European universities and open access

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open access?!

- **open access is not the hobbyhorse of a few academic revolutionaries or a scheme to make life miserable for publishers**

- **like the invention of public libraries in the old days, it is a matter of public service and the dissemination of knowledge**

- **the digital age brings new arrangements of control and ownership, of selling and buying, and of dissemination and access - also to the academic world**

- **open access should be part of those arrangements - as a service to the scholarly community and the public at large**

- **we need new business models and a new spirit of cooperation between universities, research institutes and funding councils, and publishers**

open access as part of the digital revolution (1)

- **the main driver behind it:**

  in the digital world open access is a common feature

  (we don't like barriers there, and seem to have forgotten about waiting and prolonged searching, and about ….. paying for use)

- **so open access is part of the digital revolution, stimulated by the www-experience, that makes us expect that everything interesting should be accessible, especially in the case of public goods and public interests (like research funded by public money)**

open access as part of the digital revolution (2)

- **a hot topic in the research community (among researchers and funding agencies) and in the publishing business,**

- **of growing concern among politicians, and academic leaders, and librarians –**

- **but remarkably enough not yet the public issue it should be [slowly changing? see the example of African universities]**

- **in a sense it is a simple and traditional concept:**

    "do in the digital age what publishers and public libraries did in the old days: make accessible to the public what is/should be public knowledge", that´s the simple basic idea behind open access

the basic idea of open access

- **it is a simple, basic concept**

- **but a complicated reality**
    - ✓ **a matter of digital access and visibility [searchable, harvestable]**
    - ✓ **of business [contracts, licenses, paying and pricing]**
    - ✓ **of quality management [peer review, citations and rankings]**
    - ✓ **of reliable archives [preservation, continuity and authenticity]**
    - ✓ **of e-science and e-learning [digital innovations and virtual labs]**
    - ✓ **of customer diversity [various academic, business and professional cultures]**

elementary open access

- **what doesn't exist in the digital mode (cannot be found by search machines) has less chance to be used, quoted and valued**
- **so the basic rule of all researchers should be "make your work digitally traceable, searchable, harvestable"**

- **self-archiving is a quite satisfactory way to achieve this (do it yourself or have your – digital - assistant do it)**
- **all you need is a suitable repository (digital library)**

- **a fair license to publish should allow uploading last versions after 6 months**

elementary open access, fine print

- **repositories should be interconnected and standardized (search machine friendly), whether managed by institution, nation or academic discipline**

- **deposited versions should be clearly labelled (pre/post prints etc)**

- **a clear and simple general license allowing for early depositing is preferable [see www.surf.nl/copyright-in-nl for relevant legal information]**

- **how will all of this become a success? [the EUA-position (March 08) and the Harvard resolution of 2008]**

EUA policy position

- in its Barcelona council meeting of March 2008 EUA adopted a policy on public access to peer reviewed academic publications

- based on the role and responsibility of universities as guardian of research knowledge as a public good

- including recommendations to European university leadership, National Rectors' Conferences and the EUA itself [see www.eua.be/…./policy_positions]

- and earlier positions taken by ERAB, ERC, EuCouncil

- universities are now acting on these recommendations

EC open access pilot project

- on August 21st the Commission has launched a pilot project which will see the results of EU-funded research made freely available online [http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/open access]

- to raise visibility of European research and drive innovation by ensuring that SMEs have access

- in 7 FP7-areas: health, energy, environment, ICTs, research infrastructures, socio-economic sciences and humanities, and science in society

- recipients of grants in these areas are required to deposit their peer reviewed articles in open access repositories (6 or 12 months after publication)

American positions

- Harvard Arts and Sciences Faculty & Law Faculty voted for open access to scholarly articles (a mandatory open access policy to each faculty member's scholarly articles)

- Legislation before Congress mandates that all federally funded research be available in open access

- Funding councils and other universities have adopted similar policies or are planning to do so

open access, the golden way (1)

- **digital journals could be freely accessible to all and harvestable by all if subscriptions would be replaced by advance payments**

- **this way nothing would have to change in the publishing business; they would continue their business in the public broadcasting mode (cost paid by those who want to disseminate, rather than those at the receiving end)**

- **but the transformation is less simple than it seems (research budgets have to go up and the richer you are the more you can publish)**

open access, the golden way (2)

- **moreover, the pricing issue will stay with us, unless new business models and types of contracting will come around [it can be done, vide SCOAP³: sponsoring consortium for open access publishing in particle physics]**

- **for the golden way of open access to become a success such new contracting models will have to be invented and tested**

- **like auctions, (national) licences or group contracts**

- **universities and the research community contract with publishers: for services [*the key role of publishing: branding, selecting, developing*] and open dissemination, not about stuff and limited access to it**

open access, the clients' side

- **by clients I primarily mean the research & education community**
- **but the wider circle of professional users and the public at large should not be forgotten [3 concentric circles]**

- **it depends on the circle you are in whether this or that approach**
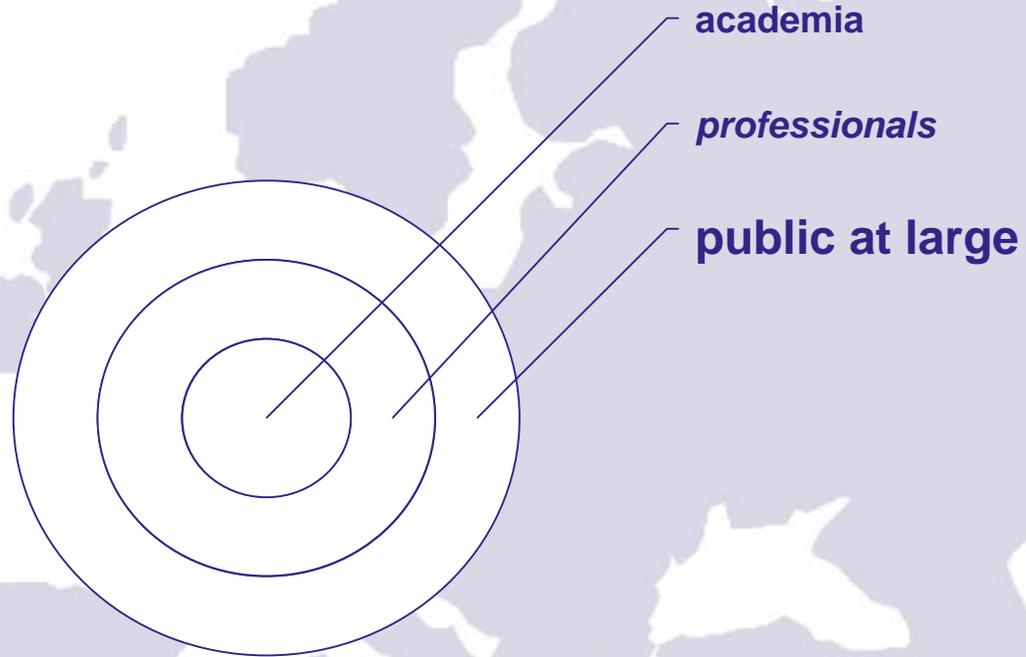
open access, quality matters

- **scientific publishing, or rather to be or not to be published is an essential part of the reputation game (academic prestige matters for all involved, just think of career enhancement, competition for funding and reliability issues)**

- **some kind of peer hierarchy on the basis of reviewing (before or after the act) is and remains crucial, also for professional use outside academia**

- **this, however, doesn't imply a conservative attitude towards present practice (new models are doable)**

- **yet, quality labelling must be done and if publishers continue to do it, they deserve to be paid for this service (one way or another)**

concentric circles of clients

academia

professionals

public at large

open access and archiving

- **open access by itself doesn't change the need for archiving and its challenges in the digital age**

- **and creates no problem, as long as responsible publishers and/or libraries continue to play their roles….**

- **archiving becomes an issue in volatile markets, with frequent migrations, and in innovative trajectories**

- **archiving basically can and should be handled best by public library consortia and/or international co-operations of research institutions and societies of scholars**

e-science is much more than open access

- **the digital mode offers much more than a digital metamorphosis of traditional ways of publishing and scholarly communicating**

- **data sharing, virtual labs, col-laboratories, wiki's by and for academics, multi-media e-learning – there is much more innovative potential than has been realized thus far**

- **we need projects and experiments to show it can be done**
- **and forerunners like the university presses consortium and science innovators**

e-science is not the same thing to everyone

- **one of the secrets of the success of the university is its complexity (what makes sense to historians doesn't impress engineers)**

- **the disparate nature of research cultures and traditions, national preferences, professional usage and language networks stand in the way of simple solutions across the board, both in e-science, e-learning and in digitally re-mastered scholarly publishing**

- **some questions seem tabu, like what about the book in the digital age? and European educational material? and ….. the often forgotten need to foster library budgets**

open access, final slide

- **the digital mode offers much more than a digital metamorphosis of traditional ways of publishing**

- **open access is not a temporary hype**

- **some of the old ways will stay with us (like drawing, painting and sailing)**

- **in Europe inter-university cooperation is essential (to create and maintain interlinked repositories, and to balance the publishers' position in the market)**