

Open Access and Publishing

-Background-

The Internet and related digital technologies are creating opportunities for new models of scholarly communication and publishing. The **Open Access** movement offers a model of scholarly communication that embraces technology's potential to make scholarship available worldwide at minimal cost to readers..

Open access is "free availability and unrestricted use" (PLOS <http://www.plos.org/>). It is an access method rather than a business plan. Open access is not free to produce, but scholarship can be made free to readers through a variety of economic support models.

Open Access maximizes potential readership and impact by removing **economic** (no subscription or access fees), **technical** (no DRM), and **legal** (minimal restrictions on reuse and redistribution) barriers to access and use of scholarship.

Scholarly authors can benefit from expanded dissemination of their work. Beyond the convenience and speed of more open scholarly exchange, so vital to the progress of scholarship, a growing body of [evidence](#) indicates that articles that are freely available on the Internet have greater impact.

Two paths to Open Access

Open-access journals - whose costs are covered through publication fees, sponsorships, in-kind contributions, or other sources of support - are emerging as an alternative to the traditional subscription model.

- Open access and economically priced journals recognize and preserve the important role of peer review in scholarly communication, while breaking down or lowering access barriers.
- The Directory of Open Access Journals <<http://www.doaj.org/>> lists more than 2900 quality-controlled open-access journals in a wide range of subject areas, and is growing at the rate of more than 1 new open-access journal per day.

Online *open archives* hosted by universities and governments provide free access to articles, supplementary materials, supporting data, working papers, pre-prints, images, and more.

- KU ScholarWorks is an example of an institutional repository: <http://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/>.
- Open archives extend the options for disseminating scholarly work and serving as complements to traditional journals. For example, physics papers often will first appear in preliminary form for community feedback in the arXiv.org physics repository. Subsequently, they appear in final form in a peer-reviewed journal and in arXiv.org. Despite the free availability on arXiv.org, physics journals have continued to flourish.
- The Directory of Open Access Repositories lists over 1,000 such repositories worldwide: <<http://www.openoar.org/>>
- Open archives make metadata available in a standardized format (OAI-PMH) and are indexed by Google, Google Scholar, OAIster, and other search engines, allowing readers to find material without having to go directly to each repository.

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Bringing down the barriers

With all the benefits of open sharing of research, why isn't scholarly publishing changing more rapidly? There are a number of factors:

- *Economies extrinsic to scholarship* have grown up around the sale (and now *lease*, in the digital context) of journals and monographs. Change has sometimes been hampered by efforts to protect publishing revenues and profits.
- Related to this is the *need perceived by many publishers* to rigorously defend their intellectual property (the texts provided to them by scholarly authors, together with their editing and formatting) in the digital environment through licensing restrictions. And new technical protection schemes on the horizon could make matters worse yet for information users.
- The *culture of academe*, with its “prestige economy,” is also a factor. Career advancement depends on publishing in leading, well-established journals — journals that may fear they have little to gain from change. Some promotion and tenure committees may not yet recognize the value of new forms of digital scholarship.

Open Access: Quick Stats, Fast Facts:

How much open access is there already?

- The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) lists over 2,900 titles, and is growing at a rate of more than one title per calendar day, <http://www.doaj.org>
- An OAIster search encompasses more than 12 million records in over 800 repositories, <http://www.oaister.org/>.
- Scientific Commons includes more than 16 million publications from over 6 million authors in over 800 repositories, <http://www.scientificcommons.org/>.

(from: Heather Morrison. The Imaginary Journal of Poetic Economics
<http://poeticeconomics.blogspot.com/> August 18, 2007)

For more information about KU ScholarWorks and publishing options at KU, please contact Brian Rosenblum at brianlee@ku.edu.

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