

Is Open Access Inclusive?

A reflection about the OA policies by Alicia Kowaltowski, Marcus Oliveira and Ariel M. Silber (alphabetical order)

Open Access emerged as an idea by the first time in the decade of 1970. However, it was not structurally implemented until 2001, when several editorial groups embraced its main principles. In fact, these principles were idealistic and looked in line with a more equalitarian world. Open access is based on two main principles: i. all the published scientific information should be available for everyone regardless he/her status of pertaining to institutions subscribed to the venues where these information is published; ii. the authors should keep the copyrights of their intellectual production. To make economically possible this new paradigm, it was broadly agreed that authors (or their funders) should pay to the editors the Article Processing Charges (APCs) to cover the costs of publishing and making the information available for anyone for free. However, most APCs are increasing beyond inflation indexes, and more authors excluded from publishing their own work in reputed journals due to overpricing and unfair policies of waivers. We are witnessing a process that is dividing the academics all over the world among those that have the resources to freely publish their research in the most reputed journals regardless the APC costs, and those that are not able to publish in reputed journals because they are not able to afford the (many often abusive) APCs. Despite the initial good intentions of the Open Access movement, in its current format, it is making science less (and no more) inclusive.