CO-ORDINATION TO IMPROVE ACCESS IN THE UK:
the response of the JISC to the parliamentary report
“Scientific Publications: free for all?”

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JISC STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO ACADEMIC CONTENT

- JISC is the Joint Information Systems Committee of the four Higher Education Funding Councils in the UK and also has a responsibility for networked services to the Further Education Colleges.
- JISC Strategy includes “improving the effectiveness of scholarly communication”.
- This involves implementing cost-effective improvements in access to academic content for learners and researchers in colleges and universities.
- One route to cost-effective improvements in access through negotiation of “big deals” – Pilot Site Licence Initiative 1996-99, NESLI 1999-2002, NESLi2 2002-.
- This route partially effective but many difficulties – e.g. long negotiations, small publishers not included, many universities and colleges unable to buy in.
- Push for Open Access coming from both JISC Journals Working Group and JISC Scholarly Communication Group.
BENEFITS TO UK ACADEMIC COMMUNITY FROM SUPPORT FOR OPEN ACCESS

- For research funding agencies, greater use and exploitation of research results resulting from a higher number of readers, facilitating further research.
- For the author, increased readership and more citations, as academic content on open web-sites is read more widely than content on closed web-sites.
- For universities and colleges, more publicity for the research conducted at the institution and higher citation of research reports.
- For readers of research papers, access to research publications without barriers imposed by subscription or access-prevention technology.
- For the UK Government, greater returns from investment in the funding of research as research publications are used more widely. This can contribute to the public’s understanding of science.
- For librarians, new opportunities to improve the service they provide.
BEFORE THE PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY, JISC’S WORK IN IMPROVING ACCESS THROUGH OPEN ACCESS DEVELOPMENTS

- For three years JISC has been supporting the development of repositories through the Focus on Access to Information Resources (FAIR) Programme
- FAIR Programme has contributed to developing the mechanisms and supporting services to allow the submission and sharing of content generated by the Higher Education and Further Education communities
- Fourteen projects, including SHERPA and RoMEO
- The FAIR Programme is part of a larger area of work being taken forward by the JISC. The JISC envisages the Information Environment as a place where members of the HE and FE community can place and share useful content.
- For two years JISC has been supporting the development of open access journals through discussion with publishers and the transition-funding
- GB£150K made available for each of three years: four publishers awarded grants in first year – bids invited for second round of funding
- National deal with BioMed Central renewed for second year following successful first year – high use by UK authors and quality maintained
An Enquiry by a Parliamentary Committee is independent of any governmental or official body

One of the functions of a parliamentary enquiry is to ensure that value for money is being achieved from funding by taxpayers

The Committee calls for written Evidence from any interested party and has the legal power to summon Witnesses to appear in person

The importance of JISC’s existing work in relation to scientific publications was recognised and a JISC Witness was summoned

The oral evidence sessions were very thorough and the questioning revealed the need for change in scholarly publishing

However, JISC had no advance notice of the recommendations in the Report of the Committee

JISC prepared a formal Response to the Report supporting the recommendations in the Report and committing to further action

Recommendations in the Report are not binding upon the Government but they carry political weight
SOME KEY FEATURES OF THE REPORT

- The Report of the Science and Technology Committee “Scientific publications: free for all?” HC399
  [http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmsctech/399/39902.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmsctech/399/39902.htm)
- Acceptance that the present system of scholarly publishing needs to change to provide cost-effective access to scientific research results
- Need for improvements in licensing terms for subscription content
- Encouragement for universities to set up repositories
- Authors should be mandated to deposit copies of journal articles derived from publicly-funded research in repositories
- Encouragement for further development of open access journals
- VAT should not be charged on electronic content
- Copyright ownership should be investigated
JISC has committed to a new Repositories Programme with substantial new funding
The JISC Scholarly Communication Group has formed a new action plan to take new developments forward
The UK Research Councils are discussing a new publications policy which is likely to give more support for deposit of journal articles in repositories and encouragement for open access journals
Universities UK will also be discussing their response to the parliamentary report
The UK parliamentary report has been referred to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for discussion
LIKELY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UK

- More universities will establish repositories, because the cost is low and the benefits to both research and teaching are huge.
- Funding agencies and universities will expect their researchers to deposit pre-prints or post-prints of journal articles in repositories.
- The use of the deposited journal articles will grow.
- Repositories will also be used for other purposes – e.g. electronic teaching packages and administrative functions.
- More open access journals will become available in most subject areas, although subscription journals will continue in humanities.
- Learned societies will continue to have an important role, especially if they transition to open access for their journals.
- JISC will continue to support universities and colleges in all these developments.
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

- Please contact me by e-mail at any time if you wish to discuss open access: f.friend@ucl.ac.uk
- The most comprehensive web-site with information on open access is: www.soros.org/openaccess
- The JISC web-site is: www.jisc.ac.uk
- Also useful is the SPARC web-site: http://web3.arl.org/sparc/ with a link to the SPARC Europe web-site: www.sparceurope.org
- A list of open access journals is available at: www.doaj.org
- A new list of publisher copyright agreements allowing “self-archiving” is at: www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php