

CERN Workshop on Innovations in Scholarly Communication (OAI4)
20 – 22 October 2005, Geneva

Breakout Session: Friday, October 21 at 11:30 - 14:00

Policy issues

Facilitator:
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Description:

The OA movement is coming of age, moving from ad hoc experimentation to policy formation at many levels, from the individual institution to the research council to parliaments. The purpose of this discussion will be to further our understanding of issues likely to arise in policy discussions around open access, and identify some effective advocacy techniques. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences with policy development, and/or thoughts and questions about policy-related issues or advocacy strategies.

Some sample issues:

Many approaches, one goal

There are many ways to achieve open access to all of our scholarly peer-reviewed literature, and many different challenges depending on our local environments. OA challenges may arise from a local profitable publishing industry - or from wondering where to find the funds to publish, period. Our universities may be centralized or decentralized, public or private or some mixture of the two. Policies can be developed by individual universities, research funders, or governments. Policies also need to take into account that OA can, and is, being implemented by individuals - the self-archiving researchers and small independent publishers.

Open Access & the public: the potential of open access for transforming society

Discussions to date have focused on the need for open access to facilitate the scholarly communications process for researchers, and rightly so. This is the most critical need, and so it makes sense that it would be the first priority. Open access, however, has the potential to do much more, to transform society in ways that we cannot yet imagine. When Medline was made openly accessible, usage increased a hundred fold. Open access will mean that patients and patient advocates, community activists, hobbyists, professionals such as teachers, doctors nurses, and other health professionals, journalists, politicians,

public servants, and business people, among others, will have direct access to the research literature. We need to challenge our ideas about both "the public" and the transformative potential of open access.

Open Access as a global phenomenon

Open access implementations need to happen at the local level. However, Open Access is, and must be, a global phenomenon. It works best when we all share our research, with everyone. One of the arguments for open access is that taxpayers have the right to view the results of the research they have funded. However, it makes no sense to limit access to the citizens of one country; it is much more effective to share with all. The whole concept of global collaboration is very new in and of itself. Are there lessons from other global collaborative endeavors - such as the mapping of the human genome? Will there be lessons from open access to inform future global collaborations?