

Welcome to the SPARC Open Access Newsletter, issue #107

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by Peter Suber

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The Ides of February in Europe: The European Commission plan for open access

The Ides of February were a turning point for OA in Europe. The European Commission hosted a conference on scientific publishing (Brussels, February 15-16, 2007) and kicked it off with a long-awaited, non-binding "Communication" on its thinking about an EU-wide OA mandate for EU-funded research.

The most important bit of background is that last year an EC-commissioned report recommended --in its lead recommendation, A1-- that the EC "guarantee public access to publicly-funded research results shortly after publication."

After the report came out, the EC opened a two-month public-comment period (April-May 2006) and reported in October 2006 that "participants...reacted positively overall....However, some caution was expressed by publishers...." It promised to issue a Communication on its deliberations at an EC-hosted conference in mid-February 2007.

As the Ides of February 2007 approached, friends and foes of a European OA mandate began to weigh in. In January 2007, the Scientific Council of the European Research Commission (ERC) pledged to adopt an OA mandate "as soon as pertinent repositories become operational". About a week later, the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) recommended an OA mandate for EU-funded research. A few days later, four public funding agencies in Europe (in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK) and SPARC Europe launched a petition calling for an EU-wide OA mandate. Later in the month, the European University Association (EUA) Working Group on Open Access joined the call for an OA mandate. On February 13, two days before the Brussels Conference and in the same city, 15 Belgian university rectors and two government ministers signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge. On the same day, on the other side of the issue, 35 publishers and eight publisher associations issued the Brussels

Declaration, opposing the idea of an OA mandate.

Here's a little timeline of the main events:

- * March 31, 2006. The EC released an EC-commissioned report recommending an EU-wide mandate for EU-funded research ("Study on the Economic and Technical Evolution of the Scientific Publication Markets in Europe" by Françoise Vandooren and Mathias Dewatripont, both of the Université Libre de Bruxelles). The official date on the report is January 2006.
- * March 31 - June 1, 2006. The EC collects public comments on the report.
- * October 9, 2006. The EC released the public comments on the report and a summary (favorable overall but with some reservations expressed by publishers).
- * January 2007. The Scientific Council of the European Research Commission (ERC) pledged to adopt an OA mandate "as soon as pertinent repositories become operational" (in a document dated December 2006 but apparently not released until January 2007).
- * January 10, 2007. The European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) recommended an OA mandate for EU-funded research. EURAB was created by the EC precisely to give advice on research policy.
- * January 14, 2007. Four national research funders (DEFF, DFG, JISC, SURF) and SPARC Europe launched an online "Petition for guaranteed public access to publicly-funded research results".
- * January 26, 2007. The European University Association (EUA) Working Group on Open Access endorsed the OA recommendations from the EC report, ERC, and EURAB.
- * February 13, 2007. Fifteen Belgian university rectors and two government ministers signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge.
- * February 13, 2007. A group of publishers and publisher associations released the Brussels Declaration on STM Publishing, February 13, 2007, opposing an OA mandate.
- * February 14, 2007. Les Carr released the results of a poll of EU-funded researchers: 86% supported an OA mandate for publicly-funded research and 14% did not.
- * February 15-16, 2007. The EC hosted a meeting in Brussels: Scientific Publishing in the European Research Area - Access, Dissemination, and Preservation in the Digital Age.
- * February 15, 2007. OA proponents presented the "Petition for guaranteed public access to publicly-funded research results" with over 20,000 signatures to Janez Potocnik, Commissioner of the EC's Research Directorate-General.
- * February 15, 2007. The EC released its long-awaited "Communication on access to scientific information in the digital age" along with four related documents: a Staff Working Paper, an FAQ, the text of Janez Potocnik's opening address at the Brussels meeting, and a press release.

After all this build-up, the EC Communication was somewhat anti-climactic. And I must say, the lack of fireworks looks deliberate. The two EC Directorates General most involved in OA policy-making -- Information Society and Media, headed by Vivian Reding, and Research, headed by Janez Potocnik-- are trying to find a diplomatic trail through a minefield. They are eager to show support for the concerns on each side and postpone the day when they will have to alienate one of them.

The Communication is not a policy but a pointer toward a future policy. It sends two signals: first that the EC has been listening to arguments from both sides and second, that all things considered

it wants to move toward OA. "Initiatives leading to wider access to and dissemination of scientific information are necessary, especially with regard to journal articles and research data produced on the basis of public funding" (EC Communication, p. 7; link below). What it does not do is squarely accept or reject the EC report's recommendation A1 for an OA mandate.

* On the primary question of an OA mandate, the EC says only that it will "issue specific guidelines on the publication of articles in open repositories after an embargo period" (p. 8). It doesn't tell us when it will issue the guidelines, whether the guidelines will require or merely encourage OA, what the maximum permissible embargo will be, why it hesitates to adopt recommendation A1, or what new information or insights it needs before coming to a decision. It does tell us that the guidelines will vary by discipline and funding program; hence even if the rules in some areas are strong enough, others are likely to be weak.

In her closing address at the Brussels meeting, Vivian Reding suggested that the EC is not waiting for new information so much as a resolution to an ongoing debate: "The key question in all this seems to be: how to combine a rapid and wide dissemination of validated results with a fair remuneration for those who make investments to make the system work? As usual, the devil is in the detail. What is a fair remuneration and what is an embargo period that makes a fair remuneration possible? There is a need for a continued and constructive debate on these issues." (See her address, p. 3; link below.)

This position would make more sense if the debate were still in its early stages, or if the parties were closer together, or if the EC were a neutral bystander. But none of these conditions holds.

I suggest that the role of the EC in this controversy is to find its own interest, as a major funder of scientific research (more than €50 billion for FP7), and to assert that interest. If it waits for a consensus of the other players, it will wait indefinitely and abdicate its responsibility to European researchers and taxpayers.

To her credit, Reding acknowledges that the EC is a stakeholder, not a bystander. Nevertheless, at least for now, she seems to see its role as mediating a controversy rather than deciding it. Reding and Potocnik should recognize that taxpayers are a major stakeholder in this debate and are not otherwise represented at the table.

I'm not calling for a one-sided decision. Publishers and taxpayers both make a contribution to the value of peer-reviewed articles arising from publicly-funded research. When deciding how to give each group its due, I've often argued that the EC report's recommendation A1 (or alternatively, FRPAA) is a reasonable compromise: a period of exclusivity for the publisher followed by permanent free online access for the public. Publishers who want to block OA mandates per se, rather than just negotiate the embargo period, are saying that they want no compromise, that the public should get nothing for its investment, and that publishers should control access to research conducted by others, written up by others, and funded by taxpayers.

On three related issues the EC Communication is unhesitating and positive:

* The EC will help pay publication fees at fee-based OA journals, a position I have supported for funding agencies that can afford it. "[P]roject costs related to publishing, including open access publishing, will be eligible for a Community financial contribution" (p. 8). This policy provides unembargoed OA, supports a new generation of peer-review providers, and lessens --or ought to lessen-- the opposition of publishers. The EC doesn't promise to pay whatever publishers charge, and it goes beyond merely offering financial support to positively encouraging researchers to take advantage of it. The language suggests that the EC is also willing to help pay publication fees (e.g. page and color charges) at non-OA journals.

The Communication uses the term "experiment" several times but doesn't apply it specifically to this policy. However, the press release accompanying the Communication does apply it to this

policy. What would lead the EC to continue, revise, or terminate this experiment? So far, no word.

(Unfortunately, in discussing publication fees at OA journals the EC still uses the misleading term "author pays" for OA journals and still seems to believe that all OA journals charge publication fees when in fact most of them do not.)

* The EC supports a strong policy of OA for data, following the OECD Declaration on open data from January 2004, which the EU signed. "Fully publicly funded research data should in principle be accessible to all" (p. 8).

Will the EC require or merely encourage OA for data? Is there a difference between the access policy we should have "in principle" and the access policy the EC will adopt in practice? Will it host its own OA data repositories or take advantage of distributed institutional repositories? What steps will it take to protect the privacy of research subjects in medical and social science research? What steps will it take for data mark-up, interoperability, annotation, and attribution? What steps will it take to encourage authors and publishers to integrate journal articles with their underlying data? So far, no word.

* The EC will generously fund OA infrastructure. It has budgeted about €50 million for building and linking OA repositories throughout Europe, and that's just for the two-year period 2007-08. In the same period it will spend about €25 million on digital preservation. And in the period 2005-08, it will spend €10 on the eContentPlus program "to improve the accessibility and usability of scientific content, in particular addressing issues of interoperability and multilingual access" (p. 9).

This is the largest government allocation to OA infrastructure in history, even after we subtract the portion primarily dedicated to digital preservation.

(The Communication spends as much time on long-term preservation as it does on open access. While I support digital preservation initiatives, and think they strengthen OA initiatives, I omit them here in order to focus on the direct OA issues.)

* Finally, the Communication outlines a process for moving forward. The EC will take up OA policy with the European Parliament and Council of Ministers. It invites member states to "explore common strategies". It will continue to consult with stakeholders. And it will launch a study of digital preservation and "support research" on the scientific publication in Europe and beyond, "for example on publication business models, dissemination strategies, and the connections between research excellence, scientific integrity and the scientific publication system" (p. 9).

* The 18-page "Staff Working Paper" accompanying the Communication does a very good job of embedding the policy questions in context: the rise of digital technologies, the rise of journal prices, the rise in government research budgets, the rise of OA, the growing number of journals, the growing volume of data, and the benefits of enhancing access to research. It doesn't shed new light on the EC's future OA policy except by making much of the case for OA without explicitly drawing the conclusion.

That's all we have so far. The announced policies all favor OA and the major unannounced policy (on OA archiving) has been framed by pro-OA arguments. Opponents of an OA mandate found little to praise. Putting the best face on it, the STM's February 15 press release praised the EC's "interest...in scientific publishing", its desire for "continuing dialogue", and its very lack of a policy decision, as if the EC were "recognising that further research on preservation and economics is essential before adopting any policy positions."

* Where does this leave us?

We have to keep working for a simple, enforceable mandate on OA archiving for publicly-funded

research. We have to take advantage of the fact that the future guidelines are still under development. We have to show that OA policies relying only on requests and encouragement fail, as documented by the NIH. We have to show that the research community is calling for an OA mandate, for example through the EC's own study from last year, the European Research Council (ERC), the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB), the European University Association (EUA), and the now-22,800+ signatures on the OA petition.

We have to show that there are ways to satisfy some publisher concerns without abandoning an OA mandate, for example, by mandating immediate deposit without immediate OA, allowing a reasonable embargo period on OA, and applying the policy to the final version of the author's peer-reviewed manuscript rather than the published version. We have to show that further concessions to publishers will put the financial interests of a private industry ahead of the public interest in advancing research and jeopardize the mission of the EU's public funding agencies.

We have to be fully involved in the future stakeholder consultations. When the question moves to the European Parliament for discussion and debate, we have to anticipate relentless and well-funded publisher lobbying. We have to help members understand the issues, make clear that publishers who oppose an OA mandate do not speak for researchers, and make clear that researchers need OA.

Note that the Communication and Staff Working Paper must have been in final or near-final form well before the Brussels conference. Hence, neither the pro-OA petition nor the anti-OA Brussels Declaration affected their language. But they could well affect the language of the future policy on OA archiving. For that reason, the petition is still open for signatures and we cannot relax the effort to communicate the need for OA and its benefits to researchers and research institutions throughout Europe.

* Here are the documents and events I mentioned above, with a few related links:

Study on the Economic and Technical Evolution of the Scientific Publication Markets in Europe, January 2006 (released March 31, 2006). This is the report by Françoise Vandooren and Mathias Dewatripont, commissioned by the EC, that recommended an OA mandate.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/414&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2006_04_02_fosblogarchive.html#114407521001187068

My SOAN article about the EC report

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/05-02-06.htm#ecreport>

EC summary of the public comments on the report, October 9, 2006

http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=NEWSLINK_EN_C&RCN=26464&ACTION=D
http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/synthesis-consultation_en.pdf

EC home page on scientific publications and research policy

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/page_en.cfm?id=3184

Scientific Council of the European Research Council (ERC)

http://europa.eu.int/erc/index_en.cfm

ERC Scientific Council Statement on Open Access, December 2006 (not apparently released or noticed until January 2007)

<http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/open-access.pdf>
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2006_12_31_fosblogarchive.html#116792021437140697

European Research Advisory Board (EURAB)

http://ec.europa.eu/research/eurab/index_en.html

EURAB's report: Scientific Publication: Policy On Open Access (dated December 2006 but released January 10, 2007)

http://ec.europa.eu/research/eurab/pdf/eurab_scipub_report_recomm_dec06_en.pdf
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_01_07_fosblogarchive.html#116845221537275857

European University Association (EUA)

<http://www.eua.be/eua/index.jsp>

Statement from the European University Association (EUA) Working Group on Open Access, January 26, 2007

http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/newsletter/EUA_WG_open_access.pdf
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_01_28_fosblogarchive.html#117043049723197107

Fifteen Belgian university rectors and two government ministers signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge --in Brussels, two days before the EC-hosted Brussels conference on scientific publishing, February 13, 2007.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117138244311867457

Brussels Declaration on STM Publishing, February 13, 2007

<http://www.stm-assoc.org/documents-statements-public-co/2007%20BRUSSELS%20DECLARATION%20130207.pdf>
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117138731546079566

STM press release accompanying the Brussels Declaration, February 13, 2007

<http://www.stm-assoc.org/press-releases/2007.02%20Brussels%20Declaration%20Press%20Release%20130207.pdf>
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117140094833622661

Les Carr, The EC Petition and the EC Poll, a message posted to several discussion lists, February 14, 2007

<https://mx2.arl.org/Lists/SPARC-OAForum/Message/3604.html>
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117146708270624318

Petition for Guaranteed Public Access to Publicly-Funded Research. Launched January 14, 2007, delivered to the EC February 15, 2007, and still open for signatures.

<http://www.ec-petition.eu/>

EC Communication on access to scientific information in the digital age, February 15, 2007

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/doc/scientific_information/communication_en.pdf
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117166447907611213

EC Staff Working Paper to accompany the Communication, February 15, 2007

http://ec.europa.eu/doc/scientific_information/swp_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/doc/scientific_information/swp_en.pdf

EC FAQ on the Communication

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/57&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Janez Potocnik's opening address at the Brussels meeting, February 15, 2007

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/07/83&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EC press release on the documents released on February 15, 2007

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/190&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Worldwide petition on open access delivered to European Commission, a press release from JISC, February 15, 2007.

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2007/02/news_petition2.aspx

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117157072527428629

Scientific Publishing in the European Research Area - Access, Dissemination, and Preservation in the Digital Age (Brussels, February 15-16, 2007). This is the EC-hosted conference where the Communication was released and the petition presented.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/page_en.cfm?id=3459

STM press release on EC Communication, February 15, 2007

<http://www.stm-assoc.org/press-releases>

[/2007.02%20STM%20Press%20Release%20EC%20Communication%20on%20Scientific%20Information.pdf](http://www.stm-assoc.org/press-releases/2007.02%20STM%20Press%20Release%20EC%20Communication%20on%20Scientific%20Information.pdf)

OECD Declaration on Access to Research Data From Public Funding, January 30, 2004

http://www.oecd.org/document/0,2340,en_2649_34487_25998799_1_1_1_1,00.html

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2004_01_25_fosblogarchive.html#107548330956944309

Viviane Reding's closing address at the Brussels meeting, February 16, 2007

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/reding/docs/speeches/scientific_info_en.pdf

* Here's some news and comment on the February events in Brussels:

Joan Bakewell, A blow to the idea that knowledge is for all to share, The Independent, February 2, 2007.

http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_a_l/joan_bakewell/article2208220.ece

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117148552910352618

Philipp Berens, Forscher fordern freien Zugang zu wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten, Jetzt, February 4, 2007.

<http://jetzt.sueddeutsche.de/texte/anzeigen/359206>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117114564710510155

Jessica Shepherd, Open season for researchers, The Guardian, February 13, 2007.

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,2011534,00.html>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117134075161471574

The Brussels Declaration on STM Publishing, February 13, 2007.

<http://www.stm-assoc.org/documents-statements-public-co/2007%20BRUSSELS%20DECLARATION%20130207.pdf>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117138731546079566

William Walsh, The Brussels Declaration on STM Publishing, Issues in Scholarly Communication, February 13, 2007.

<http://www.library.gsu.edu/news/index.asp?view=details&ID=12123&typeID=62>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117146640277559255

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Mark Chillingworth, Publishers fire broadside at EU open access ambitions, Information World Review, February 15, 2007.

http://blog.iwr.co.uk/2007/02/publishers_fire.html

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EU outlines digital age strategy, The Parliament, February 15, 2007.

<http://www.eupolitix.com/EN/News/200702/c6bf9dcb-087a-4530-8d8d-d97db36b5a7e.htm>

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EU To Support More Cost-Free Access To Research Results, Wall Street Journal, February 15, 2007.

<http://users2.wsj.com/lmda/do/checkLogin?mg=wsj-users2&url=http%3A%2F>

[%2Fonline.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FBT-CO-20070215-704322.html%3Fmod%3Ddist_smartbrief](http://online.wsj.com%2Farticle%2FBT-CO-20070215-704322.html%3Fmod%3Ddist_smartbrief)

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117158932156423604

Self-Evident? In a Shot at Public Access Advocates, Publishers Release Brussels Declaration, Library Journal Academic Newswire, February 15, 2007.

<http://www.libraryjournal.com/clear/CA6416849.html?nid=2673#news2>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117159008035988347

Charles W. Bailey, Jr., The Brussels Declaration: You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows, DigitalKoans, February 15, 2007.

<http://digital-scholarship.org/digitalkoans/2007/02/15/the-brussels-declaration-you-dont-need-a-weatherman-to-know-which-way-the-wind-blows/>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117164666055281493

Open access to scientific publishing draws controversy, EurActiv, February 16, 2007.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/science/open-access-scientific-publishing-draws-controversy/article-161757>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117163101578090369

Stevan Harnad, Impressions from Brussels EC Meeting, Open Access Archivangelism, February 17, 2007.

<http://openaccess.eprints.org/index.php?/archives/206-Impressions-from-Brussels-EC-Meeting.html>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117175096688225982

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EC outlines information-access plans, Research Information, February 20, 2007.

http://www.researchinformation.info/news/news_story.php?news_id=31

Open-access petition presented to EC, Research Information, February 20, 2007.

http://www.researchinformation.info/news/news_story.php?news_id=32

Stefan Krempf, EU-Kommission fördert Open-Access-Publikationen, Heise online, February 20, 2007.

<http://www.heise.de/newsticker/meldung/85512>

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<http://sciencesque.wordpress.com/2007/02/23/europe-not-yet-ready-for-mandatory-open-access/>

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<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/315/5815/1065a>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117226732051064893

Improving access to European-funded research results, European Public Health Alliance, February 28, 2007.

<http://www.ephia.org/a/2525>

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<http://www.eprints.org/community/blog/index.php?/archives/189-Poll-shows-popular-support-for-proposed-EC-Self-Archiving-Mandate.html>

Stevan Harnad, Feedback on the Brussels EC Meeting on Open Access, Open Access Archivangelism, March 1, 2007.

<http://openaccess.eprints.org/index.php?/archives/209-Feedback-on-the-Brussels-EC-Meeting-on-Open-Access.html>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117275894289986405

The Ides of February in the US: The National Day of Action and other preparation for FRPAA

In the US, FreeCulture and the Alliance for Taxpayer Access declared February 15 to be a National Day of Action for Open Access. At campuses across the country, students staged events to build support for FRPAA and celebrate the fifth birthday of the BOAI (on the 14th).

FreeCulture is an international student movement active in copyright and patent reform, consumer rights, accountable voting systems, and freedom of expression. Its support for open access is most welcome. It understands the student stake in OA as well as the benefits for faculty, universities, libraries, physicians, patients, and taxpayers. It brings a fresh perspective, new energy, and 30 campus chapters across the US and several abroad. It has invaluable contacts with the next generation of publishing researchers, academic librarians, university administrators, journal editors, society officers, foundation managers, and legislators.

February 15 was a day of OA education and consciousness raising. The University of Southern California hosted public talks by Cory Doctorow and Sasha Chock, and the University of Florida hosted public talks by Gavin Baker, Ashley Wills, and Stephanie Haas. Swarthmore, Emerson, and Reed Colleges, among others, set out tables of OA information staffed by volunteers.

Harvard students submitted a pro-OA op-ed to the Harvard Crimson, announced an OA forum for the following week, and handed out OA bookmarks. Above all, they launched an OA Thesis Repository for undergraduate senior theses. The repository should become a regular part of student scholarship at Harvard, expose students to self-archiving, and of course give their work a larger audience and greater impact. The repository started accepting deposits yesterday.

MIT students printed up "overprice tags" and stuck them on the print volumes of the 100 journals for which MIT pays more than \$5,000/year. Each tag showed the name of the journal, the subscription price, the publisher, and a URL for an MIT page on OA. (Link to photos below.) MIT librarians had already created a web page listing the journals costing the institution more than \$5,000/year --an idea that other institutions could emulate.

Students weren't the only ones gearing up for the re-introduction of FRPAA:

Randy Dotinga of Wired News got the first public confirmation that Senator John Cornyn does indeed plan to re-introduce FRPAA in the current session of Congress.

Thirty-nine patient and consumer organizations sent open letters to Senators John Cornyn, Joe Lieberman, and Susan Collins in support of FRPAA. The signatories included groups like the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition, Arthritis Foundation, Center for Science in the Public Interest, and Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy.

Publishers in the DC Principles Coalition issued a press release and petition opposing OA mandates for publicly-funded research.

As long as I'm listing February events that anticipated the re-introduction of FRPAA, I should mention my article in the February SOAN, "Twelve reminders about FRPAA". I hope it arms activists and journalists against the kinds of misunderstandings and misrepresentations we saw last year and are already starting to see this year.

* Here are some links on the National Day of Action for OA:

FreeCulture.org

<http://www.freeculture.org/>

FreeCulture's chapters

<http://freeculture.org/chapters/>

Alliance for Taxpayer Access (ATA)

<http://www.taxpayeraccess.org>

Press release on the National Day of Action from FreeCulture.org and the Alliance for Taxpayer Access, February 1, 2007

<http://www.taxpayeraccess.org/media/Release07-0201.html>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_01_28_fosblogarchive.html#117042463056690445

FreeCulture's list of events for the National Day of Action

<http://freeculture.org/blog/2007/02/15/events-for-national-day-of-action-for-open-access/>

MIT's announcement of the National Day of Action

<http://epsilon.media.mit.edu/openaccess/>

MIT events for the National Day of Action

<http://news-libraries.mit.edu/blog/archives/373>

Slideshow of the MIT Student Day of Action for Open Access

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nic221/sets/72157594537521716>

Overprice Tags, an MIT project for the national day of action

<http://mako.cc/fun/overpricetags/>

MIT's (pre-existing) list of journal subscriptions costing more than \$5,000/year

<http://web.archive.org/web/20050828210650/libraries.mit.edu/about/scholarly/expensive-titles.html>

Ellen Duranceau, A Conversation with Benjamin Mako Hill, organizer of the MIT Student Day of Action for Open Access, MIT Library News, undated but c. February 22, 2007.

<http://news-libraries.mit.edu/blog/archives/374>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117224172047878155

Harvard events for the National Day of Action

<http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~freeculture/blog/?p=65>

The OA bookmark distributed at Harvard and other campuses

<http://www.rrrojer.net/fc/bookmark-neu-rev4.png>

The presentations from the Panel on open access research (Gainesville, Florida, February 15, 2007)

<http://uf.freeculture.org/2007/02/17/slides-from-open-access-panel-feb-15/>

* Here's some other February news and comment on FRPAA:

Letter from 39 patient and consumer organizations wrote a letter to Senators John Cornyn and Joe Lieberman in support of FRPAA, February 16, 2007.

<http://www.cptech.org/a2k/cornyn-lieberman-public-access-letter.pdf>

--Letter from the same organizations to another to Senator Susan Collins in support of FRPAA, February 16, 2007.

<http://www.cptech.org/a2k/collins-lieberman-public-access-letter.pdf>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117211658589356629

Nonprofit publishers oppose government mandates for scientific publishing, a press release from the DC Principles Coalition, February 20, 2007.

<http://www.dcpinciples.org/press/2.htm>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117202895951705271

The DC Principles Coalition launched a petition in support of society publishers who oppose FRPAA, c. February 21, 2007.

http://www.dcpinciples.org/DCPS_PETITION/DCPS_PETITION/Petition.aspx

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117216682166251750

Stevan Harnad, The DC Coalition: A Matter of Principle, Open Access Archivangelism, February 22, 2007.

<http://openaccess.eprints.org/index.php?/archives/207-The-DC-Coalition-A-Matter-of-Principle.html>

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117216219543837662

Randy Dotinga, Senator's Spokesman: Open-Access Bill Will Return, Wired News, February 22, 2007.

http://blog.wired.com/biotech/2007/02/senators_spokes.html

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117215313735777466

Tracey Caldwell, STM manifesto rubbishes open access research, Information World Review, March 2, 2007.

<http://www.iwr.co.uk/information-world-review/news/2184595/stm-manifesto-rubbishes-open>

Round-up

Here's what happened, or what I noticed, since the last issue, emphasizing action and policy over scholarship and opinion. I put the most important items first, with double asterisks, and otherwise cluster them loosely by topic. Most of the time, I link to my blog postings, not to the sources themselves, because I only want to include one link and my blog postings usually bring many relevant links together.

Because this section focuses on action and policy, it skips over several dust-ups in February about pitbulls, Barbie dolls, and slavery. (Aren't you glad?)

** The European Commission (EC) released its long-awaited, non-binding "Communication on access to scientific information in the digital age" along with a Staff Working Paper and FAQ.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117163624319006465

** Ronald Plasterk, one of the best-known OA proponents in the Netherlands, was appointed the country's minister of education, culture, and science.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117237322053868405

** Philip Esler, Chief Executive of England's Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC), confirmed to Richard Poynder that the AHRC plans to adopt an OA mandate for AHRC-funded research.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117250305558474649

** Senator John Cornyn's office confirmed to Randy Dotinga that the Senator will reintroduce FRPAA in the current session of Congress.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117215313735777466

** The University of California is considering a draft OA mandate. Instead of requiring faculty to deposit their work in an OA repository, it would require them to give the university permission to disseminate an OA copy.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117168794313780563

** Novartis provided OA to data on the human genes most likely to be associated with diabetes.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117132640076420288*

** The American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) released a position statement on public access to scientific literature, calling for OA to publicly funded research within six months of its publication.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117081224409020774

** The ATLAS Experiment at CERN released a Statement on Open Access Publishing encouraging its 1,800 participating scientists to publish their results in OA journals. (CERN scientists already operate under an OA archiving mandate.)
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117258357515257232

** FreeCulture.org and the Alliance for Taxpayer Access declared February 15, 2007, to be a National Day of Action for Open Access and FRPAA.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_01_28_fosblogarchive.html#117042463056690445

* The e-Infrastructure Working Group of the UK Office of Science and Innovation issued a report endorsing the RCUK's OA mandate.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117095091310783347

* The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) released a draft Provosts' Statement On Publishing Agreements. It includes an author addendum enabling scholars to retain the rights they need to authorize postprint archiving.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117133978974130570

* The American Association of University Presses (AAUP) released a Statement on Open Access. It expresses some skepticism about fee-based OA journals and a willingness to explore mixed business models and OA monographs.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117261116789135561

* The Research Information Network published a report, prepared by Rightscom, on the OA and related policies of UK funding agencies.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117082262760176823

* The Research Information Network published a document, Research and the Scholarly Communications Process: Towards Strategic Goals for Public Policy: A Statement of Principles, which has been signed by an unusual combination of friends and foes of OA.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117268874388567040

* The European Research Council, which has pledged to adopt an OA mandate, officially launched on February 27 at a meeting in Berlin.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117271597620322072

* Thirty-nine patient and consumer organizations wrote a letter to Senators John Cornyn and Joe Lieberman, and another to Senator Susan Collins, in support of FRPAA, February 16, 2007.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117211658589356629

* The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) adopted reforms favoring the "development agenda", which includes stronger protections for the public domain. In June we'll know what the reformed WIPO thinks of the Access to Knowledge Treaty, which includes a requirement for OA to publicly-funded research.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117242214622552042

* AlouetteCanada, the digitization and OA project for Canadian cultural heritage, issued a Declaration that includes language supporting OA. The Declaration is undated but appears to be new.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117224996625893301

* Francis Ouellette posted an Open Access declaration for the Ouellette Laboratory on his lab's web site.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117106117434735993

* On the first day of the EC-hosted Brussels conference (February 15), OA proponents delivered a petition with over 20,000 signatures to Janez Potocnik, EU Commissioner for Science and Research. The petition called for guaranteed public access to publicly-funded research in Europe.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117157072527428629

* A group of publishers and publisher associations released the Brussels Declaration on STM Publishing on February 13, 2007.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117138731546079566

- * The STM press release on the Brussels Declaration gave evidence, perhaps inadvertently, that publishers had seen an advance copy of the EC Communication.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117140094833622661
- * Les Carr conducted a poll of EU-funded researchers showing that 86% supported OA to publicly-funded research.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117146708270624318
- * Ohio University's Russ College of Engineering and Technology and Center for International Studies now require electronic submission of theses and dissertations.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117088517168799104
- * The Bowling Green State University Libraries and the Francis Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard Medical School joined the Alliance for Taxpayer Access.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117233271526770369
- * The Wikimedia Foundation signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117216363169328124
- * The Swedish Association for Information Specialists, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and the Institute for Metal Forming and Casting at the Technische Universität München have signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117269143150701932
- * SURF announced that all the universities in the Netherlands have now signed the Berlin Declaration.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117276717548295651
- * Fifteen Belgian university rectors and two government ministers signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge --in Brussels, two days before the EC-hosted Brussels conference on scientific publishing.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117138244311867457
- * Students at Harvard College Free Culture launched an OA Thesis Repository for undergraduate senior theses.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117155629132330987
- * The Manchester Information and Associated Services (MIMAS) has received an £8.4 million grant from the UK's Economic & Social Research Council to provide free online access to government information.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117251305362825703
- * The Synergies project received \$5.8 million grant from the Canadian Foundation of Innovation to develop scholarly publishing technologies. The grant includes work with Erudit and Open Journal Systems.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#11715714830551460

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117250005365771505

* Catalysis Database is a new OA repository from India's National Centre for Catalysis Research.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117242839838682337

* The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) released its Census of Institutional Repositories in the United States.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117232540862402578

* The Alexandria Archive Institute officially launched Open Context, its OA repository and portal for archaeological data.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117088994401362336

* The University of Liverpool is preparing to launch an institutional repository and calling on interested faculty and departments to participate in a pre-launch pilot project.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117199147859674196

* The Hong Kong Jockey Club donated \$80 million to create Hong Kong Memory, an OA repository for the cultural heritage of Hong Kong.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117146859615596302

* Creative Commons launched the 3.0 versions of its licenses.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117233568863708342

* The DC Principles Coalition issued a press release opposing government mandates for scientific publishing (i.e. opposing a reintroduction of FRPAA), February 20, 2007.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117202895951705271

* The DC Principles Coalition launched a petition in support of society publishers who oppose FRPAA, c. February 21, 2007.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117216682166251750

* BioMed Central discovered that seven of the 10 most popular web sites in biology are OA, according to Alexa.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117216468656718551

* Springer merged Foundation of Physics Letters with Foundations of Physics, making the former an OA section of the latter.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117181063178814922

* Hindawi converted its last two subscription-based journals to OA and is now an OA-only publisher.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117209238438141687

* Hindawi Publishing launched 10 new OA journals, the most by any publisher since May 2000 when BMC launched 57 OA journals.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117073731238070661

* PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases opened for submissions.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_01_28_fosblogarchive.html#117053455351268919

* The National Library of Australia was reported to be experimenting with Open Journal Systems in preparation for publishing OA journals.
http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117073606523213665

* Google President and co-founder Larry Page gave a talk at the AAAS meeting in which called on scientists to "unlock" their work and make it more "accessible to the world".

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117183879653303422

* A Belgian court decided that Google must stop including newspaper headlines among its search returns. The Belgian newspapers that brought suit are now vindicated and invisible.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117147986128743164

* Princeton University joined the Google Library Project.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117078935968573062

* The University of Michigan Library posted some usability data on MBooks, the ebooks digitized from the Michigan library by the Google Library Project.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_18_fosblogarchive.html#117233516414679950

* PubDrug released its first seven peer-reviewed OA drug monographs.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117267495093118774

* BioMed Central launched three blogs, one for BMC itself, one for Chemistry Central and one for PhysMath Central.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117166676819934847

* The Budapest Open Access Initiative celebrated its fifth anniversary on February 14.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117146494448761111

* German researchers criticized an access-limiting an agreement between a German library association (Deutscher Bibliotheksverband) and a trade association of German publishers (Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels).

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117104723940073184

* The Kauffman Foundation launched the iBridge Network, an OA portal of licensable discoveries designed to promote tech transfer.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_01_28_fosblogarchive.html#117054344385968585

* The US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) proposed raising its reproduction fees.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117258974043430064

* SPARC Europe solicited nominations for the Second Award for Outstanding Achievements in Scholarly Communications. (The nomination period opened and closed in February.)

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117131567574525107

* BioMed Central announced the winners of its first open access research awards.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117094916847669765

* A group of writers released version 1.0 of their definition of "free cultural works".

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_11_fosblogarchive.html#117146584116376938

* ARL published an Issue Brief on Wiley's acquisition of Blackwell.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117258817047524530

* The OA Marxist Internet Archive reported that China might be attacking the site and forcing it to stop providing OA to Marxist texts in Chinese.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_04_fosblogarchive.html#117069272110063752

* The Association of Public Television Stations and the Library of Congress launched the American Archive project to digitize and offer OA to American public TV programming.

http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/2007_02_25_fosblogarchive.html#117259451437101175

Erratum

In my [Twelve reminders about FRPAA](#) in the last issue I mistakenly said that the current term of copyright in the US is the author's life plus 50 years. In fact it is the author's life plus 70 years --as I well knew, since I criticized the extension to 70 years again and again during the time when the Supreme Court was reviewing its constitutionality. Apologies for the slip.

Coming later this month

* Notable conferences in March

Open Access: Vom Prinzip zur Umsetzung (sponsored by the Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften)

<http://www.assh.ch/dt/index.asp?seite=detailTermine.asp&pag=start&id=814&>

Bern, March 1, 2007

Ohio Digital Commons for Education (ODCE) 2007 Conference

<http://www.olin.org/conferences/ODCE2007/ODCE2007.php>

Columbus, Ohio, March 4-6, 2007

Emerging Libraries: How Knowledge Will Be Accessed, Discovered, and Disseminated in the Age of Digital Information (Rice University's 2007 De Lange Conference) (OA is among the topics)

<http://www.delange.rice.edu/conferenceVI.cfm>

Houston, March 5-7, 2007.

JISC Conference 2007 (OA is among the topics)

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/conference2007>

Birmingham, March 13, 2007

Building Institutional Repositories with DSpace (OA is among the topics)

<http://www.ia-rep.de/index.php?id=89>

Kassel, March 14-15, 2007

Open Knowledge 1.0 (sponsored by the Open Knowledge Foundation) (OA is among the topics)

<http://www.okfn.org/okforums/okcon/>

London, March 17, 2007

Open Access: the Sea Change in Scholarly Publishing (a forum with John Willinsky)

<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/oaforum/>

Edmonton, March 20, 2007

American Chemical Society Spring 2007 Meeting (OA is among the topics)

<http://www.chemistry.org/portal/a/c/s/1/acdisplay.html?DOC=meetings%5cchicago2007%5chome.html>

Chicago, March 25-29, 2007

--Symposium on Communicating Chemistry, March 27-28

<http://usefulchem.blogspot.com/2006/12/communicating-chemistry-at-ac.html>

* Other OA-related conferences

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/conf.htm>

Housekeeping

* I've added 15 new conferences to my conference page since the last issue. In the next few days I'll delete the second asterisk marking them and the new entries will blend into the rest of the collection.

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/conf.htm>

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This is the SPARC Open Access Newsletter (ISSN 1546-7821), written by Peter Suber and published by SPARC. The views I express in this newsletter are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of SPARC or other sponsors.

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SPARC home page for the Open Access Newsletter and Open Access Forum

<http://www.arl.org/sparc/soa/index.html>

Peter Suber's page of related information, including the newsletter editorial position

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/index.htm>

Newsletter, archived back issues

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/archive.htm>

Forum, archived postings

<https://mx2.arl.org/Lists/SOA-Forum/List.html>

Conferences Related to the Open Access Movement

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/conf.htm>

Timeline of the Open Access Movement

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/timeline.htm>

Open Access Overview

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>

Open Access News blog

<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/fosblog.html>

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