

# The ultimate Open Access timeline

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## Abstract

NIH, 1961: Journals are slow and cumbersome, why don't we experiment with circulating preprints among peers to improve on the way we do science (Information Exchange Groups)? Publishers, 1967: You have got to be kidding. Nobody cares about improving science, [...] [↓ Read the rest of this entry...](#)

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<b>NIH, 1961:</b>	Journals are slow and cumbersome, why don't we experiment with circulating preprints among peers to improve on the way we do science (Information Exchange Groups)?
<b>Publishers, 1967:</b>	You have got to be kidding. Nobody cares about improving science, stop it, do it now.
<b>Physicists, 1991:</b>	Hey, look, there is this cool online thing where circulate preprints for nearly free and everyone can read them (arxiv).
<b>Libraries:</b>	Yay, we can pay for big subscription deals!
<b>Publishers:</b>	Cricket (counting money)
<b>Scholars, 1999:</b>	We can actually use that cheap online technology on a broader scale to ensure sound medical information for the world! (E-Biomed)
<b>Publishers:</b>	No way José
<b>Societies:</b>	But subscriptions are our money!
<b>Scholars, 2002:</b>	Actually, this cool online thing is how we should be doing it not only in physics (BOAI).
<b>Publishers:</b>	Let's replace paywalls for reading with paywalls for publishing (BMC, PLoS)
<b>Also publishers:</b>	Making money with bulk publishing is so gross! Let's make money with bulk publishing ourselves (Megajournals, hand-me-down journals).
<b>Libraries:</b>	Can we justify our existence by just paying for stuff?
<b>NIH, 2005:</b>	Pretty please, if you have one of our grants, could you put a copy into our PMC?
<b>Scholars:</b>	Huh?
<b>Publishers, 2007:</b>	Open science is junk science (PRISM/ Dezenhall)
<b>NIH, 2008:</b>	If you take money from us, you <i>have to</i> make the papers open (OA mandate)
<b>Publishers:</b>	

But nobody can distinguish our copy from the one of the authors! We need to have exclusive money-making embargos on our papers or we lose our 36% profit margin!

**NIH:**

Mkay. On top, we'll make tax payers pay for the open part, too (PMC). Wouldn't dream of risking your profit. Like that?

**Publishers, 2011:**

Let's use all that money we got from the libraries to pay politicians so they sponsor a bill that makes all this NIH 'open' BS illegal! (RWA)

**Biologists, 2013:**

Hey, look, it only took us 52 years to recover from publishers shutting down our Information Exchange Groups and now we too can do what physicists have been doing for the last 22 years! (biorxiv)

**Publishers:**

We can actually do the cheap publishing, too – with peer-review on top! (F1000Research, ScienceOpen)

**Scholars:**

Does publishing there get me a job?

**Libraries:**

Can we pay for cheap publishing, too?

**Publishers, 2017:**

We can actually create a market where we all have to compete with our services such that prices stay down and the competition drives innovation! (ORC)

**Libraries:**

In case we can't pay for it any more, can you funders do that?

**Funders:**

Oh, sure this is cool, we want to have those! (Wellcome Open Research, Gates Open Research, etc.)

**Scholars:**

Open what?

**States, countries et al.:**

This is really getting ridiculous. We really have to stop these rip-off subscriptions and show the publishers who's their daddy. My way or the highway!

OK, we'll pay them even more if only they make the papers finally open – next year or so. Fine, some supra-inflation price increases are only fair. And you know what? Surveillance capitalism is all

the rage right now, it's totally cool to hand over usage data from readers to publishers, ok? That's how things are these days, get over it.

**EU funders, 2018:**

If you take our money, you have to make your papers open, but no money-making embargo allowed this time! Also, no more hybrid double dipping! (Plan S)

**Publishers:**

Hmm, surely nobody is going to notice if we just add an "X" to the title of our hybrid journal, pretend it's now two journals and keep double dipping? (mirror journals)

**Scholars:**

But by threat of burger-flipping we have no choice but to salami-slice our discoveries into tiny morsels that need to be sexed up beyond recognition so the Nature editors don't see how incremental our work is. So because of this academic freedom we really won't make our papers open.

**Libraries:**

Should we pay for mirror journals?

**Societies:**

Now you are really trying to kill societies! Don't you love what we do? Isn't our mission to the general public worth millions and millions of library money? We need to stop this silly 'open' trend from re-surfacing in the US and tell Trump to Make American Science Great Again (AAP letter). It worked for E-Biomed in '99 and it's going to work again.

**Libraries:**

There has got to be a way for us to pay for something in there! Yes, here's the DEAL: we just got some power back by finally being able (thanks sci-hub!) to cancel the 30-year-old Big Deal subscriptions, so with this new-found power let's hand our cojones right back to the publishers on a silver platter by making Big Deal publishing subscriptions with them that no sci-hub can ever liberate us from!

**No-deal scholars:**

OK, I can publish for free in a journal with long titles, or I can take a loan and publish in a journal that gives me tenure? Tough choice! Thanks for nothing, OA wackaloons!

**Publishers, 2020:**

Yesss, my prrrrrrecioussss – how about paying us some money just for not rejecting your paper right away? (EPCs)

**Libraries:**

Can we pay those, too?

So this is essentially what happened instead of us sitting down and thinking how we could spend our money in the most technologically savvy way to the benefit of science, scholars and society. A generation later, roughly US\$300 billion poorer and none the wiser, it seems.

*For a serious timeline, or for looking up the references in this one, see the [Open Access Directory](#).*