

Open Access and Scholarly Publishing: Challenges and the Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

Open access is a free availability of literature on the internet, permitting a user to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of 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 Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002). The paper examines different concepts of open access on scholarly publication and goes on to examine the motivation for open access and its benefits. The findings posit that it enhances and increases the citation of published scholarly works. It provides free online access to literature that is very important as it also helps in career development. Efforts should be geared towards inculcating the awareness of the concepts techniques, technologies and benefits of open access in scholarly communities

Keywords: *Open access, publishing, scholars, internet*

INTRODUCTION

In the information profession there is a rapid increase in the stock of knowledge provision. In accessing these information a lot of activities come into play. The concept of access involves two forms: access at a cost and access at no cost. Restricted access to information hinders the development of knowledge and these can have an adverse effect on the general development of individuals. According to The Budapest Open Access Initiative (2002), Open Access means 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 Bethesda and Berlin statements add that for a work to be open access, users must be able to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship. Ochogwu (2012) defines open access as a comprehensive source of human knowledge and cultural heritage that has been approved by the scientific community. According to Schiltz verschraegen and Magnolo (2005) open access literature is digital, online, free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. These include original

scientific research results, raw data, metadata, source materials, digital representation of pictorials and graphical materials and Scholarly multimedia material. Suber (2004) as well as Wikipedia (2010) declare that open access removes price barriers (subscription, licensing fees, pay-per-view fees) legal and permission barriers-copyright restrictions. Open access journals according to Wikipedia, are Scholarly journals that are made available to the readers online without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable access to the internet itself. An open access is necessarily the work of an individual not of publishers or journals.

Open Access (OA) means Unrestricted access via the internet to peer-reviewed scholarly research. The primary content for which OA is intended is scholarly journal articles. However, OA is also beginning to be provided for theses, book chapters, and scholarly monographs. Scholarly publications means a comprehensive term used for various processes by which scholars and researchers showcase and exchange information with one another in the course of knowledge creation. Since the existence of scholarly publications, information and communication technologies have dramatically changed research practices in terms of scholarly publication by enhancing all kinds of information to scientists and researchers. This study deliberates on Open Access and Scholarly publishing with the major aim of evaluating its challenges and the way forward.

HISTORY OF OPEN ACCESS

The modern Open Access Publication traces its origin as far back as the 1960s, but become more prominent in the 1990s with the advent of the internet. With the spread of the internet and the ability to copy and distribute electronic data at no cost, the arguments for open access gained new importance. The earliest book publisher to provide open access was the National Academies Press, Publisher for the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine and other arms of the National Academies. They have provided free online full-text editions of their books alongside priced, printed editions since 1994, and declared that the online editions promote sales of the print editions.

The Association of Research Libraries developed the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) in 1997, an alliance of academic and research libraries and other organizations, to develop and promote open access. The first free online access journals (eventually to be called “Open access Journals”) began appearing in the late 1980s, among them was Bryn Mawr Classical Review, Post Modern culture and psychology. The first major international statement on open access was the Budapest Open Access Initiative in February, 2002, launched by the Open Society Institute, two further statements followed the Bethesda statement on Open Access Publishing. In June 2003 and the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to knowledge in the sciences and Humanities in October 2003, the world summit on the information society included Open Access in its Declaration on

principles and plan of Action. A study published in 2010 shows that about 20% of the total number of peer-reviewed articles published in 2008 could be found openly accessible. In August 2013, a study done for the European Commission reported that 50% of a Random sample of all articles published in 2011 as indexed by Scopus were freely accessible online by the end of 2012. From 1993 to date publishing of open access journals has seen rapid growth especially on direct Gold Open Access Journals both in number and in average annual output.

MOTIVATION FOR OPEN ACCESS

Open Access became important in response to the advent of electronic publishing as a way of advancing academic journal publishing. There are a lot of benefits of electronic publishing as compared to paper publishing. The premise behind Open Access is to have free access without restriction to the rapidly expanding stock of scientific knowledge which was found very important, therefore a critical need to make research findings free of charge to researchers and many academics was found very necessary. Rather than applying traditional notions of copyright to academic publications, readers should be free to build upon the research of others. Publications should be Libre or free to build upon.

Everyone should have greater awareness of the serious social problems caused by restricting access to academic research. Researchers and academics should be aware of the serious economic challenges for the future of academic publishing. Open access also has ambitions beyond merely granting access to academic publications as access to research is also a tool for helping others achieve their goals. Open access advances scholarly pursuits in the fields of Open data, open government, Open educational resources, free and open source software and open science etc.

OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS AND ITS BENEFITS

The new form of scholarly publication is achieved through two main channels. A Open Access Journals (Gold Open Access) and B, Self Archiving (green Open Access). According to Oghenetega (2012) Open access Journals also referred to as “Gold Road” to open access are peer-reviewed Journals that are free of charge to the public through the internet. One option for authors who wish to make their work openly accessible is to publish in an open access Journal (Gold Open Access) there are many business models for open access journals. Traditional publishers who produce subscription-based journals can provide open access. In an open access publishing, the end user is not charged to access Journal articles, instead, various funding strategies such as direct author fees, institutional membership, author’s employer, research funder are used to cover the costs for publication and many Journals will waive the fee in cases of financial hardship or for authors in less-

developed countries. It is also possible to access open access journal articles indirectly by using search engines such as Google or Google scholar. Benefits of open access journals (Gold Open Access) include the following:

- i Free access to information
- ii Increased research impact
- iii Possible solution to the so-called “serial crisis or Journal affordability problem.

Okoye and Ejikeme (2011) identify the benefits of using open access Journals as follows:

- i Publications are made free for authors
- ii It enhances an increase on citation to published scholarly work.
- iii Articles can be accessed online free of charge
- iv It provides free online access to the literature that is very important for one’s research.
- v It helps in career development
- vi It provides high quality scholarly work.

Self–archiving, also referred as “Green Road” to open access is making articles freely available in digital form on the internet by authors (Budapest Open Access Initiative 2002). The following are the three ways of self–archiving on the internet

- i Authors personal websites
- ii Disciplinary (research–specific) repositories
- iii Institutional repositories.

The Registry of Open Access Journals Repositories (ROAR) and the Directory of Open Access Repositories (DOAR) provide the list of open access compliant archives from disciplinary and institutional archives world wide. As the case with open access Journals articles from ROAR or DOAR may be accessed through direct search of respective repositories/directories or indirectly using other search engine. The intended audience of research articles is usually other researchers. Open access helps researchers as readers by opening up access to articles that their libraries do not subscribe to. Open access journal according to Wikipedia help users especially from developing countries that their institutions find it difficult to pay for subscriptions required to access the most recently published journals. All researchers benefit from open access as no library can afford to subscribe to every scientific or related journal. Open access extends the reach of research beyond its immediate academic circle. Examples are: According to Suber (2004).

Authors: OA has given them a world Wide audience, larger than subscribed-based Journals and also has increased the prestige, visibility and impact of their work.

Readers: OA gives its readers a barrier free access to the literature they need for their research. With open access readers do not need to wait for the budget of their library. With OA readers’ convenience are reached and retrieval power are increased.

Libraries: It solves the pricing crisis for scholarly Journals. OA serves library's interests in other indirect ways, too. Librarians want to help users find the information they need, regardless of the budget enforced limits on the library own collection. Librarians will want to help institution increase their audience and impact and thereby help to raise their institutions research profile. Universities: OA increases the visibility of their faculty and institution, reduces their expenses for Journals and advances their mission to share knowledge Journals and publishers: Open access makes their articles more visible discoverable retrievable and important. With Open access Journals use this superior visibility to attract submissions and advertising, including readers and citations.

Funding Agencies: Open access enables researches that have been funded by these agencies to have a return on their investment, by making the results more widely available, more discoverable, more retrievable and more useful. OA serves public funding agencies by providing public access to the results of publicly funded research. These funding agencies through OA have the greatest possible research impact.

Governments: As funders of research, governments benefit from OA in all the ways that funding agencies do. Open access promotes democracy by sharing government information as rapidly and widely as possible.

Citizens: OA gives access to peer reviewed research (most of which are not available in libraries) and they have access to the research, for which they have already paid through their taxes. It indirectly helps researchers, physicians, manufacturers, technologists and others have access to other researches for their own benefit.

Libraries and librarians: Many Librarians have been vocal and active advocates of open access. These librarians believe that open access promises to remove both the price barriers and the permission barriers that undermine library efforts to provide access to journal literature as well as helping alleviate the serials crisis.

In October 2003, the Berlin Declaration on Open Access widened the discussion to include the humanities. Bailey (2006) describes that self archiving and open access journals are the two complementary strategies that can be adopted to achieve open access to scholarly Journal literature open access Journals do not charge subscription or access fees but explore other methods for covering their expenses. According to BOAI (2001) open access have the following characteristics

- a. They are scholarly
- b. They utilize quality control mechanisms like those of conventional journals.
- c. They are digital
- d. They are freely available
- e. They may allow authors to retain their copyrights and
- f. They may use creative common or similar licenses. Those who do not read scholarly articles benefit indirectly from open access. For example, patients

benefit when their doctors and other health care professionals have access to the latest research. Open access speeds research progress, productivity, and knowledge translation.

In making information available to the user Open Access is faster and often immediate and more suitable for high paced research.

Challenges to Open Access Publishing and Development

Open access have got many advantages yet there are constraint that has made the adoption of open access very impossible. Okoye (2011) states that many authors are hesitant to leave established publishers and move to financially unstable OA journals; traditional publishers may try to retain their dominance by continuing to discredit the OA movement by creating new OA products. In developing countries lack of skills to navigate the internet, ignorance of open access, journals facility, unstable power supply and unavailability of internet could be constraints to the use of open –access. Gbaje (2010) indicates that the following reasons are part of the challenges for not adopting electronic publishing.

- i Lack of ICT Infrastructure and skilled personnel to host maintain their online facilities
- ii Lack of interest in electronic and web publishing
- iii Lack of fund to pay for web hosting and maintain a website for the journal
- iv Concern about copyright and plagiarism.
Also, in his view, Ochogwu (2012) lists the following as constituting hindrances to the open access concept:
- v Poor quality of many publications
- vi Ineffective channels of communicating published materials
- vii High cost of published materials hence the call for open access.
- viii Problems from the user community which include, lack of awareness of their information needs, Lack of knowledge of the information systems set up in the society to meet their information needs inadequate skills to navigate the internet.
- ix High level of information illiteracy. Lack of knowledge of the existence of open access journals on the internet
- x High cost of the textbooks and journal subscriptions especially online publication.
- xi Poor Bibliographic access to information resources
- xii Full texts of some open access Journals are not downloadable.

Another challenge is the redirection of money by major funding agencies from the direct support of research to the support of publication. Moller (2004) states that despite many opportunities that present themselves many developing nations are yet to utilize the privilege offered by these resources to internationalize

their research sources. Irrespective of the fact that Open Access offers free access to information, there need to be some funding to take care of internet subscriptions, designing of tools, management and new technology.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is important to realize that with Open Access, Publications are more quickly accessible. Open Access can reduce publication delays and obstacles which have led many research fields to traditions of wide spread preprint access. According to the paper free online access to the literature required for research is a major advantage of using open access Journals. Non-availability of internet facilities and high level of information illiteracy as well as lack of funds are major constraints of Open Access Scholarly Publications. More awareness programmes on open access scholarly publications and its benefits must be enhanced.

In view of the discussion, the following recommendations are being made, for the way forward of open access and scholarly publishing.

- i. Organizations, should encourage their personnel to use more Open Access Journals in updating themselves with relevant contemporary information.
- ii. Provision of appropriate mechanism and infrastructure for training and exploration of knowledge (for example, seminar and workshops) should be organized both for editors-in-chief and for the scholarly Research Community.
- iii. Appropriate agencies should double efforts and maintain a constant power supply.
- iv. Efforts should be geared towards inculcating the awareness of the concepts techniques, technologies and benefits of open access in scholarly communities
- v. There should be provision of funds for open access movement by the federal and State governments
- vi. Scholarly Research Communities should develop and encourage open access strategies such as institutional repositories, open access archives among others.
- vii. Internet connectivity should be improved in the concerned communities, with the principal aim of enhancing online access to material resources by removing price barriers and permission barriers.
- viii. Scholarly research communities and their management should develop enabling infrastructure and formulate policies that would encourage mandatory deposit of scholarly works in open access archives.
- ix. Authors, writers, scholars and scientists should be encouraged to publish at open access journals.
- x. There is the need to aggressively embrace Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by all information communities.

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