

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Open Access: Key Strategic, Technical and Economic Aspects. Edited by Neil Jacobs. Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2006. 243 pages (soft cover). ISBN 1-84334-203-0. CDN\$69.36.

Open access is inevitable; open access is highly controversial; open access is public access to publicly funded research; open access is not a priority; open access is a right. These are some of the ideas that currently circulate, and this is where *Open Access: Key Strategic, Technical and Economic Aspects* demonstrates its value. Neil Jacobs' compilation of essays presents the major players, perspectives, and strategies of the open access movement in a thorough and thoughtful fashion.

In the foreword, physician and Labour MP Ian Gibson lays out some of the basic tenets of open access, such as the increase in public demand for free access to high-quality information online, the "monopoly over knowledge" held by the commercial publishing world, and the concept that the public should have free access to research that has been funded through public money. This book itself is divided into a series of sections, each containing several essays written by key players in the open access movement, who offer some interesting and enlightening perspectives.

The history, definitions, and rationale section of the book is useful for readers who want a fuller understanding of the philosophy and background of the open access movement. Alma Swan does a thorough job of contextualizing open access in the continuum of scholarly communication, following the evolution of such concepts as peer review, intellectual property, and quality control from their inception to present day. She also addresses the broadening over time of concepts like peer review, noting its potential to become more "open" and allow for the peer group and author to engage in discussion and make changes before the formal peer-review process takes place.

Charles W. Bailey Jr. discusses how the process of scholarly communication is becoming strained and stifled by a toll- and subscription-based access system. He guides the reader smoothly through the major definitions of open access (the Budapest Initiative, the Bethesda Statement, and the Berlin Declaration are brought together to define a system of open access that removes both price and permission barriers), strategies of author self-archiving, and an overview of different strategies in the field of open access journals. My favourite essay in this section, and perhaps the whole book, is by Jean-Claude Guéron. He opens with a telling description of scientists quarrelling over the use of a semicolon or a colon, but never over copyright. He makes the astute point that librarians keep the system of toll and subscription access working despite the fact that it is broken and cannot hope to sustain itself much longer.

The world of the researcher in relation to open access is both blessed with incredible possibilities and fraught with deep-seated doubts. Alma Swan states that researchers stand to benefit most from open access policies, owing to an inevitable increase in communication with their peers, which is

the primary purpose of publishing for 90% of them. Stevan Harnad presents the many doubts, fears, and objections that researchers have to open access, including lack of clarity about the permission to self-archive (as well as the potential time and expertise self-archiving may require), concerns about plagiarism, and the perceived impermanence of electronic documents. The relationship between researchers and institutional repositories is explored by Arthur Sale, who characterizes researchers as wearing two "hats"—that of reader and of researcher. The repository is a great resource for both of these research roles, but policies that make depositing mandatory need to be established, or this arm of open access will be completely ineffective.

Other participants in the open access movement covered in this book include research funding bodies (such as the Wellcome Trust in the UK), who believe that publishing should be a research cost rather than a library cost; the journals themselves; and the institutions behind the researchers. Mary Waltham presents one of the strongest views in support of toll- and subscription-based journals, stating that journal costs have risen because of increases in submissions, and those costs have not been offset by falling print runs as many had assumed.

A wide range of perspectives is also presented on open access movements from around the world. In the Netherlands, the Digital Academic Repository (DARE) program addresses the philosophy that "unrestricted use of academic knowledge is of the utmost importance for progress." In the US, entities such as ArXiv, the Public Library of Science, and PubMed Central represent some of the oldest, largest, and most highly used open access repositories. Research funding agencies have taken the open access limelight in the UK, with the Wellcome Trust providing non-government-influenced funds to maintain the availability and accessibility of scholarly literature. Australia's university-based scholarly publishing system is a bit slower to adopt ideas such as mandatory storage and retention of publications in a repository, but it is certainly moving in the right direction with government support of programs that aim to increase access to research information. Finally, India is the one of the most interesting countries in terms of the open access movement; despite having a fairly low percentage of online scientific journals, it stands fifth worldwide in open access journals. Furthermore, when compared with only other lower gross domestic product countries, India ranks second. This unique situation suggests that the rest of the world has something to learn from India regarding open access; many of their journals have no commercial publisher involvement and are supported by councils, societies, and associations in India and around the world. Open access has been a great tool for recognition and dissemination of their scholarly publications and has also led to increases in their paid print subscriptions.

Glimpses into the possible future of open access provide a scintillating snapshot of a world in which endless data is presented in endless ways. Clifford Lynch offers a theory of "open computational access" in which all scholarly informa-

tion, including unpublished, preliminary, and proprietary information, is constantly being rearranged and restructured to help spur new discoveries in research and to create specialized services such as vocabulary databases, gazetteers, and factual databases. Nigel Shadbolt, Tim Brody, Les Carr, and Stevan Harnad present an array of futuristic models of open access: artificial intelligence text analysis and classification techniques, articles and portions of articles included in subject-based ontologies, full-citation interlinking in all scholarly articles, weighing of citations through a CiteRank analogue, and endogamy and exogamy scores for not only authors and articles, but for journals, institutions, and even

topics. The sense that one is left with at the end of this collection of essays is that the possibilities of the open access movement are both exciting and endless. Hopefully, they're all inevitable.

Brooke Ballantyne

BC Mental Health and Addictions Services

Riverview Hospital Library and

Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission Resource Centre

2601 Lougheed Highway

Coquitlam, BC V3C 4J2, Canada

E-mail: ballantyne@bcmhs.bc.ca