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## The Open Access Advantage

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In Hong Kong, the University Grants Commission (UGC) recently asked universities to respond to a letter on how best to assess research quality and impact (UGC, 2008), making reference to a UK paper on research assessment that proposes the use of bibliometrics for evaluating research in laboratory-based disciplines, with the possibility of developing suitable bibliometrics for non laboratory-based disciplines in future (Evidence Ltd., 2007; Van Raan et al., 2007)<sup>1</sup>. Clearly, this will ensure that universities look carefully at how to maximize the measurable impact of their research. One possibility is to encourage open access publication. In addition, UGC is now reviewing how best to measure and increase Knowledge Transfer (KT) in Hong Kong universities. For any reasonable definition of KT, increasing public access to research done inside universities clearly increases KT and should be encouraged, which suggests another reason to encourage open access publication.

In the US, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has announced that it will require that all of their full or partially funded investigators submit to PubMed Central an electronic version of their final, peer-reviewed manuscripts no later than 12 months after the official date of publication (SPARC, 2008). Since this mandate took effect on 7 April 2008, it will give public access to the approximately 80,000 NIH articles published every year, substantially increasing the number of high quality papers available through open access. This mandate was a response to the very low submission rates under the previous voluntary policy (LibraryJournal.com, 2008) and has shown more than doubling of the submission rates.

Although the specific policy details vary, the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) in Canada, the National Institute of Health in Italy, the Wellcome Trust in the UK, all of the Research Councils UK (RCUK)<sup>2</sup>, the Irish Research Council and several individual universities worldwide including Harvard (Guess, 2008) have created policies mandating the deposit of the final publication into an open access online repository, usually within six months of date of publication. Australia's Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) have a weaker version where they ask their investigators to attempt to do the same, and if not, explain why this cannot be done.

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<sup>1</sup> This UK paper is already outdated and the plan is now to use a combination of bibliometrics and expert panels for all disciplines in the UK (see reference).

<sup>2</sup> HK's RGC began a joint research scheme (JRS) with the RCUK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in 2007. Because of the ESRC's open access policy, RGC investigators in Hong Kong funded through this JRS presumably will be required to comply and deposit publications in open access repositories.

The Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC) announced in January 2008 a similar policy of mandated deposit within six months of publication (ERC, 2007). Both the ERC and the Wellcome Trust are prepared to provide financial support to allow researchers to pay extra fees to journals so that their publications can be placed in open access (such as in institutional repositories (IRs) or self-archiving), even if the journal does not provide open access (Wellcome Trust, 2008). The ERC also requires that data sets used to support the research, such as nucleotide/protein sequences, be deposited.

While the motivation for these moves by research funders is often the principle of maximising public access to and public benefit from research findings, open access has broader advantages. There is now good research showing that it increases citations across disciplines (e.g. MacCallum & Parthasarathy, 2006). Arguably the most methodologically advanced paper on this subject is by Eysenbach (2006), who looked at the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* and concluded that the Open Access Advantage (OAA) includes three elements, namely (1) increased citation counts, (2) increased access by end users, and (3) increased cross-disciplinary fertilization. All three of these advantages relate directly to the missions and strategies of the UGC institutions. An earlier paper by Hajjem et al. (2005), although less sophisticated methodologically, covers a much wider range of disciplines and concludes that the OAA can be replicated in ten disciplines covering all the RGC panels, with the advantage ranging from 25% to 250%. Another paper by Harnad (2005) claims that for Australia alone, the missed benefit from not going OA is AUD425 million per year (compared to ARC's expenditure of AUD0.55 billion per year and the NHMRC expenditure of AUD0.5 billion per year). There is still some argument as to how much of the OAA benefit is due to earlier publication rather than increased total citations (Moed, 2007; Hajjem & Harnad, 2007; Davis et al., 2008) for disciplines where OA is already common practice, but that does not seem critical to the argument, given that most disciplines still have strong financial barriers limiting access to papers.

While it is possible to argue with some elements of the methodology of the earlier papers, there is no question that the OAA does exist. It is also clear that the present policies of journals combined with the new policies of funding agencies will usually allow self-archiving of the author's publication in one form or another. Many journals, such as Cambridge Journals<sup>3</sup>, allow posting of the article to online repositories after publication<sup>4</sup>. Most other journals that do not allow this will allow a pre-print, or a post-print (after peer review) to be self-archived. Other journals will allow one of these actions if an extra fee is paid. Funding agencies such as the ERC and the Wellcome Trust have agreed to pay these fees.

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<sup>3</sup>Cambridge Journals, For Authors. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/forAuthors?page=copyright>  
“The [author has the] right to post the definitive version of the contribution as published at Cambridge Journals Online (in PDF or HTML form) on their personal or departmental web page, no sooner than upon its appearance at Cambridge Journals Online, subject to file availability and provided the posting includes a prominent statement of the full bibliographical details, a copyright notice in the name of the copyright holder (Cambridge University Press or the sponsoring Society, as appropriate), and a link to the online edition of the journal at Cambridge Journals Online”.

<sup>4</sup> See the Appendix for a list of publishers known to allow self-archiving of the published paper

This paper focuses primarily on journal publications, but for some disciplines, books provide the primary means of dissemination and the OA process for books is much less well developed. One example of what might happen is Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN, 2008), which consists of six European university presses, which are all scholarly publishers predominantly active in Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and book publishing. Jointly the members have digital publishing programmes, conduct experiments with OA, make use of digital repositories, publish in different European languages, have a worldwide distribution network (including the USA), and cooperate closely with university libraries. Their proposed OA model aims to create an OA-publishing platform in combination with an online library, that can be used by academic publishers and research funding institutes, based on their respective needs, which has the potential to greatly increase access and visibility of academic humanities and social sciences books. Clearly, it will be wise to track developments in this area, but for books and book chapters that do not have a royalty agreement, it is already worthwhile to try and seek the right of publishing some version of the materials in open access.

The key question is how to encourage Hong Kong authors to use OA. All HK universities have now established an open access IR. For example, HKU Library is contacting HKU authors one by one to ask permission for inclusion of their articles. How can we create a system whereby Hong Kong authors will pro-actively self-archive into an IR? Funding agencies, such as those listed above, have mandated that authors deposit into an OA repository. In a policy similar to the one by the Wellcome Trust, the University of Nottingham has set up a Central Open Access Fund to support staff across the university in achieving OA (BioMed Central, n.d.). Recently (on 12 February 2008), Harvard University's College of Arts and Sciences announced a decision to place their academic papers online in open access, unless the author opts out. Harvard's School of Law followed with a similar decision on 1 May 2008. The University of Oregon Faculty Senate adopted a resolution recommending that faculty include an "author's addendum" in negotiation with publishers, that they might keep their rights to self-archive their articles on their own web pages and the university's IR. Clearly Hong Kong could consider these options together with an associated policy of encouragement and administrative support and a suitable impact evaluation process.

### **Specific proposal**

As the majority of research in Hong Kong is funded by the RGC/UGC, their policies are critical. We would like to propose the following specific actions for the RGC/UGC's consideration:

- a) State clearly that all researchers funded by an RGC grant should aim to publish their results in the highest quality journals or books so as to maximize the influence and impact of the research outcome and that to achieve this when publishing research findings:
  - i. Researchers should look for suitable OA journals so that, where there is a choice between non OA and OA journals that are equally influential and high impact, the choice should be to publish the results in an OA journal.
  - ii. When a comparable OA journal does not exist, they should send the journal the Hong Kong author's addendum (University of Hong Kong,

- 2008), which adds the right of placing some version (preprint or postprint) of the paper in their university's institutional repository (IR). If necessary, seek funds from the RGC to pay open access charges up to an agreed limit; perhaps US\$3,000, which is the fee agreed with the Wellcome Trust for most Elsevier journals (Elsevier, 2007).
- iii. For books and book chapters that are published without a royalty agreement, send the publisher the Hong Kong author's addendum to seek the right of placing some version in their university's IR.
  - iv. Deposit all published papers in their IR, unless the journal refuses in writing. If the published version is refused, deposit the preprint or postprint, as allowed in number ii above.
  - v. Must provide evidence to the RGC in their progress report that the above steps have been undertaken.
- b) For existing RGC grant holders, set aside some money to cover the publication of papers in OA according to (a) (ii) above, where necessary.
  - c) Add a notional element, to a set maximum limit, to all new successful RGC grant applications (similar to the existing conference component of the grant) to cover open access charges.
  - d) Write to the other major research funders in Hong Kong (e.g., Food and Health Bureau, Commission for Innovation and Technology, Croucher Foundation) to encourage similar strategies.

In the meantime, we also hope that universities in Hong Kong will play their role in encouraging researchers to place all output, not just that funded by RGC, in their local IRs, and also help pay open access charges where appropriate to maximize the output placed in the IR.

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## Appendix

### 1. Partial list of publishers who allow the published version to be self-archived on the author's web page or the IR of the author's institution

A S M International  
Academia Sinica, Institute of Statistical Science  
Acoustical Society of America  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Australian Literary Studies  
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians  
American Astronomical Society  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Institute of Physics  
American Mathematical Society  
American Physical Society  
American Phytopathological Society  
American Society for Cell Biology  
American Society for Clinical Investigation  
American Society of Animal Science  
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene Anistoriton  
Anton Melik Geographical Institute  
Arkat USA, Inc  
Asociacion Cuadernos de Economia  
Asociacion de Economia Aplicada  
Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascilite)  
Australian Physiotherapy Association  
B M J Publishing Group  
Beech Tree Publishing  
Berkeley Electronic Press  
Biodiversity Science  
BioMed Central Ltd  
Biophysical Society  
Butterworths Asia (HK)  
Cambridge University Press  
Carnegie Bosch Institute  
Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education, Charles University (CERGE)  
Channel View Publications  
Company of Biologists Ltd  
Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa  
Department of French and Italian, Vanderbilt University  
Department of Geology, Universitatis Babes-Bolyai  
Duke University Press  
E D P Sciences  
Economics Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (EI)  
Electrochemical Society, Inc  
European Communities Studies Association - Austria  
Evolutionary Ecology Ltd  
Florida Entomological Society  
Heldref Publications  
Hindawi Publishing Corp  
Hong Kong College of Family Physicians  
Hong Kong Medical Association  
I E E E  
I E E E, Computer Society  
I E E E, Computer Society, Learning Technology Task Force  
I E E E, Education Society  
Institute Nazionale de Consumo  
Institute of Biology



Institute of Mathematical Statistics  
Inter Research  
International and American Associations for Dental Research  
International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry  
Ivyspring International Publisher  
Journal of Maps  
Kassel University Press GmbH  
Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc  
Macau Ricci Institute  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Materials Research Society  
MediMedia Pacific Ltd  
Medknow Publications Pvt Ltd  
Multilingual Matters Ltd  
Mycological Society of America  
N R C Research Press  
National Research Council of Canada  
Omicron Delta Epsilon  
Raptor Research Foundation, Inc  
Resilience Alliance Publications  
Rockefeller University Press  
Royal Meteorological Society  
S P I E - International Society for Optical Engineering  
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics  
Society for Neuroscience  
State University of NY at Buffalo, Department of Library and Information Studies  
Symposium Journals  
Thomson Press Hong Kong Ltd  
Universitätsverlag Göttingen (Goettingen University Press)  
University of California at Berkeley, Department of Mathematics  
University of Chicago Press  
University of Hawaii Press  
Vathek Publishing  
Verlag Eugen Ulmer GmbH  
Washington, DC: US Patent and Trademark Office

## **2. Partial list of publishers who allow the postprint version (after refereeing) to be self-archived on the author's web page or the IR of the author's institution**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit  
Academic Press  
Academic Publishers  
AEAweb  
AlphaMed Press, Inc  
American Anthropological Association  
American Association for the Advancement of Science  
American Association of Physics Teachers  
American College of Sports Medicine  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Diabetes Association  
American Economic Association  
American Geophysical Union  
American Library Association  
American Meteorological Society  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Inc  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
American Society of Hematology

American Vacuum Society  
Anadolu University  
Annals of Genealogical Research  
Annual Reviews  
Arnold Publishers  
Ashgate Publishing Ltd  
Association for Computing Machinery  
Association for Computing Machinery, Inc  
Association for Information Systems  
Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education  
Association of Applied Biologists  
Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP)  
Association pour le développement de la recherche en économie et en statistique (ADRES)  
Australian Academic Press  
Australian Academic Press Pty Ltd  
Australian Computer Society Inc  
Australian Library and Information Association  
Australian Mathematical Society  
Australian Psychological Society  
Bailliere Tindall  
Behaviourists for Social Responsibility  
Berg Publishers  
Berghahn Journals  
Blackwell Munksgaard  
Blackwell Publishing Asia  
Blackwell Publishing Japan  
Blackwell Publishing Ltd  
Blackwell Publishing, Inc  
Blackwell Science Ltd, Oxford  
Blackwell Verlag GmbH  
Brill Academic Publishers  
British Psychological Society  
C S I R O, Publishing  
CAB International  
CAB International Publishing  
Calicut Medical College  
Carnets de Geologie  
Cell Press  
Center for International Economics, Sejong Institution, Sejong University  
Churchill Livingstone  
Consultants Bureau  
Copernicus GmbH  
CSIRO Publishing  
Ecological Society of America  
Econometric Society  
Edinburgh University Press  
Elsevier  
Elsevier (Singapore) Pte Ltd  
Elsevier (Singapore) Pte Ltd, Hong Kong Branch  
Elsevier BV  
Elsevier France, Editions Scientifiques et Medicales  
Elsevier Inc  
Elsevier Ireland Ltd  
Elsevier Ltd  
Elsevier Ltd, Trends Journals  
Elsevier Masson  
Elsevier SA  
Elsevier Science  
Emerald  
Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Emerald Group Publishing Ltd  
Endocrine Society  
English Folk Dance and Song Society  
Entomological Society of America  
European Geosciences Union (EGU)  
European Optical Society  
Excerpta Medica, Inc  
Future Drugs  
Gallaudet University Press  
Geological Society Publishing House  
Georg Thieme Verlag  
Haworth Information Press  
Haworth Press, Inc  
Heron Publishing  
Herpetologists League  
Hogrefe & Huber  
Humana Press, Inc  
I O S Press  
Inderscience Publishers  
Indiana University Mathematics Journal  
Indiana University Press  
Informa Healthcare  
Information Research  
INFORMS (Institute for Operations Research and Management Sciences)  
Institute of Physics Publishing  
Institution of Chemical Engineers  
Institution of Engineering and Technology  
International Human Frontier Science Program Organization  
International Linear Algebra Society  
International Medart, Society of Integrated Sciences  
International Press  
International Society of Bassists  
Internet Journal of Chemistry  
Internet Medical Publishing  
Interperiodica  
John Libbey Eurotext  
John Wiley & Sons  
John Wiley & Sons Ltd  
John Wiley & Sons, Inc  
Johns Hopkins University Press  
Kluwer  
Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers  
Kluwer Academic Publishers  
Kohlhammer  
Laser Institute of America  
Laurenti Verlag  
Libertas Academica  
Library Publishing Media  
M A I K Nauka - Interperiodica  
Maney Publishing  
Marcel Dekker (now owned by Taylor & Francis)  
Marcel Dekker Inc  
Marine Technology Society  
Mary Ann Liebert, Inc Publishers  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press  
Michigan Law Review  
Modern Humanities Research Association  
Mosby, Inc  
Multi-Science Publishing  
National Academy of Sciences

Nature Publishing Group  
Nordic Ecological Society  
Oceanography Society  
Optical Society of America  
Oxford University Press  
Palgrave Macmillan Ltd  
Pergamon  
Physica-Verlag GmbH und Co  
Portland Press Ltd  
Professional Engineering Publishing Ltd  
Psychology Press  
Public Library of Science  
Rodopi  
Routledge  
Royal College of General Practitioners  
Royal College of Psychiatrists  
Royal Society  
Royal Society of Chemistry  
Royal Society of Medicine  
Royal Statistical Society  
SAGE Publications (UK and US)  
Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd  
Sage Publications Ltd  
Sage Publications, Inc  
School of Management, University of Bath  
Scientific Journals International (SJI)  
Scientific World  
Sheffield Academic Press  
Société Géologique de France  
Society for Endocrinology  
Society for Experimental Mechanics  
Society for General Microbiology  
Society for In-Vitro Biology  
Society of Dyers and Colourists  
Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics  
Society of Systematic Biologists  
Springer Hong-Kong Ltd  
Springer Japan  
Springer New York LLC  
Springer Publishing Company  
Springer-Verlag  
Springer-Verlag Dordrecht  
Springer-Verlag Heidelberg  
Springer-Verlag London Ltd  
Springer-Verlag Wien  
Taylor & Francis (CRC Press)  
Taylor & Francis (Psychology Press)  
Taylor & Francis (Routledge)  
Taylor & Francis Inc  
Taylor & Francis Ltd  
The Company of Biologists Ltd  
The Endocrine Society  
The Johns Hopkins University Press  
The Lancet Publishing Group  
The Medicine Publishing Company  
Thomas Telford Ltd  
Thomson Legal & Regulatory  
Trans Tech Publications Ltd  
United Kingdom Serials Group (UKSG)  
University of California Press

University of Illinois Press  
University of Ottawa Law & Technology Journal (UOLTJ)  
V S P  
Vittorio Klostermann  
WB Saunders Co  
WB Saunders Co Ltd  
Whurr Publishers Ltd  
Wiley - V C H Verlag GmbH & Co KGaA  
Wiley-VCH Verlag Berlin  
World Scientific Publishing Co Pte Ltd  
Yale Law School  
香港青年協會

### **3. Partial list of publishers who offer a fee-based open access option for publication.**

AlphaMed Press, US\$2,000 per article  
American Chemical Society, US\$3,000 per article  
American Institute of Physics, "Author Select Fee", US\$1,500 ~ \$1,800  
American Physical Society, "Free to Read", US\$975, \$1,300 per article, letter, respectively  
American Society for Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, "Author Choice Option", \$1,500 members, \$2,000 non members  
Arnold Publishers, "Sage Open", US\$3,000 per article  
Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, "ALPSP", US\$2,500 members, \$3,000 non-members  
Biophysical Society, "Biophysical Journals Open Access", US\$1,000 per article plus page & colour charges  
Blackwell Publishing, "Online Open fee", US\$2,600  
BMJ, \$2,200 or \$3,145 depending on journal  
Elsevier, "Sponsorship Option", US\$3,000 per article  
Oxford Journals, "Oxford Open", \$1,500 for an institution that subscribes, or, \$2,800 for a non-subscribing one.  
Portland Press, "Opt2Pay", US\$3,000 per article, \$3,500 without institution subscription  
Professional Engineering Publishing, "Engineering Open Choice", £1,700 per article  
Royal College of Psychiatrists, US\$4,500 per article  
Royal Society, "Exis Open Choice", £150 ~ 225 per article plus page charges  
Sage Publications, "Sage Open", US\$3,000 per article  
Springer, "Open Choice", US\$3,000 per article