

SHARE: Library-based publishing becoming a reality?

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The recently released [development draft](#) for SHared Access Research Ecosystem (SHARE), authored by the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in response to the [OSTP memo on public access](#) to federally funded research in the US sounds a lot like the library-based publishing system I've [been perpetually arguing for](#). It's even in our [paper on the pernicious consequences of journal rank](#). Could this be the initial step to break the stranglehold publishers have on scholarly communication? Here some key excerpts from the document:

universities have invested in the infrastructure, tools, and services necessary to provide effective and efficient access to their research and scholarship. The new White House directive provides a compelling reason to integrate higher education's investments to date into a system of cross-institutional digital repositories that will be known as SHared Access Research Ecosystem (SHARE).

[...]

Universities already own and operate key pieces of the infrastructure, including digital institutional repositories, Internet2, Digital Preservation Network (DPN)², and more. These current capacities and capabilities will naturally be extended over time. Universities have also invested in recent years in working with Principal Investigators and other campus partners on developing digital data management plans to comply with agency requirements.

[...]

University-based digital repositories will become a public access and long-term preservation system for the results of federally funded research. SHARE achieves the mission of higher education by providing access to and preserving the intellectual assets produced by the academy, in particular those that are made openly available.

[...]

Agencies that choose to develop their own digital repositories, or work with an existing repository such as PubMed Central, could simply adopt the same metadata fields and practices to become a linked node in this federated, consensus-based system. Discipline-based repositories, some of which are housed at universities, will be included.

[...]

The SHARE workflow is straightforward, and using existing protocols can be fully automated.

- 1. PI or author submits manuscript to journal as currently occurs.*
- 2. Journal publisher coordinates peer review, accepts, and edits manuscripts as currently occurs.*
- 3. Journal submits XML version of the final peer reviewed manuscript (including the abstract) to the PI's designated repository, or the author submits the final peer-*

reviewed and edited manuscript accepted for publication (including the abstract) to the PI's designated digital repository.

In principle, this sounds almost verbatim like the system I advocate, with a few exceptions. Clearly, SHARE is still a 'green' OA route, meaning that regular journal publishing still occurs. I see no major issue with this, as some transition period will inevitably be required. The important part is that we wrestle at least some control over our literature back from the publishers.

I also find it important to point out the combined effort of these organizations to integrate the data mandates with the literature. Now we are only missing software requirements – I wonder why these are missing?

Another task not mentioned will be to integrate the back-archives of all the published literature into SHARE. Once we could get that incorporated, we'd potentially be able to offer a superior search, filter and discovery system than anything currently on the market – a system which I would guess to be crucial for weaning ourselves from publishers altogether, eventually.

In conclusion, this might be a very first, baby-step of our emancipation from corporate publishers. If we [take the example of SciELO](#), and inspire concerted action of a critical mass of institutions of higher education and research, we might just be able to achieve a fully functional scholarly communication system, perhaps even within this generation. Now is the time to provide our feedback to this draft. I think open access activists should get together and tell them what needs to happen.