

One Who Shares, Wins

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There has recently been an increase in the number of open access journals showcasing the results of research, free of charge, in an affordable and easy to access online publication. In fact, it's a paradigm shift in publishing, and it has gained so much momentum and has become so favored institutionally that perhaps we can say that the one who shares, wins. We do wish to acknowledge the good that open access has achieved through journal readership, but we also want to mention here some of the problems and challenges brought about by these changes. These are issues we think authors should be aware of before submitting to open access journals.

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There has recently been an increase in the number of open access journals showcasing the results of research, free of charge, in an affordable and easy to access online publication. In fact, it's a paradigm shift in publishing, and it has gained so much momentum and has become so favored institutionally that perhaps we can say that the one who shares, wins. We do wish to acknowledge the good that open access has achieved through journal readership, but we also want to mention here some of the problems and challenges brought about by these changes. These are issues we think authors should be aware of before submitting to open access journals.

First, there are now financial barriers for authors. The public good that open access publishing has provided has also created certain monetary hurdles, and this raises the question as to whether or not open access is economically feasible for everyone. In 2002, for example, the Budapest Open Access Initiative raised these concerns when they invited scientists to draft recommendations to help ensure that the community will benefit from open access [1]. But when many open access journals charge an author more than USD \$2,000 in publication fees, those who perform research that is not backed

by grants may be forced to consider restricted access journals, and this could limit open access participation to well-funded, western institutions.

Second, open access has become “open excess” for some publishers. By this, we ask if the profit motive for publishers might compromise their integrity. A competition for readership has been key to the commercialization of publishing so far, but a competition for authors can lead people to suspect that open access journals allow mediocrity for the sake of earning these steep publication fees. Yes, it's been challenging for open access journals to get the attention of both readers and authors, but journals will improve their reputation only by being selective and following the recommendations of referees alone. Otherwise, open access as a practice could lose favor within institutions.

Third, there isn't a single data sharing policy, and appropriate systems for data management in large-scale projects in systems biology, for example are hard to find. A few, select, open-source data management systems have been employed effectively in such projects, the best example may be that which was implemented by the cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid (caBIG) from the US National Cancer Institute [2]. Additionally, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in the United States, in cooperation with various academies, proposed the Shared Access Research Ecosystem (SHARE), a network of inter-organizational repositories for published data sets and articles [3]. But once these repositories exist, the biggest challenge could be to manage content by providing access to users. (Authors use a unique identifier to log in to see the resources – ORCID or ISNI – and further require information on copyright license, designated repository, and preservation rights). Although these are preliminary and open to amendment and elaboration, it is notable that the SHARE document is substantially more detailed than the information offered by CHORUS [4] and more open about how those details can be shared. Somehow there must be a way to bridge these two with an ORCID or ResearchID.

If the scientific community can focus on these issues, we think that it can certainly overcome the obstacles and answer whether open access will be a boon or bane. For, in open access, the one who cares also wins!

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