Open Access: Quo vadis?
A bit of history
What are the stakes?
Funders' support
Publishers' reactions
The present front lines
The future?
The tradition of the “Grand Conversation”: publishing research results is an integral part of research.

Scientific associations and publications in the 19th and early 20th century

The rise of commercial publishers, particularly after WWII (e.g. Robert Maxwell)

The emergence of the Science Citation and its consequences

The serial pricing crisis
• Early experiments
• Creation of a movement in 2001-2
  – The Public Library of science petition in 2001
  – The Open Society Institute meeting in Budapest on December 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2001
  – The Budapest Open Access Initiative (February 14\textsuperscript{th}, 2002): definition of OA and its two approaches (later baptized Green and Gold)
  – Other meetings in 2003 (Berlin, Bethesda,...)
  – The institutional emergence of the Green and Gold roads to Open Access: First journals, first repositories, first indexing systems, etc.
• The emergence of the mandates to deposit on the Green side
• First OA journals (BiomedCentral and PloS, the latter with article processing charges or APCs)
• What are the stakes?
  – Have full access to the literature, which means:
    • No duplication of research
    • Better efficiency of research
    • A more even playing field for all involved (but equipment and labs remain a problem)
  – Re-use of the results, including for teaching
  – Opening the literature to all
  – Etc.
• Funders' ( = government agencies and private institutions) support
  - Appeared fairly rapidly (e.g. Bethesda meeting in 2003)
  - Funders want to optimize the impact of their funding
  - Funders want the general public to know about their action
  - Funders tend to be open to all solutions, even if costly: mandates (gratis) and financial support for authors (e.g. to pay for APCs)
Publishers first reactions:

- First, they generally refused to acknowledge the existence of OA
- Then they laughed and dismissed
- Then they fought back (first, stupidly, with accusation of anti-capitalism, communism, and probably worse in closed circles...)
- Then they began to experiment in earnest: in 2005, BiomedCentral becomes part of Springer
Other publishers' reactions:

- They began to experiment with digital publications around 1991-2
- They invented the Big Deal in the mid nineties (this works best with licensing of digital documents)
- They invented the APCs with Biomed Central in 2001
- They invented the hybrid journal with Open Choice (Springer) in 2005
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Jan VELTEROP
involved with Big Deal, APCs, Hybrid journals
The present frontlines

- If we continue to follow Velterop as a red thread: data and text mining (he calls this nanopublishing)
- The case of hybrid journals and why publishers love them
- The OA fiasco in the United Kingdom
- The attempts by various publishers to restrict what can be done on the Green side
Battles lines

- At the institutional level: an example to follow: Université de Liège in Belgium
- At the national level: deposit mandates such as the NIH initial mandate back in 2008
- At the national level, avoid imitating the UK
- At the international level: Unesco is getting involved
- At the international level, OA opens the door to a polycentric science system better adapted to everybody's needs (in particular peripheral countries)
The future

- Researchers must learn about the situation
- They also must get involved, as some did very early on (e.g. Stevan Harnad, Michael Eisen, and others present at Budapest in 2001)
- Governments must begin to understand the implications of the present publishing set-up
- Evaluation of research must be designed without reference to journal titles. The impact factor as a metric of research quality is stupid.
The battle is philosophical, political and economical

The integrity of the research process is at stake

Large international publishers want to control the communication channels: if they succeed, they will control the fundamental orientations of science and will make it more dependent on market forces
Economically, the publishers have the upper hand.

As a consequence, they are able to influence governments.

They have a strong coordinating body: the STM association (presently directed by Michael Mabe).

People are often confused (and publishers generously provide a lot of confusion, e.g. by constantly shifting the vocabulary).
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- Young researchers should educate themselves about these issues
- They should try to go OA if possible
- But:
  - Young researchers should not put their own career at risk when they are vulnerable to stupid evaluation procedures (the “impact factor”)
Molto grazie !