

Open-Access News Around the Net

Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data Launched

In August 2006, Peter Bogner, Ilaria Capua, Nancy Cox, and David Lipman launched the Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID), a project to provide open access to H5N1 avian influenza data. They published an open letter in *Nature* calling on all influenza scientists to participate in it. A 24 August press release from GISAID announced that the formation of the consortium of leading medical researchers around the world is “designed to improve the sharing of influenza data, analyze data findings jointly, and publish the results collaboratively as part of the Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID)”. Data collected under the initiative will be deposited in three major publicly available databases: EBML (United Kingdom), DDBJ (Japan), and GenBank (United States). The GISAID consortium is open to all scientists, “provided they agree to share their own data, credit the use of others’ data, analyze findings jointly, and publish results collaboratively”. The consortium would publish the data as soon as possible after analysis and validation, within a maximum of 6 months, a period they hope to reduce as their experience grows.

See gisaid.org for full details, a press release on the launch, and a list of signatories.

UK Natural Environment Research Council Adopts Open-Access Mandate

Starting with new grants awarded after 1 October 2006, the UK Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is requiring that an electronic copy of any published peer-reviewed paper supported in whole or in part by NERC funding be deposited “at the earliest opportunity” in an e-print repository. This is the fourth of the eight research councils of the UK to require its grantees to deposit the results of their research in an open-access repository. To help grantees without access to such a repository and to improve access to output from their research centers, NERC

is developing its own e-print repository, which as of this writing was expected to go live toward the end of 2006 and be available at www.nerc.ac.uk/about/access/repository.asp. Two of the NERC collaborative centers—Plymouth Marine Laboratory and the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton—already have repositories available.

See www.nerc.ac.uk/about/access and Peter Suber, SPARC Open Access Newsletter, issue 101, 2 September 2006, www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/09-02-06.htm.

Open Access Central Expands from BioMed to Chemistry and Beyond

The team that created BioMed Central, the world’s largest biomedical open-access publisher, is now moving into chemistry and has plans to expand into physics and mathematics, calling the expanded publishing collection Open Access Central. In August 2006, BioMed Central’s parent company, the Science Navigation Group, launched Chemistry Central, which contains articles from existing open-access chemistry journals published with BioMed Central, including *Geochemical Transactions* and *Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry*. It also includes chemistry-related content from other BioMed Central journals, such as *BMC Chemical Biology*. Chemistry Central will soon be launching further chemistry journals, including *Chemistry Central Journal*. Although not yet launched, Open Access Central intends to expand into physics and mathematics with PhysMath Central, although no projected launch date was listed on its Web site. Peer-reviewed articles will be immediately available online with no access charges or subscriptions.

See www.openaccesscentral.com/ and press release at www.biomedcentral.com/info/about/pr-releases?pr=20060822b.

Also covered by Peter Suber, SPARC Open Access Newsletter, issue 101, 2 September 2006, www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/09-02-06.htm.

CERN Leads Effort to Buy Open Access to Particle Physics Papers

The June 2006 *Report of the Task Force on Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics* describes an effort, led by the physics laboratory CERN in Switzerland, to form a consortium of laboratories and funding agencies to pay publication costs for particle physics papers in journals so as to provide free, immediate access to these journals by all people. On the basis of the cost per article quoted by surveyed publishers and the average number of papers published in 2003-2005, the report says that “sponsoring all journals ready for [open access] at the time of the enquiry would require an annual budget of €5–6 Million, significantly less than the present global expenditure for particle physics journal subscriptions”. The report estimates that about 10,000 scientists are in the particle physics community worldwide and says that that number is small enough to take some risk and yet large enough to be a representative test bed.

See library.cern.ch/OATaskForce_public.pdf.

SPARC Promotes Author Rights to Secure Broader Article Distribution

The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) has introduced Author Rights, “an educational initiative and introduction to the SPARC Author Addendum, a legal form that enables authors of journal articles to modify publishers’ copyright transfer agreements and allows authors to keep key rights to their articles”. SPARC’s Web site has a form called the SPARC Author’s Addendum to Publication Agreement that it suggests attaching to a publication’s copyright agreement to secure additional rights for the author. Specifically, it requests that the author retain the rights to reproduce, distribute, publicly perform, and publicly display the article in any medium for noncommercial purposes; the right to prepare derivative works from the article; and the right to authorize others to make any noncommercial use of the article as long as the author receives credit and the journal is cited. It also requests that the

publisher agree to provide the author with an electronic copy of the published article in pdf format within 14 days of first publication and at no charge.

See www.arl.org/sparc/author/.

American Chemical Society Experiments with Hybrid Open-Access Model

In addition to full open-access journals, many publishers are experimenting with “hybrid” models, which expand access, for instance by allowing authors to pay extra to make their articles open to the public. The American Chemical Society (ACS) is experimenting with this model through ACS AuthorChoice, a fee-based mechanism that allows individual authors or their research funding agencies “to sponsor the open availability of their articles on the web at the time of online publication”. As of this writing, this policy was due to be implemented late in fall 2006. The base fee for AuthorChoice is \$3000 during 2006-2007, with substantially reduced prices (as low as \$1000) for contributing authors who are members of ACS or who are affiliated with an ACS-subscribing institution. ACS already had in place “ACS Articles on Request”, which provides all contributing authors with a unique URL in the ACS Web site that they may e-mail to colleagues or post on external Web sites. Authors are allowed 50 downloads in the first year and unlimited access after that.

From pubs.acs.org/pressrelease/author_choice. Also see *additional developments on hybrid open access from Peter Suber, SPARC*

Open Access Newsletter, issue 102, 2 October 2006; www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/10-02-06.htm.

Springer and the Nano Research Society Partner to Offer Open-Access Nanotechnology Journal

The publisher Springer and the Nano Research Society have partnered to publish *Nanoscale Research Letters (NRL)*, an open-access journal on nanotechnology. The journal is “an interdisciplinary forum for the open communication of scientific and technological advances in the creation and use

of objects at the nanometer scale". The first open-access articles appeared on Springer's online platform, SpringerLink, in July 2006. Springer is waiving the open-access article fee for all accepted manuscripts received for submission in 2006. Manuscripts received for submission in 2007 are subject to an "introductory fee" of \$950. Fees for future years are not listed on its Web site.

See www.springer.com/west/home/generic/search/results?SGWID=4-40109-70-173672605-0.

Gates Foundation Gives \$1.1 Million Grant to PLoS for New Open-Access Journal on Neglected Diseases

The Gates Foundation has given the Public Library of Science (PLoS) a \$1.1 million grant to launch a new open-access journal on neglected diseases. The grant is part of a larger Gates initiative to find cures for neglected tropical diseases. The journal *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases* will cover science, policy, and advocacy on such diseases as elephantiasis, river blindness, leprosy, hookworm, schistosomiasis, and African sleeping sickness. The journal plans to begin accepting submissions in 2007.

See www.plosntds.org and Peter Suber, *SPARC Open Access Newsletter*, issue 102, 2 October 2006, www.earlham.edu/~peters/fof/newsletter/10-02-06.htm.

European Union Study on the Evolution of Scientific Publication Markets Released

The European Union released a report in January 2006, *Study on the Economic and Technical Evolution of the Scientific Publication Markets in Europe*. The study assesses the evolution of the market for scientific publishing and discusses the potential desirability of European-level measures to improve the conditions governing access to and exchange, dissemination, and archiving of scientific publications.

Recommendations listed in the executive summary include

- Guarantee public access to publicly funded research shortly after publication.
- Aim at a level playing field with respect

to business models in publishing.

- Institute "extended quality" rankings of scientific journals, with the definition of quality broadened to include quality of dissemination (accessibility).
- Guarantee perennial access to scholarly journal digital archives.
- Foster interoperable tools to improve knowledge visibility, accessibility, and dissemination.
- Promote competitive pricing strategies.
- Scrutinize future significant mergers.
- Promote the development of electronic publication.

With regard to public access, the report says that "the following actions could be taken at the European level: (i) Establish a European policy mandating published articles arising from EC [European Commission]-funded research to be available after a given time period in open access archives, and (ii) Explore with Member States and with European research and academic associations whether and how such policies and open repositories could be implemented." The report notes that "at this point, it seems desirable to allow for experimentation and competition between various possible business models, which means allocating money to libraries to subscribe to reader or library-pay journals but also to authors to pay for publication costs in author-pay journals, and to researchers in the reader-pay model."

See europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/pdf/scientific-publication-study_en.pdf.

By the Numbers

As of 19 October 2006, the online *Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)* listed 2423 journals. There were 709 journals searchable at article level and 118,178 articles included in the DOAJ service.

In the 30 days preceding those counts, 47 journals had been added. Some new titles are the *Canadian Journal of Diabetes*, the *Columbia Undergraduate Science Journal*, and the *Journal of Anaesthesiology Clinical Pharmacology*.

From the *Directory of Open Access Journals*, www.doaj.org.