

Norway is opening up to Open Access

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During the last few years we have seen in Norway a steadily growing interest in the new scientific communication strategies epitomized by the Open Access (OA) movement. As we abundantly witness in gardens at springtime, growth invariably starts from the ground upwards, and the same has for the last few years been the case as regards the growth of the OA movement in Norway. At this time, however, we are happy to see that the delicate OA plant is also getting attention from the owners of the garden. This, we hope, will in due course lead to a feedback of fertilizing stimuli that will enable the OA plant to grow into full bloom.

In my short article I will first briefly mention the major, current OA activities at the institutional level in Norway. Then I will point out how this work has lately been translated into declarations in favour of OA on the part of research policy bodies on national level and discuss at some length what this interest may hopefully lead to in the future.

Of the six Norwegian universities (two of which were given university status within the last year) four have at this time established institutional repositories or are in the process of doing so (University of Tromsø).

The University of Oslo has developed its own system, DUO, resulting from a collaboration between the central IT department and the library (<http://www.duo.uio.no/>) The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim has opted for the Swedish system DIVA, developed by the University of Uppsala. (<http://www.ub.ntnu.no/prosjekt/dravh/>). At the University of Bergen DSpace has been chosen (<http://bora.uib.no/index.jsp>). The University of Tromsø is presently making strategic and technical plans for the introduction of university-wide services in the field of OA. There are also a series of initiatives in this field at the regional colleges of higher education. Here work is at present being concentrated on open access to master theses. It is interesting to notice that in Norway, like in most other countries, libraries have been the ones that have taken up the cudgels for OA and developed services in the field as a natural extension of their electronic services.

Together the universities and colleges have formed a joint OA development group. Two of the main aims are to develop and apply a standard set of metadata and get in place an OAI harvester for all Norwegian materials that are hosted in the repositories of the institutions. Members of the group take an active part in Scandinavian and Nordic cooperation in the field of OA.

As a result of the various OA activities on institutional level, there has also been a steadily growing awareness on national level of the problems and solutions in relation to OA. As a case in point, Universitets- og høyskolerådet (The Norwegian Board of Higher Education), which is the joint cooperative and policy body of all universities and colleges of higher education, issued a statement in January of this year called "Åpen tilgang til vitenskapelige artikler" (Open Access to Scientific Articles). In this statement the Board gives a succinct exposition of the malfunctions of the present scientific communication system and recommends its member institutions to:

- Launch advocacy actions in support of OA
- Cooperate on the establishment of national licences with OA journal publishers and provide money at institutional level for author payment of article publication
- Market the publishing opportunities at hand in the use of OA journals
- Establish institutional repositories and create cooperative schemes among institutions
- Adopt institutional policies that strongly recommend that all scientific articles produced at the institution be stored in the institutional archive of the institution
- Develop technical solutions for the seamless integration of the contents of institutional repositories in the joint Norwegian system for research documentation, FRIDA.

It seems that these guidelines are in close correspondence with the joint recommendation that emerged from the recent Berlin 3 meeting on OA held in Southampton on 28. Febr.-1. March 2005: " In order to implement the Berlin Declaration institutions should:

1. Implement a policy to require their researchers to deposit a copy of their published articles in an open access repository and
2. encourage their researchers to publish their research articles in open access journals where a suitable journal exists and provide the support to enable that to happen".

In March this year the Government issued its Report no. 20 to the Storting (Parliament) (2004-2005) called "Vilje til Forskning" (Commitment to Research).

In the chapter on science and society the government commits itself to strengthening the dissemination of research results to various user groups. The Government finds that OA journals and publication archives represent a positive development that will contribute to an increased level of communication and assimilation of research knowledge in society at large. Hence, the Government will ask the Ministry of Education and Research to look into ways of strengthening the electronic dissemination of results from publicly funded research as part of an action programme for modernizing public services, due this summer.

The recommendations from the two national bodies mentioned above have to be taken as clear indications that OA from this time onwards will be issues of debate and actions in Norway also. What will be the immediate effects of this new interest in research publication policy?

The Board, one could say, has in its statement gone as far as an advisory body possibly can go, also as it is operating more or less on the basis of consensus. Its recommendations are detailed and to the point and will doubtlessly be a stimulus for institutions that want to move towards OA.

However, it will clearly be up to the individual institutions to implement policies that make it a requirement (cf. the Berlin 3 recommendation above) that authors deposit all their scientific articles and other types of peer reviewed works in the institution's repository or other form of OA archive.

Today, there is ostensibly a great discrepancy between the capability of the technical systems for making research instantly mediated to users everywhere, and what has so far been achieved by the repositories based on the new technology.

It is deeply regrettable that today a majority of researchers fail to recognise their obligations to make their publicly funded research

as widely accessible as possible. In particular, it seems that established scholars with a high standing within the respective scholarly networks and invisible colleges, are often the most self-complacent and ignorant of the serious dysfunctions of the present money-driven mechanisms of the scientific publishing trade. A recent study by Key Perspectives, Ltd, UK on international researchers and OA makes it clear that today there is a widespread ignorance of the OA movement in the scholarly communities. See <http://www.eprints.org/berlin3/ppts/02-AlmaSwan.ppt>

In my view, there are a number of reasons why there is a good case for requiring the depositing of research articles in an institutional archive.

Here it must be underlined that by doing so, there is no intention of restricting the long-standing privilege of researchers to decide where and when an article is to be published and to erode the system of quality assurance/peer review, which is a *sine qua non* to research endeavours. The only thing the university asks for is a copy of the published item in the repository - and for the following two main reasons.

1. OA mechanisms offer the funding body (ministry/research council, charities etc) a complete, i.e. full text, accessible record of research. Today, it is at least in my country, taken for granted that the use of public money should be accounted for in a transparent manner. In this respect OA is a most suitable way to create accountability of research. By collecting all the research articles, the institution will also have access to a most valuable source for scientific evaluation purposes, for the professional marketing of the institution and for the description of its intellectual history.
2. Research can aptly be described as a never-ending activity where new research almost invariably builds on earlier research. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that research be communicated as widely as possible. It has, incidentally, already at this stage of OA history been demonstrated that OA articles are more extensively used and cited than toll-access articles. In the future we will see more clearly how OA may dramatically enhance the impact of research both within the research area itself and in society at large.

As demonstrated above, in its recent Report to Stortinget, the Government has barely been looking into the challenges and solutions contained in the OA movement. This is the time therefore, to actively engage the Ministry of Research in discussions and demonstrations of the merits, ways and means of OA. It is only the Ministry, that on behalf of the Government may mandate the institutions of higher education and the research council to put in place instruments with respect to their accountability duty, e.g. to mandate the depositing as already mentioned. It is to be hoped that Norway will be among the first to

adopt an official OA policy, and now is the time to fight for this goal.

It is here heartening to find that the statistics pertaining to the attitude of British researchers to mandatory depositing is positive: In the study mentioned above it turned out that 81% of the researchers asked would comply with an institutional policy of mandatory depositing, 13% would do so grudgingly, and 5% would resist such a policy. If it can be done in the UK, it can also be done in Norway.

For a long time there has been a despairing complacency in this field on the part of research institutions around Europe, but a massive change is now under way. This is being demonstrated by the growing list of institutions that have recently adopted a pro-active institutional OA policy. These institutions include a number of major prestigious research institutions in Europe, like The Max Planck-institutes in Germany, CERN in Switzerland and CNRS and INRIA in France. We also see that more and more universities declare an OA policy, both in Europe, Australia and the USA – and collectively so – as in Portugal.

The question of IF Open Access will be the norm, is now long overdue, the remaining question is simply: WHEN?

Norsk sammanfattning

Interessen stiger for OA i Norge

Som i andre vekstprosesser har OA-utviklingen i Norge skjedd nedenfra ved at entusiaster på universitetene (rettere sagt på universitetsbibliotekene) har tatt initiativ til løsninger som fremmer åpen tilgang til forskning. I dag finnes det publiseringsarkiver ved universitetene i Oslo, Bergen og Trondheim, og snart kommer Tromsø etter. Også flere av høgskolene har laget sine web-baserte formidlingsopplegg, for det meste for eksamensarbeider.

Det nye i løpet av det siste halvåret har vært at også faglige og politiske myndigheter på nasjonalt nivå har begynt å interessere seg for OA. I januar sendte Universitets- og høgskolerådet (UHR) en begrunnet anbefaling til alle sine medlemsinstitusjoner om å støtte OA og treffe konkrete tiltak for å fremme allmenn tilgang til institusjonens forskningsresultater.

Like før påske kom Stortingsmelding nr 20 for 2004/2005 kalt "Vilje til forskning", som er å se på som Regjeringens nye forskningsstrategi. Her understrekes bl.a. behovet for bedre tilgang til forskningsbasert kunnskap og den positive utviklingen som åpent tilgjengelige tidsskrifter og publiseringsarkiver representerer. Som ledd i Regjeringens handlingsplan for modernisering, som

fremlegges i sommer, vil det bli vurdert hvordan offentlig finansiert forskning kan gjøres tilgjengelig elektronisk.

Tiden er derfor nå inne til å klargjøre for de offentlige myndigheter det som skjer innen OA både i Norge og utlandet – og ikke minst – hvordan OA gir viktige løsninger på de problemer som dagens tradisjonelle systemer for vitenskapelig kommunikasjon skaper.

Det er gode grunner til at forskerne på de vitenskapelige institusjonene fra nå bør gi en kopi av sine artikler til sin institusjons publiseringsarkiv – og bare inngå publiseringsavtaler med utgivere som gjør dette mulig. Men vil så forskerne rette seg etter et slikt påbud fra institusjonens ledelse eller fra departementet?

En større undersøkelse fra Storbritannia om dette forholdet gir her grunn til optimisme: 74 % av de spurte ville etterkomme institusjonens påbud, 14% ville gjøre det motvillig, mens kun 4% ville motsette seg å formidle sin forskning også via det institusjonelle arkivet. Kan man få forskerne med seg i Storbritannia, må vi også kunne klare det i Norge!