open access

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open access, both easy & difficult

simple concept, complicated realities

✓ “do in the digital age what publishers and public libraries did in the old days: make accessible to the public what is/should be public knowledge”

✓ a matter of digital access [searchable, harvestable]
✓ of business [contracts, licenses, paying and pricing]
✓ of quality [peer review, citations and rankings]
✓ of archives [preservation, continuity and authenticity]
✓ of e-science [digital innovations, virtual labs and “collaboratories”]
✓ of variety [in academic, business and professional cultures]
open access en vogue

- hot [?] topic in the research community (researchers and funding agencies) and in the publishing business, growing concern among politicians, and academic leaders, and librarians

- main driver: in the world of digital technologies open access is a common feature (we don’t like barriers there, and have forgotten all about waiting and seeking)

- enabled by the digital revolution and stimulated by the www-experience, especially in the case of public goods and public interests (like research funded by public money and public education)
what doesn’t exist in the digital mode (cannot be found by search machines) has less chance to be used, quoted and valued

so the basic rule of all researchers should be “make your work digitally traceable, searchable, harvestable”

self-archiving is a quite satisfactory way to achieve this (do it yourself or have your – digital - assistant do it)

all you need is a well-connected and well-arranged repository

almost all publishers allow it, and those who don’t do not object
elementary open access, fine print

- repositories should be interconnected and standardized (search machine friendly), whether managed by institution, nation or academic discipline

- deposited versions should be clearly labelled (pre/post prints etc)

- a clear and simple license allowing for early depositing is preferable

- why do only a few of us actually practice what we preach?
open access, the business side

- digital journals could be freely accessible to all and harvestable by all if subscriptions would be replaced by advance payments

- the publishing business would continue its business in the public broadcasting mode (cost paid by those who want to disseminate, rather than those at the receiving end)

- new business models are attractive and feasible (vide SCOAP³: sponsoring consortium for open access publishing in particle physics)

- from a university point of view dual mode publishing (“open choice”) only complicates matters
open access does not solve the pricing issues, it only requires somewhat adjusted payment schemes (migration seems complicated but doable)

intellectually the idea of sending bills to researchers (rather than to librarians) changes the feel of publishing and its cost, thereby stimulating new approaches

and underlining the need to overcome fragmentation by cooperating
open access, quality matters

- scientific publishing, or rather to be or not to be published is an essential part of the reputation game (academic prestige matters for all involved, just think of career enhancement)

- some kind of peer hierarchy on the basis of reviewing (before or after the act) is and remains crucial, also for professional use outside academia

- this, however, doesn’t imply a conservative attitude towards present practice

- yet, quality labelling must be done and if publishers don’t organize it, someone else should
open access and archiving

- open access by itself doesn’t change archiving and its challenges in the digital age

- no problem, as long as responsible publishers and/or libraries continue to play their roles....

- if and where “traditional” journals (in the digital mode) no longer cover the whole field, archiving becomes an issue

- it can and should be handled by public library consortia
e-science is much more than open access

- the digital mode offers much more than a digital metamorphosis of traditional ways of publishing and scholarly communicating

- data sharing, virtual labs, collaboratories, wiki’s by and for academics, multi-media e-learning – there is much more innovative potential than realized thus far

- we need projects and experiments

- and forerunners like the university presses consortium and science innovators, like Barend Mons
e-science is a miscellaneous thing

- one of the secrets of the success of the university is its complexity (what makes sense to historians doesn’t impress engineers)

- the disparate nature of research cultures and traditions, national preferences, professional usage and language networks stand in the way of simple solutions across the board, both in e-science and in digitally re-mastered scholarly publishing

- and some aspects tend to be forgotten, like what about the book in the digital age? and European educational material?
open access, final slide

- the digital mode offers much more than a digital metamorphosis of traditional ways of publishing

- the concept won’t go away, although some of the old ways will stay with us (like drawing, painting and sailing)

- European cooperation may make the difference (a stronger public power?)