PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE? SOME REFLECTIONS ON MANDATE IMPLEMENTATION AND UPTAKE
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What expectations concerning uptake and compliance are realistic when you are implementing an open access mandate?

There are several recent studies that can provide useful information and comparative examples, but I believe, that one also needs a practical apprehension of the local level to be able to plan what resources and strategies that are adequate.

You will have to interpret and present the progress to your stakeholders: are we doing good or not-yet-good-enough? When can we expect to reach a tipping point and to see that the policy uptake gains momentum?

Not least there is a need to prepare yourself and your team for an assiduous work, where you many times will be moving two steps forward and one step back. I remember one colleague with several years' experience advocating open access, saying in a discussion that "open access isn't a suitable work if you don't have the patience". I can see that this is true to a large extent, and it is also clear, that patience alone won't be enough to achieve what we want (and our stakeholders expect us) to achieve.

I sometimes compare the open access work with my previous experience from implementing a university-wide process to register all the bibliographic references for the published research output. Of course, this also required resources to provide information and instructions to authors and administrators (as well as participation in discussions on why this was necessary and how we should do it in a way that didn't do injustice to different publishing habits etc).

It was still a rather straightforward process, where we had a clear goal within reach when all the stakeholders got on the (same) train.

I find it useful to compare this process with the work to promote and implement an open access mandate policy. There are of course similarities, but also quite another kind of dynamics in the questions involved in open access. One of the reasons for this is, I believe, intrinsic to the way mandates/policies are being formulated. They can contain requirements as well as recommendations and also, I would say, even prayers: You shall deposit your manuscript in the repository; You are recommended to do your original publishing in an open access journal, and please, Dear Researcher, don't sign away your copyright.

Of course it is possible to promote and work with all these questions, but doing it at the same time and still being able to get a focused communication to the research community is definitely a challenge. However, the main reason for the dynamics in this process is that not all of the players in the field are playing the same game. While universities, researchers, libraries and funders are playing one game according to one set of rules, the publishers are playing another game.

I think it would have been easy (or at least more comprehensible from a pedagogical point of view) if we were just opposite teams, but that is clearly not the case. Instead it can now sometimes look like we are aiming at the same goal, but in reality it is different games being played out on the one and same field. And, as can be observed from any schoolyard during a break, this leads to a wide array of dynamic interactions.

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