



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS: MEANING, TYPES, ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT

The article aims at understanding the meaning and relevance of open access journals with reference to research. While many scholars have written on open access in a positive manner, it has attracted quite a lot of criticism about its credibility too. The article also lists out the advantages and disadvantages of the use of Open access Journals.

INTRODUCTION

Open access Journals refers to freely available, digital, online information. Open access scholarly literature is free of charge and often carries less restrictive copyright and licensing barriers than traditionally published works, for both the users and the authors. It is a newer form of scholarly publishing. (Peter Suber, 2014)

The main focus of an open access journal is peer reviewed literature. The most commonly used license in open access publishing are Creative Commons. The CC BY is one of the most widely used license and it requires only attribution to be allowed to use their material. Some smaller journals use custom open access licenses.

Since open access does not charge readers, they use financial models to cover costs by other means. In one of the models, journals generate revenue by charging publication fees in order to make the work openly available at the time of publishing.

Some publishers will waive off part of the fee for authors from less developed countries.

Types of open access journals

Green Open access publishing refers to the self-archiving of published or pre-publication works for free public use. Authors provide access to preprints or post-prints with publisher permission in an institutional or disciplinary archive such as arXiv.org.

Gold Open access publishing refers to works published in an open access journal and accessed via the journal or publisher's website. Examples of Gold Open Access include PLOS (Public Library of Science) and BioMed Central.

Hybrid journals offer authors the option of making their articles open access, for a fee. Hybrid journals are still fundamentally subscription journals with an open access option for individual articles. They are not true open access journals, despite publishers' use of the term "gold open access" to describe this arrangement. (Peter Suber, 2014)

Diamond Open access journals provide scholarly publishing free of fees and access charges. They have direct or indirect subsidies from institutions like universities, research centers, government agencies etc. for example, Discrete Analysis, an online peer-reviewed journal where articles are links to arXiv [1]

Advantages

1. Articles are freely available without charge to readers. No subscription is necessary.
2. The number of places authors can publish has increased. Competition between journals may have increased. This is to the benefit of authors who are new, inexperienced, lack administrative support, or otherwise would face

- disadvantages in their efforts to begin sharing their ideas.
3. The subscription model limits the number of journals that can be produced because university libraries can only subscribe to a limited number of journals. Limited supply enhances the economic leverage of those journals, imparting power to their editors, board members, and reviewers. This is not particularly democratic.
4. Given the limited number of print pages available in traditional journals, only the best papers could be published. Best is defined as most scientific and usually means grant-funded. Multisite randomized trials are more likely to make the cut. Smaller, more pragmatic studies that are more reflective of real-world practice are left with fewer outlets. Not coincidentally, the public periodically is dismayed to learn that a procedure, medication or delivery system does not perform as well as expected. Publication bias is not limited to exclusion of nonsignificant findings but also includes exclusion of real-world evidence produced by observational studies. [2]
5. Open-access journals were given a big boost when governments began to recognize that scientific reports funded by tax-payers should be made freely available to those same taxpayers. Not yet recognized is the fact that any medical organization that accepts reimbursement from governments should also be accountable for making all of its patient care research openly available at no cost.
6. Paper is obsolete. Electronic publishing is not just the future, but the present. The subscription-based model will live on, but many if not most journals will convert to open access since the model is fully divorced from paper. (Rohrer, 2014)

Disadvantages

1. Some may be motivated by an opportunity to make a profit by preying on inexperienced authors. Cries of protest from authors in support of traditional journals have been voiced.
2. Charges of fake peer review and sloppy editing have some foundation in some of these journals.
3. "Paying to publish" equates to cheating to those who worked their way up via the traditional route. After all, in the field of book publishing, weak writers with healthy bank accounts have always been able to find publishers who would print their books.
4. By demanding that publishing should be "free," they impart a gloss of high-minded morality over subscription-based journals. These concerns are valid.
5. Some open-access journals are of poor quality. Perhaps some will print anything for the right price and call it peer reviewed (Rohrer, 2014)
6. Perception in the profession regarding quality- one of the main disadvantages of an online format is the continued reluctance on the part of some departments to give equal weight to electronic publications, which they view as being less rigorous than print media (Magnan, 2007; Smith Lafford, 2009)

7. Fake journals are not completely filled with fake articles, But the risk to authors who publish in poor-quality journals with no systemic review process is that “every single article published in that journal is thrown into doubt,” including those of value. (Thomas K. Grose, 2017)

CONCLUSION

As it is with every concept, Open access journals have both advantages as well as disadvantages. They were initially started with the idea of making information available to all. But over time, predator journals have started making a business out of charging a fee for publishing an article even if its quality is not up to the mark.

There is a growing debate on the ethics of open access journals and its article processing charges. One controversy is “double tipping” where both the authors and subscribers are charged.

The demerits of Open Access Journals are that some of them do not have high impact factors and this is considered detrimental to a researcher. Some Open Access Journals are of poor quality and print any type of article if it is paid for.

It reduces the credibility of a researcher as traditional researcher thinks that it is less rigorous.

On the bright side, many new authors and researchers can explore their writing and publishing abilities with the help of Open access journals. Open Access journals are free of cost or charge comparatively lesser amounts so it does not financially burden a researcher.

It is free of charge to the readers who are mostly students and academic scholars and this is definitely a boon to them. It is electronic in nature and a lot of people prefer using it for this reason.

Visibility, cost and speed of publication are factors to keep in mind while publishing in an Open Access Journal.

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