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The Front

C&I 17 (2017) Annual Out Now

The annual compilation of *Cites & Insights* for 2017 is now available as a 492-page 6"x9" paperback for $30 from Lulu.com. It includes all ten issues, along with brief indices exclusive to the print volume.

Inside This Issue

If you care about gray OA—the gold OA journals that aren't in *DOAJ*—you should buy this volume, as it includes the first (Gray OA 2012-2016) and probably the last (Gray OA 2014-2017) comprehensive studies of these journals—including an analysis of why the Shen/Bjork "420,000 2014 articles in predatory journals" is badly wrong, a case of sampling gone bad.

The volume also includes the subject supplement for *GOAJ2*; "The Art of the Beall"; "Gray OA Portraits" offering some notes on the "largest" gray OA publishers; economics and access; and a few non-OA essays as well.

Now that I've received my copy of the print volume, I have to say that I believe it's worth buying. The pages are 60lb cream book paper (former volumes were 60lb white paper; cream isn't available at the 8.5"x11" size). You should be aware that graphs and illustrations are all in grayscale, since I don't have the options of having selected pages print in color (and doing the whole book in color would make it absurdly expensive).

For the record: this is the thickest annual yet (because of the smaller page size), but it's not even close to being the largest volume in terms of content. Using Word's word counts (which don't work very well for tables or at all for illustrations), it's the shortest volume at a mere 129,730 words.

Plans for 2018

Other than the near-certainty that this summer or late spring will see a special issue devoted to subjects in gold OA journals 2012-2017, and that it's highly likely there will be at least two or three other OA-related essays, I have no real idea how many issues will appear or how long they will be.

If I wanted to suggest a target, I'd say 10 issues averaging 24 to 32 pages each: say about 280 pages overall. But I've learned not to set targets. Meantime, enjoy—and do remember that the first-rate C&I Annuals are an excellent way to support this publication and let me know it matters.

Intersections
Open Access Issues

I've written a lot lately about the economics of access and the ethics of access, along with various pieces related to my research on what's actually out there. This one's not primarily about ethics or economics. It's about some other aspects of OA discussions and controversy. The seven sections here overlap, to be sure, and I see another 50+ articles that *might* belong in one of these seven sections. This roundup began with more than 100 tagged items, reduced to 87 while subtagging them (404s, duplicates, articles behind partial paywalls, etc.). We'll see where it winds up. As usual, order is more-or-less chronological (oldest first) within a section. But first…

Where I Stand: Additional Notes

I tried to summarize some of what I *personally* feel about OA in the September 2017 issue (pages 4-12). If you haven't read that essay, I recommend that you do so, and I won't be repeating the points here. There are a few additional comments possibly worth making, though:

- **Single solutions almost never work**. I believe that's true for universal mandated green OA (even if that was possible), academic librarians throwing themselves under the bus by unilaterally dropping all subscriptions, the "big flip" or any other single solution—probably including 100% OA as a solution.
- "**Universal access" that's both parasitical and illegal is not a solution**. I've stayed away from Sci-Hub in general, but *give me a break*.
- "**Eventually readable" is not open access**. I'm unimpressed by studies that half of some set of articles are openly readable after some period of time, presumably after most of their value in continuing research efforts has already lapsed.
- **Getting to 21%-33% true OA is *not* failure: it's slow success**. (That 21% figure assumes 2.5 million articles and pure-gold 2016 article counts, *DOAJ* journals only; the 33% count adds gray OA but also uses 2.9 million articles, assuming that the 400,000 additional OA articles aren't in the traditional indexes.)
- **There is no monolithic Open Access Movement.** That should be obvious to anybody who's paid attention.
- **100% OA would solve one problem but not others.** OA won't bring us to the Promised Land (nor will open data). It will make more scholarly articles available to more people. It won't inherently make them more readable or valid, and it won't do much for people without access to the internet.
- "**Inevitable" applies to death—and that's about it**. OA is no more inevitable than the death of print or the long-term survival of the U.S. as a functioning democracy.
- **100% OA is improbable.** I'd say nearly impossible in my lifetime, but that's probably no more than a quarter century.

I could go on (and on and on…), but let's get on with the citations.

Myths

Items focusing on some of the persistent myths surrounding OA, mostly setting aside economics and ethics.

Keeping an Open Mind about Open-Access Science
This commentary by Dorothea Salo appeared October 23, 2013 on the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery website.

> No one likes "pay $40 to read this article" come-ons. No one likes getting no response from principal investigators after asking for the data they promised to share in their latest article. Researchers are busy people; nobody wants to run headlong into a brick wall when all they're trying to do is look at something useful.

Salo notes the "fundamentally fatal brokenness of current scholarly publishing and focuses on what researchers themselves can change. After a bit more background she comments on half a dozen common OA myths:

1. "The only way to provide open access to peer-reviewed journal articles is to publish in open-access journals." (No! You can also use repositories like PubMedCentral, arXiv, SSRN and Wisconsin's own MINDS@UW.)
2. "All or most open-access journals charge publication fees." (Exactly backwards! As a percentage of total available journals, more paywalled journals than open-access journals charge author-side fees.)
3. "Most author-side fees are paid by the authors themselves." (No. Grants often pay, and the University Libraries offer a fund to help out as well.)
4. "Publishing in a conventional journal closes the door on making the same work open access." (No. Most of the time you can still put your work in a repository!)
5. "Open-access journals are intrinsically low in quality." (No. There are high-ranking open-access journals in many, many fields now.)
6. "Open-access mandates infringe academic freedom." (No. How does this make sense? Forbidding sharing is what infringes academic freedom!)

There's more:

> The most common reason researchers I talk to turn away from open access, both for themselves and those they mentor, is that they fear open access will endanger hiring, tenure or promotion chances. Often they are victims of Myth 1. Uninterested in open-access journals, these researchers just plain haven't considered open-access repositories.
>
> It makes intuitive sense that open access would help careers, not hurt them. The easier it is to find a researcher's work, and the fewer paywalls and other barriers between that work and its readers, the more readers the work gets, and the more careers benefit. We don't know exactly why yet, but repeated studies have demonstrated increased citations for open-access articles, and we are starting to see studies demonstrating an allied citation benefit for articles whose underlying data is openly available.

No additional comment required.

The 3 dangers of publishing in "megajournals"–and how you can avoid them

This piece, appearing April 3, 2014 on the *Impactstory blog*, focuses on one specific area, megajournals. (They define megajournals as "online-only, open access journals that cover many subjects and publish content based only on whether it is scientifically sound." My studies tend to avoid the term; when I do use it, it's for OA journals publishing at least 1,000 articles in the most recent year studied.)

> You get that *PLOS ONE, PeerJ* and others offer a path to a more efficient, faster, more open scholarly publishing world.
>
> But you're not publishing there.
>
> Because you've heard rumors that they're not peer reviewed, or that they're "peer-review lite" journals. You're concerned they're journals of last resort, article dumping grounds. You're worried your co-authors will balk, that your work won't be read, or that your CV will look bad.

They then define three myths and how to deal with them. Briefly:

- **My co-authors won't want to publish in megajournals**. They suggest showing coauthors "the data" demonstrating that megajournals publish "prestigious science"; that such journals "boost citation and readership impact"; that they "promote real-world use"; that they "publish fast"; and that they "save money" because of economies of scale. Unfortunately, most of the argumentation has *nothing* to do with megajournals (except possibly the first and last) and everything to do with OA journals.
- **No one in my field will find out about it**. The argumentation basically says "you can promote your article via social media." Once again, nothing to do with megajournals as such.
- **My CV will look like I couldn't publish in a good journal**. "So, it's your job to demonstrate the impact of your article. Luckily, that's easier than you might think." Via article-level metrics and social media, apparently. Oh, and using Impactstory profiles.

It's not a bad article, but I believe it's misnamed, given that most of the touted advantages of megajournals are true of all OA journals—and there are certainly some newer "megajournals" that hardly qualify as cheap, given that one megajournal charges a low, low $5,200 per article.

Common myths about open access...busted!

From the BioMedCentral blog, and there's no date on the item but I tagged it on October 22, 2015.

> With open access publishing making up an increasingly growing element of the scientific literature, attitudes are certainly changing. However, many authors still have preconceptions about open access, which we aim to expose as myths, and then bust them with real–life data and examples.

The myths:

> MYTH "Publishing my work open access is a nice thing to do, but there is nothing in it for me."
>
> MYTH "I can't publish open access because I don't have the funds to pay an Article Processing-Charge (APC)."
>
> MYTH "I've checked and I really don't have access to any funds to publish open access."
>
> MYTH "Open access articles are not peer-reviewed."
>
> MYTH "Open access articles are not copyrighted."
>
> MYTH "Publishing my article open access in a journal means I will comply with my funder's OA policy."

Expansions for every myth—but the last one's generally *not* a myth and the second and third have one problem in common: they rely on a fundamental myth that BMC seems to regard as a truth, namely that all gold OA involves article processing charges. Thus, the expansion on the third "myth" offers as responses that you can ask for a waiver, that maybe your *institution* could prepay APCs—or that as a last resort you could go green OA. That there are thousands of gold OA journals that don't charge APCs? Not a word. Consider the source, I guess: BMC, now part of SpringerNature.

Misleading open access myths

Also from BMC, but indirectly—copied-and-pasted from the Wayback Machine to Graham Steel's *McBlawg* on February 21, 2016, it deals with "the most common myths highlighted in the UK's Select Committee on Science & Technology 2003-2004 inquiry into scientific publishing and open access." Unfortunately, the cut-and-paste fails at times, with the same text appearing multiple times.

Yes, this is now old stuff—but some of the quotes from written or spoken testimony to the committee, supporting one or more of the myths, are fairly astonishing. For example, Elsevier's Crispin Davis:

> All of us are committed to increasing accessibility of scientific content. I would argue that in the last ten years we have made a huge contribution to that, and I think 90 per cent worldwide of scientists and 97 per cent in the UK are exceptionally good numbers.

As the piece points out, that 97% is for scientists in UK higher education institutions (many of them shelling out for Big Deals) and involves some

funny numbers. Then there are these comments, which are technically true (or were at the time):

> I think the mechanisms are in place for anybody in this room to go into their public library, and for nothing, through inter-library loan, get access to any article they want. (John Jarvis, Wiley)

> Incidentally, any member of the public can access any of our content by going into a public library and asking for it. There will be a time gap but they can do that. (Crispin Davis, Elsevier)

From the article's response (and setting aside the fact that there are restrictions on how many articles from a journal a library can lend):

> To say that being able to go to the library and request an interlibrary loan is a substitute for having open access to research articles online is rather like saying that carrier pigeon is a substitute for the Internet. Yes – both can convey information, but attempting to watch a live video stream with data delivered by carrier pigeon would be a frustrating business.

Then there's the "they wouldn't understand the articles and reading them might be dangerous" tack—this time from Jarvis:

> Without being pejorative or elitist, I think that is an issue that we should think about very, very carefully, because there are very few members of the public, and very few people in this room, who would want to read some of this scientific information, and in fact draw wrong conclusions from it […] Speak to people in the medical profession, and they will say the last thing they want are people who may have illnesses reading this information, marching into surgeries and asking things. We need to be careful with this very, very high-level information.

Part of the response:

> This position is extremely elitist. It also defies logic. There is already a vast amount of material on medical topics available on the Internet, much of which is junk. Can it really be beneficial for society as a whole that patients should have access to all the dubious medical information on the web, but should be denied access to the scientifically sound, peer-reviewed research articles?

On the other hand, I have no doubt that, for some doctors, "the last thing they want is people,..asking things," especially if they've read current *good* articles that the doctors haven't gotten around to.

Regarding the long-standing myth—that OA with APCs involves a conflict of interest because it encourages publishers to publish more articles—I'll just quote *two* Davis statements, effectively asked-and-answered:

> The second question that increasingly is being asked is the inherent or potential conflict of interest if a publisher is receiving money from the author to publish that article. There is an inherent conflict there in terms of quality, objectivity, refereeing and so on. One of the real

> strengths of today's model is that there is no conflict there. We reject well over 50 per cent of all articles submitted. Other journals do that or even higher. If you are receiving potential payment for every article submitted there is an inherent conflict of interest that could threaten the quality of the peer review system and so on.
>
> On pricing, we have put our prices up over the last five years by between 6.2 per cent and 7.5 per cent a year, so between six and seven and a half per cent has been the average price increase. During that period the number of new research articles we have published each year has increased by an average of three to five per cent a year. […] Against those kinds of increases we think that the price rises of six to seven and a half per cent are justified."

So it's perfectly fine for Elsevier to demand more money because they keep publishing more articles—but it's *bad* if OA publishers stand to gain for publishing articles. (The response also notes why there's really no conflict in either case: crappy journals shouldn't get submissions. Also, subscription journals *frequently* have author-side charges.)

There's quite a lot more, worth reading as part of the history of questionable claims regarding OA.

Is the quality of open access and non-open access reporting comparable? A short, focused piece by Jo Chapman posted May 25, 2016 at *The Publication Plan*, dealing only with the strong "OA is crap" myth.

> In a recent study, Pastorino et al, compared the quality of primary epidemiological studies and systematic reviews and meta-analyses in subscription-based journals to those published with open access. The authors selected the first case-control or cohort studies and first systematic reviews and meta-analyses published in 2013 in open access and non-open access journals from the oncology field. They assessed the quality of the reports by evaluating compliance to methodological quality scales (Newcastle and Ottawa Scale [NOS] and Assessment of Multiple Systematic Reviews [AMSTAR] scale) and reporting guidelines (STrengthening the Reporting of OBservational studies in Epidemiology [STROBE] and Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis [PRISMA] checklists).
>
> No significant differences were observed with regards to methodological quality or quality of reporting between open access and non-open access journals. Although these results are encouraging, further studies involving a larger set of papers and additional fields of research are needed to provide reassurance that the quality of open access and non-open access publishing is comparable.

I leave the study itself (in *PLoS One*) for your own analysis.

Impact

Both Impact Factor and actual impact.

Science publishing: The golden club

It's a *little* tricky when the publisher of *Nature* features an article (by Eugenie Samuel Reich, appearing as an October 16, 2013 news feature) that touts the advantages of appearing in, well, *Nature* or *Science*—but this seems to be a well-done piece of journalism. Two key paragraphs:

> Researchers often say that publishing in prestigious journals can make a career. And for decades, the most sought after of the bunch have been *Nature* and *Science*—broadly read journals that reject more than 90% of the manuscripts they receive. A paper in one of these journals, it is said, can bring job opportunities, invitations to speak, grants, promotions and even cash bonuses and prizes. [Jeffrey] Rimer believes that his *Science* paper contributed to his winning a grant from the Welch Foundation, a chemical-research funding organization based in Houston, in 2012, and he expects that it may help when he seeks tenure at his university.
>
> His impressions echo what many other scientists say—often with gritted teeth—about premier journals. But the publishing world is rapidly changing, and the leading titles are facing increasing competition. The push for open-access publishing has gathered steady steam; more than 5,000 open-access journals have been launched since Rimer's paper was published in October 2010. These journals, along with the more established open-access publications, are attracting a growing share of submissions, threatening the hold of the leading journals.

A good read, including comments that publishing in glamour journals may be less important in the US and UK—and certainly less so in some fields.

Open Access, Tenure, and the Common Good

Barbara Fister's October 22, 2013 "Library Babel Fish" column in *Inside Higher Ed* is about impact in general—or, more specifically, the impact of published articles (including *where* they're published) on tenure. The tease is critical here:

> Examining the "but I can't make my work open access because of tenure requirements" excuse.

Key paragraphs (and, as always, the whole column's worth reading):

> Too often, tenure hasn't been handled responsibly. Even in institutions where teaching matters tremendously, publications often carry more weight because it's more easily measured by outsiders, and that's so much more pleasant than having to make hard decisions amongst ourselves. The methods commonly used to decide which publications provide evidence of scholarly promise are about as valid as reading goat entrails

> when predicting whether a scholar will continue to support the mission of an institution for the rest of his or her career. Oh, we assign numbers as we read the entrails: must have a book from a university press, or hey, let's make it two to show how rigorous we are; must have a certain number of articles in journal with an impact factor of X or higher.
>
> We do this because we're not confident that we can actually assess a scholar's worth, or we don't trust each other to make a fair assessment, that by somehow attaching mumbo-jumbo to the process we're being even-handed even though we know perfectly well that impact factors are bogus, that university presses can't and shouldn't be asked to determine tenure decisions, that we're responding to an exploitive overuse of dreadfully-paid contingent scholars by raising the stakes for the few remaining positions.

How journals like Nature, Cell and Science are damaging science
That's Randy Schekman on December 9, 2013 in *The Guardian*, and you could say it's about the *negative* impact of high impact factors:

> The prevailing structures of personal reputation and career advancement mean the biggest rewards often follow the flashiest work, not the best. Those of us who follow these incentives are being entirely rational – I have followed them myself – but we do not always best serve our profession's interests, let alone those of humanity and society.

He points out that the luxury journals (journals) may have reputations that are only partly warranted: "While they publish many outstanding papers, they do not publish *only* outstanding papers. Neither are they the only publishers of outstanding research." He specifically takes on impact factor, which he calls a "marketing gimmick" and a "deeply flawed measure" that he regards as damaging to science:

> It is common, and encouraged by many journals, for research to be judged by the impact factor of the journal that publishes it. But as a journal's score is an average, it says little about the quality of any individual piece of research. What is more, citation is sometimes, but not always, linked to quality. A paper can become highly cited because it is good science – or because it is eye-catching, provocative or wrong. Luxury-journal editors know this, so they accept papers that will make waves because they explore sexy subjects or make challenging claims. This influences the science that scientists do. It builds bubbles in fashionable fields where researchers can make the bold claims these journals want, while discouraging other important work, such as replication studies.
>
> In extreme cases, the lure of the luxury journal can encourage the cutting of corners, and contribute to the escalating number of papers that are retracted as flawed or fraudulent. Science alone has recently retracted high-profile papers reporting cloned human embryos, links between littering

> and violence, and the genetic profiles of centenarians. Perhaps worse, it has not retracted claims that a microbe is able to use arsenic in its DNA instead of phosphorus, despite overwhelming scientific criticism.

Note that this appeared in 2013—but the message hasn't changed. He notes OA as a better way.

Schekman, a Nobel laureate as of 2013, discusses this further in a December 23, 2013 interview in *Library Journal* and in a December 20, 2013 piece at *The Conversation*, the latter linking to and discussing some criticisms emanating from *The Guardian* piece.

Open Access Journals and Forensic Publishing

This article by James L. Knoll appeared in the September 2014 *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*. It relates to a fairly specific field, forensic psychiatry, where the top-ranked journal has a relatively low impact factor.

While it's an interesting article, it fails on several counts, e.g.:

> In contrast, the golden road "involves a shift from the current subscription-based approach to one in which authors (which in practice means their institutions) pay to cover the costs of (open access) publishing."

You know the refrain: most gold OA journals don't charge fees.

> In particular, there is concern about the potential lack of a traditional, rigorous peer review process. OA proponents counter this criticism, believing that the process "allows interactive discussions and reviews by being open to all interested members of the scientific community and the public."…

In case the implication that OA *generally* doesn't mean proper peer review, consider this later comment:

> *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* has a somewhat unique publication format, in that it is an OA journal that has maintained the traditional peer review process. Author fees have never been charged by *The Journal*; its publishing enterprise is supported by AAPL membership dues.

That "somewhat unique format"—OA, peer review, no APC—is shared by *thousands* of other gold OA journals; calling it "somewhat unique" is a backhanded slap at most OA. And the author doubles down in the very next paragraph:

> At the present time, the pros and cons of OA publishing are subjects of contentious debate. A prominent past concern has been that the quality of scientific publishing will be degraded by the lack of a traditional peer review process. However, the past several years have seen OA journals use traditional peer review, as well as innovative and interactive models that connect scholars in a transparent process of addressing critiques.

> In addition to reliability concerns, there are concerns about the potential for "predatory" OA journals (described below) and the possibility that author submission fees may lead to a biased output from authors of greater financial means.

Sigh. It has *never* been the case that most OA journals did not use traditional peer review, and you won't be surprised that a form of the usual "predatory" nonsense follows.

There's some interesting discussion of impact here, but there's enough wrong that I can't recommend the piece. Too bad.

The public impact of open access research: A survey of SciELO users

This is a poster by Juan Pablo Alperin, added to figshare on April 24, 2015. It summarizes a study done March-July 2014 with a series of one-question pop-up surveys on SciELO's portals in Brazil, Chile and Mexico, yielding 17,575 responses. No special comments: it's brief and to the point.

Access

A handful of items specifically addressing the "access" side of OA.

Information Triage

Yes, this January 15, 2013 piece by Susannah Fox and Maeve Duggan at the Pew Research Center is a bit dated—but I'm pretty sure the problem hasn't gotten that much smaller.

> As of September 2012, 81% of U.S. adults use the internet and, of those, 72% say they have looked online for health information in the past year.

I'd guess both numbers are higher now. There are a lot more numbers and tables, but what's worth noting here is near the end of the article:

> **One in four people seeking health information online have hit a pay wall**
>
> Twenty-six percent of internet users who look online for health information say they have been asked to pay for access to something they wanted to see online. Seventy-three percent say they have not faced this choice while seeking health or medical information online.
>
> Of those who have been asked to pay, just 2% say they did so. Fully 83% of those who hit a pay wall say they tried to find the same information somewhere else. Thirteen percent of those who hit a pay wall say they just gave up.

A Case Study in Closed Access

More anecdotal than the above, but in much greater detail, this October 25, 2013 story by Adi Kamdar on the EFF website is mostly an interview with Cortney Grove, a speech-language pathologist. Some portions:

In my field we are charged with using scientific evidence to make clinical decisions. Unfortunately, the most pertinent evidence is locked up in the world of academic publishing and I cannot access it without paying upwards of $40 an article. My current research project is not centered around one article, but rather a body of work on a given topic. Accessing all the articles I would like to read will cost me nearly a thousand dollars. So, the sad state of affairs is that I may have to wait 7-10 years for someone to read the information, integrate it with their clinical opinions (biases, agendas, and financial motivations) and publish it in a format I can buy on Amazon. By then, how will my clinical knowledge and skills have changed? How will my clients be served in the meantime? What would I do with the first-hand information that I will not be able to do with the processed, commercialized product that emerges from it in a decade?

…

We do continuing education in order to keep our licensure, so I recently attended an online conference. Frequently what happens is that I'll hear about a bit of research in a lecture that I'll find interesting from another perspective, so I'll write it down to look for it later.

I went online to find the referenced articles when I started to realize I couldn't access any of the articles on my list for free. All of them are behind a gate and cost somewhere between $40 and $100 an article.

I got frustrated. I spent maybe three-and-a-half hours looking at subscriptions to these companies to see if that was a viable option, but they were too expensive. I then started going to the websites of individual researchers. Unfortunately, only one of the 17 or 18 papers I was looking for was available.

This is when I started to get really frustrated. It became clear to me that what was going to happen was what I heard during a number of lectures: "Don't worry, I'm publishing a book about all of this if you want to know more."

…

I think that ideally, if you're going to be in a healthcare profession—or really any profession—that research should be easily available. Even if I had to pay an acceptable yearly fee—if for $300 a year I could access *everything*—that would be better than how it is today.

I'm a speech-language pathologist in private practice. I know that if I was affiliated with a university, then through that I could have access to the information I need. And that highlights a bigger issue: there's always a gap between the research world and the clinical world. There's a gate that holds the normal profession out of the research process—or even from simply being able to consume the information. By the time it comes to most of us, it's prepackaged and late.

No additional comment required.

Two short observations on AAAS and open access

A brief May 18, 2015 post by Mike Taylor at *Sauropod Vertebra Picture of the Week* (SVPoW)—and I'll quote the two observations in full, since they're both cogent for OA in general:

> First, here's Matt's observation: even making users register betrays a way of thinking wrongly about the material. It says, "This is *ours* but you can see it if you'll jump through our hoops. Because it is *ours*." Whereas real OA outlets say, "Hey, this is yours now, do what you want."
>
> And here's mine: I sometimes wonder whether we're headed for a world where the meaningful scientific literature is going to be from 1660-1923 and from 2010 onwards, with a big gap from 1924 to 2009 that just gets ignored. Because it's the literature not old enough to be out of copyright but not new enough to be OA.

I omitted some introductory material in which Matt notes that even to read a *110-year-old* paper required registration.

More than a dozen comments, most of them useful and worth reading.

Sit, Stay, Pay: Paywalls and Popular Research

Haley Walton on September 18, 2015 at *Scholarly Communications @ Duke*. Walton begins:

> A couple of weeks ago, an article detailing new research findings by the Duke Canine Cognition Center appeared in our Raleigh area newspaper, the *News and Observer*. The researchers found that tone of voice can affect how different types of dogs—calmer dogs versus more energetic dogs—respond to their owners' commands. As a dog owner myself, this is a potentially useful discovery that could help me and many others develop better relationships with our pets.
>
> For those readers who wanted to delve deeper into the researchers' methods and results by reading the original article, the *News and Observer* thoughtfully included a link to the article from the journal in which it was published: *Animal Cognition*. However, clicking on the link takes the reader not to the article itself but to an intermediary page that requires a payment of $40 in order to access the article. In the parlance of scholarly communication, the reader is "hitting a paywall." By charging prohibitively high fees to view single articles, journals create a barrier between readers without a subscription (read: most of the general public) and the research they want to access.

A nicely specific and, well, cute introduction to the general issue, followed by a discussion of Duke's attempts to help provide access, including an OA mandate and DukeSpace, its institutional repository. There's a happy ending of sorts:

> [W]e wanted to make the Canine Cognition Center's paper available openly. Though the *News and Observer* is not a Duke publication, we still saw the opportunity to leverage our open access policy to provide wider access to the article. When the authors received my request, they were—like most of the authors we contact—more than happy to provide a copy of the article. They were quite appreciative, in fact, of the offer to upload it on their behalf, as it would help increase the impact of the article's findings. It is now available for download free of charge in Dukespace.

The closing paragraph suggests that news agencies should try contacting authors of (paywalled) quoted research articles to see whether an OA version can be made available.

The comments are enlightening for those who believe Jeffrey Beall isn't against *all* open access. If you read his attack, also read the responses.

Walk-in access? Seriously?

Mike Taylor asked that question on November 26, 2013 at *SVPoW*, related to one proposed "solution" for access to scholarly articles in the UK. Noting that I've generally shied away from the Finch report and other country-specific OA issues (partly because the UK seems to be doing a spectacular job of screwing up any serious cost-effective OA future, and I find that so befuddling that I can only assume there's something UK-specific that I just don't understand), this one seems so clear and nicely-stated (and terse) that I'm going to quote the whole thing (yes, of course it's CC-BY):

> Reading the Government's comments on the recent BIS hearing on open access, I see this:
>
> > As a result of the Finch Group's work, a programme devised by publishers, through the Publishers Licensing Society, and without funding from Government, will culminate in a Public Library Initiative. A technical pilot was successfully started on 9 September 2013
>
> Following the link provided, I read:
>
> > The Report recommended that the existing proposal to make the majority of journals available for free to walk-in users at public libraries throughout the UK should be supported and pursued vigorously.
>
> I'm completely, completely baffled by this. The idea that people should get in a car and drive to a special magic building in order to read papers that their own computers are perfectly capable of downloading is so utterly wrong-headed I struggle to find words for it. It's a nineteenth-century solution to a twentieth-century problem. In 2013.
>
> Who thought this was a good idea?
>
> And what were they smoking at the time?
>
> I can tell you now that the take-up for this misbegotten initiative will be zero. Because although it's a painful waste of time to negotiate the

> paywalls erected by those corporations we laughably call "publishers", this "solution" will be more of a waste of time still. (Not to mention a waste of petrol).
>
> I can only assume that was always the intention of the barrier-based publishers on the Finch committee that came up with this initiative: to deliver a stillborn access initiative that they can point to and say "See, no-one wants open access". Meanwhile, everyone will be over on Twitter using #icanhazpdf and other such 21st-century workarounds.
>
> Sheesh.

I am aware that public libraries are generally in worse shape in the UK than in the US, and I can't imagine walkin-access working in the US (or, for that matter, publishers allowing it without huge additional payments).

The comments are useful additions to the article. I'm a great believer in physical books and public libraries, but I'd agree with one of Taylor's comments in the stream: "The real brain-fail here is the category error of a physical-world solution to an online-world problem."

Does the UC Open Access Policy miss the mark? Depends on which mark. Devoted skeptics of OA in general are prone to point at institutions with OA policies (usually with easy opt-out provisions), note the lack of 100% success of those policies, and pooh-pooh the whole thing. One such target has been the University of California (which I would call the world's greatest higher education system, but as a Berkeley grad I'm biased). This thoughtful piece by Catherine Mitchell on October 26, 2016 at UC's Office of Scholarly Communications discusses this situation. Excerpts:

> Institutional open access policies often get a bad rap. Critics point to their lack of "teeth"; their poor compliance rates; their failure, thus far, to effect substantial change within the economically unsustainable and locked down scholarly publishing environment. Motivated by the desire to free all scholarship from publisher access restrictions and the equally ambitious goal of empowering all authors to retain rights to their scholarly publications, these policies struggle mightily under the weight of expectations.
>
> ***But maybe we are expecting too much—or not enough.***
>
> While 100% policy compliance sounds admirable—and is always the implicit point of comparison for any lesser compliance rate (always in percentages!)—it is a narrow and arbitrary definition of success that relies entirely and exclusively on the metrics of policy participation to gauge effect.

The discussion notes that more than 27,000 articles were deposited into UC's eScholarship between May 2012 and October 2016, and shows with a datamap that those articles have been read many thousands of times globally. Article growth has been dramatic since all ten campuses began using

the publication management system in January 2016. The articles are being used, as noted by a series of quotes as well as the actual readership.

> Every one of the over 27,000 articles we have collected thus far under the auspices of UC's open access policy represents an opportunity to spread knowledge beyond the artificially restrictive publishing marketplace that has both stressed academic library budgets and created a global population of have-nots who—by virtue of their place of employment, the financial limitations of their country/institution, or their own limited funds—struggle to gain access to fundamental (and often publicly funded) research. Clearly open access policies alone cannot solve this problem, but they can, and they often do, prompt frank conversations about fundamental issues like access and knowledge and funding and obligation among readers, researchers, librarians and publishers. **We should expect THIS.**

The OA policy (adopted by the Academic Senate) grants UC a broad set of rights in all scholarly articles, limiting the exclusive control of publishers.

> The only exception is among authors who opt out of the policy in order to work with a publisher who requires a policy waiver. But those are rare—and growing rarer.

That link goes to a writeup of waivers by publisher—and there aren't a lot. (Nature Publishing Group is by far the largest group of waivers.)

The closing paragraphs deserve to be quoted in full and need no further commentary:

> **No policy is an island**
>
> We err when we burden open access policies with sole responsibility for curing the ills of the scholarly publishing marketplace. And we err again when we judge the effectiveness of these policies solely by the rate with which the faculty deposit their articles in institutional open access repositories. If our goal is to increase access to scholarly research—and well it should be, given the stories we hear—we need to recognize that there are many paths to that end.
>
> Open access policies with robust article deposit rates get a lot of research out there to be read—and the more research we can open up, the better. That's why we are working so hard to grow the corpus of open publications at UC. But all open access policies, regardless of their compliance rates, create an opportunity to collect stories that give a voice to those communities of readers who don't yet have access. And these stories, in turn, help naturalize the idea of openness by increasing awareness among authors who may not realize the missed opportunities they have (and the rights they possess) to reach new communities of readers.
>
> Naturalizing the open scholarly communications environment is a gradual process, but this work has helped ease the way for other important

interventions in this space, like SCOAP3 or the Open Library of the Humanities or federal funder mandates or OA2020. It has been eight years since the Harvard faculty adopted the first institutional open access policy in the United States, and many other policies have followed. Almost a decade into this institutional policy work, open access has become an expectation rather than an experiment. **We should celebrate THIS.**

The Many Fallacies Used to Defend Subscription Publishing
That's the title of this November 1, 2017 piece by Lenny Teytelman that I find at protocols.io. Teytelman takes on a *Chronicle of Higher Education* editorial entitled "The Fallacy of Open-Access Publication," and I don't discuss that editorial directly for a simple reason: I may *or may not* be able to see it, depending on the time of month or phase of moon or whatever else CHE uses to determine whether the Great Unwashed is allowed access. When I *have* been able to see it, it's clear that it buys into the "all gold OA involves exorbitant fees" myth (and seems to suggest that paywall journals do *not* ever involve author-side fees, which is bizarre).

Teytelman does a fine job of fisking seven myths expounded within the editorial. I might take issue with some details, but overall it's a good job, well worth reading.

Issues

Yeah, I know, that's also the overall heading. Such is life.

Seven Propositions on Open Access
The last section ended with seven myths, and it's entirely coincidental that this section begins with seven propositions set forth by Pablo K. on July 30, 2013 at *The Disorder of Things*.

With the caution that the site's CC license is BY-NC-SA, so I'm not quoting the whole thing, here's the gist of the seven propositions:

1. The embargo distinction between STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and AHSS (Arts, Humanities and Social Science) is arbitrary and unjustifiable: if there must be embargoes, let them be 6 months for all;

2. Set learned societies free! They can choose not to be open access if it would drain too much from their coffers…

3. Moreover, learned societies are not an unqualified good…

4. Open access *is* a public good, but it doesn't require that justification…

5. Any arbitrary barrier to access, however small, should be resisted…

6. Access is a big battle, but not the whole battle…

7. 'Knowledge', likewise, is up for contestation..

I'd take issue with #2, which seems to say that societies shouldn't be grumbled at for maintaining paywalls, noting that #3 is involved. #5 has to do with registration among other things. Worth reading and considering.

5 annoying things about Open Access

Another numbered list, and since it's European I won't gripe too much about that leading "5" in the title (but as an editor I'd change it to "Five" without even asking the author). The author is Anna Kinsey and the post, dated October 21, 2013, appeared on Europe BMC's site.

In this case, each thing comes with several paragraphs of knowledgeable explication, and I'm just quoting the annoyances themselves.

1. The often incorrect definition of green and gold routes to Open Access
2. The constant argument between Open Access advocates about which route, green or gold, is best.
3. That Open Access can be so much effort!
4. This next one is not an irritation with Open Access, but with the misguided conflation of Open Access with poor or no peer review.
5. Articles about Open Access that are not themselves Open Access.

Might I just say "goes double for me" for #1 and #5?

CC BY and Its Discontents—A Growing Challenge for Open Access

Rick Anderson discusses this issue in a February 19, 2015 "Peer to Peer Review" piece on the *Library Journal* website. The opening:

> Recently I attended the conference of a major learned society in the humanities. I was only there for a day and attended only two sessions: one as a panelist and the other as an observer. Both sessions dealt with issues related to open access (OA), and in both of them I was deeply taken aback by the degree to which the scholars in attendance—not universally, but by an overwhelming majority—expressed frustration and even outright anger at the OA community. The word *predatory* was actually used at one point—not in reference to rapacious publishers but to OA advocates. That was pretty shocking.
>
> More recently, in a different meeting, I listened to a presentation by the executive director of another large and important scholarly society, this one in the social sciences. His presentation was in no way heated or angry, but he made it abundantly clear that among his organization's members there was deep dissatisfaction with significant aspects of the OA movement's current direction.
>
> Many private conversations before and since, often with scholars who did not want to express publicly anything that might be construed as objection or resistance to OA, have only reinforced the messages I received in those meetings.

> What is the nature of the concern? Why would these scholars and scientists—academics who value the sharing of knowledge and who want to see the benefits of scholarship spread as broadly as possible (and who presumably want to reach as many readers as possible)—object to OA?

The answer, as Anderson discusses in some detail, is that the objection is to CC BY and the growing assumption that an article isn't *really* open access unless it's CC BY (or CC 0, the least restrictive license).

It's a thoughtful discussion on an issue that certainly hasn't disappeared. I believe it's still worth reading, and I believe Anderson's discussion is both useful and fair.

> So the question we in the scholarly community need to be asking ourselves is: Where do we believe authors' rights should end and the public's right to access and reuse should begin? Does it make a difference whether the scholarship in question was supported with public funds? If so, does public funding give the public a moral right to read the results of that scholarship, or to read and reuse without any restriction, or to read and reuse with some restrictions? What if the scholarly product was not supported by public funding—should it be made freely available simply because it is scholarship and we don't want to commodify knowledge?

All good questions. Some of the (fairly lengthy) comments are also valuable additions, including a discussion of why BY-NC is probably not the answer. One, however, from a librarian, is befuddling, ending as it does with this:

> Perhaps authors' opposition to absolutist OA is understandable in simple human terms. To the extent that it has always been irksome to researchers to give away the store to publishers, at least it was still always identified as 'theirs'. CC-BY completely strips away any residual pride of ownership.

Anderson's response is clear. In short, CC-BY *requires attribution*, and can't reasonably be said to "strip away…pride of ownership."

Steampunk open access

I'll admit to being a bit bemused by Zen Faulkes' February 19, 2016 piece at *NeuroDojo*. It's short and carries a CC license that's compatible with C&I's (BY-NC), so I'll quote the whole thing:

> Consider a world much like our own. Scientists do research, and publish their findings in academic journals, made of paper and ink and glue and leather.
>
> Except... that the concept of open access took hold in the early days of academic publishing. Authors paid article processing fees to pay for printing costs. The resulting print journals and books were sent to libraries and to archive free of charge. People who wanted copies merely had to ask.

> This system continues until the late twentieth century, when the Internet becomes readily available to researchers and the public alike. Now, all those centuries of research (still freely available, mind you) are in an antiquated, inconvenient format. People want get digital copies of research papers that interest them.
>
> Who would put in all the hours of work to digitize those open access articles? Who would pay the costs? Who would create the websites? Who would assign the DOIs?
>
> There used to be a complaint that younger scientists' reference lists rarely went back before the 1990s because papers weren't online. Imagine how much worse the problem would be in the steampunk open access scenario.
>
> In our world, a lot of the world's scientific back catalog got digitized by those bad guys, commercial publishers.
>
> It is short-sighted to think that electronic text, and particular PDFs, are the final form of academic communication. When the next transition of formats occurs, how will open access papers make the jump?

The same libraries and publishers and societies that published the OA journals in print: that's my immediate answer to the questions raised. That, and disagreeing with the suggestion that OA folks think commercial publishers are automatically "bad guys."

There are no comments on the post, which surprises me since Faulkes is fairly high profile.

The F1000Research authorship policy

Here's an issue that goes far beyond OA, and in which I have a personal stake: who should be allowed to publish research? This July 20, 2016 post by Michaela Torkar at the *F1000Research blog* offers the answers to that question for *F1000Research*, an OA platform with open post-publication peer review, a $1,000 APC for most articles—and, sadly, a screwed-up home page that combines superfluous autoplaying video with a menu bar rendered difficult to use through bad HTML, as shown in this partial screen capture:

Anyway, back to the criteria. Here's what they require before an article can be published for peer review:

> ***Recognised institution.*** By requiring that an author is based at a recognised (accredited) institution or organisation we can be sure that a group of scientists in the field have assessed the researcher's abilities and outputs and

> judged that they have enough scientific knowledge and integrity to be employed at their institution. It also ensures that the research is conducted in a regulated research environment (e.g. with ethics approval committees for clinical and animal research). If a researcher comes from an institution with no obvious research program, we ask F1000 Faculty Members in the area if they are familiar with the organisation and/or check for publications in PubMed by researchers based at that institution.
>
> ***Active researcher***. We need some criteria to assess if the author is an active scientist who has enough training and experience to engage in the peer review process, which is of course open and author-driven on *F1000Research*. This means the focus of their training needs to be on active research; in the life sciences at least, this tends to mean they have completed postgraduate training typically a PhD, MD, DPhil or similar qualification.

So all scholarship takes place at academic institutions and is done by people with doctorates. Got it. Independent scholars and undereducated bums like me should fold up our tents and slip silently away.

They had to lower their bar somewhat to publish within the social sciences:

> In practice, we have already adjusted our criteria for this area and acknowledge that a Masters qualification is enough evidence of research training. This, combined with evidence of an author's research activity – usually a publication record, which can be quantified objectively – would suggest the researcher has enough experience to engage in the open peer review process; this practice is not currently clearly reflected in our public authorship criteria and we will update this as soon as possible.

Still, of course, at accredited academic institutions, and if you have a lowly Masters you should *already* be a published author.

The kicker comes in the next paragraph:

> We do though recognise that this may still inappropriately penalise authors of articles in social sciences where the norms of publication are different from life sciences and we welcome suggestions from the community how to define the limitations differently, bearing in mind that we cannot open *F1000Research* (and add the burden on the peer review system) to **non-researchers**. The criteria must also be broadly applicable, to, for example, academic research systems worldwide. [Emphasis added.]

I find it difficult to read this as other than saying that all research is done within academia as a definitional truth.

Well, sure, I get it: academics never make up results or cherry-pick data or produce zooey stuff like arsenic-based life or copy from others or any of the other things that "non-researchers" might do.

I am of two minds. Obviously, I believe that independent research has a place in the world; otherwise, I wouldn't do it. Maybe these criteria are reasonable: I don't know. Let me quote one more sentence:

> The perception by some of the critical voices on Twitter was that our criteria are elitist and unethical and that we actively try to stop young researchers from publishing.

I wouldn't call them unethical. It's awfully hard not to call them elitist.

How Open and Free are US Law Journals?

Sarah Glassmeyer published this subject-specific case study on August 23, 2016 on her eponymous website.

Glassmeyer studied 591 U.S. student-edited law journals, and does provide a spreadsheet with the results. Briefly, 83.4% of the journals had at least one issue available online, almost always in PDF form, with a median starting availability date of 2005 (but an average of 1998). Only 2.7% have CC licenses; another 8.5% offer educational-usage exemptions.

Her conclusion:

> US law journals definitely have room for improvement when it comes to making their content more open and available. There's no reason in 2016 to not be publishing digitally and openly. As student run journals, they should concentrate on making knowledge available and not trying to turn a profit. Of course, I do have some concerns about the longevity of the (apparently) student created websites that are hosting over a third of this content. This doesn't necessarily mean that schools should immediately sign up for BePress – there are other options open source options available if a true repository is desired. At the very least, the student websites can be monitored for issues of retention and usability.

As a point of comparison based on *GOAJ2*, in 2016 there were 188 active gold OA law journals, publishing 5,292 articles; only 6% of the journals (with 13% of the articles) charged APCs, most of those *very* low (only five higher than $199)—but only eight of those journals are US-based. (The largest group is in Latin America, with Brazil's 43 topping the list.)

Diversity in the Open Access Movement, Part 2: Differing Goals

Rick Anderson provides this discussion on January 24, 2017 at *the scholarly kitchen;* as usual Anderson raises good points and states them well. His summary of major differences with links to some proponents:

> **Embargoes**
>
> - Embargoes are acceptable as a permanent feature of the OA landscape (Research Councils UK)
> - Embargoes are acceptable only for now, as a temporary compromise measure (SPARC, Peter Suber)
>
> **Charging for access**
>
> - Access tolls are acceptable in scholarly *non-profit* journals (Darnton)

- Access tolls are also acceptable in scholarly *for-profit* journals (Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, etc.—all of whom are both major OA publishers and major toll-access publishers)
- Toll access is unacceptable in principle, at least with regard to the scientific journal literature (Aled Edwards, Jean-Claude Guédon, the Confederation of Open Access Repositories)

CC licensing

- CC-BY licensing, or the equivalent, is an essential feature of OA (SPARC, PLOS, Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation)
- CC-BY is an optional feature of OA (Directory of Open-Access Journals, Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association)

Public access vs. OA

- Public access is a suitable goal (U.S. Congress, National Institutes of Health, and every institution whose repository does not require CC BY licensing or the equivalent or plan eventually to do so)
- Public access is only a temporary way station on the road to full and universal OA (Jean-Claude Guédon, and every institutional repository that hopes eventually to require CC BY licensing or the equivalent in its IR)

You probably know where I stand: embargoes and toll access are inconsistent with OA, and *full* OA may require CC BY or CC 0—which means I'm on the side that says "public access" is *at best* a temporary waystation (and at worst a diversionary tactic). But since I don't expect full OA within my lifetime, an "acceptable" scholarly publishing *immediate* future will be a mixed one. His discussion following the points is worth reading…and it's hard to ignore his discussion of what it means either to resolve the differences or *not* to do so.

Open access outreach: SMASH vs. Suasion

I can't really excerpt and comment on Jill Cirasella's piece in the June 2017 *College & Research Libraries News*—except to point it out and say "if you haven't already done so, read it. It's good." That's especially true if you are or plan to be an OA advocate.

Fair Open Access

In this case, I'm pointing to The Fair Open Access Principles, which I believe first appeared on FOAA's (Fair Open Access Alliance) website in April 2017. There are five principles:

1. The journal has a transparent ownership structure, and is controlled by and responsive to the scholarly community.
2. Authors of articles in the journal retain copyright.

3. All articles are published open access and an explicit open access licence is used.
4. Submission and publication is not conditional in any way on the payment of a fee from the author or its employing institution, or on membership of an institution or society.
5. Any fees paid on behalf of the journal to publishers are low, transparent, and in proportion to the work carried out.

The rest of the page expands on the points in what essentially amounts to a manifesto—noting that it excludes commercial publishers and APCs, and strongly recommends CC BY. A couple of excerpts:

> Compulsory APCs (article publication charges) are not compatible with [#4]. Journals should ideally be funded by general contributions from universities and research funders, with these contributions not tied to individual articles or groups of authors.
>
> [Re #5:] "Low" depends on the particulars of each journal, but we strongly recommend an absolute maximum of $1000 per article published or $50 per page for the total expense of any journal, and substantially lower fees in all possible cases. We recommend that an itemized price structure be made public in order to ensure transparency and make the proportionality principle apparent.

Perhaps too idealistic, but a good starting point.

We've failed: Pirate black open access is trumping green and gold and we must change our approach

Toby Green offered this harsh opinion piece on September 6, 2017 in *Learned Publishing*—and although the journal is paywalled, the article is at least freely readable.

The abstract:

> Key points
>
> - Sci-Hub has made nearly all articles freely available using a black open access model, leaving green and gold models in its dust.
> - Why, after 20 years of effort, have green and gold open access not achieved more? Do we need 'tae think again'?
> - If human nature is to postpone change for as long as possible, are green and gold open access fundamentally flawed?
> - Open and closed publishing models depend on bundle pricing paid by one stakeholder, the others getting a free ride. Is unbundling a fairer model?
> - If publishers changed course and unbundled their product, would this open a legal, fairer route to 100% open access and see off the pirates?

I don't find the "unbundling" section especially convincing, and I'm apparently less convinced that green and gold OA have "failed." That said, the piece is worth reading and thinking about.

Access vs. Accessibility in Scholarship and Science

Technically, this Rick Anderson essay on November 6, 2017 at *the scholarly kitchen* isn't really about OA at all, except very indirectly—but I think it's an important discussion.

I'll use "understandability" rather than "accessibility": that is, to what extent are scholarly articles *understandable* even if they're OA (which to me means they're accessible)? And to what extent should they be?

Between the discussion and the comments, I believe the "conclusions" are those I would tend to see. Summarizing perhaps unfairly:

- There's no such thing as *the* general public just as there's no monolithic entity "scholarly articles." Some laypeople will be able to understand much more esoteric articles than others, or will go to the trouble to gain the needed background for that understanding.
- To require that all scholarly articles be understandable by non-specialists *in general* would be damaging to scholarship and probably futile.

I still remember one of America's great science journalists, the San Francisco *Chronicle*'s David Perlman, and his ability to make arcane but important concepts understandable. That task is important—but I don't believe it's the job of oncologists or rocket scientists when they're writing up research. Which does *not* mean that the research shouldn't be open for all to read; it does mean that most of us won't make sense of what we're reading without a good deal of background effort.

Conflicts of interest in scientific publishing

I'm pointing out this opinion piece by Ignacio Amigo and Alberto Pascual-Garia, posted November 20, 2017 at *EMBO reports*, and you may find it interesting, but I'm giving it short shrift, if only because of the first paragraph:

> During the past years, an increasing number of research funders and governments have been supporting Open Access (OA) publishing. In the USA, the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act and the Public Access to Public Science Act require that results from research supported with public funding are made freely accessible [1]. The EU has also decided that all publications funded by Horizon 2020 should be freely available [2]. Most authors who publish their work as OA—whether mandated or not—usually choose Gold OA, in which the cost of publishing is covered by the authors (Fig 1).

When an article positing a new path for publishing and access gets a *fundamental fact* wrong in the lead, I find I'm less interested in reading the

rest. I trust by now you've spotted the flagrant error? The last 13 words (excluding the Figure reference) are *doubly* false—both because most gold OA journals do not have author-side fees and because most APCs are almost certainly not "covered by the authors."

Sigh.

Transition

When I was distributing articles among sections, I believed that the common thread for these items is that they relate to an ongoing transition from closed to open, either through some magical flip or through lengthy evolution. This point in the essay also marks a transition, I suspect, from noting and discussing most items in each Diigo subtopic to deleting most of them—partly because they now seem less interesting or significant, partly because the essay is already longish and has covered less than half of the items.

The LMS and open access

Peter Cameron posted this on April 25, 2013 on his eponymous blog. It concerns the launch of a gold OA journal by the London Mathematical Society, which publishes several "hybrid" journals.

Cameron cites a paragraph in the announcement of the new journal:

> The new, purely open access journal will provide a place for authors whose funders, such as those institutions who have signed the "Compact for Open Access Equity", insist that the papers they fund may only be published in purely open access journals, which would exclude being published in our hybrid journals.

In other words, if you *must* publish gold OA, we'll accommodate you (for a substantial fee: £1,925 or about $2,570 as I write this). Cameron wonders why the new journal is needed at all—after all, he says, the LMS "are good guys" because journal articles are freely accessible *for six months after publication* and LMS journals allow arXiv deposits of pre-acceptance versions.

As I read the piece, it strikes me that Cameron would prefer *not* to see gold OA at LMS and worries about "pressure" to make all publicly-funded research OA. Hmm. Maybe this belongs in the next section of this essay: pieces that seem anti-OA.

Checking the journal, I find it at Wiley (formerly at Oxford University Press), with a more reasonable $1,250 APC. It wasn't added to *DOAJ* until July 11, 2017, which seems odd for a four-year-old gold OA journal.

OA options for a society journal

This piece, by Heather Piwowar on May 11, 2013 at *Research Remix*, offers an interesting outline showing possible options for a scholarly society considering a move to OA for its (paywalled) flagship journal.

It strikes me as a good outline of some possible transition approaches. At this point, it would appear that the society has chosen a route that doesn't really offer transition: in addition to changing publishers (now with a very high $3,750 APC for "hybrid" OA), it's started *another* journal, this one gold OA, which will have a $2,750 APC after an initial waiver period.

Deep impact: unintended consequences of journal rank

This article—yes, it's a full-scale article—by Björn Brembs, Katherine Button and Marcus Munafò appeared June 24, 2013 in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. I cannot for the life of me figure out what the paper has to do with neuroscience, but that continues a long tradition of OA-related articles appearing in the most unlikely journals.

> Most researchers acknowledge an intrinsic hierarchy in the scholarly journals ("journal rank") that they submit their work to, and adjust not only their submission but also their reading strategies accordingly. On the other hand, much has been written about the negative effects of institutionalizing journal rank as an impact measure. So far, contributions to the debate concerning the limitations of journal rank as a scientific impact assessment tool have either lacked data, or relied on only a few studies. In this review, we present the most recent and pertinent data on the consequences of our current scholarly communication system with respect to various measures of scientific quality (such as utility/citations, methodological soundness, expert ratings or retractions). These data corroborate previous hypotheses: using journal rank as an assessment tool is bad scientific practice. Moreover, the data lead us to argue that any journal rank (not only the currently-favored Impact Factor) would have this negative impact. Therefore, we suggest that abandoning journals altogether, in favor of a library-based scholarly communication system, will ultimately be necessary. This new system will use modern information technology to vastly improve the filter, sort and discovery functions of the current journal system.

That's the abstract, and all I'll quote or comment on. Suffice it to say it's one of the earlier Brembs-related pieces to argue that the glamour journals publish the worst science (as measured by retraction rates) and that a true transition should eliminate journals entirely. Still worth reading.

Open access and Brexit

Richard Poynder posted this on June 29, 2016 at *Open and Shut?*—and while it's largely an interview with Stephen Curry, there's also some implicit (or explicit) editorializing, as in Poynder's repeated assertion that "it is…generally agreed that the transition to open access will require additional funding, if only in the short term."

That might be "generally agreed" by the RCUK and by some OA folks in the UK, and by those in love with the "do no harm to legacy publisher profits" approach, but I very much question whether most OA supporters

agree that this is true or acceptable. If a transition to nearly-complete OA costs more overall, then something has gone terribly wrong. (Yes, I'm editorializing, and would not claim otherwise.)

How dated is the interview? Well, Curry says at one point:

> [E]veryone is disorientated because it's clear that there is no plan for Brexit at the moment. It is all still to be worked out.

The latest news I've seen suggests that this is still the case nearly 18 months later. Perhaps not directly relevant, but I'm compelled to quote part of Curry's response to a Poynder question that ends with "the OA movement":

> I'm never sure what you mean by "the OA movement" – to me it' is a heterogeneous collection of individuals and organisations with diverse emphases on the key articles of the various declarations…

Quite so.

I find this exchange interesting because Poynder had for some time struck me as a Harnadian, promoting green OA as the optimum and inevitable solution. Maybe not:

> **RP: One possibility, I guess, is that much greater stress would be placed on green OA. But green OA does not offer any kind of transition to open access does it? And as publishers impose ever more onerous embargo conditions does green OA really offer a realistic long-term solution?**
>
> SC: That could be a direction to go in, particularly with the start of the HEFCE policy. I don't think green OA is the long-term solution though it's an effective interim measure. We will have to be vigilant in spotting and calling out extensions to embargo periods – particularly since I have not seen any convincing evidence that they are a cost to publishers.

I certainly agree that green OA does not appear to offer any kind of transition to full OA other than "and then a miracle happens and all publishers become benign inexpensive service-renderers."

Converting Scholarly Journals to Open Access: A Review of Approaches and Experiences

This lengthy report (a 224-page PDF) was posted August 4, 2016 on DASH, Harvard's repository. It reviews the literature related to flipping subscription journals to OA status and discusses some possible scenarios and both failures and successes.

I confess to not having read the entire document (which has reviewer comments interpolated within the report itself). I'll quote the same conclusion quoted in an *Inside Higher Ed* item on the report:

> Not every flip was a success, and not all the flips that were successful using one scenario would have been successful with a different scenario. But there were successes under every scenario and in every

scholarly niche. Journals that picked a scenario that fit their circumstances were able to preserve or enhance their readership, submissions, quality and financial sustainability.

Successfully transitioning the world's largest chemistry subscription journal to a gold open access publication

This commentary by Emma K. Wilson and Jamie Humphrey appeared March 10, 2017 at *UKSG Insights*.

> In 2016 the Royal Society of Chemistry announced that from January 2017 it would convert RSC Advances, the world's largest chemistry journal, from a subscription journal to a gold open access journal. This article gives some background to the decision to convert, and provides an update on how the conversion to the new access model has gone during the first three months following conversion. The effect of the conversion on article submissions, including scientific topics covered and the geographical representation of the submitted articles, is also discussed.

A bit of background on the journal:

> Around seven years ago, we had consistent and strong feedback from research communities that were developing their science infrastructures and from early-career researchers, saying that we did not provide an accessible journal in which they could publish their articles. Based on this feedback, we launched *RSC Advances*[1] in 2011 as a home for this type of work.
>
> *RSC Advances* is an online journal that publishes high quality, well-conducted research that advances the development of the field. It has a broad scope and publishes across all the chemical sciences, with a particular focus on interdisciplinary research. It is now the biggest chemical science journal in the world in terms of number of articles published.
>
> Our vision for the journal is to provide a quality society publishing option for all sections of our community, including emerging scientific areas and markets. The journal has a specific focus on supporting early-career researchers and researchers from nations which are developing their research base and encouraging new authors to publish with the Royal Society of Chemistry.
>
> Our aim is to be innovative and inclusive, while maintaining quality. Our author service and support make the publication process as straightforward as possible for authors, and speed up the dissemination of their work. The process is article based, so that authors receive their page numbers (and therefore full citation) as soon as their article is accepted and their articles immediately go into the latest 'issue in progress'.

Six months in is perhaps a bit early to be drawing conclusions as to the success of a "flip," especially for a very young journal on a rapid growth

path. (As the graphs make clear, the journal is international: 48% of the 2016 articles are from Chine, with 14% from India and 4% from Iran.)

It's an interesting early report. The journal's APC is midrange, currently £500 (call it $667) but planned as £750 starting in 2019 (discounted or waived for many countries). I can't find it in *DOAJ*, but that may be a temporary oversight. The article projects about 7,000 articles for 2017; that appears to be a good projection (6,578 as of December 11, 2017).

We don't need open access, but scholar-owned publication brands

Martin Haspelmath posted this discussion on February 21, 2017 at *Free Science Blog*, and as you can imagine I take issue with parts of it, beginning with the curious title.

Haspelmath wonders why scholars haven't already abandoned journals and just posted articles to Academia,edu or ResearchGate.

> The reason is that our careers hinge not only on our research output, but on the **brands** that our publications are associated with (journal titles and publisher imprints). This is something a scientist learnd very early, but that is rarely discussed, and that the politicians seem to be completely unaware of. Even scientists often seem to be unaware that **the cost of publication comes from the prestige of the brand**, not from the dissemination. Commercial publishers exploit our need for their brands to justify their exorbitant prices (and thus their high profits or inefficient processes), and there are no market forces to keep the prices low.

I find it hard to argue with this reasoning but easier to argue with what follows:

> The idea of open access was launched in the 1990s because of the frustration with ever rising subscription prices, and it has gained widespread acceptance by politicians because there seems to be no reason in the digital age to hide results from publicly funded research behind paywalls. Strangely, however, the politicians (and open-access advocates in the universities and science organizations) have not understood that **digital dissemination can actually save a large amount of money –** probably up to 90% of the current publication costs.

I flatly disagree that OA began simply or primarily because of high prices, and the wide acceptance by politicians may be a Eurocentric view. It is *certainly* not the case that OA advocates in academia have generally or universally ignored possible cost savings; if he's right in claiming that German universities are promising publishers that they'll keep spending as much money, that speaks badly, but not for OA or academia as a whole,

> Increasingly, open-access publication means that publishers charge not the readers (via paywalls and subscriptions), but the authors (via APCs). This isn't any better **as long as the brands are owned by the**

> **commercial companies**, who will be able charge more for prestigious journals than for less prestigious journals.

There it is: gold OA means APCs. (Not stated quite so baldly.) Then comes the killer, from my perspective as a library person:

> On the other hand, universities already have technical departments – called "libraries" – which can probably retrain their staff to take over the publication tasks, as they will not be needed for acquisition of journals and books in the future.

Since there are no items worth acquiring that aren't scholarly journals and monographs, right? And since the bulk of library staff time is spent on acquisitions, right? Sigh…and he's equating librarianship with janitorial work and construction crews, fairly literally.

The close:

> Thus, it is time to drop "open access" as a progressive issue, and to push for **scholar-owned brands** as the gold standard of science publication.

Access? That doesn't seem to interest the author at all; it's all about control.

A few comments, one of them (from Tim Vines) that is, fortunately, false: he says that societies still charge (either subscriptions or APCs) for their journals, and that *any* successful publication must charge. Reality: of 731 society-published gold OA journals in *DOAJ* in 2016, only 18% charged APCs.

Working towards a transition to open access

Gemma Hersh of Elsevier wrote this piece on September 26, 2017 at *Elsevier Connect*—and I'm not going to do much quoting-and-commenting, tempting as it is to point out that Hersh makes the usual error equating gold OA and APCs and to dwell on the truly bizarre notion that "open access" could legitimately mean "only to people in Europe." And to argue with the simple assertion that a transition to gold OA won't save money (although if Elsevier gets its way, that may be a true statement).

Nope. Instead, I'll refer you to a better writer and thinker:

Why I don't share Elsevier's vision of the transition to open access

That's Stephen Curry, writing October 3, 2017 at *Reciprocal Space*.

He offers a classic fisking of Hersh's article, so good that I can only say: go read it. Oh, and the comments, including one in which another Elsevier operative attempts to say that Hersh did not say what she said about region-specific OA.

New journals that are changing the way we publish

As far as I can tell, the transition to OA (however long and complex it might be) has to involve one or more of three routes:

1. Subscription journals "flip" to OA, likely to be the most painful and expensive route.
2. Scholars abandon journals *as such*, moving to repositories as the basis for communications with endorsements or post-deposit peer reviews as quality controls—probably the cheapest, but also probably fairly painful.
3. New gold OA journals spring up to compete with and eventually (?) supplant subscription journals, some of them using new methodologies along the way.

This September 30, 2013 piece by Ethan White at *Jabberwocky Ecology*—out of order chronologically, but a good way to end this section—considers three examples of the third approach: *PeerJ*, *F1000* and the Frontiers journals.

They're interesting discussions, and White has been involved with the first two. The concluding paragraph:

> This post isn't intended to advocate for any of these particular journals or approaches. These are definitely experimental and we may find that some of them have serious limitations. What I do advocate for is that we conduct these kinds of experiments with academic publishing and support the folks who are taking the lead by developing and test driving these systems to see how they work. To do anything else strikes me as accepting that current academic publishing practices are at their global optimum. That seems fairly unlikely to me, which makes the scientist in me want to explore different approaches so that we can find out how to best evaluate and improve scientific research.

I love that final sentence, especially the first six words.

Do read the comments, which add to the initial discussion.

Anti, or Seemingly So

This label is probably unfair to some of the items in this section (assuming many of the original 25 survive the winnowing). These are items that seemed related to anti-OA arguments or made anti-OA arguments. As I go through, I'm tending to discard pieces that basically repeat the "all gold is APC" and "APCs create a conflict of interest that's not present for subscription publishing" and other myths; they're just tiresome. There are, of course, a lot of those—not surprising, since publishers and "journalists" seem never to tire of repeating the myths.

Door-to-door subscription scams: the dark side of The New York Times

Michael Eisen posted this piece on April 9, 2013 at *it is NOT junk*, and it's as relevant now as it was four years ago. It's a response to a *New York Times* piece that is in essence a Beallfest (with the sole picture one of Beall), touting the idea that sketchy academic conferences and journals are rapidly increasing and are all the fault of OA.

Eisen quotes these paragraphs from the article:

> The number of these journals and conferences has exploded in recent years as scientific publishing has shifted from a traditional business model for professional societies and organizations built almost entirely on subscription revenues to open access, which relies on authors or their backers to pay for the publication of papers online, where anyone can read them.
>
> Open access got its start about a decade ago and quickly won widespread acclaim with the advent of well-regarded, peer-reviewed journals like those published by the Public Library of Science, known as PLoS. Such articles were listed in databases like PubMed, which is maintained by the National Library of Medicine, and selected for their quality.
>
> But some researchers are now raising the alarm about what they see as the proliferation of online journals that will print seemingly anything for a fee. They warn that nonexperts doing online research will have trouble distinguishing credible research from junk. "Most people don't know the journal universe," Dr. Goodman said. "They will not know from a journal's title if it is for real or not."

It's hard to argue with Eisen's immediate response: "There's so much wrong with this I don't know where to start." But start he does—and after noting that invitations to questionable conferences and journals do represent a real issue, he notes:

> And yes, a lot of these suspect journals charge authors for publishing their works, just like open access journals like PLoS do. But suggesting, as the article does, that scam conferences/journals exist because of the rise of open access publishing is ridiculous. It's the logical equivalent of blaming newspapers like the NYT for people who go door-to-door selling fake magazine subscriptions.
>
> Long before the Internet, publishers discovered that launching new journals was like printing money – something Elsevier specialized in for decades, launching hundreds of new journals with hastily assembled editorial boards and then turning around and demanding that libraries subscribe to these journals as part of their "Big Deal" bundles of journals. These journals succeeded because there are always researchers looking for a place to put their papers, and many of these new journals greased the wheels by having fairly lax standards for publication.
>
> The same is true for conferences. For as long as I can remember I've been receiving solicitations to attend and/or speak at conferences organized by for-profit firms like Cambridge Health Tech that seem to cobble together sets of speakers from whomever they could get to accept – taking advantage of scientists' desire to put "invited speaker" on their CVs – and then charging scientists, often from industry where travel budgets are bigger, to attend. I am sure some of these meetings are useful to some people (I've never been to meetings like this, some people tell me they're basically

> junkets with little scientific merit, others say they are very useful) – but the idea that profiteering on people's desire for prestige in science is something that came onto the scene with open access publishing is patently absurd.
>
> The real explanation for the things described in the article is that it's insanely easy to create conferences and journals and to send out blasts of emails to thousands of scientists hoping a few will take the bait. It's science's version of the Nigerian banking scams – something far more deserving of laughter than hand-wringing on the front page of the NYT.
>
> But if Gina Kolata and the NYT are really concerned about scams in science publishing, they should look into the $10 BILLION DOLLARS of largely public money that subscription publishers take in every year in return for giving the scientific community access to the 90% of papers that are not published in open access journals – papers that scientists gave to the journals for free! This ongoing insanity not only fleeces huge piles of cash from government and university coffers, it denies the vast majority of the planet's population access to the latest discoveries of our scientists. And if the price we pay for ending this insanity is a few gullible scientists falling for open access spam, it's worth it a million times over.

Oops. I seem to have quoted nearly the entire post. But why not? It's to the point, concise and, of course, CC BY.

Do read the comments; they're valuable additions.

Why I published in PLoS ONE. And why I probably won't again for awhile.

This piece, by Andrew Treddenick on March 20, 2013 at *Early Career Ecologists*, is not itself anti-OA—but part of the story Treddenick tells has to do with anti-OA attitudes. It also says something about one specific form of antagonism, perhaps less visible these days: people deriding *PLOS One* as being somehow a fake journal.

Early on, there's a screen-captured tweet from one scholar (who later said it was tongue in cheek) that's fairly astonishing:

> I've now heard from several tenured or near-tenure profs that publishing in @plosone was career suicide. Thanks a lot Open Access

Wow. Fortunately, not everybody thought that way—although another one commented that "most of my peers" look at *PLOS One* as "the dumping ground for papers rejected at 'real' journals."

In any case, Treddenick and colleagues had a paper that was rejected (after three months) by one journal; after looking at other possibilities, the authors decided to give *PLOS One* a try.

> I personally like PLoS ONE. And while it may get a bad (sometimes deserving) wrap as a place to publish uninteresting science (since "perceived impact" is not considered during the review stage), I find many papers to be quite good. The one thing I really don't understand is why

> PLoS ONE gets a reputation for publishing uninteresting science while lower-tier journals get a pass on such criticism. Not everything we publish is going to be earth-shattering, so we need lower-tier journals to push us along and collect important details. But, if PLoS ONE is going to be criticized for publishing "uninteresting", "unimpactful" science, then the same criticism could be leveled against *a lot* of journals—the very same journals some consider "real" while considering PLoS ONE "fake". I am not arguing for that. I am just arguing for a more nuanced view of what PLoS ONE is and how it can serve the scientific community. And for those that do think PLoS ONE only publishes science no one cares about, check out this article in Ideas in Ecology and Evolution…
>
> In the end, we decided to submit to PLoS ONE (without me having to twist the arms of coauthors at all!), because I thought the paper would be seen by the widest viewership and might get more reads by ecologists in general (as opposed to just plant ecologists, or just savanna ecologists). The review process was great. We had a subject editor within a week and by the next week it was sent out to reviewers. PLoS tries for a review time (that is, in the hands of reviewers) of 10 days and our time fell within the margin of error, I think. All told, from submission to first decision was about a month. And the decision was…major revisions.
>
> No, our paper was not simply accepted at PLoS ONE .. The reviews were tough, critical, and insightful. It was obvious there was no free pass at PLoS and my response letter took over ten pages to address the three reviewer's concerns. This was not peer-review light, as some (who have not submitted a paper to PLoS I presume) call it.
>
> In the end, I am very happy with our decision to publish in PLoS ONE. The review process was smooth and fast, and the editorial staff is very helpful during the production phase (they added in text for me, etc.). The question is still open as to whether it is the right venue for my paper, but since March 6 it has received 409 unique views. So, even though papers can be harder to find in PLoS since they publish so many papers in so many fields without a traditional table of contents, it appears some people are finding their way to the paper.

But…well, here's the coda:

> I will probably not publish in PLoS ONE again for quite some time. There is still too much negative bias against the journal and against people that have "too many" PLoS ONE papers on their CV. My next couple papers are lined up for more traditional venues like The American Naturalist and Ecological Applications. Plus, for better or worse, I'm going to be honest, I still have a (some people would call shameful) desire to see my name on a Science or Nature paper. Perhaps this is for my own ego or maybe it is just the way most of us have been academically "raised." Regardless, even though I personally like PLoS ONE and

> read a lot of ecology papers they publish, you won't being seeing my name in there again any time soon. I'm just not brave enough.

More than four dozen comments, in aggregate much longer than the post, worth reading.

Publisher wants to take journal Open Access

For some of these pieces, there's ambiguity as to whether the writer is against OA. With "drugmonkey," who posted this on October 12, 2015 at *DrugMonkey*, the text and even more so the comments make it clear that the researcher is anti-OA.

The text is about Wiley planning to flip a journal, adding a $2,500 APC, after apparently building the journal's IF. (In fact, that didn't happen: the society-based journal currently charges $1,561 for institutional online access to its six issues per year; it's "hybrid," and after you go through Wiley's clunky process for finding out the APC—really? downloading a spreadsheet?—you find that Wiley currently wants $3,000.)

Here's the money paragraph:

> All y'all Open Access wackaloons believe this is inevitable and are solidly behind Wiley's move, no doubt.

The comment stream makes things clearer: drugmonkey denies that there *is* an access problem—"anyone with an email address or access to the mail can read any of my papers for free for the asking"—and questions whether anybody really *wants* access and doesn't have it.

Open Access Will Remain a Half-Revolution

This interview of Richard Poynder by Michał Starczewski, which appeared March 22, 2016 at *Otwarta Nauka*, isn't anti-OA as such—but as is frequently the case, Poynder is inclined to offer certain generalizations that cloud the picture. Which is not to say he's wrong; he's usually at least half-right (couldn't resist).

The main problem here, to my mind, is constantly picturing OA as "the OA movement" led by a seemingly monolithic group of "OA advocates." For example:

> What has surprised me most is the OA movement's lack of organisation, or clear strategy on how to make OA a reality. As a consequence, we are now some 15 years away from the Budapest Open Access Initiative (where the term open access was adopted), and much still has to be achieved, not least clarifying the issues listed in my last answer. Apart from anything else, we still have no conclusive definition of open access. Given this, it is no surprise that there is a great deal of confusion about open access.
>
> I think there are two main reasons for the failure of the OA movement to take a more structured approach. First, the research community is not actually very good at organising itself, particularly on a global scale.

> And it doesn't help that researchers are increasingly incentivised to compete more than co-operate with one another.
>
> Second, OA advocates have tended to approach open access more as if it were a religion than a pragmatic response to the possibilities the network provides to improve both the research process and scholarly communication (which should surely be the ultimate goal of open access).
>
> These two factors have generated unhealthy schisms and disputes within the movement, with advocates spending too much time arguing over doctrine. We have also seen OA advocates become addicted to cheerleading and the shouting of slogans, which has deflected them from devoting sufficient time to developing practical strategies and tools to achieve open access. The assumption was that all that was required was to "convert" colleagues. When the movement failed to do that it began lobbying funders and institutions demanding that researchers be compelled to embrace OA, essentially they sought to offload the responsibility onto others.
>
> It also has to be said that the strategies proposed and/or supported by OA advocates have often been cockeyed—not least the concept of the article-processing charge (APC). That anyone ever thought pay-to-publish was a sensible way of disseminating research is most odd. Not only is it impractical, but it has played into the hands of profit-hungry legacy publishers, and indeed any fly-by-night cowboy able to create a web site.
>
> I have also been surprised at how disconnected OA advocates are from the views of the wider research community—a tendency exacerbated by their habit of gathering together in their echo chamber of choice (conference hall, social media etc.) where their beliefs, prejudices and misconceptions are reinforced rather than subjected to a reality check.

Not 100% wrong, but certainly not 100% right. I've omitted links, but "fly-by-night cowboy" and "create a web site" both link to now-empty pages on a certain misnamed anti-OA site.

It's an interesting interview, to be sure.

How publishing in open access journals threatens science and what we can do about it

I'm not sure whether this commentary, by H. Charles Romesburg on June 21, 2016 in *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, is a staggeringly bad example of attacking OA through half-truths, outright errors and sweeping generalizations—or whether it's Just Another Toll-Access Editorial Sniping at OA. Maybe it doesn't matter, and maybe this is another example of "why bother?" commentaries not worth citing.

Just for starters, Romesburg sees a triad of apparently wholly distinct types of journals: society journals, which he believes are the way to go; commercial academic journals; and OA journals—the worst way to go and actively harming science. That the journal in which this appeared is both

a society journal and a commercial journal is one thing; he seems to completely ignore the existence of 700+ society journals that happen to be OA.

Here's the abstract:

> The last decade has seen an enormous increase in the number of peer-reviewed open access research journals in which authors whose articles are accepted for publication pay a fee to have them made freely available on the Internet. Could this popularity of open access publishing be a bad thing? Is it actually imperiling the future of science? In this commentary, I argue that it is. Drawing upon research literature, I explain why it is almost always best to publish in society journals (i.e., those sponsored by research societies such as *Journal of Wildlife Management*) and not nearly as good to publish in commercial academic journals, and worst—to the point it should normally be opposed—to publish in open access journals (e.g., *PLOS ONE*). I compare the operating plans of society journals and open access journals based on 2 features: the quality of peer review they provide and the quality of debate the articles they publish receive. On both features, the quality is generally high for society journals but unacceptably low for open access journals, to such an extent that open access publishing threatens to pollute science with false findings. Moreover, its popularity threatens to attract researchers' allegiance to it and away from society journals, making it difficult for them to achieve their traditionally high standards of peer reviewing and of furthering debate. I prove that the commonly claimed benefits to science of open access publishing are nonexistent or much overestimated. I challenge the notion that journal impact factors should be a key consideration in selecting journals in which to publish. I suggest ways to strengthen the *Journal* and keep it strong.

Is it actually true that OA journals are generally "unacceptably low" quality and full of false findings? Probably not—any more than it's true that all OA publishing involves authors paying a fee to the publishers; that all or even most OA journals follow *PLOS One*'s objective peer review approach (or that such an approach inherently yields defective science); that OA reviewers don't know the fields they're working in and don't help authors improve their papers;…..well, I could go on.

The "partial peer review" half-truth (or lie, since many OA journals are quite selective) pops up a lot, as in this paragraph:

> The final thing to say against OA is the most damning of all: the more that authors publish in OA, the greater is the risk that OA will kill their field's science. How? Open access journals' partial peer review process is conducive to letting false findings slip into publication. Subsequently, incautious authors may cite the false findings in their articles and some of these articles may later get cited and so on. Geometrically and insidiously, the field's knowledge base is bound to grow more and more polluted, less and less reliable.

The author quite literally says that he *knows* that OA articles—in general—were only reviewed for methodology.

I will go no further. If you do choose to read this commentary, look at the related literature, specifically a reply to the article—a reply which he replies to by essentially saying that *he knows* all OA journals use crappy partial peer review and are polluting science, because *he knows that*…

I'd tagged a one-page editorial in *Acta Physiologica*, another Wiley journal, for possible inclusion, but on seeing this statement:

> Thus, the pay-to-publish policy of **all open-access journals** has the potential to effectively shut out several countries from actively participating in science. [Emphasis added]

I conclude "Why bother?" Wrong on the facts. Period.

The Way We Publish Now

Barbara Fister, who wrote this "Library Babel Fish" column on July 21, 2016 at *Inside Higher Education*, is most certainly *not* an opponent of OA; indeed, she's a thoughtful and literate proponent. No, in this case the problem is explicit anti-OA bias on the part of a tenure and promotion committee in librarianship at some (unnamed) university:

> Given that the future of scholarship is open and that academic librarians have a stake in that future, I was completely thrown when Lisa Hinchliffe reported on Twitter that she was advising a junior colleague on publishing options and was told she had to avoid open access journals. The tenure and promotion committee wouldn't count them.
>
> At first I misunderstood. I thought the junior librarian was badly misinformed. No, *I* was the one misinformed. The T&P committee, in this case made up entirely of academic librarians, would not accept articles published in open access journals for a tenure file. In fact, they preferred subscription journals that appear in print.

Important clarification: this did *not* happen at Hinchcliffe's institution.

Still, I'd agree with the next paragraphs:

> Who on earth is in charge here and why are they so utterly, completely, *disastrously* ignorant of trends in scholarship and in our own discipline?
>
> Last week our association issued a welcome statement urging librarians to make their scholarship open access and for journals in the field to move toward open access *and* for librarian authors, reviewers, and editors to encourage them to do so. So I'm baffled that librarians evaluating the qualifications of a librarian for tenure would send the signal that open access is unacceptable.
>
> That's exactly backward. We should be *rewarding* librarians who move scholarship toward a future that reflects our values and is consistent with trends in scholarly publishing. Sure, there are plenty of library journals

> owned by giant for-profit corporations. They don't get read much, because so few libraries can afford to subscribe to them. Our best journals are not all owned by Taylor & Francis or Wiley or Elsevier, though they have bought their way into the field and snatched up some venerable properties. Most of the LIS journals they publish are not of particularly high quality. Being expensive is not a mark of excellence.

Fister looks at the possible "top journals" in library and information science. There's no consensus list, but of one good six-journal list, three are now gold OA (one changed back to gold OA after Fister's column appeared) and a fourth is accessible but with a sliding one-year embargo. Looking at another crowdsourced list of 13 top academic LIS journals, more than half are gold OA (generally with no APC, by the way).

Fister's conclusion, with which I fully agree:

> Apparently there are librarians who still haven't got the memo: open access and quality are not exclusive, and if you are discouraging rising librarians from publishing the way our association urges us to do, you're badly out of step and should stop it, right now. It's nothing less than professional malpractice.

How a sustained misinformation campaign by Scholarly Kitchen attacked PLOS ONE's rigorous peer review.

Lenny Teytelman posted this on March 24, 2017 at *protools.io*, and you'll really need to read it yourself. I think he makes a pretty convincing case.

Hybrid open access is unreliable

Another one that's *not* anti-OA but does take one aspect of "OA" to task, namely "hybrid" OA. By Ross Mounce on February 20, 2017 at *A blog by Ross Mounce*. The short version:

> **The TL;DR summary**: In February 2017, when Elsevier were accused of selling one paid-for hybrid open access article, at first they sowed doubt about it, then three days later admitted it to be true. In their admission they state that it is the only wrongly paywalled open access article "affected" at their websites. They have apparently checked their "system" and say there are no more wrongly paywalled articles at Elsevier websites. Their statement is however demonstrably incorrect as I show in this post. There are more paywalled open access articles at Elsevier, and by their own admission Elsevier don't seem to know about them. This is professional incompetence. HybridOA as whole, not just at Elsevier, is not reliable. We should not use hybridOA services if we actually want reliable open access in perpetuity.

Worth reading the whole thing, and as you might expect I agree that "hybrid" is not the way to go—now or, certainly, in the future. Read the comments as well.

Has the open access movement delayed the revolution?
As you might guess, the general answer to this leading question offered by Richard Poynder in this October 11, 2017 piece at *Open and Shut?* is "Yes," and it's probably also clear that I would say "No—partly because there's no such [monolithic] movement, partly because it's an evolutionary process." But there's a lot more going on in this piece, not all of it anti-OA by any means, and I think it's worth reading on its own—and be sure to link through to the Michael Eisen Q&A near the end.

Hmm. I seem to have skipped 16 of the 25 items originally tagged, mostly because they raise the same old falsehoods, but sometimes because they now seem outdated.

Closing

There was supposed to be a final section, Miscellany—but on examination, none of them needed to be discussed (and the piece is already too long). At this point, it appears that 48 out of original 92 items made it—but that number may decrease as editing (for coherence and for space) continues. As to *drawing* overall conclusions, see the introduction—and draw your own.

The Back
Audiophile System Prices, 2017

Time for another annual look at price extremes for certified audiophile stereo systems—that is, systems with all components listed in *Stereophile*'s "Recommended Components" list, this time the October 2017 edition—mostly taken from the print magazine, with cables and subwoofers from stereophile.com. I'm not recommending any of these systems, and I suspect there are some internal mismatches (e.g., tube amplifiers that aren't powerful enough for the speakers). I'm also not saying "spending more than $X on a sound system is stupid and you can't hear the difference anyway," because that latter assertion is *very* tricky.

Whether you can hear a difference between two components involves five factors: how well you can hear; how well you *listen* (an entirely different thing); the music involved; whether there *is* any sonic difference; and whether you *believe* there's a sonic difference.

Whether there's a *worthwhile* difference depends primarily on the size of the difference (if there is one) and an entirely subjective factor: whether you think the difference justifies the extra money. The law of diminishing returns is very definitely in play, and while for some folks an 0.1% improvement in sound quality (which they're likely to call an astonishing and unquestionable improvement) will be worth $100,000, for most of us, diminishing returns set in at a much lower level.

I'm rearranging things this time because of some realities about component differentiation. I'm also making price comparisons to the 2016 list as appropriate. I've dropped digital servers from the writeup because I find that scene too confusing.

Simple Systems

First, however, two simple (but still audiophile) systems for people who want audiophile-quality sound with a minimum of fuss and only play either CDs or vinyl (and don't need the lowest bass):

CD only
That's not quite true, since this system will also play SACDs, DVD-Audio, BD-Audio and, for that matter, videos and some other digital formats. **Source**: Sony UHP-P1 Universal Player, $349.99. **Powered Speakers**: AudioEngine A2+, $249/pair. **Cables**: AudioQuest Tower interconnects, $25. The key here is that the speakers include the amplifier. **System price**: $623.99.

LP only
Same powered speakers and interconnects. **Source:** Sony PS-HX500 USB, $599.99—a turntable that includes a quality tonearm, cartridge, built-in preamp and even a digital output. **System price:** $873.99.

Cables and Interconnects

I'm showing these first because the online listing doesn't separate items by class or grade. Within each system (but not portable players), I add "cables" as needed—usually one of each type, but with an extra interconnect for a turntable, each preamp and a subwoofer.

Interconnects
Interconnects go between components—e.g., from CD player to preamp or from preamp to amplifier. These are for interconnects with two RCA connectors at each end and at least a 1m cable in between. **Low**: AudioQuest Tower, $25. **High**: Fono Acustica Virtuoso, $20,384. (No, I'm not making that up.)

Speaker Cables
These run from the amplifier to the speakers, and the prices are for a pair of cables at least 2m long (although the extremes here are, respectively, 10' and 8' long). **Low**: Kimber 4PR, $137. **High**: TARA Labs Omega Evolution SP, $34,000.

Portable Players

Listed first because they're self-contained: a digital music player and headphones. This is also where the *Stereophile* grades/classes come into play: A (and A+) for best available essentially regardless of price, B-E also audiophile quality with more reservations and lower prices. I divide offerings into A and B-E.

Class A, Low Price
Player: Ponoplayer, $399. **Headphones:** ThinkSound On2, $199.99. **System total:** $598.99.

Class A, High Price
Player: Astell&Kern AK240 Portable Player, $1,999. **Headphones**; JPS Labs Abyss AB-1266 PHI, $4,495. **System total:** $6.494.99

Class B-E, Low Price
Player: Sony NW-ZX2, $1,1199.99. (But of course you'd go for the Ponoplayer, right?) **Headphones:** Grado SR60E, $79. **System total:** $1,278.99—or, if you have any sense at all, $478.99.

Class B-E, High Price
Player: Same as low price. **Headphones:** Koss ESP/950, $999.99. **System total:** $3198.98.

Changes and ratios
Compared to 2016's roundup, these totals are, respectively. unchanged, $2,315 more, $721 more, and $1,079 less. The high/low ratio is 10.8 for class A, 1.77 for class B (or 4.44 if you're sensible).

Phono Stages

I'm putting this *before* the CD-based System stages because there are only four levels to contend with, rather than an even dozen.

Class A, Low Price
Turntable: PTP Audio Solid12, €2,750 ($3,243 at this writing). **Tonearm:** VPI JMW-12.7, $1,700. **Cartridge:** EMT TSD-15: $1,950. **Phono Preamp:** Lehmann Decade, $2,099. **Cables: $50. Total:** $8,682.

Class A, High Price
Turntable: Techdas Air Force One, $105,000. **Tonearm:** Acoustic Signature TA-9000, $17,995. **Cartridge:** Air Tight Opus, $15,000. **Phono Preamp:** CH Precision P1 and X1, $48,000—or Audio Tekne TEA-8695, also $48,000. **Cables:** $40,768. **Total**: $226,763.

Ratio: 26.1.

Class B-E, Low Price
Turntable: Sony PS-HX500 USB: $599.95, including tonearm, cartridge and phono preamp. **Cables:** $25. **Total**: $623.95.

Class B-E, High Price
Turntable: Acoustic Signature Triple X, $5,795. T**onearm:** Sperling-Audio TA-1: $9,750. (Yes, I know that's more than five times as much as a Class A tonearm. Welcome to the wacky world of high-end vinyl!) **Cartridge:** Soundsmith Carmen Mk. II, $9,995. (See previous parenthetical remark.) **Phono preamp:** Modwright PH 150, $7.900. **Cables:** $40,768. **Total: $74,208.**
Ratio: 118.9.

CD-Based Stereo Systems

Twelve options, because you'd choose between integrated amps and separate preamps and amps—and, for Class A systems, between tube-based and solid-state amplifiers. For "monoblocks" (single-channel amps), prices are per pair (as is also true for speakers, but not for subwoofers). Changes from 2016 shown where I'd listed a similar 2016 systems; changes may be price changes but are more frequently new or deleted components.

Class A Low: Tube Separates
CD Player: Primare CD32, $2,495. **Preamp:** Luxman Classic CL-38USE, $5,995. **Amp:** PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium, $3,199. **Speakers:** Technics Premium Class SB-C700, $1,699. **Subwoofer:** MartinLogan BalancedForce 212, $3,599. **Cables:** $212. **Total:** $17,595.

Class A Low: Tube Integrated
CD Player: same. Amp: PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium HP, $4,399. **Speakers & Sub: Same. Cables:** $187. **Total:** $13.625.
Change from 2016: Down $850.

Class A Low: Solid-State Separates
CD Player: same. Preamp: Parasound Halo JC 2 BP, $4,495. **Amp:** ATC P1, $3,499. **Speakers & Sub: Same. Cables:** $212. **Total:** $16,935.
Change from 2016: Up $2,970.

Class A Low: Solid-State Integrated
CD Player: same. Amp: Parasound Halo Integrated, $2,495. **Speakers & Sub: Same. Cables:** $187. **Total:** $10,871.
Change from 2016: Up $2,321,

Class A High: Tube Separates
CD Player: DCS Vivaldi, $114.996. **Preamp:** Ypsilon PST-100 MK2, $37,000. **Amp:** VTL Siegfried Series II Reference Monoblock, $65,000. **Speakers:** Wilson Audio Specialties Alexandria XLF, $210,000. **Cables:** $74,768. **Total:** $501,764.

Change from 2016: Down $119,932. Ratio: 28.52.

Class A High: Tube Integrated
CD Player: same. Amp: Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista 800, $12,999. **Speakers: same. Cables:** $54,384. **Total:** $392,379.

Ratio: 30.71

Class A High: Solid-State Separates
CD Player: same. Preamp: Boulder 2110, $55,000. **Amp:** darTZeel NHB-458 Monoblock, $172,161 (170,000 CHF). **Speakers: same. Cables:** $74,768. **Total:** $626,925.

Change from 2016: up $34,671. Ratio: 38.24.

Class A High: Solid-State Integrated
CD Player: same. Amp: Bel Canto Design Black Amplification System, $50,000. **Speakers: same. Cables:** $54,384. **Total:** $429,380.

Change from 2016: down $43,000. Ratio: 39.50

Class B-K Low: Separates
CD Player: Sony UHP-H1 Universal Player, $349.99. **Preamp:** Schiit Audio Sys, $49. **Amp:** Emotiva XPA Gen 3 Two-Channel Version, $999. **Speakers:** Elac Debut B6, $279.99. [Or you could go for the $39.80 Dayton Audio B652, but…] **Subwoofer:** Tannoy T52.12, $921. **Cables:** $212. **Total:** $2,811.

Change from 2016: up $371.

Class B-K Low: Integrated
CD Player: same. Amp: either NAD D 3020 or PS Audio Sprout, each $499. **Speakers & sub: same. Cables:** $187. **Total:** $2,237.

Change from 2016: up $1,367.

Class B-K High: Separates
CD Player: Metronome CD8 S, $8,800. **Preamp:** Parasound Halo P7, $2,295. **Amp:** Raven Audio Spirit Mk. 2 Monoblock, $26,995. **Speakers:** Focal Sopra No.3, $19,999. **Cables:** $74,768. **Total:** $130,787.

Change from 2016: up $68,302. Ratio: 46.53.

Class B-K High: Integrated
CD Player: same. Amp: Gamut D1150 LE, $12,990. **Speakers: same. Cables:** $54,384. **Total:** $96,173.

Change from 2016: up $42,973. Ratio: 42.99

Note that the high B-K system prices are mostly the result of cables not being differentiated by class; with more plausible cables, the total prices would be around $60,000 and $45,000 respectively—or around 20 times as much as the low systems.

CD & LP Systems

You can do the math yourself, but briefly:

- **Class A Low, Tube Separates:** $26,277.
- **Class A Low, Tube Integrated**: $21,457.
- **Class A Low, Solid-State Separates**: $25,077.
- **Class A Low, Solid-State Integrated**: $19,553.
- **Class A High, Tube Separates**: $728,527. Ratio 27.72
- **Class A High, Tube Integrated**: $619,142. Ratio 28.96
- **Class A High, Solid-State Separates:** $853,688. Ratio 34.04.
- **Class A High, Solid-State Integrated**: $656,143. Ratio 33.56.
- **Class B-K Low, Separates**: $3,453.
- **Class B-K Low, Integrated**: $2,861.
- **Class B-K High, Separates**: $204,995. Ratio 59.68.
- **Class B-K High, Integrated**: $170,381. Ratio 59.55
- **Ratio A High to B-K Low**: 298.39.

But Wait! There's More!

The good news: you can put together a complete, LP and CD, stereo system that meets *Stereophile*'s standards for audiophile quality for $2,861—or, for that matter, for $1,171.98 (take the early CD system mentioned, add the turntable, and add the $49 Schitt preamp to handle dual inputs).

The better news, for some folks: you can assemble a system that appears to meet the magazine's highest price-no-object standards for $19,553. Still a lot of money, to be sure.

But there are *lots* of ways to spend lots *more* money even without adding a digital music server. For example, two other Recommended Components categories:'

Powerline accessories: a power conditioner ranging from the APC AVS15BLK ($730) to the Audience Adept Response aR12-TS ($8,995); a replacement AC cord for $4,999.99 (Nordost Valhalla 2); a high-end powerstrip/surge protector for anywhere from $35 (AudioQuest 3, which might not include surge protection) to…wait for it…$10,900 (Fono Acustica Sinfo).

Miscellaneous: along with lots of useful and inexpensive accessories, this group includes the $2,699.95 Nordost Qx4, a "scalar field generator"—oh, and you'll want one for each speaker; equipment stands that run as high as $15,275; speaker isolators (that sit under your speakers) for $1,119.98 (for 8, enough for two speakers); the Keith Monks Audio Works Mk. VII Omni record-cleaning machine ($6,995—and if you play records a lot, you *should* have a good cleaning system, but you can get a *Stereophile*-recommended machine for $700)…

For the record, my primary home music system *has* changed—audibly for the better, as far as I'm concerned. The daily personal headphone system is now a Cowon Plenue D ($189) with a 64GB SanDisk SDHC card added ($40), feeding Grado SR80E headphones ($80); I reripped all of my shorter-piece CDs to lossless FLAC (replacing the highest-quality MP3), and the difference is significant to me. On weekends, the Cowon serves as a no-frill server to our $600 (and old!) Denon compact stereo (with broken drive servos), replacing the cheap Sony DVD/CD player we were using. My wife can *absolutely* hear the difference between CD mixes from the MP3s and the Cowon's FLAC files: she was increasingly finding the former irritating, especially on piano music, and finds the latter thoroughly enjoyable. There are two factors at play: FLAC simply sounds better than MP3, and the Cowon probably has better audio circuitry (noise and distortion) than the Sony—and with the Cowon, jitter and CD error correction aren't issues. Yes, the differences are audible; my hearing may not be great (but is significantly better with recent addition of hearing aids), but my *listening* is just fine.

Masthead

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