



Open Access: Role and Impact on Libraries

Dr. Dushyant Verma,
Assistant Librarian, College of Agriculture, Kumher, Deeg (Rajasthan)
Email - dushyantverma77@gmail.com

Abstract: A long-standing scientific publishing crisis has severely hampered the ability of libraries, universities, and researchers to obtain publications needed for research and education and has significantly increased the number of publications. The Open Access (OA) publishing mechanism offers a solution to this dilemma, as it provides a cost-effective alternative to traditional publishing models. This article summarizes the OA architecture, history, role, and impact of open access libraries.

Key Words: Open Access, Open Access Journals, Libraries.

1. WHAT IS OPEN ACCESS?

There are many definitions of Open Access (OA) publishing. In general, OA publications are those that are freely available online to anyone, anywhere, and there is no charge for access. Commonly known as the three Bs, the Budapest, Berlin, and Bethesda general statements represent the most highly regarded definitions of OA, and all agree on the essentials. Although slightly different, statements essentially allow OA users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full text of works, for any lawful purpose. Possible. OA does not apply to content where authors expect financial compensation and functions under current copyright law by transferring rights to publishers that allow authors to retain the right to post their documents on institutional servers ("open archiving") or to allow free access to them. Work.

Two commonly discussed means for achieving the OA goal are articulated in the Budapest Open Access Initiative: (1) establishment of "a new generation of journals," that do not charge subscription or access fees (known as the "gold" road), and (2) author self-archiving and/or commitment to deposit a digital copy of a publication to a publicly accessible Website (known as the "green" road).

OA publications generally maintain their educational value, and many open access journals cover their costs by charging authors publishing fees. Examples of OA publishers include Public Library of Science (PLOS) and BioMed Central (BMC).

2. OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS :

Open access journals are the second open access strategy identified by the BOAI. Stevan Harnad refers to open access journals as the "Gold Road" to open access.

"Open Access Journals" Defined

Open access journals have the following characteristics:

- They are scholarly
- They utilize quality control mechanisms like those of conventional journals (e.g., editorial oversight and copy editing)
- They are digital



- They are freely available
- They may allow authors to retain their copyrights
- They may use Creative Commons or similar licenses.

There is some dispute as to whether open access journals must utilize peer review as a quality control mechanism. Most do, but there are also some high-quality journals that don't and meet all other criteria yet have great impact on their fields of study. D-Lib Magazine is an example of such a journal.

Likewise, the question of whether the journal must use a Creative Commons or similar license is another area of dispute. This dispute reflects the deeper, fundamental question of whether "open access" is just free access or free access plus a set of specified use rights that go significantly beyond normal copyright rights.

3. TYPES OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNAL PUBLISHERS

The major types of open access journal publishers are: (1) born-OA publishers, (2) conventional publishers, and (3) non-traditional publishers. The same disclaimers apply to this taxonomy as were indicated for the self-archiving one. Let's examine these types of open access journal publishers in more detail:

- **Born-OA Publishers:** With the establishment of the open access journal publisher BioMed Central⁴² in 2000, a new type of journal publishing venture was created— what I call the "born-OA" publisher. These digital commercial or nonprofit publishers were established for the sole purpose of publishing open access journals, and they typically utilize the Creative Commons Attribution License (or a similar license) for their publications. Authors usually retain their copyrights. Different funding strategies are employed by these publishers, including advertising, author fees (these fees may be paid by authors' grant funds or waived by the publisher in cases of financial hardship), grants to the publishers, library membership fees (these fees entitle authors at the library's institution to publish articles without paying all or part of the publisher's author fees), and supplemental products (e.g, print copies). Example: The Public Library of Science, <http://www.plos.org/>.
- **Conventional Publishers:** As the open access movement has gained momentum, conventional commercial and nonprofit journal publishers have begun to experiment with open access publishing programs or to establish permanent open access programs. For example, the Springer Open Choice Program currently allows authors to publish their articles as open access works for a fee. The articles are published in both print and digital form. A license is used that is similar to the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License. The author can self-archive the digital article, and it is freely available on Springer Link. Once a year, Springer adjusts the library subscription price for journals in the program in accordance with the number of open access journal articles published (e.g., if more were published than in the prior 12 months, the cost is reduced). You'll note that, unless all authors choose the open access option, this program results in journal issues having a mix of open access and restricted access articles. Example: Hindawi Publishing Corporation, <http://www.hindawi.com/oa/>.
- **Non-Traditional Publishers:** During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Internet had developed to the point that scholars began to publish free digital journals utilizing existing institutional infrastructure and volunteer labor (e.g., EJournal, PostModern Culture and The Public-Access Computer Systems Review). These journals were not intended to generate income; they were "no-profit" journals. Although many of these journals allowed authors to retain their copyrights and they had liberal copyright statements regarding noncommercial use, they preceded by a decade or more the Creative Commons, and, consequently, did not embody that kind of copyright stance. While some of these journals ceased publication and others were transformed into non-profit ventures, they provided a model that others followed, especially after the popularization of the Internet began in the mid-1990s, which followed the earlier introduction of Web browsers. In recent years, the availability of free open-source journal management and publishing systems, such as the Open Journal Systems,⁴⁸ further simplified and streamlined digital journal publishing, fueling additional growth in this area. Now, a wide variety of academic departments or schools, institutes and research centers, libraries, professional associations, scholars, and others publish digital journals, a subset of which comply with the strictest definition of an open access journal and a larger subset which comply with the looser definition of an open access journal as a free journal. Since these diverse "publishers" would have been unlikely to be engaged in this activity without facilitating



digital technologies and tools, I refer to them as "non-traditional publishers." Many of them are also "no-profit" publishers as well. Example: SCRIPT-ed: A Journal of Law and Technology.

4. OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS' COPYRIGHT PRACTICES :

Although the ideal is for open access journals to use a Creative Commons or similar license for their articles, the reality is that they can use a variety of copyright strategies that mirror those described earlier for self-archived e-prints.

5. THE DIFFICULTY OF ASSESSING OPEN ACCESS IMPACTS :

Looking solely at journals for a moment, the information environment is even more complex because there is a further distinction between free access to the entire contents of a journal and some subset of those contents. With this in mind, the following taxonomy for journals, reserving the term "open access" for those journals that meet the highest-level criteria:

- **Open Access journals** (OA journals, color code: green): These journals provide free access to all articles and utilize a form of licensing that puts minimal restrictions on the use of articles, such as the Creative Commons Attribution License. Example: Biomedical Digital Libraries.
- **Free Access journals** (FA journals, color code: cyan): These journals provide free access to all articles and utilize a variety of copyright statements (e.g., the journal copyright statement may grant liberal educational copying provisions), but they do not use a Creative Commons Attribution License or similar license. Example: The Public Access Computer Systems Review.
- **Embargoed Access journals** (EA journals, color code: yellow): These journals provide free access to all articles after a specified embargo period and typically utilize conventional copyright statements. Example: Learned Publishing.
- **Partial Access journals** (PA journals, color code: orange): These journals provide free access to selected articles and typically utilize conventional copyright statements. Example: College & Research Libraries.
- **Restricted Access journals** (RA journals, color code: red): These journals provide no free access to articles and typically utilize conventional copyright statements. Example: Library Administration and Management. (Available in electronic form from Library Literature & Information Science Full Text and other databases.)

6. THE IMPACT OF OPEN ACCESS ON LIBRARIES :

For those who are frustrated by the failings of the subscription journal system, the finding that open access will be the dominant model for scholarly journals is encouraging. Outsell estimates that a publishing system with a "high take-up of OA" would shrink the market value of the publishing industry by 57 percent. One way to think about this is to view it as a nearly 60 percent decline in revenues publishers will be able to extract from the market. Again, as Christensen shows, disruptive innovation is the mechanism for making products cheaper and easier. For libraries, this development would mean relief from the decades-long battle to pay for scholarly journals. Libraries need, though, to recognize that among the changes that the rise of Gold OA will bring is a commercial system that does not include them, at least in their role of providing content to readers. This will certainly change expectations and could easily impact budgets. Some libraries have begun playing a role in the production side of open access by hosting the Open Journal System software and providing other support for journal editors on their campuses. In doing so, libraries may end up disrupting academic publishers, potentially including university presses. Taking on this role, especially at scale, could be culturally and politically complex.

7. MAJOR OPEN ACCESS IMPACTS ON LIBRARIES :

- You would own, not merely license, your own copies of electronic journals.
- You would have the right to archive them forever without special permission or periodic payments. Long term preservation and access would not be limited to the actions taken by publishers, with future market potential in mind, but could be supplemented by independent library actions.
- If publishers did not migrate older content, such as the back runs of journals, to new media and formats to keep them readable as technology changed, then libraries would have the right to do it on their own.
- Access and usage would not be limited by password, IP address, usage hours, institutional affiliation, physical location, a cap on simultaneous users, or ability to pay. You would not have to authenticate users or administer proxy servers.



- You would have the right to lend and copy digital articles on any terms you liked to any users you liked. You could offer the same services to users affiliated with your institution, walk in patrons, users at home, visiting faculty, and ILL users.
- Faculty and others could donate digital literature and software without violating their licenses, and you could accept them without limiting their usability.
- All use would be non infringing use, and all use allowed by law would also be allowed by technology. There would be no need for fair use judgment calls and their accompanying risk of liability. There would be no need to err on the side of non use. Faculty could reproduce full text for students without the delays, costs, or uncertainties of seeking permission.
- You would not have to negotiate, either as individual institutions or consortia, for prices or licensing terms. You would not have to remember, consult, or even retain, complex licensing agreements that differ from publisher to publisher and year to year.
- Users who object to cookies or registration would have the same access privileges as other users. Anonymous inquiry would be possible again for every user.
- You would never have to cancel a subscription due to a tight budget or unacceptable licensing terms. Researchers would not encounter gaps in the collection corresponding to journals with unacceptable prices or licensing terms.

8. THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN OPEN ACCESS :

Libraries do not need to take any action in order for open access to exist. It was not created using libraries as the basis. From this angle, there are no costs associated with open access—only benefits. The library would not need to purchase as many journals and might use the funds for collection expansion in other areas if, for instance, a new open access journal completely replaces an established one or if a traditional journal becomes entirely open access.

However, the probability that libraries, especially academic libraries, will simply ignore open access materials is quite low, if not zero. The lesson of other freely available Internet resources is that, regardless of what libraries think, many users (especially undergraduates) love them and may well use them to the exclusion of conventional, vetted materials. Graduate students and faculty find riches in the Internet as well, and may be engaged in creating valuable new authoritative digital resources in that setting. Of course, they can distinguish between the real and the glass diamonds; less sophisticated users can't. So, whether it was out of enthusiasm for new digital resources or out of a sense of obligation to steer users towards useful materials (or both), libraries have increasingly considered that vast sea of Internet materials to be a source of materials that are a potential part of a redefined collection, one that primarily includes purchased and licensed materials, but also, through inclusion in digital finding tools and instruction, free Internet materials.

The major role of Libraries in OA as follows:

1. Libraries can provide enhanced access to OA works
2. Libraries can be digital publishers of OA works
3. Libraries can build specialized OA systems
4. Libraries can digitize OA versions of out of copyright works
5. Libraries can preserve OA materials
6. Libraries can subsidize author fee
7. Libraries can fund for open access efforts

9. CONCLUSION :

This is a unique chance to genuinely change the structure of scholarly communication, mostly because of the open access movement. Such an opportunity has not presented itself in recent memory, and if it is not taken advantage of, it is uncertain whether it will present itself again during our lifetimes. This is the moment to take action if you desire change. While active engagement with the ideas and initiatives of the open access movement is necessary for action, complete agreement with them is not. The movement is varied rather than homogenous. Not exclusive, but inclusive. Arguing passionately for its future, it is not dogmatic but rather argumentative. It is susceptible to new perspectives and voices.



Though not the only viable answer to the significant issues with the traditional scholarly communication system that libraries face, the open access movement is a highly significant one that does not necessitate giving up on other tactics. There is a need for libraries to speak up more in it. Libraries as a whole have been and will continue to be impacted by open access.

Implications for practice: Decisions about the acquisition and management of serials may be impacted by open access concerns. When it comes to alerting user groups and management about significant developments relating to open access, librarians ought to take the lead. Librarians have significant roles to play in relation to this emerging movement.

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