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## **OPEN ACCESS CHAMPION NOMINATED BY SPARC EUROPE:**

### **ANTONIN DELPEUCH**

SPARC Europe's new service – [Europe's Open Access Champions](#) – focuses on highlighting some of *the persons* who are driving Open Access forward in Europe's academic communities.

Despite seeing significant international and national Open Access policy development across Europe, it is the research community and senior administration who can create the cultural change necessary to embrace a new scholarly communication system.

SPARC Europe has brought a selection of people or 'champions' together in a new online showcase.

Rectors / chancellors, professors, senior and junior researchers and administrators share their personal views on what still needs to be done to achieve more Open Access. They are helping change the hearts and minds of peers towards more openness. They tell us why and how – in their own words.

Champions are actively contributing to implementing and advocating new open scholarship principles and practices within their organisation's research communities. Their efforts are speeding up more access to Open Access research results.

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## **We need to take a stand against more traditional publishers**

**Name:** Antonin Delpeuch

**Position:** Graduate student, Computer Science

**Institution:** École Normale Supérieure

**Country:** France

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## **An interview with Antonin Delpeuch**

**7 January 2016**

### **[What got you interested in Open Access \(OA\) originally?](#)**

As a graduate student in computer science, I had access to numerous articles via institutional

online subscriptions. I think I was happy or even proud to have this privileged access to research. A few months later, a friend of mine started campaigning for Open Access here in Paris. It was then that I also discovered the absurd prices of journal subscriptions and the aggressive commercial strategies of publishers. It was the [movie about Aaron Swartz](#) that encouraged me to take action.

### **What Open Access activities are you currently involved in?**

I am working on the [Dissemin project](#). Dissemin is a web platform designed to show researchers how they can improve accessibility to their articles. What we do is spot paywalled articles that are not already freely available from a repository, and encourage researchers to upload these papers in a few clicks.

In parallel, I am working with both librarians and with the faculty of my university to set up an institutional Open Access policy. I also represent graduate students on the Scientific Council, where we are currently discussing Open Access.

### **Why, in your opinion, do we need Open Access to research?**

This seems so obvious that I would prefer to return with an opposing question: Why would we even want to restrict access to scientific literature? Researchers have no interest in hiding their articles; they just want their publications to be read. Nor do taxpayers have any interest in subsidising an expensive and inefficient publishing industry. Unfortunately, traditional publishers are going to great efforts to maintain power, and so far they have succeeded, thanks to the inertia of academia.

### **Can Open Access have a positive effect on research careers?**

I would like to hope that Open Access has a positive effect on research careers although I have the feeling that the criteria of openness are rarely taken into account by evaluation bodies. This is something Dissemin can help with; in a few seconds, you can obtain a summary of how accessible the publications of a researcher are. This does not tell you much about the quality or novelty of the academic work per se, but such access data are worth being taken into account.

### **What can scholars and/or administration do to promote openness to research?**

There are plenty of ways to promote openness! For researchers, I think the easiest means by far is to make sure all their papers are available in durable, well-indexed open repositories. Home pages are not enough! Again, this is something Dissemin helps with; there is no need to fill in long forms – just upload your paper in Dissemin and it will be deposited on your behalf in a stable repository. In addition, tenured researchers should also stop working for traditional journals or help flip them to better models.

For administrations, I think one of the most important moves is to stop subscribing to abusive publishers; we need to support modern initiatives such as the [Open Library of Humanities](#) or [arXiv](#) instead. This is actually something we can do! The sky will not fall if we stop subscriptions. Researchers already regularly hit paywalls, so they know how to live with them. If libraries keep subscribing, they are effectively signing blank cheques to the publishers, and we will never move forward.

## **Who do you engage with to spread the OA message, and how? What are the challenges here?**

As part of the Dissemin project, I have had the opportunity to interact with many different players: administrations, libraries, researchers, students, publishers and developers. I try to target different advocacy strategies to each group, but this isn't always easy.

I have had the chance to take part in [OpenCon 2015](#), and the advocacy training there was excellent. We even had meetings with members of the [European Parliament](#) to explain to them how to foster Open Science. As a result, I felt even more confident about spreading the OA message at my own university.

One of the main challenges in France is that quite a significant gap exists between the French- and English-language publishing systems. They roughly correspond to the Humanities and the STM, respectively. French scholarly publishers tend to be smaller, with different practices, and they are often less profitable. Recently, they have been quite vocal against Open Access. I do not know their field enough to judge them, but it is regrettable that their concerns slow down the movement – even in the area of STM where there is a clear consensus for Open Access.

## **What still needs to be done to get more Open Access to research?**

A lot still has to be done to get more Open Access to research. We need to liberate existing papers and foster the change towards full Open Access publishing without [APCs](#) (Article Processing Charges). We need to take a stand against more traditional publishers; what I mean is that scholars should stop working for these publishers, and librarians should stop renewing their subscriptions.

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