

IARU-Workshop on Open Access Publishing

ETH Zurich 21-22 January 2010

Open Access Scientific Publishing – Role and Dilemma of Research Funding Organisations (RFOs)

Dieter Imboden

*President of Research Council of Swiss National Science Foundation
and of EUROHORCs*



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Challenges for scientific publishing

- **Rising publication costs**
- **Ongoing digitalisation process**
- **Key question:**
 - **How to reduce costs of dissemination of scientific information without losing quality?**
- **Open access:**
 - **From reader-paid to author-paid publishing system**

EUROHORCs' Recommendations on OA (I)

- On 18 April 2008, the General Assembly of EUROHORCs has accepted *Recommendations on Open Access*
- Given the very different types of EUROHORCs member organisations (research funding and performing, spanning all disciplines), the OA Recommendations represent a minimum standard. They are considered as an intermediate step towards a system in which free access to scientific information is guaranteed without jeopardizing the well established system of peer review.

EUROHORCs' Recommendations on OA (II)

Recommendations for scientists:

- **High quality publications of scientific results are a major responsibility of every scientist.**
- **When choosing the appropriate means of scientific information, authors should always consider the issue of OA. High priority should be given to journals with OA rules which are in accordance with the recommendations defined by EURAB in December 2006.**

EUROHORCs' Recommendations on OA (II)

Recommendations for member organisations:

- **Sign the Berlin Declaration on OA (2003). Adopt the EURAB recommendations.**
- **The overwhelming majority of scientific journal support self-archiving already, but only a very small minority of scientists make use of it. Therefore, scientists supported by EUROHORCs member organisations should, at least, be strongly advised to make use of self-archiving.**

Present situation: Only ca. 50% of MO have signed the Berlin Declaration and only a few have mandatory rules.

Financial consequences of OA for RFOs

- In many countries a ‚division of duties‘ exists between research performing organisations (RPOs, such as universities etc.) and RFOs: The former pay for general infrastructure including libraries, the latter for the direct costs of research projects.
- A general shift from a ‚reader-paid‘ to an ‚author-paid‘ publication scheme would correspond to a cost transfer from RPOs to RFOs.
- It is often argued that this cost transfer would be small (1 to 2% of research costs) and thus easily handled by RFOs.
- Such a shift would relieve libraries from their budgetary problems.

Where would the problem go? Who pays for repositories?

Repositories

Question to be answered: Who pays for repositories?

Universities and research institutions, funding agencies, academies, publishers.....

And who is responsible for keeping the repositories in good shape?

Number Acrobatics

Total annual budget of member organisations of EUROHORCs:

about 24'000 M€

Mean annual budget of FP7:

7'000 M€

2% of these numbers: **480 M€ / 140 M€ (total: 620 M€)**

How do these figures compare with the total annual budgets of the major publishers of scientific journals?

How many peer-reviewed journal articles are produced by the European research system?

Number Acrobatics (II)

STM publishing: 2000 publishers publish 1.4 m articles per year in 23'000 journals

The biggest journal publishers (the “Big20”) publish about 60% of all journals and about 70% of all articles (about 1'000'000 per year).

How many of these articles are related to EUROHORCs MOs? – Let us assume 300'000 per year.

With an average charge of € 2000 per article for ‘golden OA’ (or hybrid), OA of these articles would cost 600 M€, i.e. about 2.5% of MOs’ budget.

Number Acrobatics (III)

For STM journals average (total) cost of publishing is **2500€** per article. With 1.4 m articles per year, this amounts to about **3.5 billion €** per year.

About 50% of the articles published by the Big20 can be made OA (author-sponsored OA). The average price asked by the publishers for author-sponsored OA is **2000-3000 €** per article, i.e. of the same order of magnitude as the average production cost per article.

Libraries of many universities subscribe not only to the paper edition of journals, but also buy the right for OA for all their researchers.

Author-sponsored OA is only of value for scientists who are not related to a library with OA subscription. In most cases, author-sponsored OA means paying for OA twice, (1) by the library and (2) by the author.

Who shall negotiate for OA?

Some research (funding or performing) organisations have signed OA agreements with publishers. These agreements differ from one organisations to the other.

Since these agreements are confidential, only episodic conclusions are possible. For instance, according to some sources the Wellcome Trust has signed an agreement with Elsevier according to which the former pays **3000\$ (about 2000€)** per article to make OA all information originating from research funded by the W.T.

Organisations like EUROHORCs or ESF should seriously seek an agreement between ROs and publishers to make all articles available by OA for a much lower price.

Towards a European solution?

- In autumn 2009, EUROHORCs and ESF decided to install a working group under the lead of the Max-Planck Gesellschaft to study next steps towards a new author-paid publishing system

Towards a national strategy?

- Pending motion in the Swiss Parliament for equal access of all Swiss Universities to electronic scientific publications
- Swiss Scientific and Technology Council:
 - Access to international scientific literature is essentially for maintaining high internationality of Swiss Researchers
 - Unequal access to literature and increasing charges of e-journals
 - Recommendation: common access solution for Switzerland on national level like other European Countries (e.g. Germany)

Source: SWTR Schrift 5/2009 – Empfehlungen des SWTR zur Wissenschaftsaussenpolitik

,Cultural differences‘ among disciplines

- **Differences between disciplines regarding publication habits make general regulations difficult, especially for RFOs which fund projects from all disciplines.**
- **These differences not only concern the main medium of publication (journal, conference proceeding, monograph), but also the half-life of publications (1 to 2 years in biology vs. 5 to 10 years in mathematics)**
- **Is there a future for publications written in other languages than English?**

Open access at SNSF

- **Berlin Declaration signed in 2006**
- **First OA-Provisions in 2007, OA-Regulations in 2008:**
 - **OA-publishing is generally mandatory for SNSF-grantees**
 - **Free choice between green and gold road of open access**
 - **but: no funding of OA publication costs yet**
- **Future plans of SNSF:**
 - **Gold-OA as standard for journal articles and conference proceedings**
 - **Special solutions for monographs and editions**
 - **Funding of OA publication costs as part of normal project funding**

Thank you!

Further Information

<http://www.snf.ch/E/current/Dossiers/Pages/OpenAccess.aspx>



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION