

Discussion Group A

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Topic: 'Open' developments and the implications for national libraries

Scope Note

'Open' developments and the implications for national libraries

1. More and more academic researchers and policy makers are embracing the idea that the results of their research should be as widely available as possible.
2. Open access to scholarly research is argued to be important to the public for a number of reasons. One of the arguments for public access to the scholarly literature is that most of the research is paid for through government funding by taxpayers, who therefore should have a right to access the results of what they have funded. It is argued that open access speeds the research progress, productivity, and knowledge transfer. Moreover every researcher in the world can read an article, not just those whose library can afford to subscribe to the particular journal in which it appears. Many librarians have been vocal and active advocates of open access believing that open access promises to remove both the price barriers and the permission barriers that undermine library efforts to provide access to the journal literature.
3. Opponents of the open access model see publishers as an integral part of ensuring quality and effectiveness in the scholarly communications process, particularly through peer review, and they consider the pay-for-access model to be essential for ensuring that publishers are adequately compensated for their work. Moreover they would argue that the supposed tax-payer right to access is exaggerated out of all proportion by the advocates of Open Access. There is also concern that publication in open access journals does not play the same role in the scholarly reward system as publishing an article in a reputable traditional journal.
4. Nonetheless, 'Open' access developments are gaining traction. The UK Government recently announced that all publicly funded scientific research would be made freely available by 2014. Universities minister David Willetts said: *"If the taxpayer has paid for this research to happen, that work shouldn't be put behind a paywall before a British citizen can read it... The real economic impact is we are throwing open, to academics, researchers, businesses and lay people, all the high quality research that is publicly funded. I think there's a massive net economic benefit here..."*. The European Commission, which controls one of the world's largest science budgets, has also backed calls for free access to publicly funded research. *"Taxpayers should not have to pay twice for scientific research and they need seamless access to raw data,"* said Neelie Kroes, European Commission vice-president for digital agenda. From 2014, all articles produced with funding from the €80bn Horizon 2020 programme will have to be accessible and the goal is for 60% of European publicly funded research to be available by 2016. And in the US for example the National Institutes of Health public access policy ensures that the public has access to the published results of all NIH-funded research. Similar

policies have been introduced by a range of organisations including the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DfG) in Germany, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in France, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The current course towards open access now appears to be irreversible.

5. Open data is a related concept that certain data should be freely available to everyone to use and republish as they wish, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control. Major sources of open data include open data in science which focuses on making the results of scientific research available for anyone to analyze and reuse and open data in Government which has gained popularity especially, with the launch of open-data government initiatives. DataCite is an international organisation which aims to: establish easier access to research data; increase acceptance of research data as legitimate contributions in the scholarly record; and to support data archiving to permit results to be verified and re-purposed for future study.

6. The Discussion Group on 'Open' developments at the CDNL meeting in Helsinki will provide an opportunity:

- to review the extent to which 'Open' developments are impacting, and how, in individual CDNL member states;
- to identify and discuss the implications of these developments for the traditional roles of the national library - for example in respect of national bibliographic control and the provision of access in perpetuity to these publications - and how national libraries should respond;
- to identify how these developments may challenge the traditional economic models of national library functions such as document supply and bibliographic services;
- to consider also what implications these developments may have for other national library activities such as publishing and licensing; and
- to consider other issues arising.