-career researchers

with less financial autonomy and those at institutions with limited research budgets, as well as for active senior scientists no longer formally attached to a research group. Steps must also be taken to assist researchers from developing countries and emerging economies with limited resources.

The transition to Open Access should aim not to cost more to the scientific community

14. The evolution from a subscription-based model of scientific publication to one based on Open Access is expected in the transition phase to cost more to the scientific community as two systems will require funding in parallel.
15. Any such additional costs, however, should not be met from existing research funding that was not explicitly pre-allocated to pay for scientific publication. Funding agencies and bodies should provide additional new sources of bridge-funding to meet such additional costs during the transition phase.
16. In order to further support the transition phase between the traditional publishing model and Gold Open Access, a one-year embargo period should be imposed before free deposit of a published paper on a Green Open Access repository.

The evolution of Open Access needs to be carefully monitored.

17. The scientific community must carefully monitor the transition from traditional publication models to Open Access with the view of implementing the best long term model to guarantee financial stability and scientific quality.
18. There are large differences in scientific traditions and practices between scientific disciplines (even between different sub-sectors of a discipline) and these differences must be carefully considered and respected during the transition phase to Open Access publication.
19. Learned Societies are well-placed to understand the particular publication practices within different areas of the scientific communities, and play an important role in informing dialogue on Open Access policies between researchers, research funders and decision makers at European and national levels.



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