

Chapter 9

Open Access: A New Ecosystem of Research Publications

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ABSTRACT

Academic research has traditionally been published under a subscription model with limited access and exposure. However, in recent years, open access (OA) has spawned a new research publishing economy. Journals have become more accessible in the research sector, with anybody able to see or access them for free on an internet platform. In certain research areas, the transition to openness has progressed more quickly than in others. Communication, education, and employment around the globe have become simpler as a result of the dynamic changes taking place online. Learning has become more equitable as a result of having access to information. Such uninhibited access has effectively opened the door to knowledge, educational resources, and a tremendous quantity of data. This material can be used for societal, educational, and scientific purposes. Given quick access, OA was a tremendously beneficial source for academics, scientists, and researchers during the COVID epidemic. This chapter covers issues related to open access, including OA ethics and OA strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet era revolutionized the world when it began in the late 20th century, pushing the world from Industrial revolution to Internet Revolution. Thus, mankind embarked on a journey in which the economy evolved to function and operate based on information technology. This Internet Revolution transformed the business and education world with the easy transfer and access of information. It facilitated high-speed communication and confluence of computers, electronic gadgets and wireless devices. With the arrival and development of the internet and different services of internet, Open Access was conceived. In 1991, the scholarly and research world saw the early footprints of open access with the initiation of the online subject repository arXiv, which provided to peer reviewed online journals in the early 1990s, and the opening of the National Institute of Health's repository Pub Med Central in 2000. More development took place in 2002 and 2003 when three separate conventions took place in Budapest, Berlin and Bethesda, resulting in an official and internationally acknowledged premise of "Open Access." The commonly established definition of open access literature is as such: Open access literature is digital, online free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions.

Open Access as a concept has gained momentum in the last decade. Researchers and academicians across the globe are adapting to this revolution in publication, creating a new scholarly communication, ecosystem. This revolution is benefitting researchers by allowing them to publish free of cost, as well as enabling all to access such work free of cost. This, then, is making their research efforts seen and referred all over the world, increasing citations, and giving opportunity to collaborate for enhanced research as well as recognition.

According to Peter Suber, an eminent researcher and one of the pioneers, OA is defined as "digital research literature available online without any charges and also liberated from most of the copyright and licensing constraints."

Open access is an array of principles and practices in which research materials are disseminated online, *with no cost* to access. A principle of OA is enabling dissemination through copying, but with proper attribution and protection of the content from modification. A publication is considered 'open access' when it is freely accessible and it is free from any kind of financial, legal or technical restrictions. Such kind of publication can be read, copied, distributed, downloaded, and printed within the legal agreements. Due to this digital technological and networked communication, the sharing of information has grown faster and created a new ecosystem to access or share information online. This also made to adapt to sharing of information through World Wide Web, for the easy and free access to information.

Open Access – Benefits to Researchers

Laakso and Polonioli found that little research on the relationship of open access and the humanities. Their research mapped the bibliometric status of open access to publications in journal by different ethicists. The study focused on direct publishing in open access as well as the type of online structure or platform in which the researchers share publicly their work. The outcome of the research reveals that most of the publications in journals are freely available to the public. Two of the most preferred platforms were Academia.edu and Research Gate. Institutional repositories were not found to be favoured as platforms to publish the research work by the researchers (Laakso & Polonioli, 2018).

Watson examined the benefits of open access publishing, concluding that it is a good platform for the authors to exhibit their research work free from any restriction and without infringing copyright

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