



SHAPING OUR FUTURE
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2021 CSE Annual Meeting

May 3-5, 2021



Council of
Science Editors

1.4 – Open Access: A Global Conversation



Magdalena
Skipper, Springer
Nature



Mandip Aujla,
The Lancet Global
Health



Ana Marusic,
University of Split
School of
Medicine



Margaret (Peggy)
Perkins, New
England Journal
of Medicine



Chi Wai (Rick)
Lee, World
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Glenn Hampson,
Open Scholarship
Initiative



Jennifer Deyton,
J&J Editorial,
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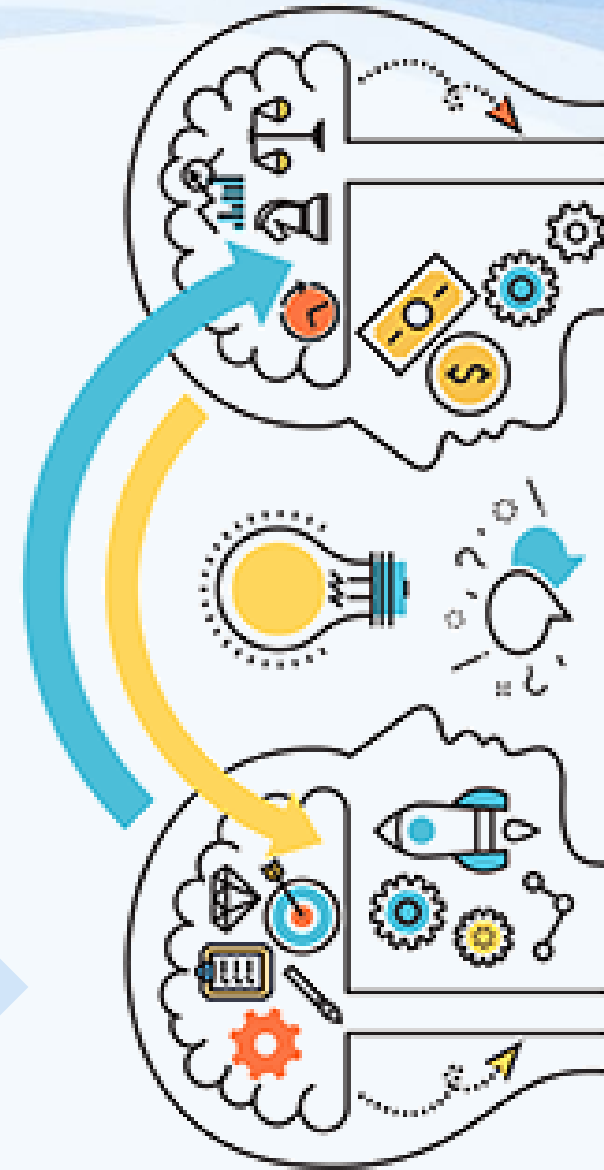
Challenges

On the road to open access

Sharing knowledge

“Experiments produce new knowledge, but if that knowledge does not circulate there is little opportunity for further progress” (from David Wootton’s “The Invention of Science”). This sentiment is as true today as it was 400 years ago when science was still evolving in fits and starts. There is no question that knowledge needs to be shared.

The question for our age is not why, but how. How can we share more of our knowledge in ways that are consistent with the needs and values of research, and that will create the greatest long-term benefit for both research and society?



Open movements

Enter the open access, open data, open science, open source, open government, and open education movements. Taken together, these movements have made a significant contribution to the evolution of our knowledge sharing practices. Each of these movements is, however, entirely separate. Each has a rich and unique history, a massive diversity of outputs, goals, tools, measures, methods, actors and stakeholders, and vibrant ecosystems of innovation.

These movements also lack coordination toward common goals, which has resulted today in a lack of leadership on broad and globally workable open solutions, a lack of support for open infrastructure and other open needs, and slow acceptance and adoption of open policies.



Fundamentally

All of these movements were initially fueled by the idealism that open information is an unalloyed public good. Fundamentally, then, the emphasis of open movements is to create openness by default, and break down cultural norms of information protection—subscription paywalls, copyright, secrecy, competition, national security, and so on.

Over time, though, all movements came to understand that there are a constellation of open perspectives driven less by idealism than by specialization, and there are no one-size-fits-all solutions for open that work for everyone everywhere.



Why?

Because each open movement, as well as each instance of interpreting and applying open philosophies and practices, is responding to different needs and goals. Different elements of these influences motivate, inform, connect and differentiate various open movements (as well as actions, tools and policies) in a variety of ways.



Going forward

Going forward, we need to be open to continuing to evolve our sharing and access norms. Part of this evolution will involve developing a better understanding the needs and concerns of researchers. Part will involve understanding what we're trying to accomplish with open. And part will involve managing this evolution in such a way that we can deliver on the promises of open without getting locked into evolutionary dead-ends.



This matters because...

The world needs science today more than ever---for scientists to be able to work together effectively on vaccines, climate research, food security, cancer, and so much more. Added to this, we are at the cusp of a new era in research, matched only by the era that Francis Bacon tried to describe in the late 16th Century when the new terms “science” and “discovery” were just emerging into the vocabulary and perceptions of society, increasingly used but with no common definition. Then as now, there were vast similarities and overlap in usage and experience surrounding these terms, but also significant differences. And then as now, recognizing it’s all the same general endeavor was and is vitally important.

Realizing our common purpose was key then to transforming science into what we recognize today as the pursuit of knowledge. It is key now to transforming open solutions into more than just the sum of their separate parts.

Our challenges on the road ahead

1

Find our common goals

2

Listen to researcher concerns

3

Manage unintended consequences

4

Anticipate a fractured solution space

5

Improve access, equity & diversity

*And now, the
conversation...*



1

Find our common goals

- Open is only a tool to help research succeed, not a goal unto itself. It is also not a panacea that can fix everything in science. In addition to improving open, we also need to work together on improving the global data processing infrastructure for science, reducing the negative influence of impact factors, improving peer review, and much more.
- There are no one-size-fits-all open solutions, no universal definitions for open (open exists along a spectrum of outcomes), and all forms of open are not a universal good in all circumstances.
- There is widespread use of open tools and practices, but no common goals for open. What if we resolve to work together on moonshot goals like combating climate change and developing vaccines, and as we move forward in common cause, let the best open solutions “win”?
- There are a wide variety of motives for doing and/or not doing open. Let’s be driven by need and evidence and be accepting of a variety of open solutions to fit different needs.

We are all committed to helping science success and improving the benefits of science to society. There are many ways we can and should work together.

2

Listen to researcher concerns

- Open licensing + immediate release doesn't work well in all cases. Indeed, researchers often fear this might result in the misuse of their data, misattribution of credit, or scooping of discovery.
- Most of the widely publicized open solutions are entirely STM-centric and are not a good fit for HSS research.
- There are many cases where open is impractical, either physically (as in uploading exabyte-size data sets), or in terms of the compliance effort involved.
- Most large scale data collaboration in research involve closed sharing systems for authorized users. These solutions are very open in a practical sense, but they aren't considered "open" in an ideological sense. Should these solutions "count"?

Open research is important, but we need to develop open tools and processes that researchers want, will use, and that consider their needs and concerns.

3

Manage unintended consequences

- Paywalls vs. playwalls: Are we trading a bad barrier for a worse one? The APC solution is becoming calcified, but APCs for top tier journals are no longer affordable for most of the world. What does this mean long-term? Are we heading down the road of science haves and have-nots?
- Policy/regulatory conflict is increasing. For example, GDPR is currently conflicting with open data requirements and stalling major science research around the world. Soon, we'll have an ideologically-based UNESCO open science policy that may further paint science research into a corner.
- Our evolving open models are not containing costs. Is this okay? Reducing costs was an original driver of the move to open.
- The global solution space is fracturing (discussed next). What impact will emerging regional solutions have on research collaboration and communication?

Our open policies are having unintended consequences. It is critical that we don't dismiss these in our pursuit of open solutions that we "feel" are right.

4

Anticipate a fractured solution space

- The Global South is unable to participate in the Plan S vision of open.
- Separate and unequal research publishing choices are emerging (some involving bad choices like predatory publishing and SciHub)
- Several “fault lines” are emerging, such as China's in-house publishing effort, India’s national subscription plan, and transformative agreements for larger research institutions. What are the implications of these developments?
- Our main open models are consolidating power in publishing. Is this okay?

Because we aren't working together on developing globally workable open solutions, countries are creating their own solutions.

5

Improve access, equity & diversity

- If we follow our current open policy path, science will continue to primarily focus on (and fund, and benefit) only the most privileged researchers, fields, universities and countries. Our current open reforms are tailored for rich countries, and will mostly make their research more visible at the cost of less visibility for other research.
- We need better indexing to improve the visibility of regional journals (which are many published in local languages). So far, this visibility is bad.
- The public need for information needs to be met in a realistic, demand-driven, and sustainable way. There aren't practical solutions for making everything available to everyone as our default objective.
- What other actions would help? Global infrastructure efforts? National subscription plans (like India's)? Improved public access (like the US)?

Improving access is the key driver of open policies. As open evolves, will access improve for some or all? Will equity and diversity also improve or get worse?



Q&A

Presentation and conversation by (alphabetically by last name) Mandip Aujla, Jennifer Deyton, Glenn Hampson, Rick Lee, Ana Marusic, Margaret Perkins, and Magdalena Skipper.

Questions? Email Jennifer Deyton at jennifer@jjeditorial.com

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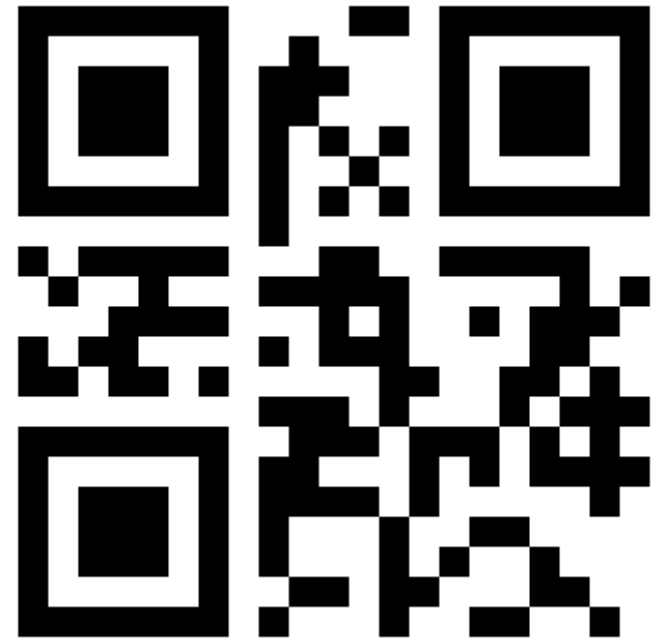
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