

Scientific Publications in the Context of Transitions to Open Access

[Editorial]

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Open access seems to have no way back and this, in turn, has generated innumerable tensions between three actors in the system: publishers, researchers and institutional governance. Firstly, the publishing houses that have monopolized scientific publishing in the world, such as Elsevier, Springer-Nature, Wiley-Blackwell, Taylor and Francis or Sage, have seen their business of selling content threatened. The questioning by the costs of access to the contents of these publishing houses that have acquired hundreds of journals and have merged publishing houses, which according to Villatoro (2017) are close to 22 billion euros and a profit of 40% apparently higher than that of companies like Apple, Google or Amazon and; only a publisher like Elsevier invoiced, for the year 2016, more than 2600 million euros with profits of one billion euros. This budget is more than all the investment in scientific research in Latin American countries; this has led universities and science and technology systems in some countries to raise statements such as DORA and LEIDEN, which have allowed them to reach reviews of this externality of the economic dynamics of science and even in some countries have created legislation that are

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demanding changes in science communication policies, especially on access to knowledge to break the paradox that is generated “investing in science and not being able to access it”, which has led to reflections of the consequences of the concentration of the largest amount of scientific knowledge in the world in a few publishing companies; These five companies own more than 50% of the world’s scientific production.

Initiatives such as Plan S have pressured the development of transformational agreements that are leading some of these companies to change their business model, as in the case of Springer, which will change to open access, but it is not clear how the costs for researchers (APC) will be for publishing and what will be the processes of transparency in the cost structures.

These problems have reached our institutions in several ways, first, it demands that we ask ourselves questions about the formation of institutional governance in their academic, research, administrative and even rector's offices, as well as librarians to negotiate agreements with these publishing houses.

It is also necessary to evaluate how these transformations will affect researchers and publishers in order to show how to prepare for the future, since in the institutional prospective it is a condition to reflect on the impacts on the entire academic community.

Another important point is what we are seeing, some publishing houses are acquiring journals in Latin America and prestigious universities have begun to deliver their journals that have cost resources and sustained investments to the institutions and even when these offer that the institutions maintain control of content editing they assume full control of them, it is clear that not always the governments evaluate these investments and these products, both in economic and cultural terms, the

artifacts of communication of knowledge are an academic product but above all a contribution to culture.

It seems evident that institutions must have open access policies and these are relevant to guide the actions of all actors in our academic communities. The transitions we are living and will live through demand multiple and complex challenges to the institutions and they have no other alternative but to identify them, to look for ways out that prepare us strategically in the midst of these transitions that are now permanent in the case of publications.

References

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