

How open access journals and repositories facilitate public access to publicly funded research

Open access is arguably the most hotly debated issue in information management and scholarly publishing. There have been significant moves by funding agencies and governments to make access to publicly funded research freely available and every major science and medical publisher now offers an open access option or open access journals.

Worldwide, 31 funders have confirmed that they are willing to fund article processing charges for their researchers in open access publications and 14 have policies that encourage or in some cases require funding recipients to deposit research articles in an open access repository. Notable examples include policies from the US National Institute of Health, Research Councils UK and JISC. Countrywide initiatives are also coming into practice, in the UK NHS England has covered the cost of open access publishing for its entire staff through a BioMed Central Membership.

2007 saw the launch of UK PubMed Central, which will provide free access to a permanent online archive of peer-reviewed research papers. Open access repositories are also fast becoming a must-have for institutions, in part because of funders' policies but also because institutions have seen the benefit of having an electronic archive and showcase of their academic output. The global directory of academic open access repositories, OpenDOAR, launched in 2006 with over 800 entries.

Open access journals provide one path to open access and open access repositories provide another. Journals publish peer-reviewed articles, while institutional repository items are not required to be peer-reviewed, nor limited to just articles. Journals and repositories are not mutually exclusive towards open access and in fact when combined can compliment one another.

This paper will outline the benefits of open access journals and repositories. It will describe not only how they facilitate access to research, but how they are influencing and accelerating research. Additionally, the paper will use BioMed Central's journals as a case study to demonstrate how open access publishers can make it easier for researchers to deposit their work in a repository. BioMed Central automatically deposits all of the articles it publishes into PubMed Central and if an institution chooses to use BioMed Central's hosted repository service, Open Repository, data feeds can be set up to deposit articles straight into the institutional repository as well.