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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Past few years have seen a soaring growth of open access (OA) publishing. An on-going debate worldwide is to whether the proliferation of OA publishing would benefit the society or not. OA model make availability of fast, subscription less and barrier-free access to the research papers and manuscripts. OA reduces marketing dependency and rely solely on spontaneous assist from search engines, bloggers and social networking. In this article, the concept, history with some common terminologies of OA is discussed. Types and other aspects of OA like repositories and publishing are presented. Distribution of open access journals pertaining to different countries and research fields are also illustrated.

INTRODUCTION

Digital Library is a special library with a focused collection of digital objects that can include text, visual material, audio material, video material, stored as electronic media formats along with means for organizing, storing, and retrieving the files and media contained in the library collection [1]. Many academic libraries are actively involved in building institutional repositories of the institution's books, papers, theses, and other works which can be digitized. Research publications and repositories are made available with few restrictions. Open access (OA) has emerged as an alternative business model to subscribe the scholarly journals [2]. OA enhance scholarly communication in a very short span of time by making research broadly accessible and relief to libraries from high subscription prices of journals [3]. An important question for scholars and librarians is whether open access will challenge subscriptions as the primary method for the distribution of scholarly journal articles. The pace of change will determine how long libraries will be burdened by high subscription costs and how long large portions of the scholarly record will be inaccessible to many who could benefit from it.

The core idea of OA is the basis of its key advantage; articles are freely available for anyone who wishes to read them. For readers and libraries, the benefits of not having to pay for an individual article or journal subscription are obvious. For authors, publishing OA rather than behind a paywall can help open up their research to a wider audience. In an era where the number of articles being published is skyrocketing, open access can help an article to be more discoverable online.

While the end user doesn't have to pay to read an open access article, someone has to pay for the costs of publication. Often, it is the responsibility of the author-perhaps through their employer or a research grant to cover these costs. Some argue that OA models incentivize journals to publish more articles. Journals have to cover their costs and when a large portion of their revenue comes from publication fees, they may be encouraged to publish more articles, with a negative impact on overall quality. This debate was recently reignited with the acceptance of a spoof article by a *Science* editor in many OA journals.

Other than their cost-recovery model, Open Access journals are no different from traditional subscription-based journals; they undergo the same peer-review and quality control as any other scholarly journal. Moreover, Open Access allows for maximum visibility, uptake and use of the published material.

History

- Late 1960s/early 1970s
- ERIC, Medline, and Agricola created; ARPANET launched
- 1971

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- Project Gutenberg formed
- 1991-1994
- ArXiv, mp_arc (Mathematical Physics Preprint Archive), Project Bartleby, Perseus Project, et al., launched
- 1994
- Digital Libraries Initiative launched by National Science Foundation; Social Sciences Research Network (SSRN) launched
- 1996
- Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, Internet Archive created
- 2000-2003:
- PubMed Central launched
- First Creative Commons licenses released
- Directory of Open Access Journals launched
- 2000-2003:
- Tempe Principles for Emerging Scholarly Publishing
- UN Economic and Social Council calls for "universal access to knowledge and information"
- Budapest Open Access Initiative
- Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing
- Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities
- Over 150 universities around the world mandate Open Access deposits of faculty works
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
- lists 7,176 OA journals in 116 countries
- http://www.doaj.org (October 2011)
- Directory of Open Access Repositories (Open DOAR)
- lists 2,116 open archives in 98 countries
- http://www.opendoar.org (October 2011)

Types of Open Access

OA publishing can be broadly classified into two main categories: Green and Gold OA. Apart from these, there are also other categories; Hybrid OA and Gratis OA [4-7].

Green Open Access

It is a way of self-archiving. The researcher decides to submit the results of his/her research in a selected repository that is open, which means that anyone has access to it, and that the materials are free.

Gold Open Access

In Gold OA, the author publishes a paper in an OA book or journal, supported by an OA publisher. The terms of publication are the same as in the case of traditional publishers, except that the published paper is freely available to the public. Gold Open Access does not charge the reader and assigns the costs to the author.

Hybrid Open Access

This publication model is a mix of subscription charges and publication fees. If the author wishes his/her article to be published immediately in the OA model, he/she must cover the processing charges of course, only when the publisher requires that kind of fee. This way the article will be freely available, but that does not mean that the journal in which it will be published will be fully open access. The journal can be hidden behind a paywall, and the user or the library will have to pay a fee to gain access. In this model, only the articles for which the authors have pay are available for free.

Status of OA Publishing

There are two major medium for carry OA to research articles, OA journals ("gold OA") and OA repositories ("green OA"). The chief difference between them is that OA journals conduct peer review and OA repositories do not. Some OA journal publishers are non-profit (e.g. Public Library of Science or PLoS) and some are for-profit (e.g. BioMed Central or BMC). Figure 1 shows the number of OA journals initiated in a particular year. Distribution of OA journals according to country is shown in Figure 2. Distribution of articles in Indian journals according to subjects is shown in Figure 3.

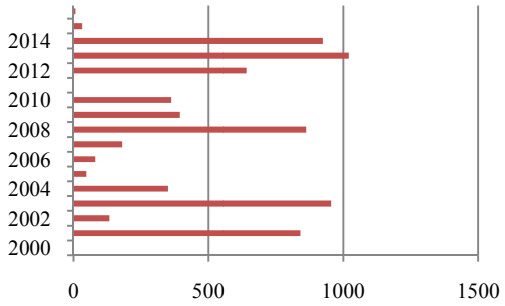

Figure 1 Number of journals initiating open access

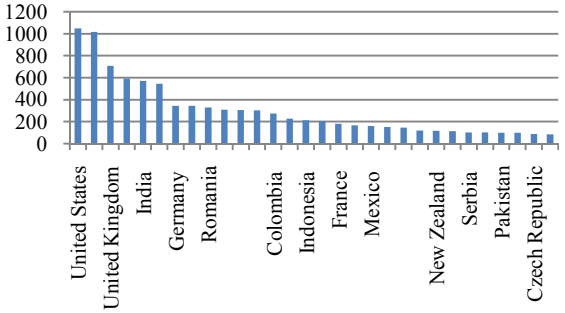

Figure 2 Distribution of open access journals according to country

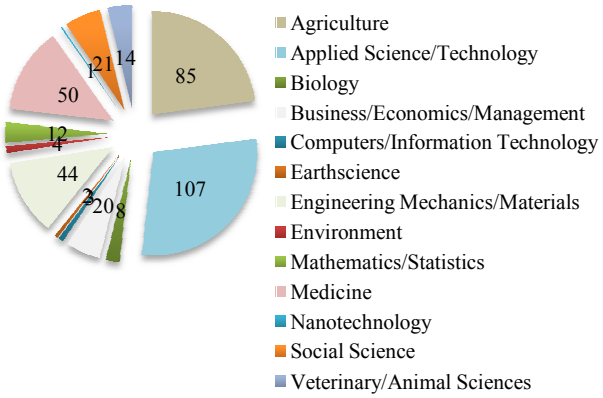

Figure 3 Distribution of Indian journals according to subject

A growing number of universities maintain funds to pay

publication fees on behalf of faculty who choose to publish in fee-based OA journals. Some OA proponents use a color code to classify journals: *gold* (provides OA to its peer-reviewed research articles, without delay), *green* (permits authors to deposit their peer-reviewed manuscripts in OA repositories), *pale green* (permits, i.e. doesn't oppose, preprint archiving by authors), *gray* (none of the above). Table 1 presents the list of top 20 OA journals in terms of impact factor.

CONCLUSION

In this work, the concept of OA is discussed along-with its multifaceted aspects. The core idea of OA is the basis of its key advantage - articles are freely available for anyone who wishes to read them. For readers and libraries, the benefits of not having to pay for an individual article or journal subscription are obvious. Some argue that traditional paid access models ensure publishers are adequately compensated for the substantial role they play. While not a problem for reputable publishers, some argue that OA models incentivize journals to publish more articles. In an era where the number of articles being published is skyrocketing, OA can help an article to be more discoverable online.

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