



Information Overload

Issue 45, May 2006

Welcome:

Welcome to the May edition of Information Overload. The use of technology and in particular the development and use of the Internet has connected more people to more resources since humankind invented the other great communicators, namely the telephone, telegraph, printing presses and television. Our problem does not lie with where to find information, rather how to sift through the bias, hearsay, personal opinion and fiction to the real facts!

As more and more information comes online, the problem of finding the right information at the right time becomes more problematic. Are we heading for a society of the information rich and the information poor, or has this information divide always existed? This month we have a look at the use of the Internet to deliver valuable information; free of charge and the impact this may well have on a number of professions and industries.

We would like to thank you in advance for forwarding this edition on "Open Access" onto friends, colleagues and other interested readers. Please note that all back issues of this edition, as well as our registrant resources edition can be read and/or downloaded from our web site – <http://www.iea.com.au> should any of the topics be of interest and use.

Lorraine Bradshaw
Marketing Coordinator & Projects Officer

In this Issue we will be looking at:

- Gaining access to research information;
- Introducing the Open Access movement;
- Open Access initiatives;
- The Publisher's response;
- How will the Open Access movement impact on you and your organisation?
- A Thought to ponder.

Gaining access to research information:

It may not come as a shock to you, to know that researchers and research institutions who would like other people to know what they have been doing, write articles that eventually appear in scholarly journals. However, what you may not know is that these people do not get paid by the publisher for the privilege of seeing their name in print, and their information being published. Rather, the author (or the author's institution) pays for the right to have material published in a journal – these costs can include payment per page, set up fees and other charges. (perhaps a serious case of vanity publishing!). If you don't receive monetary rewards for publishing your material, why do people do it? The answer is multi-fold, scholars, researchers and anyone else may just like to see their name in print, and why not – ego trips are as valid a reason as any to write an article. However, with the case of most

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researchers the reason is slightly more altruistic, in that they know that their work will have an impact on the future of research itself. The findings, may ultimately impact on the future of their career, the future of their institution, the future of their funding as well as the future of science and research itself.

Under the current print model, most (if not all) publishers insist that the author signs over their rights to the publication. This ensures that no other publication can use the material without first obtaining permission to do so, and probably paying through the nose at the same time. But in order for other researchers to be able to build on the information contained within the article, you will need to purchase a copy of the published material, which is all very well so long as your institution or collecting library has the funds to do so (but more on that later).

What is also interesting is that most authors' institutions (or the author themselves) rarely receive a copy of the publication. If you want a copy of your work, you (or your organisation) have to subscribe to the publication. Hardly seems fair does it, your organisation has paid you to undertake the research, then it has to pay to get the research out into the world (publish or perish) for comment and review. Then if your organisation wants a copy of the publication it has to pay for it again.

It makes you wonder if there has got to be a better way.

Introducing the Open Access Movement:

The aim of the Open Access Movement is to make "scholarly" articles freely available in digital form. The Budapest Open Access Initiative states "By open access to this literature, we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited." <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/>

In 2005 a significant step was taken by American Congress with the introduction of legislation aimed to give free public access to **government funded research**. Senators Joe Lieberman (D-CT) and Thad Cochran (R-MS) introduced legislation to establish the American Center for Cures within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The aim of the bill was to make taxpayer-funded biomedical research available to all potential users. However, what resulted was a policy that requested NIH-funded research be deposited into PubMed Central within a year after publication. Which can hardly be described as a complete success.

However, on Tuesday May 2^d 2006, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) introduced the bipartisan Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA) of 2006. The legislation is co-sponsored by U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.). The bill requires every federal agency with an annual research budget of more than \$100 million to implement a public access policy. The policy must ensure that articles generated through research funded by that agency are made available online within six months of publication. Cornyn said: "This legislation is a common-sense approach to expand the public's access to research it funds. And it will help accelerate scientific innovation and discovery." Lieberman said: "Tax payer-funded research should be accessible to tax payers. Our bill will give researchers, medical professionals and patients in Connecticut and throughout the nation access to scientific discoveries and advancements that can help bring new treatments and cures to the public."

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<http://cornyn.senate.gov/index.asp?f=record&lid=1&rid=237171>

In Australia Dr Mike Sargent commented at the National Scholarly Communications Forum Roundtable in September 2005, that "the Government regards publicly funded research as a public good and that, as a general statement of principle, researchers ought to be able to find out what research is being undertaken and gain access to that research." <http://www.humanities.org.au/Events/NSCF/NSCFRT19/NSCFRT19.htm> as reported by the *Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Incite, November 2005 p11.*

Whilst interesting, it only covers access to government-funded research in institutions that have a significant amount of research money. Given that considerable amount of research is conducted by private organisations, additional repositories or access to repositories are going to be needed in order to make the open access movement an alternative to the traditional print based models currently available.

Open Access Initiatives:

- **Directory of Open Access Journals** – <http://www.doaj.org>. The aim of the Directory of Open Access Journals is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals thereby promoting their increased usage and impact. "We define open access journals as journals that use a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access."
- **Open Access Initiative** – <http://www.openarchives.org>. "The Open Archives Initiative develops and promotes interoperability standards that aim to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content. The Open Archives Initiative has its roots in an effort to enhance access to e-print archives as a means of increasing the availability of scholarly communication".
- **Public Library of Science** – <http://www.plos.org> uses the [Creative Commons Attribution License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/) (CCAL) to all works they publish. The CCAL allows commercial re-use of all PLoS journals' content. "Under the CCAL, authors retain ownership of the copyright for their article, but authors allow anyone to download, reuse, reprint, modify, distribute, and/or copy articles in PLoS journals, so long as the original authors and source are credited. This broad license was developed to facilitate open access to, and free use of, original works of all types. Applying this standard license to your work will ensure your right to make your work freely and openly available." *Open Access License agreement –Public Library of Science.*
- **SHERPA** – Securing a Hybrid Environment for Research Preservation and Access – <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk>. SHERPA was part of the JISC [FAIR](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/programmes/fair/) (Focus on Access to Institutional Resources) Programme which supports projects aiming to achieve the "disclosure of institutional assets" with the vision of setting up a "web of resources built by groups with a long term stake in the future of those resources, but made available through service providers to the whole community of learning."
- **Lots of copies keeps stuff safe** – **LOCKSS** – <http://www.lockss.org>. Their opening statement says it all. "For centuries libraries and publishers have had stable roles: publishers produced information; libraries provided access to this information. Libraries, through their collection programs, provide access to information and knowledge to current and future generations of readers.

The evolution of the Web has disrupted this critical library role. Libraries have not had an easy way to build digital collections, nor had any assurance that a digital collection -- once obtained -- would remain accessible to future generations.

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Publishers are being asked to assure persistent access to content -- a function well outside of their core mission. The LOCKSS Program addresses these issues.

LOCKSS is open source, peer-to-peer software that functions as a persistent access preservation system. Information is delivered via the web, and stored using a sophisticated but easy to use caching system".

The Publishers Response:

As we now know, authors of scholarly articles do not get paid for writing an article, however, publishers and book authors count on strict copyright laws to prevent copying and reuse of their intellectual property until well after they have re-couped the cost of publishing the material. With the case of journals, they rely on money received from library, organisational and individual subscriptions; reprint rights sales, and the sale of individual documents to recoup their money. However, it has become obvious to the publishers, that in order to retain and perhaps gain more market share for their products, they need to be able to provide access to the material (and knowledge) in its archive, and that is where the Internet comes in.

On top of the work already being done by Google and Yahoo to provide digital access to the many library collections around the world, Publishers are also taking the leap across the digital divide to provide electronic access to their own storehouses of information. The most recent to take this step is Blackwells.

"Melbourne, Australia - 4th May 2006 - Blackwell Publishing today announced the launch of its Journal Backfile Digitization Program. All issues back to Volume 1, Issue 1 will be digitized for at least 500 journals over the next two-and-a-half years, comprising approximately 6.5 million pages by the time the program is complete.

The first 121 journals to be digitized are available to purchase now and one quarter of these already have their backfiles loaded on Blackwell Synergy. 51 of the journals now available cover social science and humanities subject areas, 37 cover medicine and healthcare, and 33 are from science. The digitized backfiles for these initial 121 titles represent 2.5 million pages and almost 3000 years of content. Journal of Phytopathology dates back the furthest so far, to 1852, with Journal of Applied Entomology close behind with a start date of 1876.

"The expectation of researchers is increasingly that everything that's worthwhile should be available to them online, whether it was published in 1906 or 2006", said Steven Hall, Journals Sales and Marketing Director at Blackwell Publishing. "We've been working closely with our society partners to ensure that their journal backfiles are fully digitized, linked and searchable. We look forward to working with libraries now to make the content available to researchers".

How will the Open Access Movement impact on you and your organisation?

There are a number of "issues" surrounding Open Access to material that come to mind, not least of which is the publisher's response to this threat to their livelihood.

- Many people already assume that information they find on the Internet is FREE and can be used without fear of breaking copyright laws and restrictions (even though this can and does happen). Will the Open Access Movement complicate matters further?

- With material becoming freely available on the Internet, do you need to subscribe to the traditional print versions of the material, or their electronic counterparts as put out by the publishers. Or can you rely on the research material always being available FOC as is hoped by the Open Access Movement.
- If you have limited space for your collection the answer is more likely to be lets go for the electronic version, rather than the traditional paper based material. And if budgets are a problem (and lets face it, there is never enough money to buy everything your library needs), then why wouldn't you choose to obtain the material FOC instead of paying for subscriptions, pay per view and pay per document received.
- However, space aside, there is another point to consider when choosing which version to subscribe to. If you subscribe to the print edition, (unless your copy is stolen or damaged), your collection will always have access to the information contained within its covers. However, subscriptions to electronic versions may involve annual subscriptions, pay per view and pay per document if you want a copy of the paper. But what happens if you cancel your subscription? Do you immediately lose access to the material it could be argued that you have already paid for?
- If scholars and researchers choose not to pay to have their material published in traditional journals, will the publishers go out of business, or have to change their models? Will the material they publish be of the same calibre as the material that is currently published? Will they have to commission and pay for material? Will the cost of producing the journal be too expensive for libraries and collecting institutions to pay for? If so, will this result in an endless circle of journal cancellations and rising prices.
- What will happen to libraries and information centres if the "powers that be" assume that everything is available on the Internet and people can find the information themselves? If it is available on the Internet, we don't need to keep collections of material (why duplicate), then we don't need a space for it. And because we don't have a collection of material or a space to house the collection, then do we need someone to maintain it!
- Will libraries need to borrow material from other libraries if the material is freely available from the Internet? Therefore the question is - will the Open Access movement also impact on the Inter Library Loan system that currently exists? Will organisations who supply documents on demand (Document Delivery) be able to survive with the Open Access Model in place? And if libraries are not borrowing (as much) material from each other, will they need to retain their staff in this particular area?

For a listing of document delivery organisations – the one provided by Jean Shipman appears to be the most comprehensive - <http://www.library.vcu.edu/tml/docsupp/>. Costs vary depending on where you are obtaining the material from, the speed in which you need the item, and the cost of copyright fees to the publishers of the material, all of which can make a serious dent in your budget.

Of course, with the major digitisation projects being undertaken by the major institutions world wide, some with the help of the search engine giants of Google and Yahoo, and you will begin to wonder where on earth it is going to end.

- Of those libraries that do exist, will they be open to all? Or will they be forced to return to personal subscriptions to remain viable?

- Of the library profession in general - the closure of library schools and training programmes in Canberra; falling numbers of students enrolling in library courses; the number of information professionals including lecturers who are reaching retirement age, and who may not be replaced (natural attrition); along with the notion that everything worth knowing can be found "on the net" – if you know where to look, means that the library and information profession is facing some very interesting times.
- And finally, with the ever-increasing speed to obsolescence of digital hardware and software, along with the ease in which digital information can be destroyed, lost, changed or no longer able to be read (because the software doesn't exist anymore). will the information be safe and available for generations to come. A case perhaps of – please don't throw away your paper-based research notes just yet, we might need to re-scan them!!

We hope to see you at IEA's inaugural seminar on Electronic Document and Records Management Systems – EDRMS: Local People, Local Knowledge. 14-16th June 2006. For more information please visit our web site – <http://www.iea.com.au> or contact IEA on 08 9335 2533.

We hope you have a great week.

A T hought to Ponder:

"The most beautiful thing in the world is freedom of speech"

Diogenes (412? – 323 BC)

Greek Philosopher

Your comments and suggestions on the subject of this newsletter are most welcome. Or if you would like to see other issues covered in future editions, please email me at training@iea.com.au. Please feel free to pass on this newsletter to your colleagues' friends and associates. To subscribe they should send an e-mail to training@iea.com.au with "subscribe newsletter" in the subject line.

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