

## *Evolving Roles in Access: Researchers, Librarians, Secondary Publishers, and Users*

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*Presenters:*

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**Matt Dunie**  
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How has open-access publishing affected the roles of key stakeholders in the publishing world? How will those roles be affected in the future? The five panelists in this session addressed these questions.

Vivian Siegel opened with a publisher's perspective. Open-access publishers like the Public Library of Science (PLOS) are organized around publication charges (as opposed to subscription charges) to cover the costs of peer review, print and electronic publication, and figure conversion. Siegel acknowledged several challenges in this system. For example, author charges at PLOS are calibrated to cover charges for the roughly 20% of authors who cannot pay. Furthermore, like any publisher, PLOS must

correlate the charges it sets with the value added by the publisher.

Siegel explained that electronic publication offers open-access publishers new models that can reduce author charges, standardize publication, allow for increased data publication, and enable publishers to share tools. Open-access publishers also avoid costs of access controls and marketing for subscription access.

Lyn Jeffrey described the potential effects of open access on users (authors, writers, and scholars). Jeffrey focused on how open access is a key component of establishing new relationships between places and things, data, and networks. For example, a chief resident today can use a personal digital assistant, or PDA (a thing), at a patient's bedside (place) to access trial results (data) related to a specific diagnosis and then tap into Internet resources or a networked community of practitioners to arrive at a treatment plan.

Matt Dunie provided the perspective of secondary publishers. His company sells abstracts of the content of about 14,000 journals. Although only about 150 are open-access journals, his working premise is that open access is a permanent and expanding business reality. Secondary publishers must deal with it as they consider current and future products.

An increase in access means an increase in content that is available to secondary publishers. The basic economics of primary and secondary-reference publishing are necessarily changing. Dunie emphasized, however, that the approach to open access by secondary publishers has been nonpartisan. He predicted that secondary publishers will focus, if they are not already focusing, on the broader needs of researchers and expand indexing, increase the content types they abstract, cover open-access content, and collaborate closely with publishers.

Ann Okerson represented one vocal group of stakeholders with her thoughts about how open access affects the university librarian's role. Okerson observed that

open access is rapidly mutating into many "flavors". With no single model for open access, librarians must continually react to these changes.

Chief among librarians' concerns is the assurance that open access will provide for open and long-term archiving and access. Electronic preservation is costly, and the costs vary dramatically among journals, disciplines, and other entities. The open-access finance model (authors' charges) may be too little to cover the substantial costs. Significantly, libraries, which are charged institutional subscription rates for open-access content, are currently underwriting authors' charges—a serious concern when library budgets are squeezed. Okerson asked whether library budgets can and should withstand supporting an all-open-access system. Delayed access—opening access after a period of closed access to capture revenue—may emerge as a workable compromise.

Meg Manahan stressed that the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) library supports the broadest possible access of information to its users. As her library has been forced to cut titles and use such measures as interlibrary loan to cover gaps in information availability, secondary issues, such as copyright implications, have arisen. She voiced a preference for an open-access model in which the author maintains the copyright (within the limited and conditional zone of fair use). Such a "commons" can facilitate more access for more people and fulfill the AMNH library's mission to support the broadest possible access.

The audience raised several compelling issues: Will authors' charges change authors' attitudes toward the value of peer review? If institutional members don't see their authors being published, what incentive is there for them to remain members? One characteristic of publishing is its constant retooling; can open-access models consider providing the funding for such retooling? 