

Date: Thu, 7 Jun 2012 04:52:26 +0200 (CEST)
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Subject: Re: White House petition > 25,000 ; WDML and Sloan F. ; page charges ; journals belong to the community
Parts/Attachments: 1. [Application: Gadagkar_08.pdf] (75KB) "",
2. [Application: Gadagkar_09.pdf] (53KB) "",
3. [Application: Boycott_ACHA.pdf] (80KB) ""

Dear Ingrid, Tim, Henry and Richard,

Thanks for your interesting exchange of mails.

Concerning the White-House petition I signed it on May 24th. There were 14, 275 signatures then, which indicates that more than 11 000 persons signed it within the last two weeks, which is an excellent news.

As I told you in my mail of May 17th, I am worrying that the European Commission recommends 'Gold Open Access' in the statement it will issue around June 20th concerning the next program Horizon2020. If this happens it will be the success of the publishers' lobbying in Bruxelles and I think a kind of failure for us. I send you as attached file a note a friend of mine from the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, Raghavendra Gadakgar, wrote to Nature in 2008 to denounce Gold Open Access (together with a second paper he published in 2009 where he detailed his arguments).

As Ingrid explained in her mail, it is very important that journals should be community-owned and publishers maintained in the loop, only if necessary, as service providers. While in Berlin I gathered several examples of OA publications run by scientific institutions (e.g., Max Planck Society) without any publishers' help. I hope that with the advent of OA, librarians and library's budgets would be converted into publishing service to help us running electronic journals (with print on demand).

I am glad that Ingrid proposed to transfer ACHA from Elsevier to another better solution. I have similar plans in mind that I would like to propose to ACHA's editorial board. I have not resigned from it since I am trying to convince a majority of its members to move to a better solution, but I am on strike (see the attached exchange of mails with ACHA) and will resign if I do not succeed to propose a better solution. I think that it is more important to migrate good existing

journals than to create new ones (there are already much too many journals, to my taste...). I insist on an argument I already proposed you in my mail of March 6th: without the help of talented lawyers to face Elsevier's own lawyers we would not be able to achieve our goals. I doubt that Elsevier may accept the transition scenario that Ingrid proposes, unless we are able to pressurize Elsevier on legal issues (e.g., ACHA is not protected as a trademark and the copyright agreement authors have signed are not valid under French 'author-right' law, which may be the same for some other countries). Larry Lessig, who is professor at Harvard Law School and a founding member of 'Creative Commons', could be helpful if we manage to interest him to such a case: how the editorial board of ACHA may acquire the ownership of its title and past issues, knowing that editorial board members created ACHA in 1993 with Academic Press (bought in 2000 by Elsevier) and did all the peer-reviewing since then (Elsevier providing some secretary's help, printing the journal issues and probably paying Charles Chui, one of the three chief editors)? I suggest that the members of the editorial board of ACHA should ask to see the contract signed with Academic Press, when the journal was founded, and the present contract with Elsevier.

Tim, your suggestion to talk to Google is excellent. This innovative company may bring us new perspectives we are not thinking of to make OA journals sustainable. Incidentally, we need to find a name to denote OA journals where neither the reader nor the author pay anything: I propose 'Diamond OA' as outbidding publishers 'Gold OA'. Indeed, in a speech on May 29th Neelie Kroes, the European Commissioner for 'Numerical Society', declared, I quote: 'When research is funded by the EU, we will require open access to the results. Whether by "green" or "gold" routes. And we're working to enlarge those measures to include scientific data as well'. This is actually a preannouncement of the EU statement which will be soon released, therefore we should insist (as I wrote you on May 17th) that either only OA be mentioned in the text under preparation, or that 'Diamond' be added to 'Gold' and 'Green' routes to support OA.

Sorry for this mail being too long and my English too cumbersome, please give me your feedback about Raghavendra's and my points, with my best wishes to all of you,

Marie

On Wed, 6 Jun 2012, Timothy Gowers wrote:

I'm not as against the Gold Open Access model as Henry, but I agree with the general principle that the decision whether or not to accept a paper should be independent of whether the author can pay. I also believe (despite being told by David Tranah that it is not the case) that author charges could be kept low enough, for what one might term run-of-the-mill journals (ones whose main aim is simply to certify that a paper is of a reasonable standard rather than

to provide an archive of important results), for the problems with author charges not to be too problematic.

But the main thing I want to say is not that, but rather that I know someone who works for Google, who told me that he thought Google might well be happy to help, if we could say how we wanted them to help. He seemed to think that their commitment to open access to information was such that they would be prepared to fund an open access journal with zero author charges. Of course, one would have to be careful when dealing with a mighty corporation like that, but the discussion might well be worth taking further. The main reason I didn't was simply that I'm fairly committed now to the CUP project. But the kind of thing that could perhaps be done is the setting up of something a bit like PLOS-one -- i.e., something that does what lowish-ranked journals do at the moment -- but without the author charges. With the CUP journal covering the higher quality end of the spectrum (and journals like Annals dealing with the very top papers) there would be a great opportunity to make a lot of existing expensive journals redundant, or at least under huge pressure to change how they operate.

But that's just a quick thought from me. Does anyone else have any ideas about how we might pursue this approach from Google? The person who approached me was recently a student at Cambridge, so he's young and enthusiastic, which is great, but it also means that one shouldn't think of this as a formal approach by Google: he just seemed confident that something could be done.

Best wishes,

Tim
