

WE HAVE WON THE ARGUMENT ABOUT OPEN ACCESS – NOW WE HAVE TO BRING THINGS TOGETHER AND MAKE IT WORK!

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I am delighted to be here, so much energy, so many promising projects – for me it is one of these feel good conferences, where we despite all the problems and challenges we see ahead of us never the less can see significant progress and feel that what we are doing is important and basically good.

I had the opportunity to listen to John Willinsky Monday evening, and I learned a lot, among other things that power-point is out! So I will give that a go. So here is my note book, a pile of paper sheets! The title of my presentation might seem a bit bold. The first part of the title is inspired by a number of presentations by the former executive director of SPARC Europe, David Prosser – the latter is an attempt to give an indication as to what I think should be done now!

At this stage I would like to emphasize that I am standing here as a member of the Board of SPARC Europe. But if you don't like what you hear, blame me and not SPARC Europe.

Talking to the audience here at this conference I will not talk about the many important digitization projects that have been conducted and are under way. They make a very important contribution in making lots of works freely accessible to the public. I will neither go into discussion about Green open access. Subject based repositories and institutional repositories, parallel publishing and self-archiving etc. make as well very important contribution to access to research output, and libraries have been the driving force here (as well).

I will concentrate on Gold Open Access – primary publishing of scholarly works in an Open Access mode, without reader payments and with no embargo, with extensive usage rights etc. with an emphasis on peer reviewed open access journals.

I am aware that a lot of promising things are under way when it comes to peer-reviewed open access

monographs; in fact I am involved in the preparation of one such project

It might be good to look a little bit back in time now. It often gives you an opportunity to put things in perspective. Monday evening John went some 17 centuries back in time; I will only go some 17 years back.

I have my background in academic libraries and I remember very well the discussion that took place on e-mail from summer 1994 and nine months ahead and which eventually was published by Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Office of Scientific and Academic Publishing as a monograph with the title: Scholarly Journals at the Crossroads: A Subversive Proposal for Electronic Publishing.

Among the contributors were Stevan Harnad, Paul Ginsparg, Andrew Odlyzko, James O'Donnell and Ann Okerson.

The editors (Okerson & O'Donnell) wrote in their conclusion of the debate that "This is a book about hope and imagination in one corner of the emerging landscape of cyberspace. It embraces passionate discussion of an idea for taking to the Internet to revolutionize one piece of the world of publishing." It was definitely an eye opener for me. Electronic journals, scholarly skywriting, open peer review etc. A few years earlier Ginsparg and colleagues launched the HEP archive – ArXiv – which is still in operation and by the way – referring to another issue raised by John Monday evening - recently struggling with sustainability issues.

I am not pretending to write the history of open access, but here are some of the milestones in the journey that has brought us to where we are today – the list is incomplete and I probably missed important things, but anyway:

- 1993: BioLine launched,
- 1997: SPARC founded by ARL, SciELO launched,
- 1998: African Journals Online (AJOL) launched,
- 1999: Electronic Information for Libraries

¹ PKP: Public Knowledge Project, Simon Fraser University, Canada

- (EIFL) founded,
- 2000: BioMed Central publish first OA-article.
- 2001: PERI launched by INASP, Wikipedia launched, deadline for the open letter from Public Library of Science (PLoS).
- 2002: SPARC Europe founded, Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) launched by Open Society Institute (OSI), Creative Commons launched, OJS launched by PKP.
- 2003: DOAJ launched by Lund University Libraries (300 journals), Wellcome trust endorses open access, PLoS launches first OA-journal, the Berlin Declaration launched (a few hundred meters from where we are right now! – and as we all know a very important initiative where universities and research funders for the first time in numbers called for open access)
- 2004: CrossRef announced.
- 2005: Wellcome Trust implements open access mandate.
- 2006: European Research Council (ERC) issues a Statement on Open Access, PLoS launches PLoS ONE. The European University Association (EUA) releases Statement on Open Access. ERC issued guidelines that allows for payment for publication charges in OA-journals. The European Commission launch the Open Access pilot within the FP7.
- 2008: Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) founded,
- 2011: IFLA publish Statement on Open Access, Howard Hughes, Wellcome Trust and Max Planck announced plans to launch a mega OA journal

The balance so far:

There are some 10000 installations of OJS² and several thousand journals running on OJS and the majority of those are Open Access. The DOAJ counts more than 7000 OA journals and many in process. Hundreds of institutions have signed the Berlin Declaration and other similar declarations. Universities, university associations and research centers have issued policies that mandate open access. According to ROARMAP, the Registry of Open Access Repositories Mandatory Archiving Policies there is now 132 institutional OA mandates and 52 research funder mandates.

High level decision makers in governments, in supranational organizations like the European Commission are more and more explicitly demanding

and working for and supporting open access and increasingly Gold open access.

There has been many attempts to stigmatize open access publishing as poor quality publishing, that open access publishers publish rubbish, that business models based on article processing charges corrupts peer-review. There has been and still are attempts to blur the concept – free access, delayed open access, universal access etc.

But the times they are a ‘changing: here are a couple of quotes from the Annual letter to customers from Nature Publishing Group published a week ago: “‘Gold’ open access continues to gain acceptance as an attractive solution for authors, readers and publishers alike. Open access has been at the heart of NPG’s expansion for the last two years”.

We won the discussion, the argument about open access, no doubt about that.

What needs to be done now?

There is no doubt that sociologist would tell that what we accomplished so far is the results of a global social movement based on a bottom up approach, in collaboration with innovative scientists, developers and lately as well innovative commercial open access publishers. We have been lucky to have the support from significant developments in technology and innovative individuals. But like any other social movement there comes a time when things have to become a bit more organized and focused without losing momentum and creativity.

We have to bring things together, in order to really make it work, in order to really have lasting impact on the scholarly communication system and in order to be well prepared for the moment when we reach the tipping point.

First of all we must build on the collaborative efforts that have brought us to where we are today. For instance when it comes to open access journals I find it very important that the 4-digit number of “lonely” journals find a home by one of the aggregators or platform providers. There are a number of good examples of aggregation and consolidation – SciELO, BioLine, Redalyc and PKP of course – aggregation and consolidation adds significant value to the journals in terms of technical functionality and capacity, visibility and impact.

PKP and OASPA are doing a good job here, but more could and should be done.

As Eelco mentioned yesterday morning mega journals were the hot topic at the OASPA meeting last week. Following the impressive accomplishment of PLoS

² Open Journal System – developed by PKP

ONE the concept is now being copied by a number of established publishers. This could be considered a threat to the many open access journals published in many, many countries. But on the other hand it might as well be a good idea to consider that the core features of the mega journals – namely conveyor belt peer-review and production, broad scope and huge editorial boards – could be applied in certain disciplines. For instance a mega journal in agriculture or food science, which could integrate the many journals publishing extremely important research for local communities and regions around the world. This might even facilitate much more exchange between researchers that do not even know each other. That would be a different form of aggregation and consolidation. We need research in open access, we need to demonstrate the benefits of open access.

There is an abundance of examples of journals that have transitioned from a subscription based business model to open access, often triggered by the fact that the traditional publishers wanted to close the journal. Many of these journals have experienced a massive growth in visibility and downloads. We need research to communicate this. OASPA have decided to work on this one, but more needs to be done. In general we need additional metrics and indicators. Again lots of good work is already underway here. We probably need standards and consolidation here as well.

Not only must we challenge the regime of the journal impact factor – don't blame Garfield, don't blame Thomson Reuters. But using the Journal Impact Factor as the prime measure of impact of science, and in this case the impact of science on science itself is a very problematic thing as we all know. What we need is much more differentiated indicators and measures of impact that goes beyond measuring impact of science on science itself. We need measures that can inform about the impact of science on higher education, on human health and wealth, on societies and on equality, participation and democracy. But the worst thing about this regime is its devastating effects on research in developing countries and countries in transition. The push for researchers from those countries and continents to publish in high impact factor journals has decisive influence on the subject of their research and much more so is a big obstacle for open access publishing.

Therefore we need to support and foster sustainability for the services that are underway that can in a much more socially responsible way demonstrate the impact of science.

We need an overview in order to set our priorities and focus our efforts. There are an abundance of promising projects and initiatives out there. I do not think

anyone has the overview. This might be a research project in itself.

But it might be an idea to ask the brilliant brains in PKP, OASPA and SPARC and similar organizations to come together and create such an overview and come up with suggestions as to how we make the most of all the innovative skills and power we can see is at hand. We need sustainability.

There are organizations that work for the same cause as we do. These organizations need critical mass, they need membership support, they need funding in order to gain strength.

There are initiatives and service providers that constitute an emerging infrastructure for a new, more efficient, and transparent and open system of scholarly communication. These initiatives and services need as well critical mass, sustainability and support. University libraries have for a number of years now organized themselves in consortia to negotiate better deals with the publishers. I will not discuss the actual outcome of these activities, but these consortia have a tremendous turnover. Imagine, as Leslie Chan, associate director of BioLine has put it, imagine if these consortia were able to allocate equivalent to 1% of their turnover to support organizations and services that support the cause that the library directors of the consortium member institutions (that is the academic libraries), their vice-chancellors and their organizations, want to see become reality – namely open access. That would definitely make a hell of a difference.

We need to continue and focus our advocacy and lobbying. I mentioned earlier that high level decision makers are now embracing Open Access publishing – probably not because it is a good cause in itself, probably not because it has the potential of bridging the digital divide, but probably mainly because it has become obvious that innovation, industry and societies will only benefit from science if the texts, the objects and the corresponding research data are available, interlinked, mined and reusable in an open networked environment without barriers, or put otherwise the only way to unfold the potential of technology and innovation is to create the universe of science in an open and transparent environment without walls. Next thing for these decision makers now is to realize that this transition will not come to reality without costs, without investments, without author publication charges, without investments in infrastructure. All this gives me at least some hope that the combined efforts of the bottom up approach provided by us and our allies, the continued advocacy and lobbying by organizations like SPARC and others and the increasing call for Open Access and openness in science by research funders, governments and

supranational and global organizations will continue to push the case forward. Despite the efforts from those who still want to project the barriers, the walls.

Coming back to the beginning of my talk:

Remember SPARC was founded as an international alliance of academic and research libraries working to correct imbalances in the scholarly publishing system.

We are not there yet. But I am confident that we are coming closer.

And coming back to Ginsparg's HEP-eprint server:

Just a couple of days ago the lasting importance of this huge subject repository and the strong community behind it has once again demonstrated its

groundbreaking potential in that the SCOAP3 consortium now after 4 years of consortium building

have started its tendering process, which probably will lead to a transition of high impact and very expensive physics journals into fully open access journals and

with the condition that these journals should be unbundled from the big deals.

This is promising indeed. Coming back to the book I mentioned earlier: 17 years after we can definitely say that: Yes, Scholarly journals are really at the crossroads!!

In conclusion: We have been working on moving the scholarly communication system away from a culture of shareholders to the culture of sharing, collaboration and networking.

It is a privilege to have been able to contribute to this process.

Let's continue the good work.

Thank you for your attention

Lars Bjørnshauge



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