

# Questions & Answers Session I

## **Stevan Harnad, University of Quebec, Canada**

10 years ago, I was somewhat intemperate about publishers. Although I am still intemperate, I am no longer so about publishers. I know they have children and understand they cannot be the villains. In my opinion, the researchers, their institutions and ministries are both villains and victims. They are losing as a consequence of not having OA. It is absurd to think the publishers will give all away all their information for free.

The solution is simple. The top estimate of the cost of peer review per published article is USD 500. On average, the institutions pay USD 2000 per article for restricted toll access. I recommend giving them back the USD 2000 and let them pay for the article charges. Therefore, we should self-archive our articles and let nature take its course.

## **Frederick Friend, University College, London**

I applaud Paul Uhler's concept of intellectual commons and would like to think that the production of information could be based on non-economic incentives. However, the existing reward structure is linked to the economic structure. How can we move away from a structure based on economic incentives?

## **Paul Uhler**

I was referring to a whole range of STI products, such as research software or hybrid information websites. The web contains different kinds of products being operated in this manner. In terms of journals, as long as it is based on the old print paradigm, where the publisher holds the copyright to extract maximum revenue, the situation will not change. By basing economics in a different place and focusing on self-publishing, one could imagine a less-restricting mode of dissemination. Clearly, this will evolve over time. Already, we have noted examples of open archives and online journals that allow broad access and use. I agree that we are the enemy and science remains a very conservative domain. I believe that opportunities from the Internet and pressure from new scientists will bring gradual change.

## **David Prosser**

In response to Jack Franklin's presentation, many authors do actually pay for publication. Many authors will pay more for publication in a reputable journal. If we are concerned by authors having money to pay for publication, we should start lobbying for grant authorities to include such funding. Secondly, I do not entirely understand the argument on information overload. In my view, information overload existed before the Internet. However, OA would allow researchers to read it for free.

## **Jack Franklin**

I agree that many people pay page charges. However, looking at the balance between those who pay page charges and those who do not, the latter are in the majority. Many institutions refuse to pay. At present, the budget favours libraries.

## **Erik Sandewall, Head of ICSU Press**

Instead of designating culprits, I believe this issue more concerns stupidity on a common level. In publishing, the academic community outsources its internal communication. In general, most published

information is limited to scientific community use. In terms of contracts, our community encourages our members to publish in the most prestigious journals. In addition, we advise them that their work will be evaluated by the reputation of the journal cover. Consequently, the owners of more prestigious labels charge higher subscriptions. As a community, we are not behaving in an intelligent manner. Instead, we should tell researchers that their work will be evaluated according to quality criteria.

**Steven Harnad**

The speaker did not say how the researcher who wants to publish in high impact journals can replace this by the new system the speaker recommends, knowing that peer review is required to ensure quality information.

**Yahia Bakelli, CERIST, Alger**

I would like to return to the Pierre Oudet's question on a pre-print database. What is happening in the back office and how do you ensure that researchers adhere to the system? Who is in charge of structuring text?

**Pierre Oudet**

The only way of getting researchers to deposit articles is by proving the advantages: what is not deposited cannot be analysed. Concerning funding, we all forget that in the human genome project the US and European researchers estimated that information structuring costs accounted for 10% of total information costs. Today, we do not always include the real cost of structuring. Therefore, we need to recognise the cost of archiving and access. In addition, we must ensure the efficient storage of and access to information. The rest is cosmetics, indexing and retrieval problems are less complex. Finally, peer review provides an essential first filter on scientific quality, but the real evaluation will take place later.

**Susan Knapp, American Psychological Association**

I would like to remind people that the value of an individual article is found within a body of research. In this regard, the major costs are found in linking articles. Equally, the constant process of refreshing and indexing allow researchers to make links and prevents people from repeating existing research.

**Barbara Kirsop**

I have a feeling that this trail of discussion is proceeding on the wrong track. Jack Franklin mentioned that OA might provide an alternative to the established journal environment. From what I understand, OA is not trying to replace publishing industry but complement it. Therefore, the two alternatives should exist in parallel and publishing should continue as long as the market supports it.

**Jack Franklin**

That is the purpose of the meeting. If competition does exist between the two systems, decisions and changes will occur in the future. In my report, I tried to underline that many people foresee a chance to break what they perceive as the stranglehold of the publishing system. Arguably, in 10 years, the interoperability of scientific information may be more influential than OA or journal charges.

**G rard Giroud, European Patent Office**

I belong to the European Patent Office. Earlier, we heard one of the standard comments claiming that the world of intellectual property rights aims to inhibit information flows. I agree that what we should protect remains a legitimate debate. However, the patent world has already solved the problem being discussed here. All patented documents are free on the Internet and accessible to all. Therefore, I hope that people realise that the patent world is not an obstacle to information dissemination. We should not

confuse the cost and the price of availability. In the patent domain, we have solved the question of who pays: obviously, the patent depositors pay when they present their patent.

**Bernard Lang**

For all normal scientists, the texts published by the EU patent office are invisible and useless. Depending on the domain, the effect of patents differs greatly. Therefore, one cannot generalise on their overall effects. For example, the effects of patents in computer and information science lead to great legal uncertainty.

**Zvi Ruder, Kluwer Academic Publishers**

Considering that the purpose of scientific research is the broad dissemination of information, which are problems that open archives will solve and that financially viable distributor aggregation models or services like CrossRef couldn't resolve?

**Jack Franklin**

I am not sure that these cannot solve the problems. I have tried to raise the cost issue involved when a researcher needs to access essential information. The existing architectural base does not preclude any solution.