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Open Access: Quo vadis?

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- A bit of history
- What are the stakes?
- Funders' support
- Publishers' reactions
- The present front lines
- The future?

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- 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

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- 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 1st, 2001
 - The Budapest Open Access Initiative (February 14th, 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)

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- 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.

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- 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)

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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)

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- 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**.

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- 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

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- 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”)

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Molto grazie !