About open access publishing

By Ir J.A.J. van Leunen

Retired physicist & software researcher

Location: Asten, the Netherlands

Website: http://www.e-physics.eu/

Communicate your comments to info at scitech.nl.

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Abstract

A large variety of types of open access publishing exist. Its advantages and problems are treated in this paper.

Two-sided open access

Several forms of full and partly open access publishing exist. With two-sided open access we mean that no blocks exist, neither for the authors, nor for the readers. This kind of open access is implemented by some e-print archives such as viXra and PubMed Central. The authors must follow some easily performable rules that guard accessibility of the published texts with standard means. The papers must fall into one of the available categories. No fee is required for publishing the paper. Authors and others may decide to donate the archive, but there exists no obligation. Authors are rubricated into author libraries. In this way an author can create his own e-print library. The readers have free access to the published articles.

Quasi two-sided open access

A slightly different approach is implemented by arXiv. This institute requires registration for the authors. New unregistered authors must be endorsed by a registered author that has published recently in the same category. After endorsement the new author becomes registered. Still contributions can be refused by the arXiv institute. Contributions from recognized institutions might be accepted without applying the endorsement mechanism. Authors are rubricated into author libraries. Readers have free access to the published media.

E-print archives

E-print archives such as viXra, PubMed Central and arXiv support an effective revision mechanism. The full open access media do not implement quality filters that block faulty or low quality papers from their archives. ArXiv only applies the registration and endorsement mechanism that only represent a weak, rather passive quality filter. This means that readers must perform the quality filtering. A quality review service might ease that filter process, but such a service does not yet exist.

Open access Journals

Some journals offer what they call open access publishing. In this case the reader has free access to the published media, but the author must pay a significant fee and the paper must pass a peer review process. The author fee compensates the publishing institute for the fact that it cannot collect a membership fee from the readers. Often the same institute offers peer reviewed journals that require a membership fee. Publishing a number of papers in such open access journals costs a small

fortune and most individual authors cannot cope with that barrier. So they either stick with paid journals that require peer review or they decide to publish on two sided open access media.

Reading archived papers

Free accessible archives

A category of scientists hesitate to read papers that are archived on two sided open access media. The reason is that these archives contain lots of low quality papers. On the other hand these archives may also contain jewels. Many of these scientists are subscriber of a daily journal and they do not bother to scan for the interesting articles that are hidden between the daily balderdash. With this attitude they may miss important developments.

Some universities archive their papers and make them available for open access by interested readers. Some rich people buy famous papers and make them available to the public.

Payment barriers

Peer reviewed journals own the papers that they publish. Usually they keep an archive of their papers that can be accessed by potential readers after paying a corresponding fee.

Many valuable papers disappear behind rather expensive payment barriers. University libraries try to make these papers available to their students and to their scientific personnel. This takes a large part of the education budget. The barrier hampers the spread of science.

The peer review process

The peer review process is installed in order to prevent low quality, non-fitting or faulty papers from entering the published media. One or more peer reviewers are requested to scan and qualify the presented paper. One of the problems is that the peer reviewer must be knowledgeable on the subject of the paper. Further, the peer reviewer must judge the quality in an unbiased way.

For complicated subjects the peer review process may become questionable. An article that contains unorthodox and controversial ideas will have little chance to pass the peer review process. The peer review process tends to privilege the contemporary tendencies and to halt any revolution.

In general the peer review process is rather slow. It still cannot guarantee quality.

Wikipedia

New contributions to the scientific pages of Wikipedia must pass the notability requirement. It means that the author must be trusted and the subject must have been referred by renowned journals. As a consequence Wikipedia will never publish new, fresh, innovating ideas.

Banned authors

Due to regulations such as peer review, endorsement and notability a category of authors exist that have no access to “regular” scientific publishing.

First of all this includes authors that did not pass a study on a recognized scientific institution or write articles on a subject that differ from their original training direction. Being connected to a recognized institute can “cure” this fact.

Next are authors that finished a recognized academic study and went to work in industry or a non-scientific organization and later started to do work on personal or otherwise independent scientific research project.

Third is the group of amateur scientists for which the filtering process is targeted. They have no scientific degree and gathered their knowledge by self-study.

The work of these banned authors is not judged on its content, but instead on the background of the author. This is a false criterion and is mainly induced by the laziness of the publisher.

The banned authors are enforced to publish on two-sided open access media.

My personal experience with open access.

Years ago after reading some peer reviewed papers that contained rubbish, I lost my confidence in the peer review process and I decided to never publish in a peer reviewed journal. The peer review mechanism is slow and can be easily abused. . I publish on viXra. Peer review easily takes months. ViXra takes hours. It is indicative that journals usually ask $1500 for open access publication. For my viXra library the $1500 fee would have cost me a small fortune.

I have another reason for publishing on two-sided open access sites like viXra. Early versions of a paper I publish on my own website. When I finish a paper and conclude that it matured, I publish it on my viXra e-print archive. My experience is that usually within a month I have extended and changed that paper to such a degree that it needs republication. Both viXra and arXiv provide a perfect revision service that serves that purpose. Most of my papers go through four to five revisions before I leave them at rest. No peer review journal exists that can cope with such burden.

I agree that viXra contains a lot of shit and for that reason a range of scientists never look at this site. Well, my morning paper also contains lots of shit. I still read it every morning. I have learned to scan for the jewels.

After my studies at what now is called the Technical University of Eindhoven, I started working in high tech industry. The TUE is targeted on applied physics. And is not renowned for its contributions on theoretical physics. After my retirement I had time to return to my hobby: investigating the undercrofts of physics. I do my scientific research out of curiosity to the undercrofts of physics and for the fun of it. I do not publish for reasons of honor or recognition. I publish for my friends and my family. My physical health is not very stable and my friends and grand-children might want to read my papers after I passed away.

Some authors give as reason for addressing peer review that they get feedback from the reviewer. However, far more efficient ways exist to get this feedback. I joined several scientific discussion sites where I put my ideas to the test. It works fine.

This attitude places me in the category of the banned authors. Since currently no quality review journal exists, potential readers must themselves find out whether my articles are worth reading.

Installing a quality review mechanism.

I have sent the following message to LinkedIn support:

"I like to start a group that reviews articles that are published on open access media such as viXra, PubMed Central, arXiv and open access journals. (the first two are two-sided open access). The problem with many openly accessible sites is that they also attract low quality contributions. That is

the reason that many scientists avoid these media. It is a pity, then many independent authors have no alternative then to publish in these media. Thus, apart from low quality stuff these media also contain jewels. My idea is to start a kind of product quality review service. The contributors add a review report about an article that they consider interesting. Readers can express their consent by increasing or decreasing a quality indicator. The average quality assignment will be attached to the review. A search mechanism that analyses attached search terms can also contribute to the service.

Currently the LinkedIn mechanism can accept and handle reviews as messages. However, the acclamation mechanism and the search service are not (yet) supported.

The review system will greatly enhance the value of open access media.

I am interested in your point of view on supporting such a service."

LinkedIn support answered that they will look into this proposal and transferred it to their technical staff.