

What sinister time machine?

Björn Brembs 

Published July 19, 2021

Citation

Brembs, B. (2021, July 19). What sinister time machine?. *Bjoern.brembs.blog*. <https://doi.org/10.59350/725sz-vkq65>

Keywords

Science Politics, Infrastructure, Time Travel, Transformative Agreements

Copyright

Copyright © Björn Brembs 2021. Distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

A recent [OASPA guest post](#) reminded me of something I have been wondering about for several years now. What sinister time travel device is keeping some sections of the scholarly ecosystem from leaving the past and coming back to the present? The guest post only stands in for many international examples of what most of the discussions about “Transformative Agreements” reverberate around and only serves as the latest prompt for me to finally jot these observations down. There are three things these discussions on transformative agreements have in common and that crop up time and again:

1. They all seem to treat access to the literature as if it still was a problem. Before ~2013 or so, it still was a major problem. It's 2021 now and access is not such a big deal [any more](#).
2. They mostly seem to implicitly assume that scholarly articles must be expensive. That may have been the case for subscription articles. It's 2021 now and one can actually look up [prices online](#) and find out that we've been overpaying by a factor of around ten.
3. These discussions also universally seem to tacitly endorse the perspective that the journals they want to 'transition' are somehow actually worth transitioning. That may have been a quaint but admirable position before the so-called 'replication crisis' emerged, but today it is 2021 and we know our [journals](#) are a major contributing [factor](#) to unreliability.

So, to me, it appears some pernicious time machine must be keeping them from entering the present. Which bold superheroine can travel back in time and bring them home into the present?

If participants in these discussions could be brought to acknowledge that 2021 is actually a thing that is happening right now, certainly they would be headed in a completely different direction, one would hope?