

# Open Access and Issues Surrounding It

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# What is Open Access?

Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions.

What makes it possible is the **Internet** and the **consent of the author or copyright-holder**.

Source: Peter Suber (2004). A Very Brief Introduction to Open Access.  
<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/brief.htm>

# Some Issues Related to Open Access

1. Authorship rights
2. Subscription costs (to libraries)
3. Information as a public good
4. Publishers – it costs \$ to publish
5. Author incentive issue
6. The potential of open content collaboration

# 1. Authorship rights

I should be able to post papers I've written on my website.

I never was taught issues about copyright in grad school

Creative Commons – “some rights reserved”

## 2. Subscription Costs

- It is becoming increasingly expensive for libraries to subscribe to traditional “gated access” journals

# 3. Information as a Public Good

- Tension in our society because of copyright and property rights
- Developing countries cannot afford subscriptions
- Have or are rapidly getting Internet access

# 4. Publisher's Perspective

- It costs \$ to publish – need to cover costs
- If you publish your paper online as open access, it competes with us
- Are there better ways to publish that doesn't create access barriers?

# Alternative Publishing Models

- Author pays model
  - Works better in some disciplines than others
- Library as publisher model
  - Philosopher's Imprint (U of Michigan)
  - “Edited by Philosophers, Published by Librarians”
- Other models?



# 5. Author Incentives

- Strive/encouraged to publish in journals with highest “impact factor”
- These tend to be “gated access” journals
- Recent study – 1433 academics in 49 countries
- Why they do or do not publish in OA outlets?

Supporting factors	Inhibiting factors
<i>... for the further diffusion of Open Access publishing</i>	
Attitude towards Open Access is extremely positive	Low level of peer use
Experience in accessing Open Access literature is quite high	Deficient reach of core target group of colleagues of own discipline
Almost one fourth of the respondents plans to publish in Open Access media	No institutional support
Higher speed of publication	Higher reputation of traditional publication media
Possibly higher citation rates	Little familiarity
Easy access for researchers in developing countries	Deficient impact factor
Large readership	No guarantee of long-term availability
Belief that Open Access publishing is easy to learn	Lower chances to secure research funds
Choice of preferred publication medium is mostly within researchers' control	Negative impact on promotion and tenure (career choices)
Technical requirements and know-how exist	

*Figure 19: Supporting and inhibiting factors for the further diffusion of Open Access publishing*

Source: Hess, Wigand, Mann and von Walter (2007) "Open Access and Science Publishing"

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**THESE WILL CHANGE OVER TIME!**

# 5. The Potential of Open Content Collaboration

- Existence proof: Web growth from 1994-2000
- Open Source software communities
  - Open Access-based collaboration
  - Not just volunteers – also firms, non profits, and governments
- Global “peer production”
- A way to tackle “wicked problems”?

# What is Open Access Day about?

## Press releases:

- “Open Access Day will create an opportunity for the higher education community and general public to **understand more clearly the opportunities of wider access and use of content.**”
- “Making full ***use of the Internet to share and reuse content without restriction*** is pushing scientific communication into the future...”