

# A toolkit for Research Communities.

## ***Helping Authors choose the right mode of publication to maximise impact.***

Valentina Comba  
Centro E-Learning d'Ateneo – Bologna (CELAB)  
Università di Bologna – Italy  
e-mail [valentina.comba@unibo.it](mailto:valentina.comba@unibo.it)

Abstract.

**Purposes.** The aim of this paper is to provide practical advice for Authors (and also for librarians as a support tool) wishing to publishing their manuscripts in an Open Access environment, and consequently deriving benefit from the wider accessibility of their work.

**Procedures.** After describing typical procedures of journal selection for publication currently followed by different groups of Authors, the paper gives some specific examples in the area of biology, clinical medicine and pharmacology.

**Findings.** A flow-chart has been designed which will make it possible the check a list of sources, directories and “Instructions for Authors” before submitting a manuscript, the paper also includes practical examples of self-archiving and subsequently usage statistics.

**Conclusions.** It is becoming easier to publish in an Open Access environment, which guarantees that research papers will have a greater impact. However, Authors still need the skilled support of librarians, who should also be aware of OAI-related technology and be prepared to plan costs and services.

### **Introduction.**

Since many years medical libraries have had an important role in supporting scholarly communication: Information for Authors were currently provided to users in order to let them apply the rules set by editors and publishers. More recently, librarians are getting important partners in pointing out which are the best strategies not only to publish, but also to provide a higher impact to the Institution’s research papers.

In this paper I wish to explain in a simple way some basic tools to publish in an open access environment, or, in a way, to take advantage of the new search engines which give more visibility to more accessible papers.

### **Scientific papers “impact”.**

A number of recent studies <sup>1</sup> are supporting the evidence that freely available scientific papers, published in peer reviewed journals, or/and made available in open repositories, receive a higher

---

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence S. Free online availability substantially increases a paper’s impact. *Nature* 2001, 411: 521

Eysenbach G. Citation advantage of open access articles. *PLoS Biology* 2006, 4

Brody, T., Harnad, S. and Carr, L. Earlier Web Usage Statistics as Predictors of Later Citation Impact. *Journal of the American Association for Information Science and Technology* (JASIST)2006 57(8) pp. 1060-1072, Available at: <http://eprints.ecs.soton.ac.uk/10713/>; last visited 11/3/2007

number of citations. These studies have been considered also by ISI Thomson which currently publishes the Web of Knowledge and the Journal Citation Report, widely used reference tools for research evaluation <sup>2</sup>.

The changes in the environment of scientific publishing, started of course, since the first electronic journals, is influencing research assessment criteria all over the world<sup>3</sup>.

In Italy there is a rapidly evolving situation I wish to deal with shortly, because that's the focus of our dialogue with Authors in the strategic context of evaluation of research.

There are two different methods used in Italy, one by the Ministry of University and Research, the other by the Ministry of Health. The latter is based on the Impact Factor of journals where the biomedical Authors publish their papers; the first is based on several indicators, included citations, and the recently appointed Minister of the University has started a process in order to establish a new National Agency for the evaluation of Research (ANVUR) <sup>4</sup>.

It is difficult to say at the moment whether the evaluation criteria in Italy will change or remain like in the past. But I wish again<sup>5</sup> take the opportunity of this conference to stress that it is completely misleading use only the Impact Factor of journals to evaluate research, as a well known paper has clearly demonstrated <sup>6</sup>. The changes in the UK RAE for the 2008 may not be so radical as wished <sup>7</sup>, but in the general guidelines for the thematic panels is clearly stated: "No panel will use journal impact factors as a proxy measure for assessing quality"<sup>8</sup>.

### **Procedures of journal selection for publication**

As a matter of fact, most of our Authors consider a range of factors to submit their manuscripts:

1. Impact Factors of journals in a subject category (JCR)
2. Instructions for Authors of a appropriate Society journal, in the area of the research theme
3. Members of the Editorial Board
4. Area of interest for a presentation accepted in an international conference
5. Others

Sometimes Authors consider a particular Journal category in the Journal Citation Reports database and check decrescent Impact Factor titles, until their manuscript is accepted.

In general the copyright policies of the Publisher, mainly toward OA, are not considered by most Authors. The Italian law (633/1941, art. 12-19) dealing with economic rights provides that they can be transferable, but they are independent (art. 19): the author can transfer a right retaining another one. That's why a wider awareness is needed: no indiscriminate transfer is due to publish an article.

---

<sup>2</sup> Mc Veigh ME. Open access journals in the ISI Citation Databases. October 2004. Available at: <http://www.thomsonscientific.com/media/presentrep/essayspdf/openaccesscitations2.pdf> : last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>3</sup> Harnad S, Carr L, Brody T and Oppenheim C. Mandated online RAE CVs linked to university eprints archives: enhancing UK research impact and assessment. *Ariadne* 2003 , 35 <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue35/harnad/>: last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>4</sup> This workshop was held immediately after the ISS conference in Rome. <http://www.miur.it/DefaultDesktop.aspx?doc=181>: last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>5</sup> Comba V La valutazione delle pubblicazioni: dalla letteratura a stampa agli Open Archives. *Bollettino AIB* 2003 Available also : <http://eprints.rclis.org/archive/00000095/> . last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>6</sup> Seglen PO. Why the impact factor of journals should not be used to evaluate research *BMJ* 1997 314: 497

<sup>7</sup> Harnad S. Comment on S.Pinfield article June 2006 Available at: <http://listserv.utk.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0606&L=sigmatrics&O=D&P=8560>: last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.rae.ac.uk/pubs/2006/01/docs/genstate.pdf>: last visited 11/3/2007

In this paper we wish give some technical suggestions gathered in a so called “toolkit” to help Authors to make their choice taking in account also the OA opportunity.

## **Toolkit**

Tools considered belong to different contexts.

1. Open access journals: DOAJ
  2. Journals included in post publication open databases: PMC, UKPMC
  3. Hybrid journals
  4. Green, blue publishers as listed in SHERPA list
  5. Institutional repositories
1. Open access journals included in the Directory of Open Access Journals are, in general, peer reviewed journals which support special agreements with Authors for copyright. This means that not only they allow free access to journal articles, but let Authors retain part (or all) of the rights to publish elsewhere their papers or in other versions. In the scientific area, this means that they do not comply with the Ingelfinger Rule. They are listed in the DOAJ Directory, managed and maintained by the Lund University ([www.doaj.org](http://www.doaj.org)). The Italian Serials Directory ACNP is collaborating with DOAJ to exchange data about Italian OA Journals and check new entries which may be indicated by Italian libraries.
  2. PubMedCentral and UKPubMed Central: these open databases are hosting journals which decided to comply with a national policy of disclosure immediately or after six month of publication<sup>9</sup>. At the moment, more than 300 journals are accessible in PMC, some of them with partial free access articles. UKPMC, launched on January 2007, is a mirror of PMC and offers a manuscript submission system - UKMSS - to enable UK scientists to submit their research papers for inclusion in UKPMC<sup>10</sup>.
  3. Hybrid Journals. Some publishers are offering the Authors to publish their articles freely accessible, asking the payment of a fee.  
Peter Suber, in his SPARC Open Access Newsletter, gives this definition:

*“By a “hybrid journal” I mean one that publishes some free-access research articles and some toll-access research articles, when the decision between the two kinds of access is the author's rather than the editor's. Authors who choose the free option must usually pay a fee (or find a sponsor to pay a fee) to cover the journal's expenses. In return the publisher provides immediate free online access to the article at its own web site. Authors who don't choose the free option don't pay a processing fee, although they might still pay page and color charges. Nor do they get immediate free online access, although they might get delayed free online access if the journal provides free access to its sufficiently old back issues.*

*(I've made this definition a little thicker than necessary in order to avoid the term “open access”. Some publishers carefully and properly avoid the term “open access”. But now*

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/about/pubinfo.html>. last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/doc\\_WTD015366.html](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/doc_WTD015366.html): last visited 11/3/2007

*that I've been precise, I will sometimes, for convenience, refer to these as "hybrid OA journals" and to the new option as an "OA option".)*<sup>11</sup>

In the biomedical area, these publishers are BMJ (BMA), Wiley, Cambridge University Press, Springer, Elsevier. As Peter Suber says in his article, Bill Hubbard lists a detailed account about these publishers<sup>12</sup>. It is important to note that publishers allow this option with no risk, being all expenses paid by the Authors. A comparison table of the fees due to the publishers is maintained by BioMedCentral<sup>13</sup>.

4. The Sherpa list<sup>14</sup> is a fundamental tool for Authors and Librarians. Publishers are divided in several categories, based on the policies adopted towards self archiving:

ROMEIO colour	Archiving policy
<a href="#">green</a>	can archive pre-print and post-print
<a href="#">blue</a>	can archive post-print (ie final draft post-refereeing)
<a href="#">yellow</a>	can archive pre-print (ie pre-refereeing)
<a href="#">white</a>	archiving not formally supported

It is very important for Authors and Libraries use the Sherpa list not only to choose where to publish, but also to set up open archives strategies based on those policies. As an example, in Bologna University engineers are encouraged to archive their papers published by IEEE, as it allows the Authors to archive the post print in the publisher pdf format.

The list does not include all publishers. This is the reason why in Italy the CRUI Open Access subgroup is planning to build up an "Italian" Sherpa list.

### **"Publishing paths"**

In order to take full advantage of the Open Access publishing context, three different "paths" may be considered by Authors:

1. Open Access Journals path. Authors can check the Directory of Open Access Journals ([www.doaj.org](http://www.doaj.org)) which allows to search by title and subject categories. I suggest to read the selected journal Instructions for Authors and the Editorial Policy: it is important to check whether there is a fee for the publication, or/and the Institution has to pay a membership for the journal scheme; of course it is important to give a look to the Impact Factor, in the case the journal has it already<sup>15</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> SPARC Open Access Newsletter, September 2006 <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/09-02-06.htm>: last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>12</sup> Bill Hubbard. <http://listserver.sigmaxi.org/sc/wa.exe?A2=ind06&L=american-scientist-open-access-forum&D=1&O=D&F=I&P=60709>: last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>13</sup> Available at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/authors/apccomparison/>: last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php>: last visited 11/3/2007

<sup>15</sup> Impact Factors are assigned after three years tracking by ISI

2. “Not DOAJ path”. Authors can decide to publish in a Journal which is not a Open Access Journal. In this case they should check whether the Journal is published by a Publisher which offer a “free access publication scheme” and consider the fee for this publication track. On the other side it is important to check the Sherpa list to look at the Publisher policy toward self archiving (see above, about the green, blue, yellow or white policy). Subsequently the paper may be submitted, and also archived in the Institutional repository, in compliance with the Editorial Policy of the selected journals. It is important to note that most Institutional repositories’ self archiving forms (eprints, dspace) request Authors to indicate in the metadata whether the eprint has been refereed or not.
3. “White publishers journals”. Also in the biomedical area there are “white” publishers which do not allow self archiving ( i.e. American Dental Association, American Association of Nephrology, Lippincott...). In this case Authors can check – as usual – the Editorial policy and the Impact Factor and, after the paper has been refereed and accepted, self archive only the title, the abstract and the citations on their Institutional Archive. It is important to verify whether the Publisher is allowing the free access to the abstract (in most cases it is). A “Request e-print” button has been added to the most common open archives to allow to request the paper directly to the Author (<http://wiki.dspace.org/index.php/RequestCopy>; [http://www.eprints.org/news/features/request\\_button.php](http://www.eprints.org/news/features/request_button.php)).

### **Institutional repositories**

Italian research Institutions and Centres are getting more and more aware of the crucial importance of Institutional Repositories in the research evaluation system. As Susanna Mornati is going to explain in her paper in this Conference, they may play a central role in an architecture of databases for evaluation purposes.

It is well known that the strategic aspect of getting Institutional repositories filled up by Authors, is the awareness about the “accessibility” increase of archived papers. Even if Google and Google Scholar give more visibility to papers, citations and authors, for an incredibly high number of readers it is difficult to access high quality biomedical literature. Also in Italy, which is considered a “developed” country, expensive and closed access biomedical journals cannot be read by medical doctors who not work in an University or rich Hospital paying commercial publishers licenses<sup>16</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

In my experience I found that the reasons why biomedical Authors do not consider to publish they papers in an Open Access context are very simply related to the fact they are not informed about the opportunities they have, and largely to misconceptions about their rights, plagiarism and copyright. Therefore information and communication are key aspects to improve, in order to help Italian Authors to take full advantage of the new scholarly communication and publishing environment within they live.

---

<sup>16</sup> See this letter of Dr.Claudio Blengini (Cuneo, Italy) <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/eletters/330/7496/904#105473> about the BMJ new policy (2 May 2005) : last visited 11/3/2007

