

Improving Access to Publicly Funded Research – Policy Issues and Practical Strategies

A forum co-sponsored by AAU, ARL, CNI, NASULGC, and SPARC

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Welcoming Remarks

Heather Joseph, Executive Director, SPARC

Good morning everyone. It's my pleasure to welcome you to today's program, entitled "Improving Access to Publicly Funded Research – Policy Issues and Practical Strategies."

I'm particularly pleased to be welcoming you to a forum on this very timely topic that is being collaboratively sponsored by a broad set of stakeholders in the academic and research community: The Association of Research Libraries, The Association of American Universities, The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, the Coalition for Networked Information, and SPARC.

We're here today to take a look at the implications of the growing number of policies that are designed to ensure public access to the results of federally funded research.

We'll talk today specifically about policies that have been proposed – and, in some cases, implemented – by public agencies that call for broader and faster dissemination of the results of the research that they fund.

The policies we are referring to today generally call for researchers to make a copy of accepted, peer-reviewed articles freely available in an online, open repository within a short time of publication in a peer-reviewed journal. These policies are uniform in indicating the importance that these repositories are:

- Publicly accessible
- Interoperable
- Provide permanent access to the results

The policies that are emerging differ in various small ways, but have these important elements in common. We should note that the policies we are talking about today are limited to peer-reviewed manuscripts results – we're not talking about data in these policies.

The call for public access is an issue that is growing in scope and intensity, and it is important to understand that this is happening in a global context. Around the world, government funders invest in scientific research with several fairly uniform expectations: that the research will advance science, improve the lives and welfare of their citizens, and stimulate innovation & discovery as well as economic growth.

We've seen increasing recognition by funding agencies worldwide that they consider the dissemination of results an essential component of research and that they also view it as a critical piece of their investment in science.

This is due in large part to the nature of research outputs; unlike consumable commodities, research is a public good. It is not depleted through use, but rather added to through use. The research process is cumulative; so it is only through the use of research findings that funders obtain the greatest value from their investment. Faster and wider sharing of research leverages their investment, and fuels the advancement of science.

Up until fairly recently, agencies could rightly feel confident that their investment in research was being adequately leveraged by the dissemination of findings through traditional channels – printed, subscription-based journals. It would have been quite impractical, inefficient, and expensive for them to consider taking on the task of broader dissemination of the results themselves.

But, as we know, the Internet changed everything and presents an important new opportunity to bring information to new readers at virtually no marginal cost – making expanded access to research, in the view of many agencies, not only feasible but necessary.

Today, even if it is available electronically the research paid for by public institutions is, in too many cases, still simply not widely available. Users face obstacles in trying to access all the research they need at the time they need it. Governments and funding agencies recognize that this works against their interest, as well as the public interest, since the research is not being fully used and applied.

And they are now creating policies that, in essence, are designed to eliminate access barriers, to allow this information to be more easily accessed, shared and used.

Simply recognizing that this was necessary was an important milestone. And we should note that this concept was first articulated not in a government policy, but in series of “declarations” which were signed by thousands of individuals, institutions, and funding bodies around the world, articulating the need for of more open system of access to research. These included the Budapest OAI, the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, and more recently the Salvador Declaration on Open Access.

These concerns about access to research results have been reinforced by a wide variety of civil society institutions and now, in ever-growing number, by political bodies at national and international levels.

Increasingly, these calls for enhanced access policies are rooted in the direct recognition that increased access to and use of research not only advances science, but drives innovation and promotes economic competitiveness.

By way of example: In a 2005 report on scientific publishing, the International Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development concluded, “Governments would boost innovation and

get a better return on their investment in publicly funded research by making research findings more widely available.” And that by doing so, they would “maximize social returns on public investments.”

Earlier this year the European Commission published a report on the findings of their extensive study of the economic and technical evolution of the scientific publishing market. The report’s authors note:

Scientific publication ensures that research results are made known, which is a pre-condition for further research and for turning this knowledge into innovative products and services... given the scarcity of public money to provide access to scientific publications, there is a strong interest in seeing that Europe has an effective and functioning system that speedily delivers results to a wide audience.

The report included a series of recommendations for future action, and its number one recommendation was that research-funding agencies should “guarantee public access to publicly-funded research results shortly after publication.”

We see this recommendation has been echoed in policies proposed in increasing numbers. In the U.S., of course, notable examples include the NIH Public Access Policy and the Federal Research Public Access Act, which spans 11 of the largest agencies that provide funding for scientific research.

Worldwide, similar policies have emerged from such geo-politically diverse agencies as the Research Councils United Kingdom and the Ukrainian Parliament; The Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the South African Academy of Sciences; The French National Research Center and The German Research Foundation – and the list goes on and on.

I don’t want to give the impression that the call for greater public access has been driven only from the top down – from the sponsoring of and signing onto the various declarations. It has in fact been, and is increasingly also being, driven by participants from many segments of the research community. Beside the long list of library organizations, patients advocacy groups, and consumer groups that have advocated for greater access, individual researchers have expressed their support for public access policies. We’ve seen this support surface in forms as varied as an open letter to the U.S. Congress signed by 25 Nobel Laureates in support of the NIH’s proposed public access policy, noting that:

Science is the measure of the human races progress. As scientists and taxpayers too, we therefore object to barriers that hinder, delay or block the spread of scientific knowledge supported by federal tax dollars - including our own work.

And a letter in support of public access written by the publications steering committee of a large scientific society (AAA) stating that they:

Stand in strong support of FRPAA because this legislation provides strategic infrastructure and impetus for achieving (the AAA's) mission regarding "increase[d]

visibility of and access to anthropological knowledge.

A large number of university administrators have also been vocal in expressing their support for greater access. In an Open Letter to the Higher Education Community, a group of provosts from major universities note:

The broad dissemination of the results of scholarly inquiry and discourse is essential for higher education to fulfill its long-standing commitment to the advancement and conveyance of knowledge. Indeed, it is Mission Critical.

Of course, as with any opportunity of the magnitude that public access presents, there are big challenges associated with it. There are those in the community of stakeholders who voice concerns over potential unintended negative effects these policies might have. These include concerns over potential changes these policies might cause in the economics of the scientific publishing system. For example, they wonder ‘if results are publicly available in a timely manner, will publishers’ abilities to levy subscription access fees disappear? If so, how will this revenue be replaced?’

They include concerns that any negative economic impact might impede traditional players’ ability to continue to manage the peer review and quality control process. They include concerns over what is perceived by some as unnecessary government involvement, as well as concern over possible changes to the roles that traditional institutions – such as journal publishers, scholarly societies – have played.

We’ll hear from some of those voices today, as well as from those tasked with the formulation and implementation of some of these policies – who are actively engaged in weighing the potential costs against the potential benefits of such policies.

In a sense, that is the role we all find ourselves in today. And so our program focuses on the very real challenges faced by all stakeholders deeply vested in the conduct and advancement of research and scholarship.

In our morning program sessions, our speakers will address emerging government policies, motivations of funding agencies, and the very real challenges that the research and academic communities face as new policies are implemented.

Our afternoon session will consist of two panels examining practical responses: models for engaging and supporting faculty to improve access to their own research, and new tools and economic models that libraries are using to foster institutional publishing programs.

We’ll conclude the day with thoughts on these issues from two leading thinkers in the scholarly communications arena. David Shulenburger, Vice President of Academic Affairs, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), and Clifford Lynch, esteemed colleague and Executive Director of the Coalition for Networked Information.

At this point, it is my privilege to introduce our first speaker of the day, Dr. Norka Ruiz Bravo, Deputy Director for Extramural Research at the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Ruiz Bravo came to the NIH in 1990 as a scientific review administrator in the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. She has held several key positions at NIH, including program director for the Division of Genetics and Developmental Biology, deputy director for the Division of Cancer Biology, in the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and acting director for Division of Cancer Biology in the NCI. Most recently, Dr. Ruiz Bravo was the associate director for extramural activities at NIGMS, where she oversaw the Institute's \$1.7 billion research and training grant programs from a policy, business, and scientific perspective.

Dr. Ruiz Bravo received a Ph.D. in biology from Yale University, completed an NIH postdoctoral fellowship which began in physiological chemistry at Johns Hopkins University, and finished in biochemistry and molecular biology at M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Center. Prior to coming to NIH, Dr. Ruiz Bravo held faculty positions at M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Center and the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas.

In her current role, Dr. Ruiz Bravo is the NIH Deputy Director for Extramural Research. She oversees The Office of Extramural Research, NIH's voice for all policies and guidelines concerning extramural research grants (which make up ~85% of the NIH budget). Dr. Ruiz Bravo is responsible for the complete range of issues associated with scientific program implementation, grants policy and implementation, management of grants, and peer review, including the roles and responsibilities of grantee institutions and their compliance with policies and regulations – including the Institute's policy concerning public access to the peer reviewed results of the research it has funded.

I'm very pleased to welcome Dr. Ruiz Bravo.