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The Front

Making It Easy, Making It Hard: A Personal Note on Counting Articles

The primary essay this time around is OA-related and under the INTERSECTIONS flag—so this oddity goes in THE FRONT instead.

I'm going to comment on a range of open access journal publishers and platforms from one particular and probably peculiar vantage point: mine, as I'm revisiting some 6,490 journal sites to record the total number of articles published during 2014. It's clear to me that most journal readers and scholars don't spend loads of time determining exactly how many articles a journal publishes, and certainly not doing that for thousands of journals, so I don't fault a publisher or platform for making the process somewhat clumsy.

But I *can* offer kudos to those that make it easy, although that doesn't necessarily say they're otherwise good or bad publishers (or platforms). These are mostly notes along the way.

I have some thoughts about the "issue" issue—that is, if an OA journal doesn't do print versions, why does it have issues below the year level? More particularly, why do *some* oddball OA journals have a large number of issues, each of which may have only one or two (or sometimes none!) articles? But that's another, well, issue.

Inside This Issue

The Easiest Counts

Some publishers and platforms make it exceptionally easy to get article counts for a given year.

MDPI

MDPI's template for journal home pages is clean and, unusually, includes an advanced searching area at the top of the page, along with metadata for the most recent papers. One of the search options is Volume. MDPI always does one volume per year; and given the metadata, it's always obvious what volume is for what year.

What could be easier? Type in the volume number, hit Search, and you get a number (and result). For Volume 2, that's two keystrokes. Total.

MDPI also gets credit for things the template *doesn't* do: Advertise other journal titles and use moving type or flashing symbols.

Columbia University Library Center for Digital Research and Scholarship

Click on Browse and you're taken to a browse screen with three pull-down boxes…one of which is for year. Choose the year, and you get the set of articles—with a count at the top of the list.

Dove Press

The cleanly designed journal pages include a series of tabs, one of which is "Articles"—which leads to the archive, including a list of each year with a count of the articles. In essence, it takes one click from the home page to get each year's (or all years') article count.

SciELO

SciELO's journal template, used for nearly a thousand cost-effective journals, mostly from South American countries (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, maybe others?) but also South Africa and Spain, is clean and elegant.

While not *quite* as easy as MDPI, it's close: the home page has a row of buttons including "FORM," which brings up an advanced search form. One index option is "Year of publication," and that's all you need. So: Click on Form, pull down/click on Year of Publication, key in the year, hit Search, and you're done.

J-STAGE

The template has an Advanced Search that allows you to search directly on a range of years, which is as straightforward as it comes.

BioMed Central and SpringerOpen

On the negative side, these pages are given to cross-journal advertising and moving type—but the Advanced Search template includes a year range, and that range does work as the only search argument. Oddly enough, OA journals published by Springer that are *not* part of BioMed

Central or SpringerOpen do *not* allow you to search by year or year-range alone. (But some or all of them put an article count at the top of each issue's contents list, which is at least a little helpful.)

Nature Publishing Group
NPG also has an Advanced Search template that will accept a volume-year range as the only argument. It can be a trifle overwhelming, as it's a cross-site search tool that, while it comes up with "this journal" selected, nonetheless shows a matrix of all the NPG journals. Still: this is pretty straightforward.

Sage
Sage's Advanced Search screen has month/year limits—and those limits *do* function as a search without requiring other search text. In the cases I've seen, Sage journal home pages also seem free of ads for other Sage journals.

PLOS and others
PLOS and some other publishers have Advanced Search templates that allow full date specifications and return numbers as well as results. That's pretty much essential for *PLOS ONE* and very useful wherever it's offered.

A Little Harder, But Also Straightforward

If you're not going to provide an instant number, you can still make things reasonably straightforward.

Scientific Research
When you bring up a year in the archive, you get a set of issue numbers—but you soon discover that the publisher assigns DOIs with an incrementing annual article number at the end, so you can look at the last issue for the year (and the first, just to be sure) and get the article count.

University of Isfahan?
Iran has a strong OA system, and quite a few of the journals use a template that's either provided by or at least used by the University of Isfahan. When you go to the archives, you get a row for each year and a row beneath that for each issue—and the issue rows have article counts. Neat, tidy, easy.

Hindawi
Hindawi's home pages are as clean and clear as they come, giving you current acceptance rate and time to review for a journal right up front.

Hindawi's journals are *not* issue-oriented; the archive is a numbered list of articles in reverse chronological order (latest first), with headings for each year. Since there are 25 articles to a page and since the number range appears at the top of each page, it's reasonably easy to page through a year's articles—although it would be even easier if there was a number panel at the bottom, so you could skip ahead a few pages when it's obvious that a journal has a lot of articles each year.

As it happens, URLs within article browses end with the page number; once you notice that, you can skip ahead without much difficulty.

Quite a few publishers and journals
Articles in a given issue are numbered—or, in some cases, there's a number at the top of the column. That does mean one click per issue (or a home/end combination), but that's all.

Planning for Sparseness?

A number of templates seem to be based on the assumption that there will never be a large flow of articles in any given journal, given the way archives are organized or appear. One example follows.

Libertas Academica
The first problem is that there's no Archive tab above the fold—you have to scroll down to get to "Volumes" as an option. When you select "Volumes," you get one long stream of articles with year/volume headings/no counts, no pagination that I could find. For two, four or twelve articles a year, that's fine; for 50 or more, it would be a nuisance.

Making It Harder

Then there are the publishers who insist on having *lots of issues*, with one, two or sometimes *no* articles in each issue. No overall counts, of course.

Open Journal Systems software is probably used in more OA journals than any other software, and it apparently works (and the price is right). For counting purposes, however, it's at best a nuisance—it tends to encourage issue-oriented publication, it seems to encourage journals to make it even clumsier by having issue links in the archive go to a cover illustration first, with another link needed to actually see the contents, and there's apparently nothing in the software to encourage (or allow?) articles to be numbered. Since most OJS journals also don't show DOIs in the tables of contents, that's no help either.

A few OJS journals do have statistics pages and *some* of those pages spell out the number of published articles in each year, but the existence

of such pages is rarely obvious and their contents aren't always useful. For that matter, I've seen cases where the numbers on the statistics pages appear to be wrong. (The statistics pages are almost always hidden under the About tab.)

A *bunch* of medical journals use a template that doesn't number, requires multiple steps—and inserts a picture along with each article's metadata. That's true for non-medical journals as well, of course, but for medical journals it becomes a test of my layman's stomach just to get through some of the pages…

Some journals and publishers have advanced searching templates that include date boxes—but the date boxes only function as limits on some other search, which usually isn't obvious until you've entered a date or a date range and received an error message. Gee, thanks. (That includes Wiley Online, Elsevier, Medknow/Wolters-Kluwer, Aosis and a fair number of others.) In at least one case, the layout of the advanced search screen strongly implies that a date-only search *should* work—but it doesn't.

At least one journal with hundreds of articles each year does almost everything to make it difficult to deal with: monthly issues, articles not numbered, no DOI, page numbers only on the PDFs…and variable-length abstracts long enough so that a screen may have anywhere from one to five articles. And, as far as I can see, no search function at all. I suppose you *could* make it more difficult. I'm not sure how.

I've run into at least one publisher where it's nearly impossible to tell what journal you're looking at—a moving bar keeps changing journals. Several insist on changing the banner space to different journals, even though you're apparently on one journal's page, and typically have not only moving banners but other moving type—usually in two different directions—making it difficult to even focus on the home page. I usually find that these publishers have other problems.

I'm not sure whether it's a template or a publisher, but there's one online design used by several journals that says it has an advanced search screen—but I can't tell you what's on it, because following the link takes me to a screen demanding that I "Enter this code in 'Captcha' field"—and there is no Captcha field on the screen. Wonderful. (On the other hand, when you go to specific issues, there's a count at the top of each issue's contents list. On the gripping hand, that count clearly includes overhead that wouldn't normally appear in a contents list.)

Then there's Maxwell Scientific Publication—with absurdly large numbers of issues (48 issues in two volumes in one year in one example), an archive mechanism that doesn't allow you to open links in new tabs, no numbering of any sort…and the Search button yields a 404, so there's apparently no advanced *or* basic search. Pfeh. (On the other hand, this publisher does seem to transmit article-level information to DOAJ rapidly, so it's possible to use that alternative approach—which, by

the way, yields *much* higher counts than my attempts to estimate directly, since there is no way I was going to step through 48 issues.)

peerj is a thoroughly modern journal—that essentially forces me to rely on *DOAJ* for a 2014 count, since it has *no* date searching mechanism except for recent periods that don't correspond to the previous calendar year. This seems odd, but, again, I'm not *peerj*'s audience.

One Indian publisher of would-be megajournals seems determined to make counting articles impossible. The *DOAJ* URLs don't work; there are no advanced search possibilities of any sort; there are no numbered pages, but instead one long, long, *long* page per issue…ridiculous.

Down for the Count

This is only about counting articles, although a number of these interfaces also make it surprisingly clumsy to view sample articles—something I'd expect any scholar to do before submitting to a journal they don't already know. (Actually, I'd expect scholars to get a sense of overall volume as well, so maybe the ease of counting articles *is* significant.)

I do *not* understand why some OA publishers feel the need to publish so many issues each year, even though each issue has no more than one or two articles. If there's no print equivalent, what's the point—unless it's to suggest a level of activity that's clearly not there once you get down to the actual issues.

This whole exercise is mostly a grump, however. Don't take it too seriously—unless, of course, you're one of the publishers who get in the way of users and might see fit to improve your journal's template. In which case, thanks in advance, as I may be doing this again next year.

Intersections

Who Needs Open Access, Anyway?

That title is *not* my own opinion or question—but it feels like the appropriate title for this odd roundup, covering several dozen items I've tagged over the last two years (or so) as "oa-anti." The tag doesn't necessarily mean the item was a flat-out attack on open access (even with the typical "some of my best friends are OA, but…" nonsense that's usually now phrased as "I am/this publisher is/a big proponent of OA, however…"). It means that, in skimming the item initially, it seemed to register as something that either seemed to undermine OA or could be used as an attack on OA—or, in some cases, it's discussing somebody

else attempting to undermine OA. At the end of this mostly-unsorted set of items, I note a handful of "oa-pro" items for a little balance.

I'll skip over most of the letters and posts and the like that essentially restate the tired old lies about OA—e.g., that gold OA *means* author-side fees, that OA journals don't have proper peer review, that scholarly societies are doomed if they can't rely on libraries to subsidize them. (That third one is rarely stated quite so baldly, but that's what's being said: *Our society doesn't provide enough value to its members to expect them to pay for it.* Which, frankly, means your society should disappear.) I'll skip over some *Scholarly Kitchen* articles I've tagged, at least partly because being reminded of some of the comment streams gets me too upset to proceed.

By now, you presumably know how I feel: academic libraries need OA for budgetary reasons (which makes it all the sadder, if no less understandable, that libraries tend to value things they pay for more than they value things that are free); researchers in all but the wealthiest institutions—and even more, independent scholars—need OA so they can keep up with their own literature; the rest of us need OA so we can be better informed and learn from published scholarship.

But let's hear what others have to say, not in any particular order.

U.S. Government Accuses Open Access Publisher of Trademark Infringement

The trouble with this news report, by Jocelyn Kaiser in May 2013 at *ScienceInsider*, starts with the lede:

> Submitting a paper to a new open access journal can be a risky venture: More and more companies are popping up with an offer to publish a report for a fee but deliver less than expected—sometimes they skip peer review or use editors who do no work—according to critics such as Jeffrey Beall, a University of Colorado, Denver, librarian who keeps a list of so-called predatory publishers. Now, the U.S. government has jumped in as an enforcer, warning one open access publisher to stop misusing the names of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the agency's employees in promotional material.

That lead sentence certainly suggests that there's a problem with OA in general—and it's not helped by the reference to Beall's list of "predatory" publishers, which gives a largely useless list added credibility.

The story itself is an interesting one that involves one of the most flagrantly problematic publishers and some of that publisher's practices. It's the lede that gets this a mention here.

I'm not the only one who sees it that way. Mr. Gunn (that's how he signed the comment) commented, in part:

> ScienceInsider is doing a useful service by raising awareness of the issue of predatory publishers, but it's really unfortunate that this good

> service is undone by the disservice of mixing up predatory publishing with open access. Open access has nothing to with predatory publishing, and in fact, many OA journals charge no author fees at all.

Elsevier, NewsCorp, Facebook, and Yahoo join ignorant attack on open access

Seems to me the title on this Peter Suber post, on May 17, 2013 at Google+, says it pretty clearly. It's about NetChoice, a trade association "promoting convenience, choice, and commerce on the net." It claims to include "eCommerce businesses and online consumers," but the list of members seems to be entirely businesses—and note that "consumers" are called just that—*people who buy things*—not "citizens." On the site, "choice" is defined as "preventing unnecessary barriers to *new business*" so there's not a lot of doubt what this group is all about. Dig a little deeper on the NetChoice site and it becomes a little more obvious: they post "iAWFUL," a strained acronym for what NetChoice calls "ugly laws." Ugly laws such as imposing state sales taxes on ecommerce, "preserving the car dealership monopoly," "shifting the burden of tax collection" (as far as I can tell, that's the same as "Internet sales tax" but somehow implying that physical businesses *don't* have to collect taxes) and more…all of them solidly pro-internet-business.

It's one of the iAWFUL posts that gets Suber's attention—this from May 2013:

> Forcing Journals to Make Their Works Publicly Available—Requiring professional journals to give away their published content will diminish the employment prospects of in-state professors and threatens in-state businesses that receive any state assistance.

There's a fuller "explanation" at that link, which manages to "logically extend" the call for access to government-funded research papers to blogs, sheet music, videos, "photographs taken by work-study students," "original artwork created with guidance from college instructors"…wow!

Those poor deluded states that pass such laws (one such "state" being the White House) would be at a terrible disadvantage:

> First, in-state professors and researchers will be disadvantaged relative to their peers at universities across the country.
>
> Second, the bills would deny in-state professors the opportunity for high-profile publications in paid journals, decreasing their chances for exposure and career advancement.
>
> Finally, the bills make it harder for in-state universities to attract and retain professors and researchers keen to publish their work in paid journals.

Some of what Suber has to say about NetChoice's exuberant "it could cover *everything*" language:

> When a bill is limited to publicly-funded research published in peer-reviewed journals, then it's limited to publicly-funded research published in peer-reviewed journals. It doesn't cover music or artwork or unpublished notes. Yes, the state could in principle change the focus of its research-funding program, but it has a rationale, and a good rationale, for requiring OA to publicly-funded research and not to other categories. NetChoice's lunatic slippery-slope is like arguing that if the state can compel the recipient of a publicly-funded research grant to spend the money on research, then it could in principle compel the recipient to spend it on cheeseburgers and pornography.

If you've followed Peter Suber at all, you'll know he's mild-mannered and generally prone to understatement. With that in mind, read that last sentence again. I wouldn't call it overstatement.

As regards the "disadvantages" quoted earlier, Suber says:

> The objection seems to assume that those who receive public funds will be disadvantaged somehow, for example, because they will be prohibited from publishing in journals, or in peer-reviewed journals, or in subscription-based peer-reviewed journals. But that's false. Since 2008, the NIH has required green OA for NIH-funded research published in peer-reviewed journals. Instead of prohibiting that kind of publication, the policy is limited to that kind of publication. Some subscription-based journals dislike the policy and lobby against it; and the wealthiest of those, Elsevier, also belongs to NetChoice. But not a single surveyed publisher has refused to publish NIH-funded authors, not even Elsevier. If subscription-based publishers see risks in publishing NIH-funded authors, then without exception they see more benefits than risks. The NIH policy hasn't limited the freedom of NIH-funded researchers in the slightest.

There's more—for example, *Computerworld* quoting much of NetChoice's nonsense uncritically and even seeming to confuse matters further.

Worth reading the comments. Note that NetChoice appears to include Google and Yahoo!—and that's just sad. Some Elsevier employees suggested Elsevier was distancing itself from NetChoice's assertions—but, as other commenters pointed out, Elsevier's really the only journal publisher in NetChoice, which makes one wonder where the director got the idea that the lobbying group (which is what this is, of course) should oppose OA mandates.

Open Access and Its Enemies, Redux

J. Britt Holbrook posted this on July 12, 2013 at *jbritthjolbrook*. Holbrook quotes Cameron Neylon on being open being about "embracing a particular form of humility"—and Robin Osborne from a *Guardian* post, "Why open access makes no sense." (Osborne's piece made less and less

sense itself, the more I tried to read and understand it. But never mind…) Holbrook quotes this from Osborne:

> For those who wish to have access, there is an admission cost: they must invest in the education prerequisite to enable them to understand the language used. Current publication practices work to ensure that the entry threshold for understanding my language is as low as possible. Open access will raise that entry threshold. Much more will be downloaded; much less will be understood.

To which my own uneducated response is "Bullshit. You write the paper you need to write. Understanding it is *my* burden. OA just means that I get to make the choice even if I'm not affiliated with a wealthier-than-Harvard university."

Holbrook's looking at different aspects, and I think you need to read that in the original—it's not long and I don't find a good way to summarize.

Joseph Esposito on the state of Open Access: Where are we, what still needs to be done?

A twofer: Richard Poynder, who's definitely for *his approach to* open access, which is to say, he's increasingly revealed as a Harnadian—and Joseph Esposito, who calls himself an "advocate of open access publishing," which is true in much the same way that Elsevier is an advocate of open access publishing. The piece appeared on July 17, 2013 at *Open and Shut?*

From Poynder's introduction, I think this is worth quoting:

> What are the take-away points from his answers? For me, two things seem noteworthy. First, in their frequent complaints about "greedy publishers" OA advocates tend to assume that publishers inhabit the same moral universe as they do, one in which things like fairness are key principles. Esposito reminds us that publishers operate by a different set of rules — the rules of the market place…
>
> For me this raises an interesting point. Given what Esposito refers to below as the "moral urgency" of many OA advocates, should we conclude that at the heart of the scholarly communication system is an irresolvable conflict of interest between the aims and objectives of publishers and those of the research community? Or is it simply that, as Esposito suggests, the OA movement ought to consider "getting rid of the idealists"?
>
> This leads me to my second point. Could it be that the OA movement has become so distracted by its constant discussion of things like fairness and greed — and how one even defines Open Access — that it has failed to notice the game is already up? While OA advocates continue to fill mailing lists and social media platforms with their disagreements over definitions and strategy, publishers are busy

> launching OA journals, and lengthening their Green OA embargoes; and doing so in ways that suit their needs, not the needs of the research community. If true, the good news is that the OA movement will get what it has been calling for; the bad news is that it may not like the form in which it gets it. But then, as Esposito puts it, "The marketplace has its own mind and makes its own decisions."…

I'm an idealist. I don't deny that. Maybe that's why I find Esposito so distasteful. (I would note that many publishers *began* by caring as much about good books and good journals as about sheer profit, and some of them still do, but that's obviously idealistic nonsense.) But let's quote a bit more of Esposito, which may help clarify why his "advocate of open access publishing" is, to my mind, "enemy of true OA."

> My view of OA then and now is that it is a useful, marginal activity that opens up a new class of customers through the author-pays model and that it would be subject to the laws of market economics like any other thing. And that's what has happened. It is additive, not substitutive. And it's a great development. It's just not a revolution.
>
> OA is marginal in the sense that most research is performed at a small number of institutions. "Most" is not the same thing as "all." Those institutions subscribe to most (not all) of the relevant materials. So by definition the access granted by OA is marginal to what researchers at the major institutions already have. Nothing wrong with working on the margins, but let's call it what it is.

Hokay. Access by anybody other than *institutional* researchers is simply irrelevant, and all OA is is another way for publishers to rake in the Big Bucks.

The rest of the interview makes it abundantly clear that, to Esposito, *the market* is all. Period. And he's still clear about wanting to "get rid of" people like me: he says the *most important task* for the OA movement is "getting rid of the idealists. Let pragmatism abound." Oh, and he doesn't much care about researchers in the developing world.

Students should be empowered, not bullied into open access

Adam Crymble posted this on July 23. 2013 at *Thoughts on Public & Digital History*—and it's pretty striking. The first few paragraphs:

> The American Historical Association (AHA) has just adopted a resolution in support of recent graduates, encouraging them to feel empowered to keep their dissertations offline while they seek a publisher to turn that dissertation into a scholarly monograph.
>
> Surprise, surprise, open access advocates everywhere have started snivelling.

> *No*! they cry. We shouldn't support a resolution passed in good faith to protect the career progression of new scholars against scholarly presses that are allegedly refusing to accept manuscripts based on openly available dissertations. We should be burning books and the organizations that publish them. Down with books, up with free information on the Internet!
>
> Lovely, but you can't eat free information. Makes a shit shelter as well.

You probably didn't realize that OA advocates were book-burners. Neither did I. I guess I'm not a good student of history. Nor, for that matter, was I aware of "snivelling" as a typical OA attitude.

A bit later, Crymble sort-of admits that studies of the situation suggest that access to electronic theses and dissertations does *not* prevent them from being published as monographs. Then says:

> With all of this in mind, let's give the open access community what they want: You're right.
>
> But dear God you're obnoxious.

I'll admit, the idea of an "open access community" acting as one is a touch ludicrous, but never mind. (That *some* OA advocates are obnoxious? Absolutely true.) Then there's his assessment of OA itself, which he claims to support:

> And while I can appreciate the advantages of open access, its advocates often ignore the problems of an open access model. We live in a society in which things that have no cost have no perceived value. You wouldn't expect your lawyer to work for free, so why your historian? The scholarly presses defend their (failing) business model because it keeps their friends and family employed, their kids fed, and their bills paid. This isn't just a matter of profits funneling into the pockets of the rich. It's the way people like you and me make modest and honest livings.

I'm inclined to agree with his second sentence, and it's an ongoing problem for OA—but it's a bit off as an overall attack on OA.

Open access requirements will erode academic freedom by catalyzing intensive forms of institutional managerialism

So says Kyle Grayson on May 9, 2013 at LSE's *The Impact Blog*—and I'm not going to discuss it thoroughly, partly because it's distinctly UK-oriented. But it's one of many examples of an increasingly standard attack on OA: opposition through misdefinition. Grayson's talking about UK moves to require that government-supported research be openly available and the UK preference for gold OA, and, crucially, says this:

> [A]lthough HEFCE mercifully backed down from demanding that all post-REF 2014 eligible research be gold open access–i.e., authors pay journal publishers to have the accepted copy-set version of an article immediately available to the general public on a CC-BY license…

That "i.e." clause is the kicker and the basis for most of the rest of his argument. Oh, did I mention that he's specifically talking about the humanities and social sciences? Fields in which, as of 2013 (and so far 2014 looks about the same, but I haven't quite finished counting yet) 87% of OA journals *do not charge author-side fees*, and 70% of OA articles appear in those journals.

There's more to the post, including an apparently groundless supposition that American journals will simply reject UK submissions because of the onerous OA requirements, but that's beyond the scope of this brief mention. Grayson does admit at the end that he's the editor-in-chief of a subscription journal.

Adequate Thought On Open Access

This relatively brief letter by Gordon L. Nelson (president of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents) on July 20, 2013 at *Chemical & Engineering News* is almost classic. Responding to an article about OA, noting that federal agencies will partner with publishers and libraries, Nelson asks "Where are the scientists and scientific societies?"

> Indeed, a significant fraction of the scientific literature is published by not-for-profit science, mathematics, and science education societies. Publications often represent the core activity of these organizations. Journal pricing by scientific societies is a fraction of that of for-profit publishers. Journal publishing is not free. It requires spending for hardware, software, management of peer review, editorial work, long-term database maintenance, and printing. The important question is, who pays: authors, users, or a third party (institutions or government)?

The answer to his first question is that the scientific societies he's talking about *are* publishers—and the question at the end of that paragraph is classic misdirection. Right now, third parties *in the form of libraries* are paying for the publications. Skipping over his "we've done it this way for more than a century and it will hurt to change," we get this:

> The open-access plan for scientific publishing seems to be that authors will pay publication fees on the order of $1,500 to $2,000 per paper. Where will scientists get that money? Will funding agencies increase grants by some 2 to 4% to cover publication fees? The alternative may be to cut publications and/or students.
>
> An embargo period of 18 to 24 months has been identified as the necessary period before research published in scientific society journals

> moves to open-access archives. An inadequate embargo period clearly will result in not-for-profit journal collapse.

A two-year or eighteen-month "embargo"—during which only the wealthy get access to the research. Otherwise, journals will "clearly" collapse. As for his figures, only 4% of OA chemistry journals charge $1,451 or more (61% charge nothing at all), and although those are some of the busier journals, they still account for only 21% of the articles. The average APC per chemistry article in 2013 was $713—a lot, but no "$1,500 to $2,000." And, of course, the "third party" issue is nonsense—libraries are already third parties.

This is special pleading marred by sloppy "facts." This is also no surprise.

I tagged "Commentary: Open access matters for researchers" in the January 2015 *physicstoday* for discussion—but it turns out that it's same-old, same-old, Nelson recounting questionable facts, this time basically suggesting that there really isn't an access problem anyway, and basically doing more special pleading. Not worth a repeat visit.

Open access threatens journals

I promise, I won't mention *all* of them, but here's another one—by Heather Sparling in the December 2013 *CAUT/ACPPU Bulletin*. Maybe the title's enough, that and knowing that it's a response to a society president saying OA was a good thing. See if the first clause of this paragraph seems familiar:

> While I am in principle in support of open access, I do not believe the challenges of open access faced by journals like *MUSICultures* have been adequately addressed or even voiced. Peters makes one brief acknowledgement late in his column that "smaller discipline-specific societies, which offer access to their journal publications as a benefit of membership, worry about losing their membership without the exclusivity of such a benefit. Satisfying these concerns under an open access model would require new approaches to funding the publication enterprise." He is indeed correct, but I see no such innovative funding models immediately forthcoming.

"Or even voiced"? Really? Reading further, we learn that making a society's journal OA "threaten [the society's] membership." Because the journal is one of the "primary benefits of membership"—in other words, the threat is that members might not find the society worthwhile unless outsiders subsidize their journal.

There's also a Canadian Canadian Canadian litany that has little to do with OA, but that's a different issue.

On open access, and why it's not the answer

I will admit up front that I'm not doing a proper critique of this long post by Daniel Allington on October 15, 2013 on his eponymous blog. It's too long, it's too heavily British-oriented (I didn't realize that British OA advocates were all as contentious as Stevan Harnad or that 100% Universal Forced OA was now a British thing), and Allington has done his damnedest to make it unreadable—light-grey type on a dark-grey background. Maybe you'll choose to plow through the whole thing and conclude that I'm being unfair in including it, although the title alone is pretty much a tipoff.

Will it surprise you to read in the first paragraph that "Not too long ago, I was in favour of [open access]…"? It shouldn't. But, in this case, he's seen the light—as in the lede:

> In the last two or three years, open access to academic journal articles has gone from being something that noisy idealists were unrealistically demanding to something that's going to happen whether we like it or not – at least in the UK, and probably elsewhere as well. Not so long ago, I was in favour of it and doing what I could to put it into practice with regard to my own work. Now, it's just another of those things that I must pragmatically accept, like the vice-chancellor's high level appointments. I feel like a man with a beard in a country where shaving has just been banned.

So he was in favor of OA but regarded it as something "noisy idealists were unrealistically demanding"? Hmm. So now he's reflecting:

> On open access: what's it for? What did its advocates (me, for example) think it was going to facilitate? And now that it's become mainstream, does it look as if it's going to facilitate that thing we had in mind, or something else entirely?

I don't think I need to step through his answers for you to get the overall tone. (How long is long? 12,793 words, including the lengthy bibliography but not the comments. That's for a blog post, and would be about 15-16 pages of *Cites & Insights*.) Reading some of it and some of the comments, I am pleased to see that apparently all UK citizens have easy, quick access to libraries that have access to all the peer-reviewed research anybody could ever want, thus making (according to one commenter) arguing for OA equivalent to arguing *against* libraries. Here in the benighted US, we're not so fortunate—I certainly can't find a library within easy reach, for which I have reading privileges, that has access to all scholarly articles!

Public accessibility of biomedical articles from PubMed Central reduces journal readership—retrospective cohort analysis

In this case, I'm just providing a link to a peer-reviewed article by Philip M. Davis in *The FASEB Journal* for April 2013, The conclusion's in the title—essentially saying that open access *reduces* readership from a journal's own website.

If that's true (and I'm in no position to argue with Davis' statistics), it raises other questions—how is that possible and what does it mean? If, for some reason, people who have paid access to a journal won't read the articles *because* other people have access to them, something is terribly wrong. Providing broader access ain't it, though. Still, here's the concluding portion of the abstract:

> While PubMed Central may be providing complementary access to readers traditionally underserved by scientific journals, the loss of article readership from the journal website may weaken the ability of the journal to build communities of interest around research papers, impede the communication of news and events to scientific society members and journal readers, and reduce the perceived value of the journal to institutional subscribers.

Greater access means lessened value and reduced communication and community: I feel as though 2015 is 31 years late for that assertion.

Open Access Theses and Dissertations Increasingly Used as a Source for Plagiarized Journal Articles

Yes, I know, citing anything from Jeffrey Beall and his sadly misnamed *Scholarly Open Access* blog is like shooting fish in a barrel, but I'll do it this time anyway—with this post on January 16, 2014.

The facts (apparently): Beall found two articles that apparently plagiarized from a single dissertation. Which, of course, could *never* happen in a subscription journal, because as we all know they're paragons of honesty and have access to all published material to run checks. (OK, in this instance, the plagiarists were really sloppy, but…)

What makes it Beallian is the first three paragraphs—what he builds from a bit of anecdata:

> Open-access theses and dissertations (also called ETDs for "electronic theses and dissertations") are increasingly being used to easily create journal articles by some needing a quick and easy scholarly article publication.
>
> After stealing text and data from a thesis and re-formatting it as an article, one can submit it to a predatory publisher and get an easy publication. Because the theses and dissertations have already passed through a round of quality control (the dissertation committee and the defense), they are often ready for publication.

> All the open-access activist work that's been done to make research more available has also helped make more research available to plagiarists, one of the weaknesses of open-access.

I'm not even clear on whether the supposed weakness is somehow that only OA journals are susceptible to plagiarized articles (I suspect *Retraction Watch*'s people would have a good laugh about that) or that *providing more access* means more plagiarism, which is, I suppose, true but an interesting argument. Certainly true: If nobody can read something, they probably can't copy from it.

One of the comments notes that this isn't something new, citing a 1966 case where somebody stole a thesis waiting to be bound and "used it as the basis for several articles published in *Applied Optics*." Later in the comments, when somebody asks for evidence of Beall's assertion that plagiarism is enabled by OA, he cites…the two examples given. (When another commenter notes a case of plagiarized material appearing in *Nature*, Beall calls the comment "mean-spirited" and notes that he only looks at OA journals.)

why is the asa against public access?

This piece, by Fabio Rojason on January 22, 2014 at *orgtheory.net*, is *about* anti-OA rather than an example of it. To wit, the statement of Sally Hillsman, executive officer of the American Sociological Association, in response to OSTP's notice about access to peer-reviewed scholarly publications based on federally-funded research.

The statement itself is fairly stock stuff with a few twists I hadn't seen that often, such as the assertion that businesses are packaging PubMed Central content and reselling it, and that this somehow deprives scholarly societies of their needed revenue from "our copyrighted content." I'm a bit astonished to read the assertion that the costs of social science publishing are much *higher* than for biomed and natural science, apparently because of long articles and lengthy peer review processes.

Rojason isn't entirely buying Hillsman's arguments—and does note that she misses one major point of OA:

> [T]he Federal government, sensibly, doesn't want the results of funded research to be hidden behind pay walls. The pay wall for ASR may not be a barrier to social scientists who have university accounts, but $300 is a barrier for many other readers. But the Federal government's argument isn't directed at the ASA. It's directed at other publishers who charge thousands of dollars for a journal subscription. If you are a lay person, a poor person, or someone from another country, this is a real barrier.

The comments are something else, with one so-called devil's advocate asserting that the only access that *matters* is access by other scientists, and this gem from "Dave":

> Ugh. A bit off topic perhaps, but I seem to be the only person under 40 in sociology who finds the arguments for open access unpersuasive, a solution in search of a problem. I don't get it, so please help a brother out here. When I talk to OA true believers, I strongly pick up one part, "we're sticking it to the man because…you know…the man always needs sticking!," one part, "if I can't publish in a 'real' journal, we should do away with 'real' journals…then our tweets would count towards tenure, bra!," and one part, "dude, the internets!" So, one part knee-jerk "radicalism," one part resentment and status politics, and one part techno-millenarian-anarcho-libertarianism. Each can be attractive, depending on mood and the day of the week, but what am I missing? If you are going to recruit me to your movement, please tell me how my life would change in any noticeable way after we've burned down the journals and marched Sally Hillsman to the guillotine? Do you really believe that, after your revolution, Jesper Sorensen will not emerge as Napoleon III?

Ugh indeed. If this is the clarity of thinking of a modern sociologist, we're in deep ugh.

It's funny…

Another case where the post is *about* attempts to weaken or undermine OA, not where the writer is themself anti-OA—for it would take an extraordinary leap of logic to label Cameron Neylon, who posted this on February 21, 2014 at *Science in the Open*, as anti-OA.

To fill in the dieresis, here are the first two paragraphs of the post:

> …one of the motivations I had to get writing again was a request from someone at a traditional publisher to write more because it "was so useful to have a moderate voice to point to". Seems I didn't do so well at that with that first post back.
>
> When you get a criticism about tone it is easy to get defensive. It's particularly easy when there has been a history of condescension, personal attacks and attacks on the fundamental logic of what you're doing from "the other side". But of course many times, perhaps mostly, those who are concerned about tone and civility are not the same ones who made those attacks – there often is no "other side" just a gradation of views. It's also easy to feel that comments about tone or "reasonableness" are a strategy to discredit an argument by attacking the person. Again, this is a strategy that has been used against OA advocates, including myself but that doesn't mean that it's necessarily the motivation behind any specific expression of concern. Equally it can be seductive to view criticism of tone as success, that the "opposition" can't deal with the argument itself. That way however lies the madness of far too many internet pundits and sterile argumentative discussion forums focussed on scoring points. I use many strategies for

> persuasion, including ridicule, but I try not to attack people, only ideas. I wouldn't make any claim to be perfect at that – and I lose my temper as much as the next person – but I try to own my mis-steps.

I think this discussion of Tone Attacks is interesting without context—not only for OA but for other areas where criticism gets labeled as "screeching" or otherwise dismissed. Sometimes, you can't say it nicely because there's no nice way to say it. But let's look at the links.

The first is to a Neylon post about the "Access to Research" initiative, which makes millions of scholarly articles available in *some* UK public libraries—sort of. (It's "walk-in access": you can only read the articles while you're in the library: you can't download them. Just as, you know, you have to read books at the library—they don't let you take them home, do they? Oops…) As I read the post, the initiative struck Neylon as a somewhat cynical attempt to claim that people *already* have access—"just go to your library."

The second link is to an Alice Meadows post at *Scholarly Kitchen* that talks about tone in general and throws in this shot at Neylon's post (the word "criticize" links to his post):

> Could we do more? Undoubtedly. But might there not be a greater impetus to do so if OA advocates were to acknowledge and encourage these efforts, rather than criticize them?

My own answer would be that you should encourage and acknowledge efforts that you see as legitimately positive, but that such acknowledgment doesn't mean you shouldn't criticize efforts (sometimes the same efforts) you see as cynical, deceptive or wrong-headed. (The comment stream on the Skitch post is fascinating in its own way, including wonderful examples of self-proclaimed OA advocates who, by their actions, I'd regard as trying to either undermine OA or redirect it into the Pay Us The Gold Permanent Publisher Profit path. But that's just me.)

Neylon continues to explain why he chose to criticize Access to Research—not because it was only a small step but because he regards it as "a step entirely in the wrong direction." I think he makes a good case; read it in the original.

Wayne Bivens-Tatum used his February 27, 2014 "Peer to Peer Review" column in *Library Journal*, "On Extremists," to discuss the *Scholarly Kitchen* post and how it relates to absurdities such as the "debate" in which Bill Nye debated evolution with Ken Ham (the "ark park" 6,000-year-old-earth guy). Part of what WBT has to say:

> As with the evolution versus Ham-fisted creationism debate, the problem isn't one of extremes, though. The problem is a clash of worldviews. The Scholarly Kitchen post claims, "There are a lot of very smart, dedicated, and hard-working people in our community, and at the end of the day we all want the same thing—to make the

> best possible scholarly content available to those who need it." The phrasing itself is worth noting: "available to those who need it." That isn't the goal of OA advocates, though. They want scholarly content available to anyone who wants it. This statement implies that commercial publishers and OA advocates have a common goal, but they don't. OA advocates want open access scholarship, and commercial publishers want to maximize their profits.

WBT isn't anti-publisher:

> Most of the time, there isn't much of a conflict. The vast majority of publishers provide value for money, and if all publishers were like that, the OA movement wouldn't have gained much traction with librarians and researchers. But there are extremists who upset the delicate balance that still works well most of the time. Extremists who inflate prices well beyond what library budgets can support. Extremists who give money to members of Congress to support legislation against providing open access to publicly funded scholarship…

He offers a few other examples of how extremists work, then says (excerpting):

> It's true that there can be no debate among extremists. However, it's also true there can be no debate *with* extremists. One reason OA scholarship is so attractive to so many people is because the actions of extremists on the other side over the past couple of decades have made it much harder to see the benefits of traditional publishing, to make it seem a desirable good instead of a necessary evil. Those extremists have poisoned the well against their own cause and against the majority of traditional publishers whose models work quite well for librarians and scholars.
>
> My suggestion to the publishers out there that aren't Ham-fisted extremists is to stop arguing with OA advocates and focus on the bad practices among yourselves that have driven people to want to abandon traditional scholarly publishing altogether…

Is a Rational Discussion of Open Access Possible?

This post—at *Discussing Open Access*—is the text (with slides) of Rick Anderson's March 10, 2014 lecture at the Smithsonian Libraries. It's a long one, made longer by a set of comments that's small in number but large in text.

It's an interesting lecture, and as always with Anderson it's well-written and well thought out. But, well, the devil can be in the details, and there are a few here that are—like Anderson's assertion that, other than possibly Jeffrey Beall, he doesn't know of *anybody* who's opposed to

OA—a little unsettling if you're really looking for a balanced, rational, factual discussion. For example:

> The combination of concrete fiscal pressure and a mounting resentment towards publishers who take scholarly content out of academia and then sell it back to academia at a high price has led to the growth of the Open Access movement, which proposes to make published scholarship freely available to the world.

That's wrong. That combination is *one reason* for the growth of OA—but far from the only one. Universal access isn't just about making articles *affordable*; it's about making them *accessible*.

Then we get to his discussion of the consequences of Gold OA. In part:

> Another important (though unintended) consequence of the Gold model lies in the fact that, since it provides for immediate free access, the publisher's incentive to maintain a high quality of output is weakened. This isn't to say it disappears entirely or that Gold OA journals aren't any good — some are very good, and some aren't (just like toll-access journals). It's only to point out that when your business model does not rely on people buying your product, the incentive to invest in a high-quality product is relatively weak.

Without recognizing that major publishers can *and clearly do* use "increased number of published papers" as a justification for price increases, and also that Big Deal bundling means that libraries—the actual buyers—don't really choose individual journals from major publishers pretty much vitiates the "incentive to maintain a high quality of output" in any but the flagship journals that keep the Big Deals going.

> In fact, with an author-pays model, the quality incentives move from weak to actively perverse. If your revenue increases with a higher rate of acceptance, then there's a strong incentive to accept papers without regard to quality.

Two factual points: A majority of OA journals do not charge author-side fees; it's been reported that a *higher percentage* of subscription journals than of OA journals charge author-side fees. Oh, and a third: adding more journals to a Big Deal is another way to justify increased charges. All three of these suggest that Anderson's "perverse incentive" is *at least* as relevant to traditional publishing as it is to OA.

I'm not going to say much about his critique of Green OA because I believe he has it right (yes, I need to do a personal commentary on that soon, especially about the Magic Day When Publishers Become Peer-Review Managers for Almost No Money).

Then he takes on OA advocates for being unwilling to admit that there are problems or to argue fairly. It's a long discussion that I think you need to read directly, but I see some straw men blowing in the wind.

There are other problems, even as Anderson (I believe) gets some things usefully right, such as his issues with "inevitability" and "inexorable rise" and "dramatic growth." On the other hand, he quotes a low-end estimate of the presence of OA publishing that's either so blatantly outdated or so blatantly false that you'd think he'd take the two minutes with *DOAJ* to discredit it (or that Richard Poynder would have done so), namely a claim by Derk Haank that, as of the end of 2010, "only around 2% to 2.5% of the world's papers" were appearing in Gold or Hybrid journals.

I can't speak to 2010, except indirectly: limiting things to only those journals that are in *DOAJ* and that report all of their article-level metadata to *DOAJ*, and noting that this explicitly excludes so-called "hybrid" journals, the 2010 article count was 176,766 articles. Given that only about 60% of the journals in *DOAJ* provide article-level data, we can safely assume a much higher actual number: for 2011 through 2013, where I can compare *DOAJ*'s numbers with my actual observations (which *themselves* leave out possibly 15%-18% of articles that are in journals with no English-language interface), the *DOAJ* numbers are anywhere from 80% to 58% of my numbers. So it's likely that actual 2010 OA publishing was somewhere between 220,000 and 300,000—and has grown substantially since then, to more than 366,000 in my own counts in 2013.

For this to be "2% to 2.5% of the world's papers," even for the clearly-low 176,766 count, would mean that the overall total in 2010 was between 7.1 and 8.8 million, where most estimates are that the overall total *now* is around two to 2.5 million. (His reference for the 20% gold-and-green figure is an even older paper, from 2006; that one estimated overall publishing at 1.35 million papers in 2006. If scholarly publishing has *actually* incresed from 1.35 million papers to 2.5 million papers in nine years—an increase of 85%--then something else may be wrong, but that's beyond the scope of this discussion.)

I'm spending far too much time on this article, but here's another I have to note:

> What about OA opponents? Are they more willing to discuss these matters in a reasonable way? In fairness, I obviously have to address this question. The problem is, I can hardly think of anyone who, to my knowledge, actually opposes OA (other than, perhaps, Jeffrey Beall, who has done excellent work on the problem of predatory publishing but whose recent article attacking the OA movement was, in my view, unbalanced, inaccurate, and unfair).

So there's *only one OA opponent in the entire field*! Isn't that remarkable? I'd add my opinion of the "excellent work" remark, but I've dealt with that elsewhere at absurd length. (As to his claim that balanced and critical discussion of OA can bring you under attack, given that Stevan Harnad has attacked me personally, I'll give him that one. As for being put on an OA

enemies list—the link is to a Harnad attack on Rick Anderson, and that's a problem with Harnad, not with OA proponents in general. If you want to argue that Harnad is such an extremist that he harms OA efforts, fine, except that I agree with you, so it will be a short argument.)

Open Access Licensing

How could I possibly tag this item, subtagged "Making Open Access Licensing Work," as anti-OA? Let's see: it appears on the STM Association site ("The global voice of scholarly publishing") and it's not a summary of Creative Commons licenses and where they're most appropriate (i.e., when something other than CC-BY makes sense).

Instead, it's a *new set of licenses*—five of them in all—to use instead of, or alongside, CC licenses.

> STM believes that publishers should have the tools to offer a wide variety of appropriate licensing terms dependent on their economic model and business strategy. To that end, the Association has produced sample licences for a variety of uses within open access publishing. The licences on this page have been designed to provide easy to use, ready-made terms and conditions which publishers can adopt and/or adapt to the needs of their users. The "full" licenses can be used as stand-alone options, while the "supplementary" license clauses can be used to supplement other existing standardised or bespoke licences.

To my naïve eye, it appears to be an effort to complexify things—maybe not anti-OA, but a way to make the whole rights situation even more complicated. Maybe I'm wrong.

Reactionary Rhetoric Against Open Access Publishing

This peer-reviewed article by Wayne Bivens-Tatum appeared in *tripleC: communication, capitalism & critique* 14:2 (2014)—after I'd already written INTERSECTIONS: ETHICS AND ACCESS 1: THE SAD CASE OF JEFFREY BEALL (*Cites & Insights* 14:4, April 2014). If it had appeared earlier, I would have discussed it in my article, as it's an excellent ~~takedown of~~ response to Beall's over-the-top article in *tripleC*.

> Abstract: In 2013, Jeffrey Beall published an attack on the open-access scholarship movement in tripleC: "The Open-Access Movement Is Not Really About Open Access". This article examines the claims and arguments of that contribution. Beall's article makes broad generalizations about open-access advocates with very little supporting evidence, but his rhetoric provides good examples of what Albert O. Hirschman called the "rhetoric of reaction". Specifically, it provides examples of the perversity thesis, the futility thesis, and the jeopardy thesis in action. While the main argument is both unsound and invalid, it does show a rare example of reactionary rhetoric from a librarian.

It's a careful, thoughtful article that deserves to be read on its own, but I will quote the opening paragraph, decidedly lighter in tone than much of the rest:

> You should realize that when Joseph Esposito at the generally anti-open access *Scholarly Kitchen* blog thinks your anti-open access rant is excessive, you've crossed some sort of threshold. You should also realize that when Michael Eisen of the Public Library of Science bothers to give your article a thorough fisking, you have people's attention. In the digital pages of this very open access journal, Jeffrey Beall managed to publish an anti-open access article so poorly argued that I wonder if he'll later use the publication as an example of how bad open access (OA) publishing can be. If only *Lingua Franca* were still around to publish "The Beall Hoax".

Worth reading.

Meet Kent Anderson, anti-#openaccess campaigner, publisher of Science

This one's by Michael Eisen on August 7, 2014 at *it is NOT junk*, and it's in celebration of Kent Anderson being named Publisher by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which publishes *Science*. Apparently, the news of that appointment was "met with shock and widespread derision by myself and other supporters of open access publishing," causing others to wonder "what we were getting all worked up about."

This post makes the case for Kent Anderson being an outright foe of OA, and includes a set of links for posts in the *Scholarly Kitchen*, a set that I believe makes a pretty strong case that, when Rick Anderson says he doesn't know anybody other than Jeffrey Beall who's against OA, he's not paying enough attention to his fellow "chefs" at the Kitchen.

> Kent clearly does not like open access. He thinks it is bad for scholarly publishing – that it undercuts publisher's ability to make money, and, more importantly to him, it erodes the quality of the products they produce (which is why we all find it so ironic that his first job at AAAS is to launch a new open access journal).
>
> He at times raises important issues. If he were just an open access skeptic, that would be one thing. But his writing on the subject is marked by several other deeply troubling features:

- An utter disdain for the supporters of open access and a tendency to impugn our motives.
- The belief that science exists to serve science publishing and not the other way around.
- The dismissal of government efforts to promote open access (especially public access mandates and PubMed Central) as needless subsidies, but the

> view that the product of tens of billions of dollars of public investment in research, as well as nearly ten billion dollars in subscription fees, is not a subsidy, but some kind of publisher birthright.

Is Eisen unfair? Read for yourself.

One of many omitted

I'd planned to comment on "What happens when you take something of value and give it away?"—an attack on the Department of Energy's compliance with general OA mandates—in *TheHill*, but I'm not going to for a fairly simple reason: As soon as I went to the site, I got *multiple* flags from Malwarebytes, which I added to Microsoft Security Essentials as my malware protection after being hit by driveby malware (on a scam OA "journal" site).

It looks to be ads on the site, but in any case, I won't link to or discuss sites that appear to contain malware. Life really is too short.

Scientists criticise new "open access" journal which limits research-sharing with copyright

Is it possible for an OA journal to be anti-OA? That's a definitional question, one that arises in reading this Fiona Rutherford article on August 29, 2014 at *NewStatesman*. The lede:

> One hundred and fifteen scientists have signed an open letter to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), one of the world's most prestigious scientific societies and publisher of the journal *Science*, expressing concerns over the launch of a new scientific journal, *Science Advances*. The AAAS describes *Science Advances* as open access, a term used to describe free online access to research for members of the public - but the scientists who have signed the open letter say they are "deeply concerned" with the specifics of its model, claiming it could stifle the sharing of scientific knowledge.

What's wrong here? Well, you could start with the breathtaking APC: $5,500, a rate higher than *any* journal in *DOAJ* as of May 2014—oh, and if your paper's more than ten pages long, make that $7,000. Additionally, the license for articles will include the –NC clause, prohibiting commercial reuse, which for many OA purists means they're not really OA.

An AAAS spokesperson said the prices were "competitive with comparable open-access journals." Just because I couldn't find any in *DOAJ* doesn't mean they're not out there… (At this writing, the base APC is $3,000—but it's $4,000 if you want CC BY rather than CC BY-NC; there's still that $1,500 surcharge for long papers, but the cutoff is now 15 pages. At $4,000 there *are* "comparable" journals—about four of them.)

AAAS Vies for the Title the "Darth Vader of Publishing"

Another one that's *about* anti-OA actions, this time by "longpd" on September 15, 2014 at *Innovision*. The lede:

> AAAS is vying for the crown of Lord Vader or Chief Evildoer in its approach to suppressing cost-effectiveness_open_access_journals open dissemination of scientific knowledge, even when that knowledge is paid for by tax payer money in the first place. They claim to support open access. They redefine it to be a pay for publishing charge (APC) of $3,000 USD and that restricts the subsequent use of the information in the article preventing commercial reuses such as publication on some educational blogs, incorporation into educational material, as well the use of this information by small to medium enterprises. If you really meant open access, the way the rest of world defines it, you'll have to pay a surcharge of an additional $1,000. But it gets worse.

Yep, it's about *Science Advances*, as more of the piece makes clear:

> A new faux open access journal Science Advances is being launched next year that will, get this, charge an additional US$1,500 above the fees listed previously to publish articles that are more than ten pages long. Wait…. this is a born digital publication with no paper distribution. They're charging $1,500 plus the $4,000 to publish an open access article longer that 10 pages. It is bits, right? Their argument is that the freely provided peer review process is more difficult with longer papers so they should charge more for the effort, seeing as how they are getting their reviews for nothing anyway and this is just pure profit – and who doesn't like pure profit? They claim that the additional 'editorial services' justify this additional surcharge.

The author also mentions Bohannon's *Science* "sting, (noting that the methodologically-unsound "study" wasn't really about OA at all), some other questionable moves by *Science* and the AAAS, and concludes:

> It's time to recognise when a monopoly is trying to consolidate its position at the expense of the very people on whose work its prestige depends. Shame on AAAS.

I'm guessing some folks would object to the tone of this message.

Opening up on Open Access

This set of "mini-rants" (the author's term) by Paul Barrett appeared on September 1, 2014 at *New Views on Old Bones*. Barrett says he's a "huge admirer" of the "hard push" for OA…but has a "few brief observations."

Summarizing them: OA costs authors money (he says an *average* of $2,500 in his field, paleontology, which works out to about 23 times the per-article 2013 average for anthropology and archaeology, six times the average for earth sciences, three times the average for medicine and more than twice the average for biology, so paleontology must be an unusually

expensive field); OA costs publishers money (apparently, even the smallest journals need complex staffing structures—and here's the "subscription revenues fund other worthy society expenditures" line); green OA is really all we need; "rediscover some scholarly skills" (hey, *scholars* can get all the papers they need, as long as they know who to ask, and who gives a damn about anybody but scholars?); and "a historical perspective is interesting," as he thinks we may reverse the "progress" of going from patronage-funded publication to "handing over publication to commercial publishers," with apparently no sense of who's paying the bills for those publishers.

There's more. It's not convincing, unless you really do believe that the only access that matters is access by well-connected scholars.

Do people outside of universities want to read peer-reviewed articles? Adam Dunn's question, as he discusses it in this September 3, 2013 post on his eponymous blog, belongs here only because I frequently see a negative answer from those questioning OA—you know, "nobody but researchers can read/can understand/wants to read/cares about this stuff anyway, so what's the deal?"

Dunn gathered a little anecdata, asking this question on Twitter:

> If you aren't in a university, do you ever try to access peer-reviewed journal articles? If yes, ever hit a pay-wall?

He got a bunch of responses, and—apart from a couple of oddities like the guy who told people to just go to a university library and photocopy the articles—the answers were pretty much uniform: *Yes and yes*.

> Some people seem to assume that only other scientists (or whatever) would be interested in their work, or that everything the "public" need to know is contained in a media release or abstract.
>
> I think the results tell us a lot about the consumption of information by the wider community, the importance of scientific communication, the problem with the myth that only scientists want to read scientific articles, and the great need for free and universal access to all published research.

He offers some other data points, all of them fairly convincing. I know my answer, of course: "Yes. I do, at least once in a while." Dunn concludes:

> Surely the impetus to move towards universal and open access to published research would grow if more academics realised that actually *everyone* wants access to the complicated equations, to the raw data and numbers, and to the authors' own words about the breadth and limits of the research that they have undertaken.

Survey of CES Members: Open Versus Restricted Access to CJPE

This one's a little unusual: it's an October 2, 2014 (I assume: the site just says October 2, but I tagged it on October 9, 2014 and it refers to September 2014 events) item on the Canadian Evaluation Society's website regarding access to the *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*.

It's unusual because *CJPE* was, in online form, members-only (or for an article fee to nonmembers); then, in 2011, it became open access in online form, provided in print form to members—but starting September 1, 2014, they were charging $50 for hardcopy subscriptions, even for members.

> The CES Board of Directors has put forward the idea of once again restricting access to the online CJPE, for the main purpose of increasing benefits to members. The CES is currently considering several options regarding access to the CJPE in order to best serve CES members as well as the evaluation discipline.

In other words, a society was seriously considering taking an OA journal *out* of OA status. That's happened elsewhere (in one ALA division, sadly, even as others were converting journals to OA), but it's rare. It's also interesting that *CJPE* is heavily subsidized by Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council—45% of its costs.

The post gives arguments for and against OA, including these two interesting anti-OA arguments:

- Restricted access embodies the very high value ascribed to the intellectual property found in the Journal;
- Most journals associated with evaluation societies around the world currently restrict access to their journal.

I have to admit that the first one, which I'll rephrase as "people value things more if they have to pay for them," rings all too true. The second is "other societies do it, so why shouldn't we?"

How did the survey go? A December 11, 2014 post says that the results were "carefully considered by the Board of Directors," which voted to "remain open access" but not really: it's gone to a one-year embargo for non-members. In other words, it's now toll-access—and given that the decision was put into effect *that same month*, it appears that the association may have had a preferred course of action. The actual results? I could send email to ask for them: they're not provided in the news item, which seems a bit odd.

My change of heart about open access journals… we can do better

This one, by Michelle Kelly-Irving on February 11, 2014 at *Research Frontier*, is tricky.

> I have changed my mind about open access journals recently, and simultaneously confirmed that I am a naive optimist.

> The open access movement is unfortunately prone to the cynical profit-driven culture of the publishing world – which open access activists deplore. I fear that we are still far from an ideal open access model.

So far, so good—although the second paragraph's an extreme overstatement. But…

> I was very much a supporter of open access journals where the authors pay for their paper to be made available to all – but I am now back-tracking in that support. I don't think that we have the publication model right yet.

Need I bother to repeat the boring refrain that most gold OA journals do *not* charge author-side fees (and "the authors pay" oversimplifies the model)? Never mind. Kelly-Irving explains why she's changed her mind. Excerpted:

> I have seen the model more closely having (very) briefly done some editorial work for a well-established open access journal recently. My observations made me realize that I had naively forgotten about the money-making motivations of most publishers not least the open access ones. The motivation within these journals is still ultimately to make money, and they do so by accepting papers and getting the authors to pay for them. To be fair, many of the best open access journals have a separate process from the standard peer-review one, to enable authors to request article fee waivers. For authors this means that the reviewing and ensuing decision on your paper should not be linked to your ability to pay. This is something I found reassuring, and encouraged me to submit, review and do editorial work for open access journals…
>
> Except, what I discovered is that such journals also have an "inclusive" policy. This means that it is actually very difficult to have your paper rejected by an open access journal. It is only under extreme circumstances that need to be explicitly argued for, that a paper can be rejected with no further re-submission possible…

She later complains about the "industrial numbers" of paper submissions that "these journals" receive and manage.

What's good here: she recognizes that money-making is a motivation for all for-profit and many "not-for-profit" publishers, not just OA publishers. What's not so good: on the basis of (one?) unnamed example, she casts a pretty broad shadow suggesting that OA journals (in general?) accept almost anything, and that only "many of the best" journals separate the review process from the payment process.

> The most problematic area is that the current most common open access journal model has not altered the fundamental issue: they make money by exploiting academics. The editors and reviewers carry out this time-consuming work for free, and the journal makes a profit. This could be

> regarded as a form of fraud. Governments and public bodies or public funders pay these academics their salaries, which then partly go towards supporting private entities (publishers). And the real sting: as authors, we need to come up with the cash to pay for the fees by obtaining money from hard earned projects. Funders are often public institutions or charities, meaning that once again, access to knowledge is funded twice: once by funding the academics to do the work, and second paying the open access journals to publish the work.

Author-pays is *not* "the current most common open access journal model," but the point's well taken (and applies even more so to subscription journals)—but I don't see any proposed solutions. Maybe that's not her job.

In the end, given the lack of specificity, this is not so much an attack on gold OA as an attack on *all* journal publishing that involves either subscriptions or fees.

Where to submit your paper. Or "If at first you don't succeed, fail fail again … then try open access"

Andrew Hendry posted this on November 29, 2014 at *eco-evolutionary dynamics*, and maybe the title is all you need to see where Hendry stands. The piece is primarily an attack on *PLOS ONE* as a "dumping ground" where you should only submit papers after you've failed in several attempts to get them into proper journals.

He includes a strange set of twitter items, in which one person suggests that the 31,000 papers published in *PLOS ONE* in 2013 might be "more than Elsevier's entire output" from its 2,200 journals (another person noted that Elsevier published more than 250,000 papers in 2013)…and Hendry weighed in with this: "OA jour. (note: many more than just PLOS) decrease reviews b/c they don't reject = less re-review."

"They don't reject" is slander, pure and simple, and might be reason enough to give up on the post immediately. Hendry follows that with notes about his lab's recent history of mostly having rejections, and then this:

> These two experiences led me to consider the question: "Should you – as a young scientist – take the easy route and publish in open-access journals, or the hard route (likely entailing multiple rejections) of trying more traditional journals, either the big boys or the classic society-based journals?" First, let's consider the benefits of open access. The basic idea is, of course, that everyone will see the paper and you won't waste your time cycling through journals that don't think your paper is "important enough." Moreover, citation rates are pretty decent for open-access journals, right? At least, that's what everyone says. I would like to put this presumption to the test based on my own experiences.

This is followed by classic anecdata: Hendry published three papers in *PLOS ONE* after they'd been rejected a few times by traditional journals—and those papers haven't been cited as often as his papers in traditional journals. *He* thinks they were good papers, but…

Based on this sample of one researcher, he says this:

> [I]t remains clear that publishing in PLoS ONE will not enhance your citation rate for a given level of paper quality.

At least if your name is Andrew Hendry and you only publish papers there that have been repeatedly rejected elsewhere. He explicitly argues that you should "forego open access and publish in traditional journals" and equates low acceptance rates with rigorous peer review (then says that papers are rejected for "all sorts of arbitrary reasons").

What about access? Hendry has an answer for that too:

> But, wait, I hear you saying: those papers won't be accessible to the rest of the world because it requires an expensive subscription. Nonsense. Anyone can get access to any paper from any journal – many papers are posted on someone's website and, for those that aren't, all you have to do is email the author to ask for a copy! (I admit getting papers is harder – but certainly not impossible – without institutional access.) Moreover, you can pay for open access in those journals at a cost that isn't much higher than at *PLoS ONE* or many other open access journals.

There's definitely nonsense going on here. The concluding paragraph is a bit clearer about Hendry's feelings:

> In summary, I suggest you work toward publishing in traditional and well-respected general or society-based journals as your goal, learn to deal with rejection, and only when you are so sick of the paper that you vomit (actually vomit, that is, not just feel nauseous) send it to *PLoS ONE* or another open access journal. (Or if you need really quickly publications to graduate.) Someone is bound to cite it someday – probably anyway. With this in mind, perhaps you might like to cite the cool new paper we just published this year in *PLoS ONE*. [Emphasis added.]

He also provides the first comment for his own article, and it's a doozy:

> To make sure my opinion is clear, I am FOR open access PAPERS (in whatever journal) and even for open access journals as long as they are selective (e.g., *PLoS Biology*, *Evolutionary Applications*). What I am not for is for-profit open access journals where you pay your way to publish pretty much whatever you want. Those are merely profit making machines for publishing houses - they only make money when they publish your paper. *PLoS ONE* is non-profit but the problem there is that it is (rightly) viewed as a dumping ground for papers that people couldn't get published elsewhere. Thus, it is not good for exposure of

> your paper, for the influence of your paper (citations), or for your career. It should be a last resort when you are in a hurry or you (or your student) are sick of trying other places. Indeed, that is how many people already view it and you should too or people will think that was the case for your paper even if you submitted there first.
>
> By far the best option as far as everyone (except for many publishers) is concerned is to publish in a respected traditional (often society based) journal and pay for the paper to be open access. Everyone wins.

There you go: "hybrid" is the way to go. That way, libraries run out of money *and* publishers make even more money. "Everyone wins."

A related post makes it clear that Hendry thinks *PLOS ONE* is "the archetypal open access journal" and that open access journals—all of them, not just the "archetypal" and wholly atypical *PLOS ONE*—lack good peer review. (When others show evidence that, in ecology at least, articles in *PLOS ONE* are cited reasonably well, he says "well, evolution's different than ecology." He's not willing to admit that his frequently-rejected papers really might *not* be as important as his others—they're all awesome, says Hendry—but he's at least willing to admit that his advice for every researcher is based on one narrow field, and really on one person's experience.)

Sad, just sad.

Free Access to Science Research Doesn't Benefit Everyone

This piece by Rose Eveleth appeared December 22, 2014 at *The Atlantic*—and it's an odd hodgepodge, involving various Opens and various problems.

As a former analyst/programmer, I was appalled to read that making code open source is difficult because the programmers have to *document* their code. But not quite as appalled as having *Science*'s executive publisher quoted as saying that *Science* "costs $50 million a year to publish," without *any* questioning of that figure (which I suspect is the *revenue* for *Science*, a quite different figure) and whether it has much of anything to do with scholarly research (since, at least in the free issues I've received now and then, most of what appears in the magazine is *not* full refereed articles).

It's an article that almost exclusively quotes opponents of OA (with one brief quote from a *PLOS* person) and another astonishing, unexamined assertion from the *Science* person that basically says OA isn't affordable, period.

Tather than spend more time on it, I'll link to "Ripping apart that terrible Atlantic piece on Open Access," Mick Watson's partial fisking, which appeared December 30, 2014 at *opiniomics*. Not that I necessarily agree with everything Watson says, but it's a valuable balance to an

unfortunate and heavily biased article. The comments are also interesting.

One commenter, Pawel Niewiadomski, took issue with Watson, and later posted "Selectivity is important in research publishing" on January 4, 2015 on his own website. He says:

> My argument in defense of the closed access paywalled model of scientific publishing is that the incentives in this model are so aligned, that the publisher is motivated to be selective – they will pick the best papers most likely to be read and cited by their clients – the readers. On the other hand, the open access model forces the publisher to lower their standards – if the standards are too high, none of their prospective clients – the authors, will want to publish there. Please note the important dichotomy – in the closed access model the client is the reader, in the open access model the client is the author. In other words, closed access publishers can afford to be highly selective of what they publish, while open access publishers cannot.

Except that the clients for subscription journals are predominantly libraries, not readers, and Big Deals force libraries to accept journals they don't really want—oh, and publishers use increasing numbers of papers as a basis for increasing subscription costs. Meanwhile, to be sure, *most* OA journals publish relatively few papers (and most of them don't charge author-side fees). The "On the other hand" assertion is nonsense.

As for the argument that selectivity is important—which boils down to "it's easier for me to keep up with my field if I assume that the only papers that matter are the ones in Highly Selective Toll Journals"—that's a different set of issues. Access by anybody *outside* the inner circle? Not an issue, apparently.

Authors and readers beware the dark side of Open Access

This editorial by six authors (!) appeared December 12, 2014 at the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* (a "hybrid" journal)—and begins by saying that there *are* OA publishers "whose publishing standards match those of *JAN*." But it's focusing on "predatory" journals, and—of course—assumes that everything in Beall's sideshow is both (a) "predatory" and (b) an actual journal. Never mind. What got to me was actually this statement:

> The difference between acceptable open access publishers and predatory publishers is that, *while both operate on a pay-to-publish business model*, predatory publishers do not follow many if not all acceptable publication standards. [Emphasis added.]

Is it a party line handed down by groups of editors—the assumption that *all* OA journals use a "pay-to-publish business model"? It's false. It's misleading. (The rest of the sentence is garbled, but hey, six authors.)

Why Open Access is Good News for Neo-Nazis

Huh? Have we hit the Godwin point in this discussion? Here's Robert Dingwall on October 17, 2012 at *social science space*, and I'm tempted to say it appears out of chronological order because I didn't want to derail the roundup (rather than the truth, which is that I didn't see it or tag it until recently).

This one isn't about OA in general. It's about CC-BY.

> Much of the debate on Open Access has concentrated on the shift from a subscription model that opens access for authors, while restricting access for readers, to a publication charge model that restricts access for authors, while opening access for readers. The proposed requirement to publish under a Creative Commons CC-BY licence may, though, be even more pernicious for social science authors. Unfortunately, understanding why takes us to parts of intellectual property law that many of us do not usually need to bother with.

"That restricts access for authors"? Huh?

> The CC-BY licence [means that] one class of content creators, who happen to work in universities, will arbitrarily lose its historic rights to own and control the intellectual property that it has created. Will there be any compensation for their economic losses? Do I need to spell out the answer?

What happens when an author submits an article to almost any subscription journal? They are required to *assign their copyright* to the journal, with *no* payment. So much for "economic losses." But that's not really the point. The point is that CC-BY means other people can use the material: "When you publish a paper in an academic journal, any reader will, in future, be able to copy and pass it on, to mash it up or to use it for marketing purposes without the author having any control or receiving any reward."

We're told that nobody really wants to read these articles anyway; the all-OA-means-APCs meme is at least implied; OA automatically means "weaker quality signals"; and the kicker:

> Others may be more excited by the potential benefits. Take the possible example of a far-right political group studied by a political scientist. This might well result in a journal paper which demonstrates that the group's members are not demons but ordinary men and women responding to economic and social challenges with strategies that seem reasonable to them, even if based on partial information or analysis by others' standards. Racism is not psychopathology but as an action that is wholly intelligible within a particular context. For the author, the paper presents evidence that it is unhelpful to dismiss these people as bigots: the political system needs to recognize and address their grievances, without

> adopting their racist solutions. With a CC-BY licence, however, nothing stops the group taking hold of the paper, editing it down and using it as a recruitment tool: "Famous professor says we are just ordinary people responding in a reasonable way to the problems of our community…" You cannot pick and choose users: free access for Big Pharma is also free access for neo-Nazis.

There it is. *Somebody might use your scholarship in a manner you don't approve of*—as though they can't already paraphrase what you've said (more readily, because with toll-access readers won't find it easy to double-check) or cherry-pick a few sentences as fair use. (Oh, sorry, UK: fair use doesn't apply. It's called fair dealing.)

In the comments, Dingwall makes it clear that *all* OA of whatever color is evil or at least useless. It's fair to say that some commenters disagree.

Open access and authors: two questions for the future

Rick Anderson posted this on January 23, 2015 at *UKSG eNews*. He simply asserts that green OA isn't working very well, in a carefully-worded statement that I suspect may be true (but unproven) as given:

> Green OA – the model under which formally published articles from subscription journals are placed in public repositories – has not yet posed a significant challenge to subscriptions, largely because Green OA has not yet achieved pervasive success; relatively few articles can easily be found in their versions of record, in a timely way, in OA repositories.

Key here: "versions of record" and "in a timely way." Also, I suppose, "relatively few." If you eliminate all green OA with embargoes and all green OA where the version posted is not precisely the version of record, I suspect you wipe out rather a lot of green OA (and I think that's a real issue).

Then there's the issue of gold OA and APCs. Here, I think he overstates the importance of PLOS quite substantially:

> And while it is true that most Gold OA journals – or at least most of those listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals – do not impose author fees, most of those journals publish relatively few articles; thanks in large part to the massive output of the PLoS journals, which impose author fees and which together published roughly 35,000 articles in 2013, most Gold OA articles are, in fact, paid for by author fees.

By the time this piece appeared, RA certainly had access to my numbers, whether or not he read them, and *should* have known that 35,000 is *not* a "large part" of Gold OA output—it's less than 10%. (OK, "large" is fuzzy enough that you can argue it either way, I suppose, but…) As for the "most Gold OA articles…" statement, that's true overall, but not for all

fields. In 2013, articles involving APCs (and assuming no waivers) made up the bulk of articles in STEM and biomed, but most articles in the humanities and social sciences did *not* involve APCs, which puts a different spin on his next sentence:

> For authors in the STEM disciplines, this means that research grant funds are redirected from research support to dissemination; for those in the humanities and social sciences, who are much more rarely supported by grant funds, paying fees is often simply not possible.

The extent of that "redirection" has been discussed elsewhere—2% seems to be the figure I've heard most often—but the fact is that, in HSS, paying fees is usually *simply not necessary*.

I agree with Anderson's conclusion:

> Faced with resistance on the part of recalcitrant authors, OA advocates have three choices: cajole, coerce, or compromise. For those invested in the goal of maximal OA, the first two strategies are risky: cajoling (or 'educating') is never 100% successful; on the other hand, coercion is fraught with both philosophical and practical difficulty.
>
> That leaves compromise, a concept to which some some OA advocates are more open than others. It seems likely, however, that they will ultimately have little choice. As long as any choice is left to authors, a truly comprehensive OA future is difficult to imagine.

More specifically, I agree with the last clause. I honestly can't imagine a truly comprehensive OA future in my lifetime.

On the Other Hand…

I thought it would be nice to close this messy roundup with a handful of items that are fairly clearly in favor of OA, without being simplistic evangelization or extreme cases. I begin with one that's somewhere in the middle:

Thoughts on Open Access Panels

This one's from Konrad M. Lawson, posted January 14, 2014 at "ProfHacker" in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Lawson considers himself a strong supporter of OA, and looks at how OA panels tend to work at conferences—or not work.

> When one presenter at a recent open access panel at the American Historical Association asked the important question, "To what problem is Open Access the answer?" the first answer that came to my mind was rather simple, "My problem, and the problem faced by people whose historical work I care about: access."

> Notice that this first somewhat selfish answer that popped into my head was not phrased as, "So that everyone in the world can read my obscure scholarship for free." Of course, that is a perfectly legitimate answer, but a growing number of critical voices against open access may take the wording of this statement and insert it into a misleading binary composed of producers of research on one side and the "consumers" of a "free product" on the other. This, in turn, makes it relatively easy to perform a powerful inversion of debates on OA where strong proponents, including myself, have long argued that open access is primarily an attempt to address inequality. The inversion I have seen employed more and more often is to embrace the argument of inequality but conclude that open access is in fact a cause, and not a solution to inequality.

What I love here, and what gets this item prominence, is Lawson's "four-step program" to turn OA from a solution into a problem:

1. Associate the open access movement as closely as possible with the idea of a business model that must confront a set of relatively fixed costs.
2. Assert that the only reasonable business model that is compatible with high-quality scholarship is Gold Open Access, and imply that a) Gold OA will almost always take the form of a large monetary sum charged for article submissions and b) that individual scholars or budget-strapped departments will have to have to pay up or not get published. Scholars at elite schools will always be able to pour out a flood of scholarship submitted to high-impact journals thanks to departmental or grant funding while scholars elsewhere will have to count their pennies and make careful strategic decisions about where and what they submit for publication.
3. Juxtapose the gross inequality and hardship created for scholars publishing in this new environment with the presumably minimal additional exposure of our work to an increased number of freeloading "consumers" as a result of open access.
4. Bonus Points: Turn the discussion about predatory pricing of journal subscriptions and other online resources on its head by talking about the predatory practices and horrendous quality of a new breed of open access journal that is thriving in an author-pays environment.

Indeed. Realistically, 2a) is usually a little more absolute: it is assumed that *all* Gold OA involves large APCs, typically stated in figures that are in the top quartile of what's actually charged even in the minority of OA journals that charge APCs. Lawson does note that most people aren't quite this blatant.

He offers a couple of suggestions for improving OA panels. The most critical: thinking about the voices to be included. He's seen too many cases where librarians "stand alone as strong supporters of OA," and adds that they need help. The discussion here is excellent, and well

worth reading in the original. His second suggestion is to ask that all panel participants read Peter Suber's Open Access Overview; I'd agree that this is a good place to start.

Show Your Work

So says Barbara Fister in this October 17, 2013 "Peer to Peer Review" column at *Library Journal*, and as always with Fister I'm inclined to say "Here's the link. Go read it" and leave it at that.

Fister's talking to academic librarians: "Why is it that librarians agitate for open access and, at the same time, are content to put their own scholarship behind paywalls?" That's a good question—and since, as Fister notes, very few academic institutions have library science programs (call it 2%: roughly 40 out of roughly 1,800 four-year and above public and nonprofit colleges and universities in the U.S.), what this means is that academic librarians at most institutions don't have access to key articles.

There's so much that's good here, in terms of good advice and dealing with the trash-talkers of librarianship, that I have to stop quoting, but only after quoting the antepenultimate paragraph:

> Library school faculty, can I make a special appeal here? Why on earth don't you make every single article you've published available to us practitioners? We have such a short time to be trained professionally in your programs, and you keep discovering new things after we graduate. We have to keep on learning even after we leave the training nest. Most of us will not be able to subscribe to the journals you publish in, so unless you are thoughtful and publish in open access journals, we probably won't benefit from your work. Unless you are ashamed of your work or ashamed of the profession you are in, you should make your research public for the audience that can benefit from it. Those of you at public universities in particular—what are you thinking?

Opening up knowledge on the tenure track

Some academic librarians are doing their best, such as Meredith Farkas, who posted this on October 20, 2013 at *Information Wants To Be Free*.

> I'm not a hero. I'm not an open access warrior. I'm not one of those people who would risk their career on the cross of Open Access. I'm not a badass who makes demands of publishers. I ask nicely. I'm on the tenure track and the idea of walking away from an opportunity to publish is terrifying.
>
> But, you know what? You can find all of my writing (other than what's on this blog) in PDXScholar, our institutional repository (IR). Want to read my peer-reviewed articles? My American Libraries columns from the past few years? The book chapters I've written since 2008? They're all in there. My most recently article, co-authored with Lisa Hinchliffe and

> applying a management model to building a culture of assessment where librarians have faculty status, is in an open access journal. And I honestly didn't think this was particularly notable these days until I read Barbara Fister's not-at-all-cranky column in *Library Journal* on making our work freely available and post on Library Babelfish on tenure and the common good.

Those are the first two paragraphs. The rest discusses how she achieved these non-heroic feats and why she finds it odd that more people don't do so—and why you should *want* your work to be accessible. To all of which I find myself saying: Here's the link. Go read it. (Full disclosure: I regard Fister and Farkas both as heroes and friends.)

Read the comments too.

Not All Scientists Have Access

So says Erin C. McKiernan, posting on November 18, 2013 at her eponymous blog. McKiernan's a researcher, and she uses a CC-BY license for the text in her blog. And because she's representing a non-librarian, non-researcher-in-big-U.S.-university perspective you don't see all that often (also because this is well written and reasonably short), I'm quoting the whole thing.

> There are some great tweets coming out of the Berlin Open Access Conference (hashtag #berlin11) this morning. But like always, there are a few people on Twitter and elsewhere who just don't seem to get why we need complete and unrestricted open access to the scientific literature. I won't go into detail about all these reasons here. I would just like to address one argument I hear a lot and why it's wrong. It goes something like this:
>
> *The people who really need access to research are scientists, not the general public. Most scientists have access through their institutions. So, there's really no need for increased access. Scientific articles aren't hidden.*
>
> Putting aside for a moment how little you must think of the general public if you don't realize they deserve access to research they paid for with their tax dollars, is it really true that all scientists have access? Absolutely not. When people claim this, they are making at least two tenuous assumptions. First, they assume that scientists work in institutions that can afford journal subscriptions. Many scientists, however, work in small universities, teaching colleges, or private companies that cannot pay the high fees charged by publishers. If wealthy universities like Harvard say they can't afford journal subscriptions, imagine how many other institutions find the costs prohibitive. Second, they are often thinking of scientists working in developed countries. Even small universities in the U.S. have budgets exceeding some of the largest research institutions in low- to middle-

> income countries. Institutions in these countries struggle to purchase supplies and equipment needed to carry out experiments. Purchasing journal subscriptions isn't an option. These scientists do not have access to a large percentage of the scientific literature. To them, these articles are hidden.
>
> I'll give you a personal example. I work for a large federal research institute in Mexico. We do not have subscriptions to many academic journals. The subscription fees are simply too expensive. From what I understand, we have very limited print subscriptions because they cost less than the electronic ones. But even those take up a single small bookcase in the library. The majority of the research literature is hidden to us.
>
> So, how do we keep current? Some of us have affiliations with U.S. institutions that grant us access to the literature. Others ask friends for articles. Or, we email authors. Do we obtain the articles we need? Sometimes. But just because we eventually find something after upturning several rocks, does that mean it wasn't hidden? Does that mean it's acceptable that we don't have immediate and unrestricted access? What about students who don't have other institutional affiliations to rely on, or may find emailing authors (especially in a foreign language) intimidating? The scientific literature is hidden to them.
>
> And it is not acceptable.

I have nothing to add (although I'm a bit bothered by the first sentence in the italicized paragraph). It is *not* acceptable.

Is it time for a PLoLIS?

Dale Askey asked this question on January 13, 2014 on the *Taiga Forum*, and I'll assume most readers know that "LIS" stands for "Library and Information Science." Askey seems sure that librarianship needs One Big Journal. Then he says:

> Yes, we certainly have golden open access journals in library and information science, but they are few and far between. The journals that most of us know and read (and cite) are still subscription based.

Maybe. I count 77 library science journals in *DOAJ* that are accessible to an English-language reader (of which 94% don't charge APCs); those journals published 1,460 articles in 2014 (95% in no-fee journals). (Right around mid-June, I should be posting the 2014 numbers as part of my *The Open Access Landscape* series: look to *Walt at Random* on June 12, 2015.) I'm not sure I'd call 77 journals "few and far between," and I'd like to think that journals such as *C&RL* and *ITAL* (both OA) are among those "most of us know and read (and cite)."

Nor do I see where institutional support or funding for some massive journal would come from, or why One Journal to Rule Them All is preferable to a range of more specific OA journals. As to Askey's comment that it's "perhaps ironic that we don't have a funding agency that will force us to make this change," it's less than ironic that there's very little funding for library science research (and, of course, *none* for unaffiliated idiots like Walt Crawford).

Open Access Publishing: Pipe dream or the way forward for science?

Sarah Boon posted this on April 21, 2014 at *The CSP Blog*, a blog from Canadian Science Publishing. It's a nice and fairly well balanced overview of the realities of OA (from a Canadian perspective), both its advantages and some of the issues.

> Ensconced within our academic networks, we forget that there are many people who can't access paywalled articles: journalists, freelancers, scientists in less wealthy countries…the list is longer than you might expect.
>
> If only to get more people reading our research, academics should be keen on OA publishing. But OA is ultimately about moving the scientific endeavour forward: the more people taking part in the scientific conversation, the more ideas will be generated across the community to push science in new directions. This is what drives the most passionate promoters of OA publishing: that it's a paradigm shift in how we do science and is about the betterment of the discipline as a whole, not just individual researchers' careers.

That said, Boon points to some of the real-world issues; as I say, it's a good writeup. (I may have reached this article because Boon links to my discussion of the Bohannon "sting" after linking to the sting itself. For which I thank her.)

Recommended, at least for Canadian researchers. The conclusion:

> So next time you're trying to figure out where to publish your latest, groundbreaking research – consider your open access publishing options. If you prefer traditional publishing – look for an institutional repository through which you can make your work accessible to others. Either way, science will benefit.

How to Start an Open-Access Journal

Here's something a little different: a post by Suzanne Birch on September 2, 2014 at *OpenQuaternary Discussions* about the founding of a new OA journal, *OpenQuaternary*. At the time of the post, the journal was still in startup: the first two research articles appeared in March 2015. Still, the set of "five (easy) steps" is worth reading, if only because it's so far from

the "easy money" approach that some questionable publishers take (and that some commentators think is at the heart of most OA).

The steps boil down to five questions, each posed with an answer for this particular journal. Here are the questions, and I think they're good ones for most anybody contemplating a new OA journal:

> Is there a gap in open access publishing in the area or your research?
>
> What are the aims & scope of the journal?
>
> What will the journal offer than existing journals in the field cannot or do not?
>
> Who will serve as editors and on the editorial board? What will the editorial and review process look like?
>
> What are the nitty-gritty details (publication frequency, article types, and journal name)?

In the case of this journal, answers to the final question include a fairly modest $500 APC and contracting with Ubiquity Press to handle the actual publishing. Worth reading for the example; worth pondering the five questions.

Some open access advocates are like the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks

I have slightly mixed feelings about this fairly long post by Witold Kieńć on October 21, 2014 at *Open Science*. That may be because it's an interview with Bo-Christer Björk, and I'll admit to both being a little envious of his ability to get funding and widespread recognition for *sampling* research on actual OA, where (as an independent researcher) I find it difficult or impossible to do so for my *complete* research—and it's clear from some of what's here that Björk either isn't aware of or simply ignores the results I've made readily available.

Thus this direct quote in an October 2014 item:

> Pretty soon we are going to reach the point where open access journals have a 15% share of newly published articles.

366,000 articles—or, more likely, at least 400,000 including journals not accessible to English-readers in 2013: That's probably 15%-20% of newly published articles *in 2013*, which is "pretty soon" to October 2014 only in the reverse sense.

Or, for that matter, the "research project" that his group carried out regarding Beall's List:

> We went through the 600 publishers listed on the so-called List of Predatory Publishers and Stand Alone Journals maintained by Jeffrey Beall, and we counted their journals. As a raw estimate, we got that

> around 10 000 predatory journals exist at this moment, although a lot of these journals do not have any content at all.

July 2014. The entire *Cites & Insights*. And I did a lot more than just count the 9,000-odd journals. But, hey, I'm not a respected grant-funded researcher, and there's no reason at all that this person ever saw my work. My own sour grapes aside, there's a lot of good stuff here. Take the comment leading to the post's title:

> Some of the people who blog about and discuss OA are revolutionaries, and are split into factions like the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks who believe that they knows the truth and everybody else is wrong. They want to promote open access, but believe that the other guys who are also promoting open access are doing it in the wrong way. That is why my coworkers and I allow our results to speak for themselves. This is our participation in this discussion. Our works are downloaded and cited frequently and I think it is a very good way of participating in this discussion.

I think he oversimplifies the U.S. access situation—he seems to think that those of us, at least those of us who matter, already have access to all the journals—but what he has to say about green and gold rings awfully true. Quoting most of it:

> In the long term, when open access journals and article processing charges become more and more popular libraries will be reluctant to pay subscription fees. And if in addition green open access would start to reach high uptake levels of say 50%, publishers would respond with a counterattack, to try to enforce longer embargo rules. There is an internal contradiction within the green model – if it succeeds it will kill the whole subscription based system. When you take into account the current economic situation it is clear that current embargo periods will not be enough to protect journals. Universities are looking for cost reduction, and will not be able to pay for journals that will be virtually free after a short period of time. In medical research, embargo periods are important for researchers, but in the humanities and social sciences for example, they are not that crucial.
>
> Gold open access is so simple that is almost esthetically beautiful. It just reversed the subscription based model, making the author the client and every article available in its final version on the publishers website. With green open access it is much more complicated. You have to search for a green copy in various places, and a green copy may also have a different layout and page numbers than in the published version, which makes references more difficult. And it may come a year or longer after publication. People are lazy. If they cannot make a citation in just one click they will simply not do it at all.

The idea that, if OA becomes the norm, publishers will just quietly turn into peer review managers (at competitive prices) only works if publishers have been sleeping on the sidelines and have no power to forestall widespread OA. Neither is the case.

Worth reading, even if I grumble about the realities of research and funding.

Your Story Matters

This time, it *is* just a link—to the page with that title at DASH, Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard. (If you're reading the version of this in which links don't work, that's osc.hul.harvard.edu/dash/stories).

The site has a world map and a long pull-down list of countries from which one or more readers have offered stories about what DASH—a major institutional repository—has meant for them. There's one story from Angola, two from Barbardos…and 486 from the U.S.

Go read some of them. I believe you'll find them inspiring.

Open Access Rants: On the wagon with Henry Ford & Steve Jobs

John Dupuis posted this on September 4, 2014 at *Confessions of a Science Librarian*, and while I might not agree with everything in it (as a humanities person, I think the 'wallet' role of academic libraries would still be important even if there was 100% OA in the journal field—and I don't think we'll get to 100% OA any time soon), I think it's a great "rant."

I don't believe I should quote selectively; it reads best taken as a whole. Decidedly worth reading.

Full disclosure: Not only is Dupuis a friend and hero of sorts, he's one of those who (as with Fister, for that matter) *does* pay attention to—and publicize—the work of this independent researcher. For which I continue to be vastly grateful.

Finding a Niche as a New Open Access Journal: An Interview with Jesper Sørensen

Another interview, this time by Danielle Padula, posted on August 6, 2014 on the Scholastica blog. It's an interesting discussion on the founding of *Sociological Science*.

I won't have much to say about the interview; you can read it on your own. I count 234 other OA sociology journals, but that doesn't mean this one doesn't have an appropriate niche.

Except for one truly confounding fact. *Sociological Science* is not in the *Directory of Open Access Journals*, even though it started publishing papers in February 2014. It wasn't there in May 2014. It's not there in April 2015. Which, to me, says there's either something wrong with the journal or the editors really don't care about OA in general.

Why I Don't Care About Open Access to Research—and Why You Should

Perhaps this January 31, 2014 article by Michael White at *Pacific Standard* is as good a place to close this roundup as any—even though it's a bit short of being a resounding endorsement of OA, and that's OK.

Why doesn't White care about OA? He's at the Washington University School of Medicine, and apparently it's got a *very* well funded library (as, apparently, does every other research university):

> It's hard for me to see why I should care about open access. Through my university's library, I already have access to all of the publications I need in order to do my job, and so do all of my colleagues at other research universities. Making these publications available in an open online repository after a 12-month embargo does nothing for me because I need to read these papers as soon as they're published. The idea that the public should be able to access the research it paid for sounds nice, but these papers are highly technical, narrowly focused, and generally useless to anyone without specialized training. Someone who really wants a free copy of a particular paper can almost certainly get it by emailing a request to one of the authors. And besides, the publishers of these journals add value, through editing, peer-review, and distribution of a finished product that has been formatted to make the presentation clear and consistent. In the six years since the National Institutes of Health implemented its open-access policy, how I read the scientific literature has not changed at all. So what problem is the government trying to solve by mandating open access to research papers?

There it is: the people who count all have all the access they need; the papers are useless to the great unwashed anyway; and you can always just ask the author for a copy.

After that discussion, which I'd love to fisk (but why bother), there's the flipside:

> THERE ACTUALLY ARE GOOD reasons for why the federal government cares about open access, and why you should care about it too. The push for open access gets to the heart of why the government is in the business of funding non-defense scientific research: to produce a resource that the private sector lacks the incentives to make in the quantities our society needs. If federally funded research is going to broadly benefit society, it has to be widely accessible, not just to curious private citizens, but also to industries, private organizations, and federal, state, and local governments where scientific knowledge can help create new products, solve problems, educate students, and make policy decisions. My university library can pay for access to all of the scientific journals I could wish for, but that's not true of many corporate R&D departments, municipal

> governments, and colleges and schools that are less well-endowed than mine. Scientific knowledge is not just for academic scientists at big research universities.

I suspect White's librarians might have something to say about the sentence beginning "My university library," and I'm 100% certain that it is *simply not true* that all researchers at all research universities have libraries that provide access to all the publications they could ever need, but the rest of the paragraph seems reasonable.

And that's it. I found this piece discouraging to write; I hope you won't find it quite as discouraging to read.

Masthead

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