



Growth of African Research, Equity in Access and Dissemination of African content - the Catalysts

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Introduction- Before Open Access

- Main goal of authors is to have their works made accessible to all
- Many academics published mainly in high impact, accessible but expensive journals.
- Research Councils funded research were published in high impact journals, because everyone read them.
- No alternative so academics accepted the situation because they needed an avenue to publish their research.
- Internet and the web came in and scholarly communication other than journals got an avenue to feature
- Then studies revealed that articles in open access journals were more cited than in for-profit ones.
- Then some public –funded bodies decided that public funded research , should be made available at no cost to users.
- Then advocacy for Open access started becoming vigorous.
- Between 2001 – 2007 advocacy for OA and OA journals and OA support Policies increased



Introduction — What is Open Access?

- Several definitions but commonly used one is the Budapest Open Access Initiative - literature in digital format, available online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions, explicit removal of price and permission barriers to the end user
- Open Access is a kind of access, not a kind of content- Peter Suber
- OA increases availability of local content in global scholarly communication, increases global visibility, impact and showcases the intellectual output of the institution
- Scholarly communication is disseminated for the development of society including the African society.
- Scholarly communication is scholarly publishing presented through peer reviewed or refereed journals or conference papers
- Access to scientific and technical information supports the development of high quality teaching and research
- A great necessity for Africa to create knowledge within the continent to enable societal transformation.
- More effective channels need to be created to disseminate such created knowledge.
- On the global knowledge production table open access offers Africa the opportunity to be more of a producer rather than a consumer to be relevant as a partaker of the current knowledge economy,
- Over the years the **Green** and **Gold** publishing and now the **Plan S** and **Plan U** publishing.



Introduction — Some Issues for/not for Open Access

- Institutions with great research output pay more in the author-pay model while others with more emphasis on teaching pay nothing for using the information.
- OA articles are not really free since some payment is still made at some stage to get it published.
- OA needs a lot of marketing so that will increase cost of processing.
- OA will neutralize the high quality expected of peer-reviewed articles because, of the ability to pay and get published model.
- OA will not protect the rights of authors, but it is an effective means to make authors works very visible, more cited and not plagiarized. Who is therefore protected by the restriction?
- OA model will not sustain the archival record of Science, but currently OA articles are automatically deposited in several archives without the trouble of seeking permissions.
- OA concept not widely known and its ideals not greatly accepted in Africa.
- More research publications in OA Journals means more payment by the institution and likely reduction in Library's budgets.
- Most of those who know about OA are skeptical about its sustainability.
- Negative attitude of 'old brigade' towards computers and their output.
- [Open Access Now](#) provides interesting responses to critics of OA



Introduction- Some Issues for/not for Open Access

- **Open Access publishing useful in Africa**
 - fills gaps in non-subscriptions
 - provides full text articles
 - allows immediate dissemination and access for all to freely use
 - allows for long term access to scholarly materials
 - enables small libraries and those with small budgets to have access to greater amount of scholarly materials.
 - enables research carried out in the south to be made visible globally, and for collaboration.
 - bridges the digital divide to bring about development and innovation.
 - A means of making sure that researchers working in Africa are aware of what other researchers in Africa and other parts of the world are doing.
 - Assists faculty and researchers to increase their impact and visibility in the world.
 - allows for long term access to scholarly materials.
 - Improves the research profile of the institution.
- **OA is beneficial as research results are made easily accessible and not restricted in commercial journals.**
- **A Solution to journals subscription crisis of libraries**
- **OA has built in structures like for subscription journals, to ensure high quality reviewing.**
- **The author pay model is too expensive for an individual to pay, unless payment is through research grants.**
- **OA does not invest heavily in technological development, so no need for regular innovations.**
- **Professional societies or associations find OA unsustainable but it is a good way of making publishing by its members visible.**
- **When research results are put in the public domain discussions are enabled to bring about further innovation.**



Open Access Expectations for Africa...

- Great visibility of African scholarship.
- Opportunity for Africans to also contribute to global research not only to consume.
- Increased avenue for intellectual and knowledge development.
- OERs, digital repositories will expand African ways of learning, teaching & research.
- African scholars will use OA as fastest and easiest means for pushing African research results into the world.
- All OA journals will be peer-reviewed, indexed and of general high quality.
- Institutions will accept OA articles and equally weigh them with subscription ones.
- Commercial publishers will also do OA publishing.
- Emergence of strong economic support for OA from Universities and funding agencies.
- No personal financial costs to authors in order to get published.
- Fostering of strong academic links between researchers(south-south and south – north).
- Companies/Industries will fund OA publishing to enable researchers with high quality material but no funding to publish.



Open Access Expectations for Africa

- Stakeholders in the development information sector will agree on a sustainable model for free access.
- Transition period (paying for subscriptions and 'author pays' OA model) will not affect library's budget negatively.
- The public will use OA publications profusely and so demand for more of them.
- African Institutions will develop their own OSS for their OA journals having in mind their indigenous languages and materials.
- Universities, research institutes, libraries and librarians in Africa will work together to create a central fund for sustainable OA publishing.



Key Open Access Initiatives

- Open Institutional Repositories
- Open Educational Resources
- Open Access Publishing



Research in Africa- Some Challenges

- Cost of accessing content in indexed journals.
- Institutional restrictions on content provided by institution-based journals.
- Main databases do not index several African journal articles as they do not meet the requirements.
- High cost of journal subscriptions.
- Scarce funding for research and so limited access to scientific content affecting the quality of African research output and opportunities for collaboration that they could have.
- Internet connectivity is low and expensive.
- Lack of visibility of the research content that is produced on and about the continent.
- Little knowledge and poor visibility of available scientific publication platforms and journals.
- Lack of national and institutional policy frameworks on open access publishing.
- Open science is a promising vehicle to reduce or even eliminate these issues eventually.



**How Access and Dissemination of African content will
contribute to the growth of African research**

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The Catalysts



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The Catalysts

- Put Framework of Open Scholarship in place
 - ✓ Institutional Repositories
 - ✓ Open Educational Resources
 - ✓ Open Access Publishing
- Sensitize / implement policy of OA articles as carrying equal weight.
- Transition Fund institutions.
- Legislation / enforcement public funded research publishing.
- A more sustainable OA publishing model by Stakeholders.
- Build OA costs into research grants.



The Catalysts

- Institutional funding to support OA 'author pays' model.
- Policy –driven, IRs for libraries for scholarly communication publishing
- Use well - tested and proven Software.
- IRs publish OA peer –reviewed journals.
- Register OA initiatives
- OA Policy , mandatory deposit , all year round self- archiving.
- Creation of a Central fund for sustainable OA publishing.
- All buy into the idea of OA Publishing.
- Researchers actively take the lead– Peter Suber.



The Catalysts

- Profuse use of OA by public critical.
- Institutions active commitment.
- African governments strong and active commitments
- Align OA and National knowledge development.
- National Open Access policies positioned in a broader regulatory framework.
- Vigorous advocacy and awareness.
- Policies adopted and integrated as part of national STI policies.



Catalysts

- Stable e-Infrastructure.
- High awareness of existing OSS publishing platforms and tools.
- Skilled personnel in the publishing chain for OSS platforms.
- High quality editorial boards with high quality articles.
- Journals listed /indexed.
- Africa develops OERs and not only be consumers.
- OERs in high use - be *shared, exchanged, expanded and adapted* with appropriate attributions and expanded.



The Catalysts- Summary

For Africa to address equity in access and dissemination of research to promote growth in African research , key areas to be looked at :

- ✓ Strong commitment to OA publishing by African governments.
- ✓ Development and implementation of Policies by institutions/ governments.
- ✓ Incentives to be provided for Research activities.
- ✓ Skills for effective OA publishing should be developed and put in use.
- ✓ Adequate e-infrastructure, stable and affordable connectivity should be readily available.



Conclusion

- Several misgivings about OA suite but it is still alive and growing stronger.
- OA publishing is key to Africa's digital research content.
- OA publishing is increasing access to Africa's knowledge.
- While OA publishing facilitates access to knowledge developed elsewhere, its value to Africa remains in the creation of platforms for uploading knowledge developed in Africa.
- Institutions should set aside funds to support OA 'author pays' model for their staff.
- OA publishing costs need to be built into research grants.
- For benefits of local research to development, governments/institutions must make policies, avenues and facilities for OA publishing available.



Thank you



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