Max Planck and Taylor and Francis Agreement Removes Open Access Barrier

Author
Enago Academy

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A new agreement between the Max Planck Digital Library and the Taylor and Francis Group is set to have a significant impact on the open access landscape. Research emanating from the Max Planck institutes can now be published in an open access format in any of the 2,390 journals that belong to the Taylor and Francis Group. Under the agreement, authors from any of the Max Planck institutes will no longer be required to pay open access publication fees. Instead, this cost will be borne by the Max Planck Digital Library over the next three years. The Head of Information at the Max Planck Digital Library, Dr. Ralk Schimmer, said,

“This new agreement is constructed from an open access perspective and helped us to revitalize our business relations after several years of no central site license for the Max Planck Society. We are particularly pleased that our new collaboration marks a departure from the subscription system and shifts our fees from read access to our publication output. This constitutes a significant service improvement for our authors and underscores the transformation to open access.”

The agreement also gives the Max Planck institutes access to a set of Taylor and Francis subscription journals. There is leeway in the agreement for individual journal titles to be added or swapped out in line with the needs of readers at the Max Planck institutes.

According to the Max Planck Digital Library, in order to benefit from the fee waiver, the corresponding author must be from a Max Planck institute and use that affiliation, the article must be published under a CC-BY licence, the article must be accepted between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2019, and the article should be an original or review paper.

Open Access and Europe

This bold move by the Max Planck Digital Library is in line with recent trends towards supporting open access in research findings. In May of 2016, the European Union's member states agreed on a very ambitious open access target. The Competitiveness Council, which consists of European ministers of science, innovation, trade and industry, agreed that all scientific papers should be made freely available by 2020. The Council also agreed that there should be no, or a very short, embargo on research articles. This goal is part of a move towards open science, which would also include improved access to, and storage of, research data.

The details of how these objectives will be met have not yet been finalized. There is the feeling that achieving open access by 2020 is unrealistic, given the pace at which open access has been moving so far. Achieving this goal could be made possible if research articles are deposited in institutional repositories—a practice known as Green OA. The Dutch government favors Gold OA, where the data is published in an open access academic journal.

The impact that both the Max Planck agreement and the European Union's open access goal could have on the global community should be overwhelmingly positive. In the words of Sander Dekker, the Dutch state secretary for education, culture and science,

"Research and innovation generate economic growth and more jobs and provide solutions to societal challenges…Europe must be as attractive as possible for researchers and start-ups to locate here and for companies to invest. That calls for knowledge to be freely shared."

References

1. Nadia Khomami (2016, May 28) *All scientific papers to be free by 2020 under EU proposals.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/may/28/eu-ministers-2020-target-free-access-scientific-papers.

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