

Ouvertures immédiates

Le blog de Bernard Rentier – Un savoir enfermé est un savoir stérile

25 OCTOBRE 2014 par BERNARDRENTIER01

The success of Open Access is revealing new dangers. The fight isn't over yet.

In a recent blog post (<http://blog.oup.com/2014/10/open-access-success-failure/>), Matthew Cockerill was asking: « *Has open access failed ?* ». This question stemmed from the observation that the financial health of the big traditional scholarly publishers has not the least suffered from the development of the OA movement. This corroborates the view from an other standpoint: scholarly libraries have not made any savings during the same period.

But the point is: was the question asked properly ? As a money saver for libraries, universities and research centers in general, OA has failed, no doubt about it. Except for some spectacular actions, most libraries have not cancelled subscriptions, understandably worried as they are to avoid depriving their customers from any essential documentation. Many have reduced the panel of their purchases to remain in line with their budgets and these reductions have mostly hampered acquisitions from smaller publishing houses, unfortunately. The incompressible « big deals » imposed unilaterally by the big publishers are not only harming universities and research in general, but small and reasonable publishers as well.

However, in terms of spreading into the scholarly community, there is no doubt that OA has succeeded. The concept is now increasingly adopted worldwide (although still heavily misunderstood by some, such as Section 60 (mécanique, génie mécanique, génie civil) of the French *Conseil National des Universités* who, in its recommendations for assessment (<http://www.cpcnu.fr/web/section-60/conseils-generaux>), specifies: « *Prise en compte de la production scientifique: Les articles dans des journaux uniquement en 'open access' ne seront pas pris en compte* » i.e. the articles solely in open access will not be taken into account).

The two most visible initiatives in promoting open access to research publications, which do confirm OA victory, are the European (<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/open-access-scientific-publications-horizon-2020-projects>) and American (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf) decisions to mandate OA for all research funded by public sources. In addition, many major international associations have joined together (<https://www.coar-repositories.org/activities/advocacy-leadership/aligning-repository-networks-across-regions/statement-about-embargo-periods/>) to support immediate OA to research articles:

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries), *LIBER* (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de

Recherche – Association of European Research Libraries), *National Science Library of the Chinese Academy of Sciences*, *OpenAIRE* (Open Access Infrastructure for Research in Europe), *SPARC* (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, *USAResearch Libraries of the United Kingdom*, *Coalition for Action "Copyright for Education and Research"* (Aktionsbündnis "Urheberrecht für Bildung und Wissenschaft") Germany, *Australian National University*, *AOASG* (Australian Open Access Support Group), *INRIA* (Institut national de recherche en informatique et en automatique) France, *NEREUS* (Network of European Libraries in Economics and Social Sciences), *Carnegie Mellon University*, *USA Association of Southeastern Research Libraries USA*, *SPARC Europe*, *CLASCO* (Latin America Council of Social Sciences).

However, the battle is not over yet because the big publishers, who are outstanding professionals with remarkably skilled teams have now better understood the whole potential of OA than most researchers themselves. After having fought OA very strongly and having declared it evil, still now trying to strike separate and secret deals (<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2014/10/15/foi-requests-uncover-lack-of-transparency/>) with each university individually, they have dropped their rejection of OA. Indeed they have understood that the people to seduce are not the librarians and even less the University authorities or the funders, but the researchers themselves.

Here is the recipe for your best bounce back strategy if you are a big scholarly publisher: pretend you love OA and you have always loved it. Better: pretend you invented it. Name your new products after it. Join the OA community, praise the OA principles, become an OA militant, célébration the OA Week and publish in OA, but make sure you twist the concept in such a way that it boomerangs back into your assets. How can you do that? Easy: call « Gold OA » a small modification of the real Gold OA (which originally is: pay neither to publish nor to read) based on the evidence that there is no such thing as a free lunch. This will never provoke anyone's outrage, it is fair enough to pay for a service. Then make sure that, based on the reputation of your journals, you increase the price for publishing up to thousands of dollars and you have simply reversed the mechanism. People are no longer paying to read but now paying to publish. And you know that many researchers are ready to pay to publish (or perish), even more so that it is not with their own money. But make sure you keep alive the confusion about the concept of « Gold OA » and « Author-pays Gold OA (<https://www.martineve.com/2012/07/16/gold-open-access-does-not-mean-author-pays/>) » . And, by the way, jeep sellent subscriptions at the same time for as long as you can, so you can win on both counts: make thème pay to publish AND pay to read (some call it « Hybrid Gold »!). Such formulas are gaining ground these days and it is a very good business.

It is the major danger for OA of loosing the battle after all: setting the ground for its own perversion...

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Bookmarker le [permalien](#).

[2 Commentaires](#)

2 réflexions sur “The success of Open Access is revealing new dangers. The fight isn't over yet.”

Catalan dit :

[26 octobre 2014 à 21 h 30 min](#)

Be careful! This is not « the French Conseil National des Universités », but « Section 60 (mécanique, génie mécanique, génie civil) of the French Conseil National des Universités ».

★J'aime

J'aime

[Répondre](#)

bernardrentier01 dit :

[26 octobre 2014 à 23 h 05 min](#)

Merci! J'ai introduit la précision !

★J'aime

J'aime

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