

Open Access to Research Publications

Open access

'Open access' represents a conscious decision by the League of European Research Universities to investigate new models for scholarly communication and the dissemination of research outputs emanating from researchers.

Routes to open access

There are two basic routes: 'gold' and 'green'. The gold route is concerned with publication in open access journals, while the green route looks to the deposit of materials in institutional or subject-based repositories. The adoption of either or both routes could lead to a transformation in the means of disseminating research.

The benefits of open access

Authors of academic works enjoy increased visibility, usage and impact for their research outputs. Because Google and other web search engines index open access repositories, authors' work is easily found and, being open access, can be retrieved for use by everyone. This visibility and usage are new, since previously the only way to see academic work was by paying for subscriptions to journals or by paying a fee to view an article on the publisher's website.

Having university research open and showcased to the world potentially boosts a university's profile and enables the uptake and use of the fruits of research effort funded for the benefit of society. The free diffusion of knowledge into society in general from Europe's universities aids the building of a

knowledge economy and the raising of scientific and cultural literacy.

There are potential economic benefits too. Economic modelling by the Australian economist, Professor John Houghton of Victoria University, Melbourne, has shown that in all the countries modelled so far, open access works out as the most cost-effective option for disseminating research. The research process is streamlined and there are potential savings in the workflow of research as a whole.

Green route towards open access

The green route has been defined as the route where copies of peer-reviewed research outputs are made freely available on the web, using an open access repository, alongside any formal published versions.

In this model research is deposited into the institutional repository, subject to copyright permissions. Many journal publishers do allow deposition after embargo periods (e.g. 12 months) and these embargo periods are maintained to ensure the continued value of subscriptions and therefore ensure sustainable business models for commercially published journals. Many book publishers do not allow deposition (of the full work) into institutional repositories. Advocates of open access would wish to keep embargo periods as short as possible.

Gold route

The gold route has been defined as journal publishing operating with a business model not based on subscription, but rather on either publication charges (where the author

or an organisation on behalf of the author funds the publishing costs) or on subsidy. Gold open access journals do not charge readers and grant extensive usage rights in accordance with the authoritative definition of the Budapest Open access Initiative.¹

There are two types of journal under which authors can adopt gold open access: full open access journals and hybrid (or optional) journals. Whilst gold open access has been shown to increase usage, there is no decisive evidence to date that it increases citations. Many full open access journals are young journals and so may not have the same profile or impact factor of their more traditional/ established competitors, but this does not reflect their future influence.

LERU and/or other universities may also consider allocating funds to pay for publication charges in those open access journals which charge for submissions and publication, where funding is not provided by the research funder.

Research funders

Increasingly, research funders are developing their own strategies and requirements for the dissemination of funded research outputs. National/regional examples of guidance will help to shape work at an institutional level.

University strategies

At an early stage, LERU universities can embed their open access efforts into pan-university strategies. This is important because work on open access needs to be fully aligned with an institution's mission.

Institutional strategies can be aligned with the new developments:

- Research/teaching and learning
- Copyright/Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

¹See <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/boai-10-recommendations> for an update on the BOAI.

- Publications

Institutional mandates

In many ways, a real sign of success at an institutional level will be for researchers to agree an institutional mandate where, copyright permissions allowing, all research outputs from the institution are deposited in open access in the institutional repository. Such a step is a bold one and will need explicit support from the academy. Commonly, such a policy is agreed by an academic senate.

Copyright

LERU and/or other universities are able to take a proactive stance on copyright issues, safe in the knowledge that the vast majority of commercial journals allow some form of archiving of an author's own research outputs. Where assignment of copyright is required by a publisher as a condition of publication, researchers should instead consider the use of a 'licence to publish', where copyright is retained by the author and a licence to publish granted to the publisher by the author. It is the authors' responsibility to check the policies of the journals they are publishing with, but mechanisms to check they are abiding by the licence they have published should be in place.

LERU and the EU

LERU's position is in line with the EC's recommendations on access to and preservation of scientific information.² The [LERU Roadmap Towards Open Access](#) gives fuller details of open access developments and implementations in LERU institutions.³ LERU strongly advocates that the Horizon 2020 programme adopt the position outlined in this guidance paper.

² See http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/recommendation-access-and-preservation-scientific-information_en.pdf.

³ See http://www.leru.org/files/publications/LERU_AP8_Open_Access.pdf.