

Dear Sir,

It has just been brought to my attention that the EU has been considering open access for the scientific literature, so I am sending you my views.

As a practicing scientist (for over 40 years) there are 2 points I should like to make, the more important being the second:

1. Immediate open access is a great advantage to the scientist; this is ever more true with the proliferation of potential journals in which research can be published. Too frequently do I find that I cannot see an article because the local University (Cambridge) happens not to have a subscription for that journal, or that the article is old and the publisher demands extra money (which I cannot provide) before one can see the paper. This is a new problem because previously there were far fewer journals and anything significant (in my field at least) was available in our local library.

2. I am concerned at the manner in which the ownership of most journals is now in the hands of a few very large companies. I do not know how this will affect scientific publishing but I am sure these companies are in the business for very large profits. **And as a primary producer of this wealth, I would much rather see the benefits of publishing be returned in some way to those who originally funded it - usually the taxpayer. In a world of anti-scientific bias (where it is intellectually acceptable to believe in "intelligent design" or to deny climate change is caused by Man) it is more important than ever that scientific results should be widely accessible, even to the layman.**

In short, I strongly urge you to push for open access, even if only after 6 months.

Sincerely

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Mark S. Bretscher, PhD, FRS,
Laboratory of Molecular Biology
Medical Research Council