

WHAT IT TAKES FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED TO FACILITATE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF OPEN ACCESS TO UNFOLD!

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SPARC Europe was founded in 2002 out of LIBER, the Association of European Research Libraries. SPARC Europe is a sister organization – the smaller sister – to SPARC developed in U.S. 1997 by the Association of Research Libraries. We are advocating change and working to correct imbalances in the scholarly publishing system for the benefit of research and society. We are primarily funded by university libraries.

I am sorry to inform you, that I have no slides for you, my talk is deliberately not polished, couldn't manage with the short notice – if you do not agree with what I am saying do not blame SPARC Europe & SPARC for that matter, blame me and my lack of patience!

It is great to be here, it is good to be able to participate in our discussions as to how we can continue the good work that has taken place during at least the last decade or so, where we have advocated for and worked for open access and the open agenda. As indicated in the introduction my background is primarily from managing academic libraries in Denmark & Sweden for more or less two decades now and from the early days in various ways involved in promoting open access and developing services supporting open access.

My talk is designed to be somewhat provocative and maybe controversial because I think it is about time now to send strong messages to those stakeholders, who can facilitate change in the scholarly communication and publishing system. And I actually think, given the work we have done and the progress we have made so far can have the confidence to send strong messages.

At this important conference we will hear a lot of promising projects and initiatives and as well about the obstacles we have to overcome in order to serve our communities and societies the best way possible.

On my way to Stellenbosch during the 11 hour flight from Munich I used the entertainment program provided by Lufthansa, and suddenly this great piece of music entered my ears: All along the watchtower, performed by Jimi Hendrix, and at this stage I will quote Bob Dylan's lyrics: "There's too much confusion"

To cut through all the confusion:

Ladies and gentlemen it has become more and more obvious for more and more stakeholders that the still dominant system of scholarly communication and publishing based on subscription barriers and reuse restrictions does not work. It simply does not adequately serve research, higher education, societies and the people.

I mentioned in the introduction that SPARC advocate change and work to correct imbalances in the current system. For my part I think I have reached the point where this is an understatement. What we should aim at is to radically change the system of scholarly communication and publishing. We want a new system! A system that serves research, higher education, our societies and our fellow citizens.

But how come we have such an inefficient system to communicate research? How come that we despite all kinds of technological advances still have a system that essentially still is in the print age?

If we look at research in general, research is funded via grants from research funders, universities (via government funding), international organizations etc. In short: research is funded, paid for upfront – in other words: research is **subsidized directly**.

The dissemination of the output of research – publications – on the contrary is **not funded upfront**.

Instead, scholarly publishing has been **outsourced** --- at first, to scholarly societies and later on to corporate companies, who are doing the publishing and sending the bill to (academic) libraries, which in turn are funded by universities as an overhead – even on grants from funders.

Outsourcing is not a bad thing in itself, as long as those who are doing the outsourcing are able to specifically determine what they expect from the service provider, and as long as it happens in the context of a competitive market.

But that is not the case. There is no competition. We cannot talk about a market for scholarly publishing, because essential features of a free market are absent.

So here we are.

Research funders, universities and governments and the research community have (until recently at least) happily outsourced the dissemination of research output and the result is a system that is dysfunctional and outdated.

Now, there is a tendency to blame the commercial publishers. But in reality, they are just doing what any for-profit company should do -- Maximizing their income and pleasing the shareholders. They just exploit the conditions offered to them as any savvy business would.

The important stakeholders in the scholarly communication and publishing system have allowed them to fine tune a system, that is way too expensive and counterproductive and the same stakeholders are still to a large extent supporting mechanisms that strengthen the commercial publishers and service provider's grip on the scholarly publishing system.

What I refer to here specifically is the Journal Impact Factor. I will not go in depth with this, because Tom Olijhoek will fire us up about this later this afternoon. But I will just say that the research community cannot any longer defend a position and continue to say that in the absence of other and better measures we will stick to that one. JIF has become the symbol of an outdated system, that has – and I am sure we will hear more about that -- devastating effects on research policy and research priorities around the globe.

The lack of attention from all the stakeholders, who contribute to the system and who should have the responsibility to manage not only research, but as well the dissemination of research outputs and their application to the benefit of research itself, societies and the people has facilitated the mess we are in today. I said earlier that we want to get rid of this system. Luckily there are a growing number of the stakeholders who want the same to happen. We will help them!

Earlier this year we celebrated the 10 years anniversary of the Budapest Open Access Initiative, where the concepts of open access were coined. We are here today at the 10th conference following the Berlin Declaration of Open Access and declarations keep coming. Hundreds of universities, research institutions, associations of universities and research institutions, research funders and even governments have signed those declarations. This is great of course,

but as we know not enough.

A slowly increasing number of those have moved beyond signatures and have endorsed open access policies and mandates. This is great as well, but still not enough. We need more policies and mandates on publications and research data, we need stronger mandates and we desperately need follow up on compliance with mandates.

What we need is the research community - especially the decision makers in research funding organizations, universities and the governments behind them-- to reclaim responsibility for research outputs, how these are managed, disseminated and curated. This is a strong message that I will encourage us to send today: **Reclaim the responsibility for research outputs and how these are managed, disseminated, curated and measured!**

Despite the increasing momentum for open access to research publications and research data, there is still a long way to go.

From my experience gained from working in universities it is obvious that universities are only beginning to care about their intellectual output. The positive developments in and around institutional repositories is evidence for an increasing ambition to be able to keep an institutional record of outputs, but as we know there are still lots of problems in terms of filling the repositories with content. Even worse is the state of affairs when it comes to management and curation of research data. It seems that many universities are more occupied with getting grants than being accountable for the output of the organization.

Research funders have only recently begun getting an overview of the output of research results facilitated by their grants. One of the curious things here is that one of the problems is the fact that they are not allowed to access the publications resulting from the research they had funded! Laugh or cry, whatever you prefer.

Having worked in academic libraries for 30 years now it is obvious that libraries are part of the picture and part of the problem. I repeat, that I do not blame the publishers, but I think all the other stakeholders including libraries bear a collective responsibility for creating the conditions that enables publishers to do business the way they do.

Just as it is the case of research funding the conditions of libraries are very diverse from continent to continent, and to a large extent libraries faces different problems, depending on where you are. Indeed the libraries have played a major role in the origin of the open access movement. The open access movement was triggered by two factors: The first one

the potential of technologies and the second one the serials crisis. Early adopters (researchers) started using technologies for better and faster dissemination of research results (Arxiv etc.). Libraries were suffering from skyrocketing subscription prices for prestigious journals. So one of the primary objectives was to solve the problem of access to journals articles behind paywalls. Therefore the focus has been on depositing versions of articles in Institutional Repositories and developing and supporting new business models for open access publishing.

So based on that you can say that the origins of the OA-movement has been focused on solving access problems in the North, access problems that have been a problem for the South in many decades. I am sure that we will hear more about the need to reinvent the concepts of open access in order not only to solve problems in the North.

Nevertheless librarians and libraries want to contribute to a changed system, but the libraries (in the North) are stuck in the big deals. As long as researchers expect to have access to all the content from the big publishers and as long as promotion and merit systems are based on citation counts and the regime of JIF no library director will cancel the big deals with the Elseviers and the Wileys, the one who do that will be a head shorter the day after. **Unless** the library director and the library consortia are supported by their bosses, the university managers and research funders. As long as there is a continuous inflow of articles into the journals of the big publishers this situation will continue.

Librarians and libraries can contribute – and have already contributed to the transition to a better system. Libraries have traditionally been most occupied with the **import** of information to their institution, the researchers and students.

But libraries have been the driving force in setting up and operating the institutional repositories, and with the increasing attention from the research management officers within the university there is an increasing understanding that the librarians have significant skills in terms of managing the **export** of research outputs from the universities.

Libraries are trying the best they can to contribute in these new areas, but again as long as they are forced to continue with negotiating the big deals, doing all the back office work, authentication etc – in fact denying outside users from access to public funded research, which is very far from the core values of librarians – as long as this continues only fractions of the potential librarians can offer in terms of changing the system will unfold.

So, bearing in mind that the conditions of libraries are very, very diverse librarians have one thing in common. They can apply their skills in new areas, where they are highly needed, not only in support to research management but as well as we increasingly see is the case in open access publishing and in curation and dissemination of many other kinds of research output.

So far I have mentioned a number of the important stakeholders in scholarly communication and publishing: Research funders and their associations, universities and their organizations, libraries and publishers. What about the researchers, the authors.

Well: It is indeed great to see that many researchers are embracing open access not only because it is a good thing, but as well because they can see the benefits of exposing their content faster and to a broader audience. But again: we have a long way to go before this will become the default.

Experiences regarding author self---deposit are not the most promising. In the context of institutional repositories I personally do not think we can rely too much on researchers doing additional work here, unless they are told to in capital letters and with indications that their work will not count before it is in the repositories and in the open. That is essentially stronger mandates.

More important but less operational --- I am afraid – is a necessary shift in culture and mindset. The culture of sharing needs to be promoted if not enforced: It should tell that it is simply bad style to put your work behind pay walls, and those who do publish in the open should of course be rewarded.

So what do we do with all this?

Another quote from Bob Dylan: “There must be some way out of here”

First of all: we have made significant progress. Open access is in the mainstream now and is inevitable. But there are big battles to be won.

One very important thing is that the communication lines are open. All the important stakeholders are discussing the need for open access, open research data, open science and openness.

High level decision makers are now embracing open access. In the European context for instance the decision makers do not embrace open access because it is a good cause, which it is, they do not embrace open access because it has the potential of bridging the digital divide, but mainly because it has become

obvious that science will only benefit itself and societies if the texts, the objects and the corresponding research data are available, interlinked, mined and reusable in an open networked environment without barriers, without walls, 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.

OK, then, how do we do that, what does it take:

As indicated earlier: Research funders, universities and the governments behind them **must reclaim the responsibility** for the dissemination of research outputs. They must assist libraries to enable them to come out of the deadlock of the big deals, thus freeing resources to facilitate a system transition.

No single research funder or university can do that. This must be done in **collaboration**. This requires brand new organizational efforts. Research funders, universities, their associations and the libraries must come together and outline bold action plans to accomplish what they all say they want to see become reality. And this accounts not only for research publications and research data, but as well for creating an infrastructure for open access.

And it must happen quickly. We have to increase the speed. And I know we have already entered the sphere of politics where middle of the road and compromise is the easiest way to make things work.

But I must say that I am afraid that we in our eager to monitor progress are too much ready to accept compromises or soft solutions. We definitely must avoid repeating the mistakes that we are trying to repair now, namely to develop a new system which will have the same basic problems as the one we are trying to eliminate: lack of transparency, catering for monopolies and no competition.

The fact that the commercial publishers after 10 years of laughing at us, ridiculing us, later yelling at us are now as well embracing open access makes me a bit nervous.

We must have the self-confidence now after all the work we have done to put forward a very strong message to the decision makers, that if they listen to the commercial publishers they are in fact sacrificing innovation, progress, the health and wealth of their communities and all sectors of society in protecting an industry which has not left the print age and has proven inefficient in terms of serving science and society. We do not want a new open access big deal!

BTW: apart from abandoning the JIF this might as well mean that we will have to abandon the concept of

the journal, which is a print age concept as well. The good news is that this is beginning to happen.

In the print age a journal could publish 15 articles every 3 months and thus had to have gatekeepers (editorial boards) to shift what they decided was the best from the worst, is probably not needed anymore, at least not in the same sense. NB: I am not advocating for abandoning peer review, I am more questioning whether editorial boards always have been the best judges.

With the increasing interdisciplinarity of research the traditional publishing in narrow silos becomes more and more obsolete.

With the advent of megajournals and peer review based on soundness of methodologies, data management etc. it makes much more sense to let researchers, research groups and those who apply the research findings in solving problems judge whether the research deserves recognition.

Moving beyond the journal and thus the brands that facilitates the non---competition might be the thing that could rock the boat and as well pave the way for other kinds of research output that is large hidden and invisible today.

And talking about not going too much into compromises that will repeat failures of the past, I have a minor request to the real, dedicated Open Access publishers: please stop flashing your journal impact factors. We do not want to play that game. Let's focus on getting the alternative metrics rolling!

Things are moving in the right direction, but we have to take a global view on things. Global in terms of global and global in terms of all aspects of scholarly communication and publishing.

I warmly welcome the newly created Global Research Council and I hope it in collaboration with other stakeholders, universities and their libraries can create and implement the promised action plan for open access in the course of 2013. Together we will reclaim our responsibilities for the dissemination of the outputs of research! And we will invite the publishers, but this time the research community will decide the rules of the game!

Final quote from Bob Dylan: "So let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late".

On this fine day the 7th of November: Let's more forward, fast – forward. That's it.

Thank you for listening. *Lars Bjørnshauge*



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