Open Access and the Research Excellence Framework

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Motivations for OA

The Internet makes it easy to share research outputs freely.

So let’s subvert the current system...

...to deliver an unprecedented public good!

Images: Princeton (Harnad); Suber/Twitter (Suber)
Motivations for OA

“The principle that the results of research that has been publicly funded should be freely accessible in the public domain is a compelling one, and fundamentally unanswerable.”
The current system of journal publishing is too expensive, unsustainable, and in crisis.
Growth of serials expenditure in the UK

Data: SCONUL statistics (expenditure); ONS (CPI); HESA (other data)
Harvard University says it can't afford journal publishers' prices

University wants scientists to make their research open access and resign from publications that keep articles behind paywalls

http://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/apr/24/harvard-university-journal-publishers-prices
Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications

Report of the Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings
Some concerns...

- Quality?
- Ability to pay?
- UK “going it alone”?
- Double-dipping?
- Licensing?
- Learned societies?
- “Academic freedom”?

And is it even necessary?
And now the REF

- Open research is excellent research
- Mandates are successful
- £1.6 billion

http://is.gd/OAREF
Our aims

• Maximising the reach and impact of research we fund

• Delivering a future that is ‘open by default’

• Not ‘distorting’ the system unilaterally and ideologically

• But fixing some of the problems in the system
Our aims

• Author engagement is essential
• We must set clear and straightforward rules
• We must be ambitious, but reasonable and flexible
The minimum requirements

• To be eligible for the next REF, journal articles and conference papers accepted after 1 April 2016 must be:

  • Deposited in a repository as the peer-reviewed manuscript (or better)

  • Made accessible for read and download after 12 months or 24 months

Full policy: http://is.gd/OAREF
Will publishers allow authors to deposit their papers in repositories?

Yes!
How many journal articles are published in venues with permissible embargoes?

96%

Source: HEFCE analysis of REF2014 submission
How many papers are being deposited today?

12%

A few more details...

• Exceptions apply where deposit not possible / open access not possible etc

• Benefits of OA should be extended beyond journals and conferences

• Libre OA is a desirable ‘end game’

Full policy: http://is.gd/OAREF
Challenges

• Implementation and monitoring

• Stability vs. harmony

• Ambition vs. realism

• Long-term trajectory for UK OA: are we seizing the golden opportunity?
The future is open, and the benefits are substantial
Thank you for listening

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