Open access – compliance, freedom and responsibility

Stephen Curry | Professor of Structural Biology | Imperial College London | Pasteur4OA Meeting | 17 May 2016
Open access – a good fit to academic culture but there are tensions

technological change
cultural change (societal, academic)
political forces (i.e. economics, but also govt transparency...)

http://www.fameimages.com/hm-berners-lee-olympics
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[Image of Olympic stadium with 'This is for everyone!' sign]

**Academic freedom vs responsibility**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*Academic freedom* is the belief that the freedom of inquiry by faculty members is essential to the mission of the academy as well as the principles of *academia*, and that scholars should have freedom to teach or communicate ideas or facts (including those that are inconvenient to external political groups or to authorities) without being targeted for repression, job loss, or imprisonment.
Researchers are focused on research...
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Scholarly-Communication Reform: Why Is it So Hard to Talk About, and Where are the Authors?

POSTED BY RICK ANDERSON - MAY 16, 2016 - 11 COMMENTS

Readers of the Scholarly Kitchen (or of any number of professional listservs, magazines, journals, etc.) may have noticed that questions about scholarly-communication reform tend to be, shall we say, vexed and controversial. Having participated in these conversations for 20 or so years now, and having recently gotten home from a conference that dealt specifically with such questions, I’ve been thinking a lot about why feelings run so high when we talk about them. I think some of the reasons would include the following:

1. They are tied up in troublesome questions of right and wrong. When Person A speaks of the public’s right to have access to scholarly products that were created on the public’s dime, he’s invoking a moral principle: that charging for access to such products...
Researchers are focused on research...
Researchers are sympathetic but compliance and costs are issues
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“There has been some concern raised by research funders about the quality of service received from publishers in return for Gold OA charges... These problems are particularly prevalent amongst publishers offering a hybrid OA option.”
Can we expose academics to cost-benefit analyses?

Nature Communications - $5200
Cell Press - $5000
Science Advances (w. CC-BY) - $4600
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Do lower APCs threaten the quality of the published paper?

https://blog.frontiersin.org/2015/12/21/4782/
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Rejection rates for a sample of 570 journals with impact factors

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Do lower APCs threaten the quality of the published paper?

Can openness (e.g. citation distributions) change behaviour?
HEFCE: linking open access to the REF was genius, but...

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“the HEFCE policy is problematic — because the REF process has little or nothing to do with rewards, but a great deal to do with sanctions and punishment. As such, the HEFCE policy could turn researchers away from open access rather than towards it.

...the principles inherent to the OA movement are those of sharing and egalitarianism, not elitism and sanctions...”
Poynder’s critique of HEFCE open access policy – and rebuttal

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Access
Pre-prints (for speed)
Open peer review
Largest possible audience (sharing & scrutiny)
Don’t forget the carrots – benefits of open access

Peer review, preprints and the speed of science

Peer review is often claimed to be the guarantee of the trustworthiness of scientific papers, but it is a troubled process. Preprints offer a way out.

A few weeks ago my collaborators and I submitted our latest paper to a scientific journal. We have been investigating how nonviruses subvert the molecular machinery of infected cells and have some interesting results. If it passes peer review, our paper could be published in three or four months’ time. If it’s rejected, we may have to re-work the manuscript before trying our luck with another journal. That will delay publication even further - it’s not unheard of for papers to take a year or more to get out of the lab and into the world, even in the digital age.

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Peer review, preprints and the speed of science

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Keep authors in the picture

Rewards for good behaviour
Don’t forget the carrots – benefits of open access

Tell researchers about:
New (non-traditional) audiences & scientists

Communication + Participation = Public Trust
Thank you

@Stephen_Curry
s.curry@imperial.ac.uk