Report on the 13th Berlin Open Access Conference

B U I L D I N G   C A P A C I T Y   F O R   T H E   T R A N S F O R M A T I O N
Berlin, 21–22 March 2017

On 21-22 March 2017, more than 200 key representatives from 33 countries and all continents of the globe came together in Berlin to share experiences toward the common goal of ***large-scale transformation of scholarly journals from subscription to open access***.

Hosted by the Max Planck Society, the conference was chaired by two of the Society´s most prominent leaders in the Open Access and Open Science movements, Ulrich Pöschl, Director at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, and Gerard Meijer, Director at the Fritz-Haber-Institute of the Max Planck Society.

Now in its 13th iteration, the conference was opened with a special welcome from the President of the Max Planck Society, Martin Stratmann, who recounted, "More than 10 years ago, in 2003, my predecessor Peter Gruss stood here in this room and said that the Max Planck Society felt obliged to give the vision of open access a chance. It was the day that we signed the 'Berlin Declaration on Open Access' which later became a milestone in the Open Access movement...signed by over 580 organizations from around the world," and urged delegates "Research is one of the most international endeavors of all. It has always been so. It is only when we join forces that we, the scholars, can realize a smooth, swift and scholarly oriented transition to open access", reconfirming "I'm firmly convinced of that and I ensure you that the Max Planck Society will continue to take an active part in every step of the process and see it through to fruition."

Receiving endorsement at the highest level, Day 2 of the conference was opened by Daniel Spichtinger from the European Commission Director-General for Research & Innovation with a strong declaration in support of Berlin 13 and the OA2020 Initiative.

Overview and background

An important outcome of the previous Berlin Open Access Conference (December 2015) was reaching consensus on an **Expression of Interest** (EoI) which sets out three fundamental aims of the community:

- *transform a majority of today's scholarly journals from subscription to OA publishing in accordance with community-specific publication preferences while continuing to support new and improved forms of OA publishing;*

- *convert resources currently spent on journal subscriptions into funds to support sustainable OA business models, re-organize the underlying cash flows, to establish transparency with regard to costs and potential savings, adopt mechanisms to avoid undue publication barriers;*

- *collaborate with all scholarly publishing stakeholders on a swift and efficient transition for the benefit of scholarship and society at large.*

The EoI is at the basis of the international initiative **OA2020**, a concerted effort coordinated by the Max Planck Digital Library; by signing the EoI, institutions and organizations agree to make a good faith effort to devise and implement practical strategies for attaining these OA objectives. Building on the Berlin 13 conference theme, experts from the research, higher education, library, funder, policy and publishing communities shared perspectives and best practices for *Building Capacity for the Transformation* envisaged by the OA2020 initiative.

Testimony to the momentum building around OA2020, the conference coincided with the announcement of three campuses of the University of California system signing the Expression of Interest, bringing the total number of signatories to 81 to date, representing over 1000 institutions globally.

Day 1 of Berlin 13 was a closed meeting of signatories and observers from the academic domain, while Day 2, open to the community at large, offered broader perspectives from a number of stakeholders in support of the principles of OA2020 and complementary concepts of transformation.
The conference presentations are available here, and video footage of Day 2 can be found here.

Essential takeaways and concepts from the 13th Berlin Open Access Conference

On the progress toward Open Access:

- Back in 2003 [at the first Berlin Open Access Conference], then President of the Max Planck Society Peter Gruss said in his speech: "You don't have to know the answer to any question already to come to find an idea to be a good idea". Well, where we are now in the process of attaining Open Access is the critical point where we have to find answers to questions – precise answers to real-life questions of research and research policy. What we need now is the "engineering approach" to the matter. (Stratmann)

- Lack of clarity on OA is a major impediment to progress in implementation. Building on guiding principles already established for data, research output need to be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Re-usable. (Barbour)

- Progress toward full OA must take into account how fast the publishing system is changing, and how scholarly communications are growing in richness and variety. One size does not fit all – even if the end goal for all disciplines may be the same. Ways towards compliance, including both incentives and enforcement, should be proposed, clarified and harmonized in a discipline-sensitive way. (Leonelli)

- We need to do the best we can to change things as soon as we can. We cannot wait for data or plans to be perfect or we risk driving out the good that can be obtained. (Shore)

- Open Access is quite strong as a principle, but still relatively weak as a practice. Fourteen years on from the Berlin Declaration of 2003, today only 15% of scholarly articles are open access immediately upon publication. All experimentation to date has *not* resulted in impactful transformation of the market and the vast majority of scientific journals remain behind a pay wall. (Schimmer)

- Economics of Gold OA (MacKie-Mason):

    o There are real costs associated with dissemination of scholarly outputs and a stream of revenue is essential to support this activity. Green OA does not eliminate these costs nor provide any added benefits to the system.

    o Pre-payment (APCs) may not be the only way to Gold OA but it would bring the advantage of aligning author incentives (peer review, etc.) with reader demands (immediate universal access, discoverability, etc.).

    o In a post-payment (APC) scenario, authors would have a stake in the economics of publishing and, leveraging their market power as holders of copyright, could exert pressure to lower publishing fees.

On the OA2020 initiative

- To gain the full benefits of open access and enable a smooth, swift and researcher oriented transition, the international initiative OA2020 aims to transform a majority of today's scholarly journals from subscription to open access publishing in accordance with researchers' publication preferences. At the same time, full support shall be continued and extended to other established, new, and improved forms of open access publishing and archiving. Thus, the OA2020 initiative is not in competition with but complementary to other open access initiatives. (Pöschl)

- As research organizations worldwide, we have to stand united to bring about the change from an archaic subscription based publication model to a service-oriented Open Access business model, openly exchanging information on the strategies that are being used in negotiations, as well as details of the agreements that have been reached. (Meijer)

- In just one year, over 80 entities representing over 1000 institutions and organizations from 26 countries have signed the OA2020 Expression of Interest, and momentum is growing. (Campbell)

- Cost monitoring and further publication data analyses conducted by others following the 2015 MPDL white paper, "Disrupting the Subscription Journals' Business Model for the Necessary Large-Scale Transformation to Open Access", demonstrate there is enough money in the current subscription system to support a transition to immediate Open Access of STEM journals and ensure support for the dissemination of SSH content with other new or traditional publishing initiatives or business models. (multiple)

- Applying a new twist on the 80/20 rule reveals that transformation of the subscription system can be achieved more rapidly than foreseen by targeting efforts. (Schimmer)

- o The MPDL reports that by moving to transitional offsetting agreements with just 20 publishers would result in 80% of their scholarly output to be liberated from the subscription model.

- o Similarly, 2015 WoS data shows that corresponding authors from just 20 countries account for 80% of the world's annual scholarly output.

- o Concerted efforts of just 100 research-intensive institutions, distributed globally and committed to divesting funds from the subscription system and shifting budget and operations to OA related services, would result in an irreversible departure from the subscription system, to the benefit of all.

- To support business cases at the institutional or consortium level, standardized data submissions, automatic enrichment as well as valid cost data are needed. The OA2020 network can be a means to share this expertise. See https://www.intact-project.org/. (Pieper)

On offsetting agreements

- The proliferation of alternative access routes ensures researchers feasible options to get content they need and empowers institutions negotiating transformational offsetting agreements with publishers. (Schimmer)

- Whereas the hybrid model is inherently flawed as it involves two distinct business models with separate transactions and payment streams resulting in additional costs (double dipping), offsetting agreements unite these streams and provide incentives for both institutions and publishers. But to avoid the risk of offsetting agreements becoming a new version of the Big Deal, we need to re-think traditional negotiation strategies. See http://esac-initiative.org/. (Geschuhn)

- One of the earliest national scale offsetting agreements, between Austria and IoPP, has been renewed with slight adjustment for 2017-2019, but there is a need for workflow improvement as well as greater transparency and granularity in response to the global offsetting scheme. (Kromp)

- To improve workflows in offsetting agreements, ORCIDs should be required at the time of grant application. (Hall)

On researchers

- Researchers write scientific articles for impact and not for money, and every scientist would like her or his work to be as widely disseminated as possible; various studies have unambiguously shown that this is best guaranteed when articles are published under Open Access, as these are downloaded and cited significantly more frequently. In my discussions with colleague scientists and science politicians, I have not encountered any valid argument against Open Access. (Meijer)

- The growing number of research outputs makes it difficult to assess individual contributions to research. It is essential that Open Standards be implemented (ORCID, CRediT, NISO, casrai, etc.) (Page)

- Trying to lead researchers to Open Access has not been successful; Open Access should be brought to the researchers. Peer review, brand recognition, and other publishing services are essential for author participation in Open Access as they provide validation or certification, constitute a quality filter, and are the basis for evaluation and career advancement. (multiple)

- Achieving full OA requires the mobilization of research communities at large. This should be based on new models for research and career assessment. The system must include robust incentive systems and researchers should be involved to some extent in the negotiation process with publishers. The scientific community must regain its 'scientific sovereignty', including in economic and financial aspects. (Borrell-Damián)

- We don't need more mandates for researchers; we need a mandate for our money. (Schimmer)

On Article Processing Charges (APCs)

- APC waivers for authors from under-funded institutions are still just charity. (Willinsky)

- Transparency in APCs is needed at both the institutional and national level. (Borrell-Damián)

- To apply downward pressure, article processing charges must be itemized, just like your bill from the auto repair shop. (Rooryk)

On the role of publishers and funders

- Transformation is possible but we need to avoid winners and losers and ensure a win/win situation. All stakeholders, including not just large but also medium and small publishers, need to work together. (Kalumenos)

- Role of funders and governments committing to an affordable transition to OA is essential for the broad range of disciplines. (Borrell-Damián)

- The OA2020 mission is great, but organizers should not shy away from other stakeholder groups like funders and publishers. Pure OA and small society publishers need to be included in the discussion to avoid distortion. Engaging with the publishing community at large could bring insight and better data. (Peters)

- Universities and research institutions should strengthen dialogue with publishers and funding agencies/governments to change research assessment systems for researchers' career progression. (Borrell-Damián)

On Open Access models

- LingOA experience provides proof of concept that a transition from subscription to Fair Open Access can be achieved even in the Humanities. While an investment of foundational funds was needed to support the initial transition period (3 years), libraries now pay out APCs with funds previously destined for subscriptions and authors retain copyright. (Rooryk and de Vries)

- Flipping journals to Gold OA significantly increased their usage (downloads) on SCOAP3 and also resulted in (smaller) increases in usage via toll-access and arXiv—baking a bigger pie. The key to success of SCOAP3 is building community and infrastructure. (Mele).

- 80% of citations come from 20% of the journals available, and while we may focus on flipping that 20%, we need to think about leveraging cooperative models for the long tail—because it is the long tail that makes scholarship rich and unique. (Willinsky)

Key outcomes of the 13th Berlin Open Access Conference

Recognizing that the characteristics of a scholarly-driven transformation will be unique to each country, region or even institution or organization, signatories participating in Day 1 reaffirmed the need for a coordinated organization in order to leverage the successful strategies of peers and negotiate with publishers at eye-level on a global scale. Renewing their commitment to the OA2020 initiative, participants approved a basic governance structure comprising:

- A National Contact Point (NCP) Network formed by 1-3 representatives per country/region to advocate among local stakeholders to secure broad support of the transition (e.g. signing of the EoI), coordinate transformational activities and local iterations of the OA2020 Roadmap, gather data and best practices to share within the OA2020 NCP Network.

  The call is now open for representatives to volunteer to serve on behalf of their country (contact contact@oa2020.org).

- A 6-8 member Advisory Group with global perspective to advise on issues arising and provide strategic direction, as needed, based on the feedback of the NCP Network. Members of the Advisory Group thus far include:

  <u>Americas</u>
  Clare Appavoo, Executive Director, Canadian Research Knowledge Network (Canada)
  Jeffrey Mackie-Mason, University Librarian and Chief Digital Scholarship Officer, University of California, Berkeley (USA)

  <u>Asia / Pacific</u>
  Virginia Barbour, Executive Officer, Australian Open Access Strategy Group (Australia)
  Jun Adachi, Deputy Director General, National Institute of Informatics (Japan)

  <u>Europe, Middle East, Africa</u>
  Katrine Weisteen Bjerde, Section Manager, CERES - National Centre for Systems and Services for Research and Studies (Norway)
  Liam Earney, Director of Jisc Collections (UK)

  Max Planck Digital Library, as initiator and organizer of OA2020

- Additional Working Groups may be established as needed.

Action items

Short- term objectives for OA2020 organizers and signatories for the next 12 months include
- Extend the network of National Contact Points as broadly as possible
- Establish NCP communication and resource-sharing strategy
- Refine local OA2020 Roadmaps
- Compile data and conduct analyses to underscore business cases for transformation
- Lobby for the transition among local stakeholder groups
- Set OA goals for the next publisher agreements

The 14th Berlin Open Access Conference is tentatively scheduled for Q3 2018 and, while offers from potential hosts are welcome, the Max Planck Society has offered, once again, to host the event on behalf of OA2020.

The present report was prepared by Colleen Campbell, Max Planck Digital Library.

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