PLOS Science Wednesday: Hi Reddit, we're Achintya, Elise, and Heather, ECRs who recently presented our projects at OpenCon, a global conference on open access. Brewster Kahle, a leader in OA and our keynote speaker, is also joining us – Ask Us Anything!

PLOSScienceWednesday [1] and r/Science AMAs[1]

[1]Affiliation not available

April 17, 2023

the WINNOWER

REDDIT

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PLOSSCIENCEWEDNESDAY R/SCIENCE

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PLOSScienceWednesday , r/Science , PLOS Science Wednesday: Hi Reddit, we're Achintya, Elise, and Heather, ECRs who recently presented our projects at OpenCon, a global conference on open access. Brewster Kahle, a leader in OA and our keynote speaker, is also joining us -- Ask Us Anything!, *The Winnower* 3:e147930.00645 , 2016 , DOI: 10.15200/winn.147930.00645

This is so awesome. My master's graduation project was about the unique challenges concerning digital cultural data, especially for image content, in the context of hybrid art archives. During my research I felt that much of the art world still fears the ease of reproduction and distribution that the Internet allows, and the issue of copyright for images is so complicated that it was one of the biggest obstacles in the OA movement gaining traction in the field of visual arts.

“The ever increasing cost of reproduction ... is one of the most pressing problems facing the world of art publishing today. ... Fees [for reproduction of copyrighted works, frequently collected by agencies who manage licenses for artists or their estates] have long been the bane of fine art publishers. Because such agencies work to a percentage of taking, they have little interest in making any distinction between ‘commercial’ and ‘non- commercial’ publishing.” (Stone 2003)

What are your thoughts on how OA could become more prevalent in the field of art and design?

brrrbrbr

Brewster, Internet Archive, here.

We hope that people will post their ongoing career porfolios at places like the Internet Archive, but that is a dream (our site is not great at supporting such things).

For getting the past materials, museums are opening up slowly. https://archive.org/details/metropolitanmuseumofart-gallery is a positive example. hopefully all catalogs would go up.

in practice, publishing on the web seems to have fewer hurdles for reuse than commercial publishing.

what do you think of services, that grand access to science paper, regardless of the "legal"-matters? (concrete: sci-hub)

what i've heard: pretty much everyone involved in science is totally fine with "not paying" for papers... even most (all?) people, that publish those papers ~> some do even encourage getting their work "illegal".
(promoting and showing how it is done in their lectures)

the only force against this seems to be the publisher, who is making tons of (unnecessary) money. ~> duplicating information doesn't take much resources with our current technology. these high prices seem to me like a relic of the past.
(peer review seems to be important, thou...)

what is your general view on "freedom of information"?

- do you think patent laws and copyright are essential a mask for censorship? (i do, wish we could get rid of both)
- do you think, that there is some information out there, that should not be "open access"? if yes: what kind of information would that be?

well, the people i talk to are pretty much all in research and not in industry... maybe i have a distorted view here :)

oh, and thank you for doing the AMA. I hope someday information is free :)

cO-necaremus

Achintya here. This isn't as comprehensive an answer as I would like (it's past 23:00 here and I'm recovering from a 16-hour trip from DC to Bombay), but I'd like to give you my perspective.

Alexandra Elbakyan (the creator of sci-hub) is called a hero by no less than the founder of PLOS itself. While I don't disagree, I would prefer that access to knowledge produced by taxpayer-funded research didn't require such actions.

One thing to note is that many publishers allow authors to deposit a version of their paper (not the version formatted for "publication") on personal or institutional repositories. I therefore prefer things like the Open Access Button and oaDOI (read more about the latter: http://blog.impactstory.org/introducting-oadoi/) to access otherwise-paywalled content.

these high prices seem to me like a relic of the past.

Bingo! They bring little value to the process and yet these journals have been makingobscene profits each year while hiking subscription costs for libraries worldwide. See more on the matter on Björn Brembs's blog: http://blogarchive.brembs.net/comment-n820.html

- do you think patent laws and copyright are essential a mask for censorship?

Copyright is certainly abused extensively to deprive us of access to valuable knowledge, but I'm not sure I'd equate it with censorship. Sorry I can't give you a more nuanced response!

- do you think, that there is some information out there, that should not be "open access"? if yes: what kind of information would that be?

I would never make confidential data collected as part of my social-science research entirely public. We have to protect the privacy of those who participate in our research. I will only make anonymised datasets public to ensure that the participants to my project cannot be personally identified, so that the views they express cannot be held against them.

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do you think patent laws and copyright are essential a mask for censorship?

Brewster here: historically, copyright has largely been for control rather than compensation.

But libraries have a role and responsibility to provide access to all materials. We just have to live up to it. We are doing "digitize-and-lend" at scale for the last 6 years and it is working well. We are talking with others to expand that approach:
https://archive.org/details/TransformingourLibrariesintoDigitalLibraries102016

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cO-necaremus

Heather here: I think sci-hub is really interesting. It gives us a taste of what a truly open future looks like. WOW, right? We are just a few business model change decisions away from that being legal and they way research is done and disseminated from here on out.

Let's make it happen. Demand it of your publishers and societies.

Hi all, and thanks for doing this AMA.

Universal access to all knowledge is an ambitious goal. Can you add a bit more clarity around how you are defining "access" and "knowledge" here?

I would also be curious to hear your thoughts on how patents have played a role in enabling broader access to knowledge. The basic premise of a patent is that if you share your proprietary idea ("knowledge") with the world, you may be granted a temporary monopoly on the ability to profit from that information. It seems as if much of your focus is on tearing down paywalls in the publishing space, bug can you imagine other economic-driven solutions, perhaps analogous to the patent system, ever being effective?

SirT6

Brewster, head of the Internet Archive, here.

The Internet Archive (archive.org) is concentrating on the published works of humankind: books, music, video, tv, webpages, software. (not exclusively these, but concentrating on it).

There is plenty of money spent, we just need to spend it better. Libraries worldwide are 30billion/year. about 1/4 of that goes to publsihers products. Lets keep that going, but spend it better.

What libraries do, in general, is buy and lend. So we think we should continue doing that. We are doing that with books, for instance, in the https://openlibrary.org site. (try borrowing a book, it is cool). We also index and lend US TV News programs (try https://tv.archive.org).

I'm really curious about your work in Sub Saharan Africa. My friends who work in non-Western regions have talked for a long time about two interrelated problems: the lack of local quality academic journals and the lack of access for everyday people to learn more about their own society's history, culture, economics, etc. What does exist is often heavily weighted towards colonial influences and uses colonial languages.

But there are also systemic issues that make local engagement with academia and journal articles difficult even if there are open access journals in their language and focused on issues relevant to them. This is true even in the US. If your only means of accessing online content is a mobile device with metered internet it is hard to take advantage of these resources. And, as the SSRC focused on this summer, there is still a large gap between what academics focus on and what people on the ground care about.

Do you plan to address those issues too as part of a larger more holistic effort?

firedrops

My focus so far as a catalyst is more into sensitizing the next generation of social science researchers on the necessity of producing their research outputs using a transparent workflow from the collection of the raw data to the publication of the paper. I am also training undergraduate and graduate students on the existing data sharing platforms such Github and OSF

Hi Everyone, thanks for the AMA!

When I've brought up open access to research with my peers and superiors, I find that most (to a first approximation) people my age think it is a good idea and generally in favour of open access, open source code, open data, etc. Most (to a first approximation) established researchers don't seem to care much, think it will get their ideas stolen, or resent the extra cost and effort involved. How do you win over the entrenched attitudes of senior researchers and convince them that being open is good for them and their research? I know the quote is that "science advances one death at a time" but I'm not ready to go to jail for open access.

superhelical

Heather here. Great question. One approach I've taken for Open Data is to show that there is a citation benefit for making data available (see https://peerj.com/articles/175/).

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superhelical

Achintya here. I wish everyone could be like Björn Brembs, who tweeted last year:

For the record: since I got tenure in 2012, my non-tenured co-authors decide where we submit our manuscripts.

Sadly, many “legacy faculty” as I've taken to calling them are too entrenched, as you said. One way to slowly advance science without going to jail is to demonstrate the tangible benefits of OA publishing:

- http://sparceurope.org/open-access/benefits-of-open-access/
- http://www.nature.com/openresearch/about-open-access/benefits-for-authors/
- http://openscience.com/benefits-of-open-access-for-authors/
- http://www.righttoresearch.org/learn/whyoa/index.shtml
- http://www2.le.ac.uk/library/for/researchers/publish/benefits

Further to Heather’s point about the citation benefit, I want to point out that all particle-physics data from the CMS Collaboration on the CERN Open Data Portal are released to the public domain under the CC0 declaration and each dataset is assigned a DOI to make it a citable object. We need to start rewarding the data generators as much as we reward the data analysts.

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superhelical

Brewster Kahle here. Not quite a direct answer, but we work with hundreds of organizations to get them to offer their stuff up for free. people cite costs or copyright, but it is usually "ego", in the sense people try to figure out are they "better off or worse off?" for putting there materials up.

the best path is say "Try something" "put your foot in the water". if it does not work out, then pull out. but it doesn't happen. they almost always move forward.

Hi Everyone, thanks for the AMA!

When I've brought up open access to research with my peers and superiors, I find that most (to a first approximation) people my age think it is a good idea and generally in favour of open access, open source code, open data, etc. Most (to a first approximation) established researchers don't seem to care much, think it will get their ideas stolen, or resent the extra cost and effort involved. How do you win over the entrenched attitudes of senior researchers and convince them that being open is good for them and their research? I know the quote is that "science advances one death at a time" but I'm not ready to go to jail for open access.

superhelical

Elise: I believe one of the key argument you could give to convince your peer to be open is the following: being open or transparent in research is part of the scientific ethic itself. Many research outcomes/ papers at least in social sciences often end up with key policy recommendations impacting the life of millions of people throughout the world. Those policy recommendations stem from a data analysis process using specific statistical techniques. The inability of replicating those research because of a lack of (raw) data sharing from the author could therefore put some doubts on the research outputs which could potentially be flawed.

A question for Heather. I really like the work you are doing with ImpactStory and oaDoi. IMO the former could be a game changer. However I fear that requiring Twitter to sign in will prevent many academics from using it and will limit its use to those researchers who are already into social media, Open Science etc. Any plans for extending login possibilities to ORCID, Google...? I think that could really help spreading it to a wider scientific audience. Thanks for what you do!

theotherraf

Hi! This is Heather. Thanks a lot for the question and feedback :) Our decision to require Twitter for an Impactstory account was data-driven, as we discuss here: http://blog.impactstory.org/nps

Briefly: people with a Twitter account were much more likely to like and recommend an altmetrics-based tool. We have limited resources and want maximum culture change, so we are focusing first on those who are predisposed to think this is all a great idea, and then all of us together can help convince everyone else :)

What do you see as the biggist hurdles blocking the way for open access publishing? Is it different than the hurdles blocking the way for open access research/data?

p1percub

Heather: Yes, very different. The hurdles to OA publishing are mostly around prestige -- there is a fear your research will not being seen as valuable or serious. For Open Data there is much more fear: fear that other researchers will find mistakes, that they will do work you yourself want to do soon, and that you will be overwhelmed with questions.

How is the internet archive planning to fund itself in the coming years, hopefully decades? I know that hosting costs are constantly falling, but I see wayback machine links being constantly thrown around the internet and imagine that it's getting pretty high traffic.

StupidName2010

internet archive

Brewster, head of the Internet Archive, here. As for funding, 1/3 comes from libraries paying us 10 cents a page to digitize books and put them up for free, 1/3 comes from libraries paying us through archive-it.org to collect webpages for them, and 1/3 from donations and foundations. We fundraise at the end of each year (a banner will be going up Nov 29th) and please please donate. https://archive.org/donate

Hi everyone and thanks for doing the AMA!

My question pertains to the current options that exist for sharing scientific data with others. It seems that currently only a handful of major institutions publicly release data (NASA, CERN, USGS, etc.) and they are all hosted on institutional websites in a million different formats. There is no easy way to merge data from multiple sources together without manually seeking it out, downloading it, and formatting it.

I recently attended a seminar from the CEO ofhttps://data.world, which seems to be an attempt to resolve this issue of siloed data. The website allows data to be uploaded (by anyone) and then processed so that other datasets with similar metrics can easily be linked together for analysis. **Do you see the scientific community moving towards greater data sharing in the future? Should this movement be spearheaded by a private corporation or should academic/governmental entities provide their own solution?**

shiruken

Heather: Yes, definitely, the scientific community is moving toward data sharing even now. Some evidence: - it has been shown to be growing within a discipline (ie http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0018657#s3) - there are more government mandates for data sharing (ie White House OSTP memo which applies to articles as well as data https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf) - more journals are requiring data sharing (see JORD project https://jordproject.wordpress.com/reports-and-article/journals-and-their-policies-on-research-data-sharing/)

I think data sharing should be required by funders and journals. Private corporations could host the data, provided there is a fallback for if the private corporations close or discontinue the product, like

there is for scientific publications (ie CLOCKSS https://www.clockss.org/clockss/Home or the Internet Archive)

What is the connection of open access data and publishing to open education initiatives?

divvyflax

Achintya here. I'd be happy to give you my perspective on this. I happen to work on theCERN Open Data Portal, which we built to serve open data from the LHC collaborations. We have two tiers of data available: so-called "derived" datasets that are useful in an educational context (see http://opendata.cern.ch/education) and the "primary" datasets that are in the same format that is used by experimental high-energy physicists (see http://opendata.cern.ch/research). I work for the CMS Collaboration, so I can only really you give the CMS side of things.

The educational datasets are probably the best place to start. The LHC collaborations have been releasing small subsets for the Physics Masterclass activities (see http://opendata.cern.ch/search?p=masterclass). In these Masterclasses, thousands of high-school students around the world perform a measurement using real data from the LHC. By releasing larger open datasets, we've seen teachers begin to incorporate them into their teaching, not only to introduce students to cutting-edge fundamental research but also to programming. Project CODER (this is a temporary URL while they update the main website) is one example. You can see teachers reproduce simple analyses using tools such as Jupyter notebooks and then take these analyses to their students.

We've also seen open data used in higher education. So far we've released over 300 TB of data. This is not a data volume that can be downloaded and analysed easily. But with a bit of guidance and access to institutional computing resources, some undergrads in Germany have been able to reproduce plots from highly cited CMS papers. (See my panel talk at OpenCon for more details: https://youtu.be/ooSJUlkmcpE#t=51m20s)

Oh, and the datasets are released to the public domain under CC0 public-domain dedication. We hope that more teachers and students can build upon these datasets and develop open education tools.

Hi all,

Thanks for doing this AMA! I've always had two questions about open access publishing. First, what is the incentive structure for young scholars to publish their work through OA channels rather than traditional journals? My understanding is that tenure review panels are concerned with not just the number of publications one generates, but also where the articles were published and the frequency at which these publications were cited (often a function of publication location). For instance, a publication in a high impact journal like *Science* will be viewed much more favorably by the panel and the field as a whole than a publication in a lesser known, lower impact journal, whether that journal be a traditional outlet or an OA one that senior scholars are skeptical about. It seems like it is easier for scholars who have already reached tenure and who have a reputation in the field to venture into OA publishing, but that OA publishing by junior scholars presents an uphill climb for these individuals to reach tenure and, perhaps most importantly, have their ideas taken seriously by the field. If OA is still gaining respect in academic channels, how can junior scholars be assured that publishing in this manner will both positively impact their own careers and have their ideas taken seriously by their fields?

Second, are there ways that OA publishing can incorporate the kind of rigor found in the peer review into the process? It seems to me that one of the beauties of the current publishing system is that articles go through a vetting process by other experts in the field before being included in journals and

widely distributed. However, institutional barriers like peer review seem contrary to the idea of OA publishing, in which everyone can have the ability to publish and have their ideas widely disseminated through the Internet. My concern is that, without peer review, we will see a rise in unsound publications and the propagation of pseudoscience. Is there a way to reconcile these two ideas?

Thanks again for doing this AMA today!

crimson_bulldog

Achintya here. Thanks for asking two excellent questions, and I hope I can address them sufficiently.

I will start by taking the easy way out and pointing you to a compelling set of points that support open research: http://whyopenresearch.org/ The website is by the brilliant Erin McKiernan, who has pledged to be open in her research. It brings up several points regarding the incentive structures. Concerning your other points:

For instance, a publication in a high impact journal like *Science* will be viewed much more favorably by the panel […]

Björn Brembs (whom you should follow for more insight into the Open movement) covers this on his blog in a post titled "Even without retractions, 'top' journals publish the least reliable science". Specifically, he points out the following:

1. Criteria for evidence-based medicine are no more likely to be met in higher vs. lower ranking journals.
2. There is no correlation between statistical power and journal rank in neuroscience studies.
3. Higher ranking journals tend to publish overestimates of true effect sizes from experiments where the sample sizes are too low in gene-association studies.
4. Three studies analyzing replicability in biomedical research and found it to be extremely low, not even top journals stand out.
5. Where quality can actually be quantified, such as in computer models of crystallography work, 'top' journals come out significantly worse than other journals.
6. In vivo animal experimentation studies are less randomized in higher ranking journals and the outcomes are not scored more often in blind in higher-ranking journals either.

[…] how can junior scholars be assured that publishing in this manner will both positively impact their own careers and have their ideas taken seriously by their fields?

There's no reason to hold on to the notion that publishing in open-access journals results in one not being taken seriously. PLOS, for example, publishes research of the highest standard. Regarding positive impact on one's career, besides Erin's "Why Open Research?" website, you should check out this project by Erin and Juan Pablo Alperin that "aims to examine how faculty are evaluated in the review, promotion and tenure (RPT) process". (More details: http://publishing.sfu.ca/7297-review-promotion-tenure-project/)

[…] are there ways that OA publishing can incorporate the kind of rigor found in the peer review into the process?

Open access and peer review are not mutually exclusive. :) That said, you might want to take a look proposals for post-publication peer review (here and here for example), which concerns your point about everyone having the ability to publish their ideas.

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Thanks again for doing this AMA today!

crimson_bulldog

Heather here. Another incentive for young publishers to publish through OA is that Open Access papers reach more people. This results in more citations (http://sparceurope.org/oaca_table/) and more discussion on social media (altmetrics).

Altmetrics are particularly relevant for young researchers because they accrue more quickly than citations, but are correlated with future citations. This can help make a case for the impact of a paper you published just a few months earlier -- so often the case when you are finishing up a PhD or postdoc.

How can the Open Access movement help preservation of the collective knowledge of the past 150 years, prior to the Open Access era?

egonw

preservation

Brewster here: Scan and upload. there is a link on https://archive.org 's homepage to upload. if it is a pdf, we ocr it and make it available lots of different ways. If you upload a .torrent file, then we retrieve the files.

We also scan for people at 10 cents a page at regional scanning centers, and ones that can located at libraries. We are scanning 1000 books per day. even modern books-- those are borrowable at https://openlibrary.org for free.

We are building a large scale scanning facility in asia to ramp up further.

One problem I have seen with a push for scientists to publish in OA journals is that currently, many of the most prestigous journals are not OA, and career advancement heavily depends on publishing in

prestigious journals. Are there any solutions to this that will remove this negative about OA and allow authors to more easily publish in OA as their first choice?

kerovon

Achintya here. One step to moving towards OA publishing is being required to do so by your research's funders. See, for example, a selection of funders's OA policies: http://whyopenresearch.org/funding For a more comprehensive look at *your* funder's OA requirements, check out http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet/index.php

As I said elsewhere in this AMA, "Even without retractions, 'top' journals publish the least reliable science". Also, journals with higher impact factors have higher rates of retractions. So, I see little reason to go chasing those "prestigious" journals. :)

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kerovon

Heather: Yes: focus on more appropriate metrics, and encourage your peers and evaluators to also.

Being published in a prestigious journal means that 1 editor and 3 anonymous reviewers though a paper was good quality and useful. This is good, but the citation count a paper receives after publication, and the discussion it inspires on social media are much more appropriate.

Making your peers and evaluators aware of DORA (the San Fransisco Declaration on Research Assessment, http://www.ascb.org/dora/) will help bring this transition about, making it easier for everyone to publish in OA journals. And sign DORA yourself while you are there! :) http://www.ascb.org/sign-the-declaration/

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kerovon

I strongly believe and think that there shouldn't be a trade-off between publishing in an open access journal and career advancement. There are open access journals of good quality as well even though publishing in those journals doesn't have any impact factor. Alternative metrics are currently suggested as a replacement of the traditional old impact factor. I would strongly encourage you the read this interview of Erin Mc Kiernan : https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/aug/22/university-research-publish-open-access-journal

Hello there! I'm glad you are looking at an open access initiatives.

1. One of most important hurdles for open access is people do not know the exact costs associated with open access. For example, we all know some scientific journals charge exorbitant amount of money. If we shift them to open access, how much costs would be reduce? It would be a nice research project in itself and worth explaining WHY open access - apart from other things - is a

good idea. Your thoughts?

2. The peer reviewed process is long considered the holy grail of scientific publishing. However, we all know that "nothing is perfect". If this is put out, most of the times scientists retort with TINA - there is no alternative - answer. What better systems could be consider and why? For example, it is an open secret (in some research communities) that double-blind is more easier to game the system than not. The reason being in single-blind the onus of a conflict rests on the reviewer. In a double-blind review, one can always hide behind plausible deniability - if you know your area, you could almost guess where the work came from. I admit this affects conferences more than journals.

3. It would be important to spell out to people tat open access does not mean decrease in quality. There is a genuine issue with open access where due to the open nature, there is a flood of fraudulent conferences/journals. How would you handle associated costs with such a system?

[denzil_correa]

Achintya here with a quick reply to your first question.

It would be a nice research project in itself and worth explaining WHY open access - apart from other things - is a good idea.

Here's what you might be looking for: http://whyopenresearch.org/

Hello there! I'm glad you are looking at an open access initiatives.

1. One of most important hurdles for open access is people do not know the exact costs associated with open access. For example, we all know some scientific journals charge exorbitant amount of money. If we shift them to open access, how much costs would be reduce? It would be a nice research project in itself and worth explaining WHY open access - apart from other things - is a good idea. Your thoughts?

2. The peer reviewed process is long considered the holy grail of scientific publishing. However, we all know that "nothing is perfect". If this is put out, most of the times scientists retort with TINA - there is no alternative - answer. What better systems could be consider and why? For example, it is an open secret (in some research communities) that double-blind is more easier to game the system than not. The reason being in single-blind the onus of a conflict rests on the reviewer. In a double-blind review, one can always hide behind plausible deniability - if you know your area, you could almost guess where the work came from. I admit this affects conferences more than journals.

3. It would be important to spell out to people tat open access does not mean decrease in quality. There is a genuine issue with open access where due to the open nature, there is a flood of fraudulent conferences/journals. How would you handle associated costs with such a system?

[denzil_correa]

This is Heather. To answer your second question -- an alternative and compliment to blind peer review is crowdsourced feedback -- what are people saying about your research. It is hard to leverage what people are saying in conference hallways, but we can indeed collect and understand what they are saying online. What are people saying, how many people are saying it, and who are the people and what are their qualifications?

There are tools for gathering this information now (PubPeer, Altmetric.com, Impactstory, others) and they will keep getting better.