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Why Open Access Publishing?

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In academia, traditional publishing practices constrain the impact of scholarly exploration. “University of California (UC) boycotts publishing giant Elsevier over journal costs and open access: The move could aid a global movement for immediate free access to scientific articles” (Fox & Brainard, 2019, article title). Headlines like this have become common over the last twenty years. In this case, UC tried to negotiate a reduction in licensing fees to extend free access to the research coming out of the university. Gaining access to scholarly content has become financially challenging if not untenable for academic libraries. Unfortunately, for academic communities, publishing restrictions limit authors’ rights and the research’s influence while stifling scholarly conversation (Dudley, 2021; Laakso, et. al., 2011). Fortunately, the Open Access (OA) movement has emerged to address these limitations and re-established more accessible publishing practices.

Traditional vs Open Access Scholarly Publishing

Traditionally governments or other sources funded scholarly research and publishers managed the peer-review process and published the researcher’s work without compensation. After publication, licensing agreements or article fees restricted access to the research (SPARC, 2023; Tennant et. al., 2016). Today, however, OA publications may require publication in an accessible open repository. OA values reuse rights under Creative Commons and making research accessible to a world-wide audience (Dudley, 2021; SPARC, 2023).

Support for Open Access Publishing

In North America, the Association of Research Libraries’ advancement of open and equitable access to research launched the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) in 1998. SPARC maintains the OA movement through advocacy and policy change for open access, open

education, and open data. “Open Access is the free, immediate, online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment” (SPARC, 2023, para. 5).

Internationally, the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) complemented growing support for open access, peer-review scholarly research (BOAI, 2002). This early declaration focused primarily on self-archiving options for research authors and on the development of more open-access journals. The initiative included several points that preserve the goals of OA. First, authors maintain copyright; second, there are no embargo periods; third, research data is shared with the article; and finally, Creative Commons licenses permit text and data mining (BOAI, 2002; Creative Commons, n.d.).

Models of Open Access

As the OA movement gained momentum, traditional publishers adapted. This included the larger publishers like Elsevier, who began to offer hybrid models considered “open” (Fox & Brainard, 2019). The degree of openness, however, ranges widely in OA publishing and requires additional consideration when selecting a publisher. Broadly defined OA models include:

- Green OA models – research freely available in an online repository (self-archiving)
- Gold OA models – authors pay an article processing charge (APC); research is freely available; author retains copyright
- Gold OA, Non-ACP Funded models – other sources pay associated publication costs; research is freely available; author retains copyright
- Platinum OA models – research free to publish and freely available

(University of California, 2018; Rubow et.al., 2015).

Reputable Open Access Journals

Reputable journals share similar qualities, whether they are OA or traditionally published. When selecting a journal, the American Psychological Association (APA) (2020) recommends one consider an “appropriate, well-regarded” journal, publishing costs, scope of readers, and open access status (p. 374). OA supports researchers during this discovery process. Jeffrey Beall (2015) developed a framework that draws on the works of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and provides criteria for considering a journal’s editor, business practices, integrity, standards, and practice. In searching for OA journals, the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ) highlights journals earning their best OA practices and standards “Seal.” Their criteria include “long term preservation, use of persistent identifiers, discoverability, reuse policies and authors rights” (DOAJ, 2023, para. 3).

OA journals range from reputable to questionable. The APA (2020) warns against “predatory or deceptive practices involving any number of unethical or negligent means of soliciting, evaluating and/or publishing articles” (pp. 374-376). Substandard journals take advantage of authors who are required to publish. These publications may appear legitimate but lack rigorous review and at times include entirely

faked manuscripts (Else & Van Noorden, 2013; Laine & Winker, 2017). Journal selection tools differentiate predatory publications from the high-quality OA journals.

Conclusion

Even though Open Access addresses many of the limitations of traditional publishing, researchers continue to gravitate toward prestigious journals (Dudley, 2021; Frank, et.al., 2023). However, the Budapest Open Access Initiatives along with advocacy may well tip the balance in favor of OA (BOAI, 2002, 2022; SPARC, 2023). Eastern Florida State College established and has published the inaugural edition of *Science2Practice*, a peer-reviewed, platinum OA journal. It promotes the scholarship of teaching and learning and provides faculty with an opportunity to publish their research. FLVC Library Services hosts *Science2Practice* through Florida Online Journal's publishing program. This serves as a successful Open Access model for academic publishing in Florida.

Suggested OA Journal Selection Resources

[How Open is it? Open Access Spectrum](#)

[Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#)

[Think Check Submit](#)

[Beall's Criteria for determining predatory open-access publishers](#)

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