

Open access: the future of academic publishing?

JOURNAL PUBLISHING BEGAN IN THE LATE 17TH century, when the Royal Society and the Académie de France both began publishing the proceedings of their regular members' meetings, to serve as a physical record of what went on in the meetings and also to communicate the same to members who were unable to attend. Both publications were intended as profit-making enterprises. This traditional model of publishing academic research has served well for over 300 years. With the advent of online information-transfer, however, the potential for electronic publishing and data harvesting has increased dramatically. In parallel with this technological development, the amount of research itself has increased exponentially, coupled with the desire for wider dissemination of research results. From this scenario, Open Access has arisen.

In 2001, an early formal definition of Open Access resulted from the Budapest Open Access Initiative,¹ which outlined the goal and ways to achieve it. An Open Access publication² is one that meets two conditions. Firstly, that the author and copyright holder grant to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship, as well as the right to make small numbers of printed copies for their personal use. Secondly, a complete version of the work and all supplemental materials, including a copy of the permission as stated above, in a suitable standard electronic format is deposited immediately upon initial publication in at least one online repository that is supported by an academic institution, scholarly society, government agency, or other well-established organization that seeks to enable open access, unrestricted distribution, interoperability, and long-term archiving (for the biomedical sciences, PubMed Central is such a repository).

In summary, the underlying principle is to remove the access barriers to the results of scholarly research, in order to maximise the benefits of this research. It was recognised that accessibility could be enabled via online systems, which offer more potential for

wider dissemination and use than traditional paper-based publications.

To achieve Open Access, there are two complementary strategies. The first of these strategies can be classed as "Open Access Archives". With this approach, authors deposit a version of their accepted paper in repositories that can be freely accessed. These can be the archive managed by their institution, a national archive, or any other that is considered suitable. The second approach is "Open Access Publishing" where authors publish papers in journals that allow readers free access to their content. The costs associated with publishing (peer-review, editorial support, typesetting, etc.) are recovered from the content supplier (author or their institution, funding body etc.) instead of the consumer (reader, library).

With Open Access becoming such a hot topic within the world of academic publishing, it is important that *Cardiology in the Young* formulates a strategy to take the journal forward. It is advisable, however, to consider the inherent risks associated with Open Access. The major problem facing a publisher that embraces Open Access is the actual provision of a free and unrestricted access to the journal. As the Open Society Institute highlights,³ this strategy clearly disrupts the publishing business model familiar to most publishers, resulting in a loss of finances through subscription-based activities and reprint revenue. Nonetheless, if the Open Access market becomes more common and is adopted by other publishers the risk of inaction might shift to outweigh the risk of action. Therefore, the initial (with immediate effect) strategy for *Cardiology in the Young* is to refine the copyright agreements with authors, in order to allow them to post pre-print and subsequently the published Portable Document Format (PDF) files of their articles on their home web sites or institutional repositories. Authors will be asked to acknowledge and provide a link to the published source – namely *Cardiology in the Young*. In this way, *Cardiology in the Young* will match the practices of the majority of peer-reviewed academic journals, and by such a change promote and encourage wider dissemination of the results of authors' research.

Whatever the outcome of Open Access publishing, the provision of Open Access *archiving* of published

articles is likely to become a normal practice, encouraged by the governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. This is demonstrated by the recent recommendations to the House of Commons⁴ and by the announcement by the National Institute of Health in response to the recommendations of the Appropriations Committee of the United States House of Representatives.⁵

Cardiology in the Young will continue to monitor the situation, and ensure that the Journal avoids the risk of inaction in this constantly changing environment of Open Access.

Gavin Jamieson
Cambridge University Press
gjamieson@cambridge.org

References

1. Open Society Institute. Budapest Open Access Initiative. February 2002; www.soros.org/openaccess
2. Public Library of Science. Definition of Open Access. June 2004; <http://www.plos.org/about/openaccess.html>
3. Open Society Institute. Guide to business planning for converting a subscription-based journal to Open Access. January 2003; http://www.soros.org/openaccess/pdf/business_converting.pdf
4. United Kingdom Parliament. House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Inquiry into Scientific Publications. December 2003; http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/science_and_technology_committee/scitech111203a.cfm
5. National Institute of Health. Department of Health and Human Services. Notice: enhanced public access to NIH research information. September 2004; <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-04-064.html>