Description

The Open Access (OA) movement has redefined the way scholarly knowledge is shared and accessed globally. What began as a response to the monopolistic practices of subscription-based publishing has evolved into a global initiative that drives the future of sustainable knowledge sharing. This article traces the origins of the major OA initiatives and examines key challenges and controversies surrounding their implementation. It also highlights the impact of key statements that influenced policy changes and advanced the global OA movement.

Open Access Initiatives

Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) (2002)

Launched by: Open Society Institute

Mission: To achieve OA in scholarly publications across different fields by adopting two complementary strategies of self-archiving and launch of OA journals. BOAI also provided one of the first definitions of OA

Current Status: Being foundational to the global OA movement, BOAI is still guiding various initiatives in the current day

Challenges: Was perceived with skepticism and ridicule in the initial days as it challenged the traditional subscription-based publication system

Controversies: The APC model has faced criticism for perpetuating inequalities, as researchers from low-income countries often struggle to afford publication fees.

Right to Research Coalition (R2RC) (2009)

Launched by: The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)

Mission: To ensure that all students have ready access to research outputs irrespective of the institute they are associated with

Current Status: R2RC has become one of the largest student led organizations and is currently representing around 7 million students worldwide. It has also been successful in driving institutional OA policies on campuses in North America, Europe, Africa and Nepal.

Challenges: Ensuring sustained student engagement and expanding this initiative across different regions

Controversies: Critics argue that while student advocacy is powerful, the coalition needs stronger institutional backing to effect large-scale change.

Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics 3 (SCOAP3- 2014)

Launched by: European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)

Mission: To increase the accessibility to research outputs in the field of high-energy physics and support researchers by eliminating the burden of article processing charges

Current Status: Currently in partnership with 3000 libraries, key funding agencies and research centers in 44 countries and 3 intergovernmental organizations. It has facilitated the transition of various subscription-based journals to embrace the OA model

Challenges: Balancing financial growth and the principles of Open Science by driving sustained and scalable transitions across regions

Controversies: In its early days, SCOAP3 model faced minor setbacks when some libraries and a leading journal withdrew from the partnership. Publishers also argue that the SCOAP3 model could destabilize revenue streams, particularly for smaller journals that rely heavily on subscription income

Plan S (2018)

Launched by: cOAlition S

Mission: To ensure that publications supported by public grants should be freely available online in lines with the OA policies

Current Status: An independent report published by cOAlition S highlights the role played by Plan S in steering the institutes' right retention policies and its contribution to establishing the diamond OA model in scholarly publishing

Challenges: Overcoming publishers' tactics to undermine right retention policies and addressing concerns that this restricts the academic freedom to publish their work in the journal of their choice

Controversies: Plan S model has been widely criticized for its support for large, well-established journals. The model is believed to leave out small publishers and limit the journal options for researchers. Moreover, according to a 2022 report, two-thirds of the partnering journals failed to meet the OA policy targets.

Open Access Statements

Bethesda Statement (2003)

- This statement was released in 2003. It defined OA publications and outlined two conditions that mandates OA — firstly, authors or copy-right holders should provide access and free distribution rights for their outputs and secondly, a complete version of their work should be made freely available in electronic format.
- Bethesda Statement played a major role in influencing various OA movements and policies by providing a clear framework.

Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (2003)

- This declaration was drafted at a conference hosted by the Max Planck Society in collaboration with the European Cultural Heritage Online project. The statement outlined the definition of OA contributions and laid out the foundations for transitioning to the electronic OA paradigm.
- Berlin declaration was pivotal to progress of the OA movement as more than 120 organizations attended this conference and the statement was extensively promoted post its release.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Declaration on Access to Research Data from Public Funding (2004)

- Launched in 2004, this declaration was mainly focussed on advancing the OA movement to ensure that the outputs of public funded research are made freely available and accessible to all.
- This declaration was instrumental in influencing global policies regarding data sharing and driving the OA movement in 38 member countries.

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Statement on Open Access to Scholarly Literature and Research Documentation (2004)

- The IFLA statement was released by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Interestingly, IFLA also signed the Berlin Statement and has taken a leadership role in the OA movement by supporting the launch of OA-compliant publications.
- This statement recognized the commitment needed to ensure unrestricted access to research outputs. It played a significant role in laying the foundations for recommended practices in open science.

Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Guidelines (2022)

- Released in the year 2022, the updated policy guidelines mandates agencies to make the federally funded research in the US publicly available by the end of 2025.
- This statement has had profound impact on the STM publishing industry, as it promises to unlock more than $90 billion in research. It also leads the world by setting an example on the crucial role played by government policies in advancing the OA movement.

While multiple OA movements have been initiated time and again, most of these movements suffer from sustainable financial stability. It is essential to develop a model that encompasses all publishing costs, including peer review, editorial work, and digital preservation.

As OA movements continue to evolve, its future is shaped by how effectively it can address the challenges of financial sustainability, regional disparities and upholding quality in publishing. A collaborative effort by all the stakeholders involved in the publishing industry — governments, institutions, funding bodies, libraries, and researchers will be crucial in advancing this movement to the next phase, enabling it to thrive as a viable and equitable publishing model.

Category

1. Publishing Research

Date Created
2024/10/31
Author
editor