

Roundtable on Economic Impacts of Open Access

Open Society Institute, New York
March 16-17, 2006

On 16-17 March a meeting was convened in New York by SPARC Europe, with the support of the Open Society Institute. The two-day invitation only meeting sought to sketch out an ambitious program of research into the impacts of open access (OA).

Aim of the meeting

The aim of the meeting was to provide a solid foundation for the development of a proposal for a program of research outlining and estimating the potential economic and social impacts of open access to the scientific and scholarly literature.

The meeting brought together a small group of experts to determine what could reasonably be proposed as the aim of such a research program and to map-out an approach to take it forward.

Outcomes

Following a wide ranging discussion lead participants were tasked with scoping a research program that supports the integration of existing work and provides a coordinating focus for new research on the economic and social impacts of OA.

The program will examine the costs and benefits of various scholarly communication models, and the distribution of those costs and benefits throughout the scholarly communication system. A core focus will be exploring and measuring the impacts of OA.

The program will be inclusive, bringing together detailed ‘bottom-up’ work on scoping the entire research and scholarly communication system, ‘top-down’ work on broad economic impacts, and a range of work on ‘vertical slices’ that explore specific impacts in particular disciplines or fields of research, industries and countries. Studies will be conducted simultaneously, building into an ever clearer picture as pieces of the puzzle fall into place.

There will be a small coordinating group to provide a collaborative focal point for the work. This ‘secretariat’ activity (including program coordination, management and operation of a website and wiki, and the production of an annual report on progress) will need support through modest program funding. Individual studies will be supported by a range of funders and conducted by a range of research and industry stakeholders. Beyond the core group, everyone is invited to contribute and to participate.

For further information contact:

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Attachment: Background and Agenda

Roundtable on Economic Impacts of Open Access

Open Society Institute, 400 West 59th Street, New York
March 16-17, 2006

(With the support of the Open Society Institute)

Aim of the meeting

To provide a solid foundation for the development of a proposal for an international research program outlining and estimating the potential economic and social impacts of open access (OA) to the scientific and scholarly literature.

Background

Despite billions of dollars being spent by governments on R&D each year, relatively little policy attention has yet been paid to the dissemination of the results of that research through scientific and scholarly publishing. However, the environment in which research is being conducted and disseminated is undergoing profound change, with new technologies offering new opportunities, changing research practices demanding new capabilities, and increased focus on research performance and the commercialisation of findings. The question is, are there new opportunities and new models for scholarly communication that could enhance the communication of research findings to users and maximise returns to public investment in R&D?

There has been extensive discussion of scholarly publishing costs, but to date relatively little attention has been paid to identifying and quantifying the potential benefits of the various emerging models for scholarly communication. It is more difficult to estimate the benefits of something than it is to estimate the costs involved, especially when they relate to intangibles such as knowledge and accrue over a long period. Nevertheless, for the sake of informed policy discussion, it is important that we begin to put some ‘ballpark’ figures on the benefits side of the equation.

In this meeting, we gather together a small group of experts to determine what we could reasonably propose as the aim of such a study program and to map-out an approach to take it forward.

Attendees

Attendees included: David Prosser, SPARC Europe; John Houghton, Victoria University, Melbourne; Melissa Hagemann, OSI, New York; Peter Suber, Earlham College, Richmond; Don King, University of Pittsburgh; Fred Friend, JISC, London; John Dryden, OECD, Paris; Paul Uhlir, CODATA, Washington; Raym Crow, Chain Bridge Group, Washington; Mark McCabe, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta; Andrew Odlyzko, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Bruce Kingma, Syracuse University, New York; Peter Sheehan, Victoria University, Melbourne; Edwin Horlings, Rand Europe, Leiden; Karla Hann, ARL, Washington; Bob Downs, Columbia University, New York.

Invited, but unable to attend: Ted Bergstrom, UC Santa Barbara; Clifford Lynch, CNI; Danny Quah, London School of Economics; Mathias Dewatripont, Free University of Brussels; Paul David, Oxford/Stanford Universities; Hal Varian, UC Berkeley; Michael Gibbons, Sussex University; Frank Lichtenberg, Columbia University; and Charles Oppenheim, LISU, Loughborough University.

Agenda

DAY 1

12:00	<i>Assemble at OSI For Lunch</i>
12:30	Welcome and Introductions
1:00	Brief introduction to the aims and format of the meeting.
1:15	Background on OA to publications. What OA is, key issues in OA and links to the aims of meeting.
2:00	Issues & Agenda. Using the scoping paper as a take-off point for discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do people think?• What do they want to add, delete, change, etc?
2:30	What should be the focus? The potential impacts of OA, or comparing cost-benefits of OA with something else. If so, what else?
3:00	<i>Break</i>
3:20	Approaches Possible approaches (theory/method) to analysis and quantification of impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is in the literature (quantitative)?• What has been done on OA to data?• Possible economic approaches?• What are the problems/challenges?• What sort of answers might emerge?
5:00	<i>Close for the day</i>

DAY 2

8:45

Assemble at OSI For Breakfast

9:00

Short recap and review of the agenda for the day

9:15

Further thoughts on approaches?

9:30

Indicators and data for the approaches identified:

- What are the data needs for such approaches?
- What sources are there?
- What are the indicators linking data to impact measures?
- Can we establish baselines for comparisons?

11:00

Break

11:20

How far can we go?

In the light of the approaches and data needs, how far could we go?

- Measuring potential impacts?
- Estimating Benefit/Cost Ratios?
- Issues, problems and challenges?

11:50

Gaining policy traction?

- What are the policy issues and policy processes for OA?
- What kind of evidence would be influential?

12:30

What are the projects?

- Are there obvious projects emerging?
- Can we identify and scope one or more projects?
- What are the complementarities and conflicts, if any?

1:00

Lunch

2:00

Next steps?

- Where to from here?
- Can we identify possible funding sources?
- Can we identify possible research teams?

3:00

Wrap up and close

3:30

End (with Coffee/Tea)