

# Open Access – a battle of words

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Janus-Bifrons – the typical scientist

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## The researcher-bifrons

- Seeks information
- Produces information

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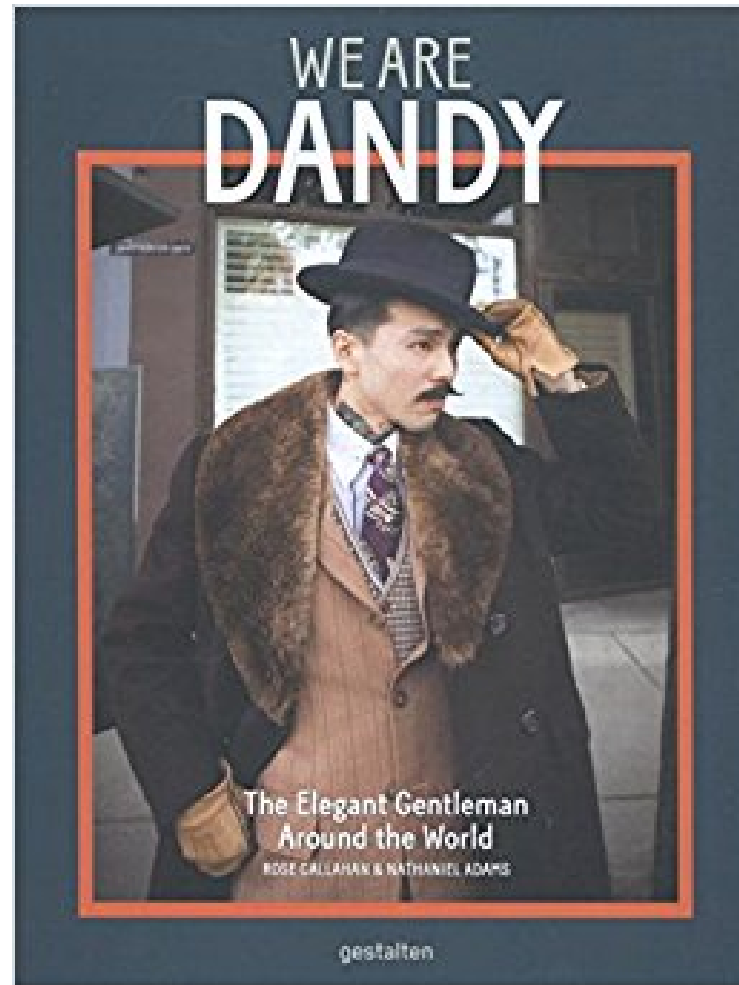


Searching leads (almost) anywhere

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However, producing knowledge is also associated with showing oneself

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Our researcher-Janus is not symmetrical

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The researcher needs:

- **Access** to **information**
- **Access** to **means of communication**
- **Means** to make one's work
  - **Visible, accessible, retrievable, usable,**
  - But also **trusted, authoritative, perhaps prestigious**

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At this **stage**, new **players** are clearly needed:

- **Librarians**
- **Editors**
- **Publishers**

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Until the **Second World War**, the **situation** was relatively **clear**:

- **Librarians** **collected** the kind of **information** their **researchers** **needed** most;
- **Editors** were **researchers** selecting the **best** works in their field;
- **Publishers** took care of the **mechanics** of **dissemination**.

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Thanks to librarians, research was:

- Accessible for a very long time
- Retrievable because well ordered
- Usable

Thanks to editors, their research was

- Trusted
- Authoritative
- Perhaps even prestigious

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After the **Second World War**, the whole **situation** changed:

**Commercial publishers** became dominant

Many **scientific societies** **lost** their importance  
(but **some very large ones** did not)

The **Science Citation Index** (**Eugene Garfield**)  
helps create an **inelastic market** for some  
journals

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## Commercial publishers compete for market share

They **compete** to sell **journal subscriptions**, **not to individuals**, **but to libraries**

As a result, they need to **reorganize** the **production of knowledge** to **align** it on their **commercial objectives**

To this end, they need to create a form of competition among **researchers** that is governed by **journals**, not **fellow researchers**

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**The solution? The Impact Factor**

**Journals can be ranked**

**The ranking is wrongly assimilated to  
quality**

**Researchers are being judged by where they  
publish (not what they publish)**

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## The new situation means:

- Access to information (now publishers dominate librarians and access is limited)
- Access to means of communication (now publishers monopolize them)
- Means to make one's work:
  - Visible, accessible, retrievable, usable (all defined and constrained by publishers)
  - But also trusted, authoritative, perhaps prestigious (and publishers emphasize prestige and create it with journals)
  - Publishers even have a say in the choice of editors.

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**Then came**  
**digitization, networks**  
**and, with it,**  
**Open Access**

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**Open Access** emerged  
**with**  
**experimentations in**  
**electronic publishing,**  
**starting around 1988.**

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**Open Access** signalled a  
**desire** among  
**researchers to recover**  
**some control over their**  
**communication system**

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**From this point on, a**  
**contest** has developed  
**between researchers,**  
**librarians and**  
**publishers** (particularly  
**the large, commercial,**  
**publishers)**

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**Recently, this contest  
has been fought around  
a few words:**

- **Markets**
- **Sustainability**
- **Competitive**
- **OA itself**

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## PDF-Report

"Towards a Competitive and Sustainable OA Market in Europe"

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**Let us go back to these terms:**

- **Markets**
- **Sustainability**
- **Competitive**
- **OA itself**

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**The scholarly  
publishing market is an  
'intermediated market'**

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“...**market forces** are unlikely to deliver either **widespread open access**, or a **competitive and sustainable market**.” (p. 53)

!!!!!!

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**Finally:**

**Sustainable...**

**What does it mean?**

**For whom?**

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**MOLTE**

**GRAZIE !**