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# Editorial: The Serials Information Chain

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Foreword

# Revisiting Open Access: Anything New in Four Years?

Connie Foster

Four years ago *Serials Review* published a special issue on Open Access with volume 30, no.4. At that time the guest editor David Goodman invited articles from key, representative publishers, organizations, and individual researches deeply involved in the Open Access movement. At that time, too, the landscape was shifting with mandates and controversies from government bodies, and no one was certain about the outcomes. The idea formed then that this topic should be revisited in a few years. As 2007 was drawing to a close, a press release came in an e-mail on December 19, 2007, about the Society of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance moving *Journal of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance* (JCMR) to an open access publishing platform of BioMed Central instead of a traditional publishing model. This example is just one among many to indicate that the open access movement remains a mainstay of certain researchers, an opportunity of exploration for universities, and a change to exchange lively remarks about nuances and shifts in scholarly communication, faculty research, and publishing models.

One significant vehicle of scholarly communication that was not tapped four years ago in *Serials Review* is the institutional repository. The IR, as it is called, is another element in the mix of publishers seeking avenues of access with fees, authors wanted the widest access possible, and institutions hoping to gain the best of both with acknowledgements to publishers and contributions from authors in a permanent, centralized environment on

a University campus. At the well-known 2007 Charleston Conference: Issues in Book and Serial Acquisition, Greg Tananbaum, a keynote speaker and panelist, had conducted an informal survey as part of his presentation on activities at the intersection of technology, content, and academia. His informal pool of responders suggested that Open Access was the most overly discussed scholarly communication issue today, with the consensus that it was still worth discussing but that it is sucking air from select individuals. If this "survey" was in any way representative, the conference program did not reflect or buy into those responses. Open Access abounded, both in other keynote presentations and concurrent sessions, from Rick Anderson (University of Utah) and Scott Plutchak (University of Alabama at Birmingham) to Corrie Marsh (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology). And on the heels of that conference came an announcement from BioMed Central about its new release of Open Repository, featuring DSpace, the open-source platform for accessing, managing, and preserving scholarly works. (27 November 2007, Robert Brumfield, email)

Not easily discouraged, I was in the midst of preparing this special focus on open access--despite these contrary opinions--and already had contacted previous contributors and added some new participants, notably people connected with institutional repositories (IRs) to provide perspectives not previously covered. I am pleased to offer Open Access Revisited with contributions about institutional repositories in a variety of settings and places: from the Ukraine and developing and transition countries (Iryna Kuchma), bepress/Digital Commons (Jean-Gabriel Bankier and Irene Perciali), University of Nebraska's Paul Royster, and Alma Swan from the United Kingdom, with numerous

professional associations to her credit. All of these authors offer interesting and vital comments about their places in IRs and the repository's place among us all.

The 2004 issue carried words in titles like "Shifting Sands," "Emerging Phenomenon," "Green and Gold Roads," and "Criteria." That collection of articles also served as a snapshot in time of the trends, issues, data, and vision of the Open Access movement in scholarly communication. This new volume and issue of *Serials Review* conveys associations with "equity" and "strong economy" alongside "rediscovery" and engaging faculty in the process of archiving and publishing original content. Through my own current experience as a project director to launch an institutional repository at Western Kentucky University, I must extend appreciation to Paul Royster, not only for making available on his institution's repository many helpful documents, but also for returning my phone calls and unknowingly being filed away as a potential author for this journal!

And I read Stevan Harnad's update with great interest as he provides exactly the kind of data needed to encourage faculty with archiving and accessing their intellectual output. Jean-Claude Guedon offers a "Take 2" on mixing and matching the green and gold roads as he reflects on the status of open access after four years. Peter Murray-Rust presents data and observations about the trends and issues in XXXXXXXX.

These articles should prove invigorating, enlightening, and timely, regardless of one's assessment of the movement to date (as of December 2007). If you differ and want to contribute also, please feel free to contact me or write a Letter to the Editor. There is a

place for more discussion on open access and other topics affecting librarians, publishers, governments, and societies-- everyone involved in scholarly communication.

Once again Elsevier has agreed to make this focus issue available in its published version for the next nine to twelve months as *the* sample issue of *Serials Review* to support the intent of the authors and the concept of Open Access. In this vein also, I have left the term "open access" in each manuscript as written because I have yet to find standards for the phrase, and I have not changed the authors' cited references or notes to conform strictly to a humanities-based citation. Purist though I am, I do have some veins of flexibility and sanity overriding my compulsions for exactitude and consistency. I thank each of the authors for their acceptance of this invitation and for their articles.

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