Open access

Free and universal access to knowledge is fundamental to science. Although this may sound obvious, as all scientists do their work "standing on the shoulders of giants" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_newton), scientific publication has become a highly lucrative industry. Since: (i) journals receive, free of cost, the results of research funded by numerous, mostly governmental, agencies; (ii) the quality of published articles is based on peer review, also free; and (iii) the internal procedures and costs of maintaining journals are relatively low, it follows that researchers create value, while commercial scientific publishers generate profits.

One particularly perverse aspect of this market is the requirement that copyrights be transferred to the publishers. Publishers then hold the rights to total or partial reproduction of the articles and their prior authorization becomes necessary for any reuse. In other words, even the original authors may have limited use of the material they themselves created. The main argument justifying copyright is that authors need to be protected and therefore encouraged to distribute and develop their work. However, in science, as in culture, this stimulus comes from sharing and debating ideas and from immediate and free access to all such production.

The Open Access (OA) publication model is an alternative way of distributing research output, whereby the journal guarantees free, irrevocable, and unrestricted access to the article from the date of its online publication. This inverts the logic of restricted access and facilitates total or partial reproduction as well as the development and distribution of derivative works. The idea is to take full advantage of ever-evolving information and communication technologies in order to expand information sharing and thereby foster scientific development. The OA model defines readers' rights to reuse, copyright, posting, and machine readability. Publishers adopt more or less open policies for each of these dimensions (http://www.plos.org/about/open-access/howopenisit). Reuse is regulated by Creative Commons or CC licenses (http://creativecommons.org/about), the least restrictive of which are adopted by publishers with more open policies.

In 2009, SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) adopted the CC-BY-NC license for distribution of its scientific content. This allows "*others to remix, tweak, and build upon the original authors' work, except for commercial purposes. New works must credit the author and may not be used for commercial purposes, but do not need to be licensed under the same terms*" (http://creativecommons.org.br/as-licencas). Reaffirming CSP's commitment to support free access to scientific information, our journal also adopts a CC-BY-NC license for distribution of its scientific content. Thus, the current instrument for transferring copyrights will be replaced in order to adjust this policy to the terms of the CC-BY-NC license. CSP will also further develop other aspects of its open access policy, especially methods for assessing impact and use of research results, and thus the adjustment of metrics for the evaluation of scientific publications.

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