

The OA Interviews: Leo Waaijers

The Netherlands is a leading nation in the ongoing struggle for Open Access (OA). It has been more successful than any other country in creating a network of institutional repositories, and it has led the world in deposit rates – most notably by means of its [Cream of Science](#) and [Promise of Science](#) initiatives. Significantly, it has achieved this without the need to mandate researchers to deposit their research papers. Instead it has incentivised them. Much of the credit for this success must go to the manager of SURFshare Leo Waaijers.

But how successful is successful? Can the Netherlands ensure that the entire nation's research output will eventually become freely available on the Web without a mandate? Waaijers speaks to Richard Poynder.



Leo Waaijers

RP: I believe you are a librarian by training. Can you start by saying something about your background and your current role?

LW: Actually, I am not a librarian by training. I studied mathematics and theoretical physics and I was an associate professor. But after a long odyssey through the academic managerial ranks, including an elected post on the executive board of [Delft University of Technology](#), in 1988 I was appointed university [librarian](#) at Delft. Then, in January 2004 I became manager of SURF's [DARE](#) program, and subsequently manager of [SURFshare](#), the successor to DARE.

RP: As I understand it, [SURF](#) is a collaborative venture of all the institutions of higher education and research in the Netherlands. Its mission is to stimulate and organise the ICT co-operation of these institutions. But what is the specific purpose of the DARE and SURFshare initiatives, particularly with regard to Open Access?

LW: The aim of both programmes is to provide better access to the results of research. DARE's focus was on textual publications; SURFshare is about the production of and access to complex documents.

RP: *What do you mean by complex documents?*

LW: Complexity here refers to structured multiplicity. I.e. many dislocated authors collaborating on consecutive versions of multidimensional publications (including text, data, visuals, algorithms etc.) that are distributed over a multitude of repositories.

RP: *Which implies **e-Science** I guess. In terms of OA, however, I'm conscious that there are a number of different views as to what it is, and the purpose it should serve. How do you define OA, and what do you see as its rationale and objective?*

LW: OA to knowledge means that the only access limit is your own comprehension. The need to know is fundamental in humans: Think of children; think of Eve. Sharing knowledge has always been the critical survival factor of our species.

Green and gold

RP: *Ok, but in the context of scholarly literature I guess we are talking about the free availability of research papers (and increasingly primary research data) on the Internet. There are two approaches to OA: the so-called **gold and green routes**. What's your view on the respective merits of these two approaches?*

LW: In terms of the OAI layers: green is data, gold is a service.

RP: *When you talk about OAI layers you are referring to the **Open Archives Initiative**. This assumes a two-layered model in which data providers (research institutions) create institutional repositories (**IRs**) at an organisational level (and archive their research in them). Third parties then offer services on top of these repositories. Initially it was envisaged that these services would mainly be harvesters like **OAIster**, which are designed to aggregate the data in OAI-compliant repositories in order to create a virtual archive that researchers can use to search the entire corpus of distributed papers through a single interface.*

*Most people view gold OA as a complete publishing service, but one in which the costs are covered by means of an upfront Article Publishing Charge (**APC**), rather than a post factum subscription fee. In referring to any service built on an IR as a "gold" service you appear to be implying that for you publishers too are now just service providers (providing, for instance, peer review).*

LW: Right. The point is that green is necessary but insufficient on its own.

RP: *Green implies continuing to publish in subscription-based journals, but then also archiving the papers in an IR?*

LW: Sure, and the problem with green is its anarchism: it consists of unsubmitted papers, submitted papers, accepted papers, published papers and embargoed versions of papers that have been published but cannot be made available yet. Basically, anything goes. So green means every man for himself, and Google for us all.

But that is not enough. Knowledge has to be organised. We need version and quality controls and subject indexing. We need citations, we need information about institutional provenance, and we need information about document type. We need searchability, not only for keywords but for instruments, methods and techniques, for data types, and for software applications or theories.

The gold service provided by OA publishers today is a very meagre service in that respect and way too expensive for what it offers. But it is a start.

RP: *Nevertheless, you take a particular interest in the green route. DARE, for instance, is very focused on creating and managing institutional repositories. How would you define an IR, and what in your view should be its purpose?*

LW: An IR is the institutional e-archive, a module of the academic information domain like the [CRIS](#), or the catalogue and stacks of the library. The 'I' in IR should guarantee interoperability. Every research institution ought to have an IR. Together, the global network of IRs constitutes our cognosphere, the seed-bed for knowledge-based services. As such, IRs belong to the public domain, but the services provided around it can be both public, sponsored and market driven.

Far too primitive?

RP: *You stress the importance of interoperability. That makes sense — after all, key to the development of OAI was the principle of creating a single virtual archive from thousands of distributed archives. Critics, however, have argued that the developers of OAI adopted the bibliographic approach of the traditional librarian, and so focused on providing metadata, not full text documents. For this reason, they add, it now needs to be adapted to deliver the full-text, not just point to it. Would you agree? If so, how can it be re-engineered?*

LW: Actually, a pointer to a single document is good enough for an end user. The real problem we faced was in harvesting large numbers of full-text documents, because the OAI protocol was developed to harvest metadata only.

RP: *So what is the issue here?*

LW: The issue is that for some services (long-term storage, full-text indexing etc.) you need to harvest the full text as well. To solve this problem, therefore, for DARE we have developed an internally structured metadata format — the so called [DIDL-container](#) — which does the job. This is an Open Source application and available to everyone.

RP: *You too, however, have argued that OAI is inadequate. You have said, for instance, that since it is based on Dublin Core it is "far too primitive". This suggests that in order to create an effective network of distributed IRs more work still needs to be done on the platform doesn't it? What precisely needs to be done?*

LW: OAI is not based on Dublin Core. The former is an interoperability protocol; the latter is a metadata format for simple documents. And, you can apply OAI for many formats. It can be used, for instance, for the DIDL-container I mentioned, or for the more extended metadata used in, say, learning objects.

But it's true that both the OAI and Dublin Core are unsatisfactory for the complex objects — and their multiple internal structures — that we now want to include. Consequently, last October the inventors of OAI PMH initiated the development of OAI's successor. This is an ambitious international project called Object Reuse and Exchange ([OAI ORE](#)).

RP: *There has also been some [debate](#) about what research institutions should be placing in IRs. What are your views on this?*

LW: Every research result of the institution that's meant for reuse and sharing should be placed in the IR. I would stress that the institution is responsible for the quality of the stuff in its IR. And while it could outsource elements of the quality control — e.g. to a publisher — that does not exempt it from this responsibility.

RP: *What has the Netherlands achieved to date in terms of developing IRs, and what is the end game?*

LW: Since 2003 all universities and national research institutions in the Netherlands have installed an IR. On top of that a number of services have been developed, both locally and nationally. Personal, institutional and disciplinary web sites, for instance, are based on the (selective) harvesting of these repositories.

In addition, the Dutch universities of applied sciences (polytechnics) are starting to come on board; to date 20% of them have created a repository.

Internationally, the most renowned Dutch examples here are national services like DAREnet, [Cream of Science](#) and [Promise of Science](#).

We can also see the first [Web 2.0](#) services beginning to emerge. And the European [DRIVER](#) project, for instance, is modelled on DARE.

RP: *DRIVER — the Digital Repository Infrastructure Vision for European Research — is a project to build a large-scale public infrastructure for research information across the whole of Europe right?*

LW: Exactly. And it is based on DARE.

Additionally, the new SURFshare programme (2007-2010) has widened its scope to also include [collaboratories](#) and complex documents. So we are seeing increasing exploration into the ICT-based future of knowledge communication. So with regard to your question about the end game: I don't see one yet.

Cream of Science

RP: Collaboratories move us back into the direction of e-Science, which is a fascinating development. But let's stay focused on scholarly publishing. Last time I looked at the DAREnet web site it [indicated](#) that there are currently 120,680 documents available on DAREnet, of which 47,034 are classified as Cream of Science and 14,404 Promise of Science. Can you put the DAREnet figures in context?

LW: DAREnet offers all the OA publications of Dutch researchers and includes both PoS and those papers available in full text in CoS. In total, DAREnet contains well over two times the annual national production, although we don't know what percentage of national production is currently captured in DAREnet. For the subset of the doctoral theses, however, we do know: 60% for 2006 and we expect 80% for 2007.

RP: I'm not sure I understand your point about the percentage of national production. Can you elaborate?

LW: Yes. The total number of official academic publications in the Netherlands, as registered in the annual reports of Dutch universities in 2006, is 55,000. We don't know yet which fraction of this total production was captured by DAREnet.

RP: OK, so although DAREnet contains over two times annual national production, you don't know how many of those papers are being archived from previous years, rather than current research.

LW: Right. But we expect the capture of current research results to increase, because in 2006 we linked the CRIS systems in Dutch universities to their IRs. So, now the metadata of the publications flow automatically to the IR as soon as they are registered in the institutional CRIS. A so called 'upload button' facilitates the subsequent posting of the publication in the IR with one keystroke.

RP: You talk of services being developed on top of the Dutch IRs: I think what you are saying is that initiatives like [Cream of Science](#) are themselves gold services, since they are a subset of Dutch research created by harvesting all the IRs in the Netherlands. Clearly, discipline-based services like [arXiv](#) could be created on top of them as well. In effect then, "gold" services can now be created not just by publishers but by anyone, including research institutions themselves?

LW: Indeed. Like Cream of Science, which is a national service providing the complete oeuvre of over 200 Dutch top scientists, and Promise of Science, which is the national doctoral theses site.

RP: *So as IRs are created and filled a mass of research data is becoming available, on top of which services can be built — and not just subsets but, as you said earlier, indexing services, citation services etc.*

LW: Exactly.

RP: *It's widely agreed, however, that the greatest problem facing IRs today is getting people to put material into them. This issue was most recently highlighted in a [report published in D-Lib Magazine](#). This describes the problems of trying to fill the [IR at Cornell University](#). What's your take on this problem, and what is the answer?*

LW: The main driver for authors is exposure. That's why they write in the first place. So, you get their co-operation if you can demonstrate that putting their papers in an IR is not detrimental to their current exposure (from publishing in journals), that it gives them new exposure (by making their work available through, say, [Google Scholar](#), and through national, institutional, personal, disciplinary or other document-based web sites), and that it guarantees long term exposure (curation). You also need to convince them that they can achieve all that without too many (perceived) problems.

In short, what we need to do is to remove all the barriers (administrative, technical and copyright barriers), create awareness and, foremost, exhibit good practices and champions. Repositories *per se* are part of an infrastructure and do not sell themselves. It's services that do the trick.

RP: *The Netherlands has been unusually successful in filling its IRs. Why is that, and do you think its experience can be replicated elsewhere, or is there something specific to the Netherlands that has made your approach more successful than others?*

LW: SURF has been a critical success factor. As we said, it is an independent organisation of all the institutions of higher education and research in the Netherlands, and has been in existence for 20 years now.

Every four years a plan is negotiated and settled by the participants. The core funding of the plan comes from the institutions themselves, but because our Ministry of Education and Research highly values this co-operation they have always been prepared to co-finance SURF projects.

Moreover, during the planning periods of 2003-06 and 2007-10 the core theme for the ICT and Research domain within SURF has been on providing better access to research results. That's what we have been working at. Together!

RP: *OK, so by having a national body focused on ICT it has been possible to evangelise OA at Dutch research institutions in ways that would not be possible in, say, the United States, which has a far more granular and decentralised university system. Another reason for the success of Cream of Science, perhaps, is that you incentivised researchers — by saying that you wanted to showcase the "best" Dutch research. Presumably no*

academic would want to turn his or her back on an opportunity to be presented as a member of an exclusive club?

LW: Right. Although they were renowned already, it was interesting to see that practically all the authors approached for Cream of Science were enthusiastic. The idea that their work would be preserved for ever in the [e-Depot](#) of the National Library also played a role. Wherever they could they co-operated to collect their publications and have these posted in the repository of their institution. And as we said, this has allowed us to harvest the results for the CoS website.

RP: *You also said earlier that not all the content in CoS is full-text. Indeed, in a [chapter](#) you wrote for a book on OA recently you estimated that only 60% of the content listed in Cream of Science actually points to full-text documents. What is the problem here, and what is the answer?*

LW: As I said, nearly all the authors we approached wanted to be involved with Cream of Science. Yet, for 25% of the papers we wanted to make available the authors would not permit us to provide Open Access to the full text. This was because they feared the publishers to whom they have given away their copyrights would object. In addition, a lack of resources for scanning in older documents within the time frame of the project accounted for another 14% shortfall, and we weren't able to archive another 1% of the documents we wanted to because they were simply lost.

RP: *What do we learn from this?*

LW: CoS has taught libraries how to improve the workflow of documents and metadata, and it has taught authors about the consequences of giving away their copyrights. Both lessons were useful for the ['hunDAREd thousand'](#) project, the successor of CoS, which aimed at 100,000 Open Access publications for DARE.

RP: *And this was achieved?*

LW: Yes. On the deadline of the project — 24th January — we had almost 105,000 Open Access publications in DAREnet. The figure has subsequently grown to over 120,000.

Copyright

RP: *You say that one quarter of the papers you wanted to put in Cream of Science could not be archived due to concerns about copyright. OA advocates have become increasingly vocal about the implications of authors assigning copyright to publishers. What are your views on this?*

LW: Actually, one of the most frequently asked questions we get about the success we have had in filling our repositories in the Netherlands concerns copyright. "How did you deal with it?", they ask.

The fact is that when we began we never gave much thought to copyright, although I can see in retrospect that it is an important issue. But what strikes me as odd here is that when librarians have questions about copyright they spontaneously refer to the publisher, not to the author.

RP: Why does that surprise you?

LW: Well, if you think about it, authors are equal partners with publishers in copyright contracts, and libraries are supposed to be working on behalf of authors. My view, therefore, was that we should ask them for permission, not the publisher.

RP: What kind of comments do you tend to get from researchers when the issue of copyright comes up?

LW: There is an interesting diversity of opinions and positions. Some authors respond by asking what their publisher thinks about it. So you accompany them to the [RoMeo](#) web site and they discover that there are more copyright policies than publishers, because some publishers even have different policies for different journals.

Others dive into their personal archive to find specific copyright contracts so they can see what they say. In doing so, they often discover that these contracts have changed considerably over time. In those drawn up before 1998, for example, digital rights are absent, and so the author still has these rights. This has allowed us to scan in a lot of older but still relevant articles and post them in the IR.

Some authors start asking about what is permitted under the subscription licence that their university has signed with publishers, and they learn about the various rights associated with "[walk-in users](#)", "authorised users", "affiliated users", and "site users" etc.

In a few cases we discover that authors never gave up the copyright in their papers, or negotiated a specific contract. I know of a few recent cases, for instance, where authors have published with Elsevier and Wiley without assigning any rights. They simply gave the publisher a licence to publish their article. When I am in a provocative mood I tell authors that these must have been really good articles, and I challenge them to try the same for their article.

RP: Quite a mix of views then. One thing this demonstrates, perhaps, is that publishers don't need to acquire copyright in order to publish scholarly papers?

LW: That's true. We have also learned that regardless of their knowledge of copyright, authors will reach very different conclusions. When they are confused by it all, for instance, some of them will say, "I am puzzled, so you cannot do anything with my article."

In exactly the same situation others will say, "I am puzzled, so you can do whatever you want with my article." This invites the question: "Why should we only listen to the first group of authors?"

Then there are a growing number of civil disobedient authors. Indeed, our new minister of education and research stated openly in a national newspaper, when he was still a scientist, that the growing interest in Open Access to knowledge was more important to him than what his copyright contract did or did not allow. But then all great movements in human history have begun with civil disobedience. So why not here too?

RP: *What's certain is that there is a lot of confusion surrounding copyright.*

LW: Absolutely. But we have been able to exploit this chaos to maximise the number of papers that we can make Open Access.

At the same time, we are trying to bring order to the chaos too. Together with the UK's Joint Information Systems Committee ([JISC](#)), for instance, we have defined a new [standard licence](#) for authors publishing scholarly papers, and we encourage them to use that licence instead of just signing away their copyrights.

RP: *What the copyright maximalism practised by publishers means for libraries, of course, is that they are finding it increasingly difficult to pay the licensing fees necessary to provide their researchers with access to electronic journals, many of which will contain papers authored by those same researchers in the first place. In an [article](#) you published in [First Monday](#) in 2005 you said, "a licence is simply an act of surrender by libraries that has to be renewed every three to five years. And what is politely referred to as licence negotiations are merely a euphemism for the begging of favours." The problem I guess is that in assigning copyright in their papers to publishers researchers are putting publishers in a monopolistic position, and libraries in an invidious position. In a nutshell, once publishers acquire ownership of the research they can charge what they like for it, even though they are selling back to research institutions what those research institutions produced in the first place?*

LW: Exactly. And under the current arrangements if libraries don't like the price-performance ratio they cannot leave the negotiating table and look for a competitor. There are none. So the information that researchers need to check the state of the art before they begin a new and costly project is exclusively in the hands of the specific publisher opposite you. And he knows that, and that defines your position.

Of course he is a gentleman and he has brought some trifles for your consolation, like a small collection of electronic books, or a discount for retro-digitised material. But at the end of the day you have to sign the new multi-year contract, without cancellations, and with a 5% annual price increase built into it.

RP: *What can be done about it?*

LW: Well, one thing we have done is to create [Knowledge Exchange](#), which is a partnership between SURF, JISC, the German Research Foundation ([DFG](#)) and Denmark's Electronic Research Library ([DEFF](#)). Currently Knowledge Exchange is in the process of

tendering for new business models that can be built around the licensing contracts we have developed on behalf of a multinational consortium of organisations.

RP: Can you say more about this?

LW: Publishers and digital content owners are being invited to state what they could offer using these licences, and what business models they would use to do so.

It is too early to predict success, but progress reports are being **published** on the Knowledge Exchange web site.

Mandates

RP: As we mentioned, notwithstanding the success you have been having in the Netherlands, filling IRs filled is proving very difficult. Some believe that the only solution is for research funders and research institutions to force their researchers to self-archive their papers in their IR, by means of a mandate. Are you in favour of this?

LW: Not primarily. Authors are spontaneously in favour of Open Access. All that stops them from acting are the administrative, financial and copyright obstacles that exist, or are perceived to exist. So, the first priority for institutions or research funders should be to remove those (mental) hurdles. Only when that has been done will an institution be in a position to mandate self-archiving for the few academic mavericks who always oppose everything.

In other words, mandating could be an eventual step, but a mandate is not necessary in order to start the institutional OA enabling process.

RP: What is wrong with imposing mandates now anyway?

LW: If people are not convinced it would take constant policing to maintain the rules. That would be costly and annoying. If they are convinced you don't need a mandate. So the answer is not to mandate them, but to convince them!

RP: OA advocate Stevan Harnad argues that although the Netherlands has achieved greater success than other countries in filling its IRs, this has only seen deposit rates increase from an average of 5% to 25%, to 30%. If instead you had introduced a mandate, he says, this figure could have grown to around 90% in two years. He concludes, therefore, that mandates are essential. You don't agree?

LW: Stevan must be clairvoyant. We simply don't know the figures, and I have told him that. The fact is, our universities are just not interested in a green mandate. Mandates cause resistance and they do not solve the problem.

RP: I think one of Harnad's points is that a mandate could overcome many of the obstacles you mentioned (e.g. copyright), and reduce the impact of publisher embargoes

— as you know, an increasing number of publishers are insisting that researchers do not self-archive for, say, six months after a paper has been published. To this end he has proposed what he calls an "Immediate Deposit / Optional Access" (ID/OA) mandate. Effectively, this means forcing researchers to self-archive immediately on publication, but allow them to initially only make the bibliographic data OA. His reasoning is that if the details of papers are available on the Web then people can contact the author and ask him or her to email a copy over to them. What are your views on this approach?

LW: This is the so-called green mandate, which simply uses the classical [fair use](#) clause, but only for the author's version, not the final published version! Oh yes, and at the publisher's discretion this version may be circulated openly.

RP: *Can you elaborate on that?*

LW: Sure. The ID/OA process has three steps:

1. After acceptance by a publisher researchers have to post the author's version of their article in their own closed IR.
2. Via a worldwide metadata catalogue other researchers can request a copy of this version.
3. At the publisher's discretion this version may be circulated openly.

Now suppose that the whole world has been given a green mandate, and see what has really been gained.

RP: *What would have been gained?*

LW: First, let's consider the issue of retrievability: As a consequence of the interoperability of the IRs it will be relatively easy to build a coherent worldwide catalogue of separate publications. The metadata may include the table of contents and text snippets, or the abstract, of the document. I agree that this is a big leap forward compared to the current patchwork of public and private catalogues and databases.

Next consider the availability of the document: A simple request button (already possible in some repositories) enables the user to ask for a copy of the document. The request is forwarded to the holder of the document who can grant it under the standard fair use clause — via peer-to-peer document supply. In fact, this classical clause permits the holder to deliver both the author's version and the published version. As the author's version is by definition available before the published version, the green mandate makes research documents available earlier. But the gap between the moment of acceptance and publication in scholarly publishing is narrowing. So, this advantage is lessening.

Here is the key question however: What has this green mandate got to do with Open Access? And the answer is: essentially nothing. Under a green mandate the accessibility of both the author's version and the published version is at the publisher's discretion. At this

moment in time, most publishers are more tolerant with respect to the author's version than to the published version. One can only speculate about their attitude in the future.

RP: *In short, you don't believe an ID/OA mandate is much of a step forward?*

LW: A green mandate may certainly enhance the document delivery process. In that regard I am in favour of it. But the letters "OA" in the acronym ID/OA are confusing and misleading. It is a pity that "OA" is an unprotected brand.

RP: *But why don't you think that the green mandate will ultimately lead to real OA?*

LW: The way is too long; there are too many parties involved. Just follow me. You need a majority of institutions that not only adopt a mandate but are also prepared to police and sanction it. Then you need someone who will build and maintain the universal catalogue with the button. Next, end users would need to take up the service in large numbers, far more than use the current document supply system.

Subsequently, authors would need to be prepared to deliver the papers. Not just once, which is fun, but repeatedly — including when they are away at conferences or on holiday. And this would then need to convince libraries that journal subscriptions were no longer needed, to the point where they started to cancel them. As a result, publishers would then be forced to adopt OA.

What may also happen, of course, is that publishers simply shutter their business, and the 'free' stream of accepted versions dries up.

RP: *So you are clear that the Netherlands can achieve 100% OA without ever having to resort to a mandate?*

LW: [Asymptotically](#) yes. But not without incentivising researchers, and not without providing support and services.

Budget neutral

RP: *Certainly people are trying hard to force publishers to embrace OA. And in some cases this appears to be working. For instance, traditional publishers are increasingly offering so-called hybrid journals — where an author can opt to pay for his or her paper to be made OA on acceptance of the article. However, take-up has been very slow. Why do you think that is?*

LW: Publishers claim that this so called "hybrid" or "open choice" model is budget neutral because the subscription price of a journal is reduced in proportion to the fraction of up-front fees paid for the Open Access articles in it. But this mechanism is far from budget neutral for the institution that has to make the "open choice".

RP: *Why do you say that it is not budget neutral for the institution?*

LW: When an institution decides to enable its authors to use the Open Access option of a hybrid journal it pays an APC. If the number of Open Access articles published covers 1% of the total number of articles in that journal then the publisher will reduce the subscription price of that journal by 1% the next year. This makes the whole operation budget neutral on a global scale for the publisher.

The global price reduction, however, has been paid for by that local institution, not all the other institutions who subscribe to the journal. Yet these other institutions will also benefit, even though they did nothing to earn the price reduction.

This means that any institution thinking of opting for open choice will be inclined to wait for other institutions to do so first. This is called the 'sur-place' effect. And it has nothing to do with an aversion to Open Access. It is simply an aversion to double paying.

Publishers, however, are able to claim that the low uptake reflects an aversion to Open Access. This is perverse propaganda, and I challenge the so-called open choice publishers to offer a choice model that is budget neutral at an institutional level; so that its library, for instance, can convert subscription money into publication fees. Then we would be talking.

Full control

***RP:** You said earlier that rather than introduce mandates, research institutions should remove the barriers to OA. The University of California ([UC](#)) has proposed a novel approach. That is, to insist that, as a condition of employment, researchers must give UC permission to self-archive their papers. The aim is to ensure that UC faculty do not assign exclusive rights in their papers to publishers, and so allow the university to archive faculty papers without any constraints. What are the pros and cons of this approach in your view?*

LW: If at the same time UC expects its authors to publish in prestigious journals (which demand the assignment of exclusive rights), then this approach will force its authors to do the splits. However, UC could solve this problem by tendering the review process.

So here is my suggestion for an imaginary call for proposals from UC for such a system.

"Annually, UC produces N articles in (sub) discipline Y . UC wants to tender the reviewing process for these articles under the following conditions:

- 1. The reviewing process must be independent, prestigious and swift.*
- 2. For the moment, the reviewing remains classical i.e. anonymous and pre-publication.*
- 3. All articles have to pass the reviewing process.*
- 4. As a result of the reviewing the articles are marked 1 to 5.*

5. *Articles with marks 3 to 5 are accepted for posting in the institutional repository and for immediate open publishing on the Internet through UC's web site.*
6. *Authors may also publish their articles in any journal — Open Access or toll gated — thereby ensuring that they don't assign exclusive rights to a publisher.*
7. *In UC's appraisal procedures, be they personal, project-based or institutional, the articles with marks 3, 4 and 5 are weighed as if they were published in journals with impact factors 3, 8 and 15 respectively.*
8. *Separately, UC will tender the coherent presentation of the accepted articles on a highly-branded web site including a citation index, social tagging and other Web 2.0 facilities.*
9. *UC will contract a trusted third party to take care of the long term curation of the accepted articles.*

Proposals for a three year contract should be sent to The allocation of the contract will be based on the best price-performance ratio."

RP: So you are suggesting that UC goes one step further: retain full control over the intellectual output of its faculty and also control the process of communicating that output to the rest of the research community. As such, peer review would be outsourced to publishers as a gold service in the way you suggested earlier. In effect, this would turn the current scholarly publishing system on its head, by putting the institution at the heart of the process, not the publisher?

LW: Right; although I would put less stress on the control aspect, and more on the opportunity side. A top university offers its researchers good labs, human and digital networks, conferences etc., and a high-class appraisal system. To make this system independent, however, it should not be done in-house.

That said, in my scenario UC does indeed take responsibility for the communication and appraisal of its intellectual output, thereby enabling its authors to attractively publish in an Open Access manner.

RP: This would incur some additional cost presumably?

LW: Sure, there will be institutional money involved. But there is money involved in the whole research process anyway, and the review process is a built-in part of it.

RP: CERN has adopted a different approach. As you know, it introduced a self-archiving mandate a while ago; and it is now seeking to convert particle physics journals to gold OA via its SCOAP³ initiative? Is this a good approach?

LW: CERN is rich. Its plan effectively means that it will lease a few toll-gated journals, and give Open Access to their content. Why not? But the model is not scalable financially. And their mandate is somewhat funny. It's like mandating the sun to rise in the east every morning. And see, it does!

RP: *How do you mean?*

LW: CERN's authors have posted their articles in [arXiv](#) voluntarily for over fifteen years now. So, why do they need to introduce a mandate?

But the point to bear in mind is that CERN is a unique institution. And other disciplines will be specific too. Law will be different from chemistry and linguistics from genetics or social sciences. So while I do not oppose the CERN approach I do have some questions e.g. about the copyright transfer of their articles.

Every year counts

RP: *Are you saying that every discipline will need to have its own OA solution? If so, what are the implications of that?*

LW: What I am saying is that if you think in terms of outsourcing the peer review and publishing process you can adapt the tender approach that I suggested to the specific needs of any discipline or community.

So, peer review can be personal or anonymous, pre- or post-publishing. Social tagging may be included. You may also want a DAP [[Data Availability Policy](#)] journal. Essentially, the level of sophistication and the kind of add-ons that you provide for your publishing web site can be specified however you want.

In general, you define your needs and ask for proposals under proper market conditions; as you do in the real world.

RP: *What's your view of the recent [EC Communication on scientific information in the digital age](#), which has proposed encouraging researchers to publish their papers in "author-pays" OA, or [hybrid](#), journals, but rejected calls for a European self-archiving mandate?*

LW: Unlike research funders and universities the EC has legislative power. It can use that power to enforce market competition, as it does regularly. Why not here? Of course publishers will cry that their industry is at threat. And we should emphasise the phrase "their industry": their current monopoly-based industry is indeed under threat.

But the publishing industry as such is not. The Directory of Open Access Journals ([DOAJ](#)) produces a list of over 2,600 Open Access journals showing that the Open Access model is viable.

I am absolutely convinced that as soon as Open Access to the results of publicly financed research is made legally binding the publishers will adapt their business models overnight, and develop a vital industry. Their current outcry is just propaganda to protect their comfort zone.

RP: *So you believe the EC should have been more robust?*

LW: I do. It is a shame to see how timid the European commissioner for science and research [Janez Potočnik](#) and the commissioner for information society and media [Viviane Reding](#) [the Commissioners responsible for the EC Communication] were *vis-à-vis* the publishers. They should give the task to [Neelie Kroes](#), the commissioner for competition. She would do the job — and the sooner the better. Every year counts.

RP: *Most people agree that the EC should have done more, but they argue that it should have introduced a mandate. You say we don't need a mandate. So what do you think the EC should have done that it did not do?*

LW: First and foremost, the EC should have entered into a process of de-monopolising the publishing industry so that new entrants have a fair chance. They, the EC, know how to tackle monopolies and cartels.

Next, for the publications that are the result of EC sponsored research, they should have adopted recommendation A1 of their own study.

RP: *That was the recommendation for a mandate?*

LW: A green mandate is one way to comply with A1 yes.

RP: *Certainly the [petition](#) that the OA Movement organised in support of A1 called for a mandate.*

LW: Right, but A1 leaves room for other options. Gold OA, for example, is the most natural interpretation of it. Toll-gated articles that are freed after six months are OK as well. It could be that publishers will ask a price for that. So let's tender and see what happens. This time we have a lever. When conditions are unacceptable, journals may be excluded as publication platforms for EC publications.

RP: *What then are the main challenges facing OA advocates today, and how long do you think it will be before the world achieves 100% OA?*

LW: The main challenge is how to get from here to there. As the Irish gag has it about the Englishman who asked for the road to A: "Sir, if I were you I would not start from here."

The challenge is how to get rid of the current publisher bridle. The [big deals](#) absorb all the money available. There is practically no room for new initiatives. It's even worse: The sums that are used for shielding the information behind toll gates (technology, contracts)

and for anti-OA propaganda and lobbying are being paid for out of the unsustainable subscriptions that libraries are being forced to pay.

If governments and university authorities let things drift it will take at least another ten years before libraries and authors reach a critical OA mass.

RP: Finally, when it is finally achieved, what are the implications of OA for the various players in the scholarly communication process?

LW: Researchers will see their work published faster and used more often, publishers will have to cope with a proper market environment, libraries will become the institutional authority and a global hub for the academic information domain, and universities will finally take responsibility for the communication of their intellectual product.

RP: Thank you for your time.

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