

# Open Access and Digital Repositories

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# Talk outline

- History of open access movement
- How open access is achieved
- Benefits of open access
- Description of my research
- Preliminary findings with examples

# What is open access?

1. The author and right holder grants a free worldwide, right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly.
2. A complete version of the work is deposited in at least one online repository.

- Berlin Declaration 2003:  
<http://oa.mpg.de/openaccess-berlin/berlindeclaration.html>



# Why open access?

- Basic argument: Why should the taxpayer who has already paid for the research have to pay again (in the form of subscriptions) to see the results of that work?

# Open Access is all the rage

- The **NIH Public Access Policy** - May 2, 2005.
- **The Wellcome Trust**, Oct, 2005. – extended to all outstanding grants Oct 2006
- **Research Councils UK (RCUK)** -Open access mandates took effect at four of the eight, Oct 2006.
- **China** announced a mandate for open data, Oct 2006
  
- **Pending:**
  - **American Center for CURES Act of 2005**, to mandate open access to publicly-funded medical research sponsored by NIH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Agency for Healthcare Research. Dec 2005.
  - **Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006** introduced, to mandate open access to most federally funded research. May 2006



# Even in Australia

## ■ Statements of support for OA:

- The Australian Group of Eight released a Statement on open access to scholarly information - May 2004
- The Australian Research Information Infrastructure Committee (ARIIC) issued its Open Access Statement - December 2004
- The Australian Government Productivity Commission released *Public Support for Science and Innovation* recommending open access to publicly-funded research – March 2007

## ■ Requirements with teeth:

- Research Quality Framework report recommends open access to publicly-funded research - October 2006
- ARC & NHMRC “encourage access to research findings” - January 2007



# Roads to open access

- **‘Green’ road:**

Depositing a copy of a pre-print or post-print into an Institutional or subject-based repository

- **‘Gold’ road:**

Publishing articles in an open access journal. (The Directory of Open Access Journals\* lists 2620 journals, with 789 searchable at article level, and 130089 articles) – note the **‘hybrid option’**. (\*<http://www.doaj.org/>)

# The hybrid option

- The 'hybrid' option is where the author pays an up-front fee by choice - allowing their paper to be published as open access by the journal. In theory the journal proportionally reduces the subscription fee. (Not a great deal of evidence to show whether this is actually happening.)
- 2 programs launched each in 2004 & 2005.
- 12 launched between May-Dec 2006



# Publishers are generally OK with the Green road

## Statistics for the 266 publishers on [Sherpa/Romeo] list

- Green can archive pre-print and post-print (99) 37%
- Blue can archive post-print (ie final draft) (68) 26%
- Yellow can archive pre-print (ie pre-refereeing) (28) 11%
- White archiving not formally supported (71) 27%
- Summary: **73%** of publishers on this list formally **allow** some form of self-archiving.
- <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php> (accessed 3 April 2007)



# Where I'm coming from

- Honours thesis in 1995 in Science and Technology Studies at UNSW about move to electronic journals
- Worked in science journalism and publishing 1996-2003



# My PhD question

- “What are the barriers to the uptake of open access publishing options in Australia?”



# Methodology

- Interviewed 43 academics at UNSW and ANU about their interaction with the literature.
- Will triangulate later 2007 at another institution



# Finding 1: Disciplines differ!

- There is no such thing as a generic academic
- Interviewed Computer Scientists, Chemists and Sociologists because of their different publication methods
- Discovered they differ in almost every way



# Computer scientists

- Computer scientists are already practising open access – through personal websites.
- They keep their own libraries and use Google with gay abandon.
- They report no barriers to the literature.
- They are cognizant with copyright requirements (which they often choose to ignore).
- They do NOT want to use a badly written computer interface.
- They are sick of having to explain they publish in conferences.



# Sociologists/Anthropologists

- Sociologists are concerned about IP.
- They don't have the access to the literature they would like because they use books.
  - “I buy my own sources. The library ran out of money half way into the year” - Sociology
- They are unaware of copyright restrictions.
- Publication times can take up to 9 years (3 is more usual).
  - “University of New South Wales is heavily oriented to the sciences and technologies.” - Sociology



# Chemists

- Chemists will often have several early papers they did not help to write.
- They are well serviced by the library.
- Copyright is not an issue for them.
- They almost exclusively use SciFinder.
- They often keep their own libraries.
- They are annoyed they have to submit camera-ready papers.
  - “We provide everything, the refereeing and content and they charge us for it.” - Chemistry





# Finding 2: No-one is talking to the academics

- Government bureaucracy and university management consult each other and write rules
- In 3 years of workshops about implementing repositories or encouraging open access or RQF - I have often been the only academic there (almost without exception)



# Example: Publish or perish

- Universities want academics to publish lots
- More publications means a higher place in university rankings
- A higher place means more overseas enrolments and therefore more income



# Does the university help the process?

- Most interviewees had minimal instruction about how to write & publish their work:
  - “It took me years to find out that conference papers didn’t count” - Sociology
- Some academics are making an effort to improve on their own experiences
  - “I give students instruction. By the time they finish they can write a paper” – Comp Sci
- Others aren’t
  - “I have no formality or handholding with students re publishing “ – Chemistry

# Example: Promotion committees

- Promotions committees rarely consist of people in the field of the reviewee.
  - “There is too much emphasis on how many papers and they don’t look at the quality or if things furthered the area of research.” - Chemistry
- Everyone has their own reference point, which often differs from other people.
  - “ARC Discovery Projects – how can you fit a model alien to the actual needs of your research?” - Sociology
- Computer scientists publish in conferences – but try telling that to the promotions committees.
  - “I get the impression the uni wants to push academics to publish in journals. The computer scientists use conferences.” – Comp Sci



# Finding 3: Academics are really busy

- Teaching is all-consuming - very little research gets done in teaching periods.
- They do not have time to take on extra administrative tasks.
  - “My schedule is packed. I make an appointment to see my own children in my calendar.” - Comp Sci

# Example: Reviewing loads

- Some chemists are reviewing 50-70 papers a year, others are doing 3.
  - “I peer reviewed about 70 papers last year, and knocked back a similar number of requests.” - Chemistry
- Some comp. scientists reported receiving 150-200 papers for reviewing/year, others 4.
  - “I review 3 papers per week – on average. It takes 4-5 hours a week” - Computer Sci
- Sociologists do fewer, but the papers are more dense.
  - “5-6 articles per year and a couple of books” - Sociology

# Reviewing is without reward

- This is hidden work
  - “If you publish in a journal then you will be asked to referee but the reverse isn’t true” - Chemistry
- Majority are philosophical about the load
  - “Peer review is very worthwhile, it’s a necessary function” - Sociology
- Very rarely any compensation - at least computer scientists can put Program Committee duties onto their CV
  - “We pay with personal/professional funds to travel [to committee meetings]. The conference pays for the meeting room and meals for the day. - Comp Sci



# Finding 4: Management fatigue

- Academics at UNSW are suffering from management fatigue.
  - “The requirements change every 6-12 months” - Comp Sci
  - “I seem to get asked to do things three times a year” - Chemistry
  - “Promotions committees shouldn’t ‘weigh’ [your publications], they should look for articles that are genuinely new” - Sociology





# Finding 5: What's a repository?

- Very few people (at UNSW or ANU) knew there was a repository at their university

# Some think it's a good idea

- “I would put my material into a repository – if doesn't prohibit from publishing in accepted journal.” – Chemistry
- “I would put material into it – partly out of misplaced obligation and vanity” - Sociology
- “May put things in – provided it can be searched.” – Comp Sci
- “I like the idea of being able to access everything in a repository.” – Chemistry
- “It would be good to tie into the reporting.” – Chemistry
- “I would put work online if [the repository was] available.” – Comp Sci

# Some don't

- “I have a concern about plagiarism” - Sociology
- “I don't see any harm in depositing in a IR, but don't see any use in it either.” – Chemistry
- “It's easy for me to maintain a website. I make datasets available as well - they wouldn't know what to do with data. It will take 6 months for them to update it.” – Comp Sci
- “I don't know what benefit it is for me, sounds like more work to do it. I wonder what incentive there is apart from counting articles.” – Chemistry



# Academics generally support OA principles

- “Don’t think knowledge should be owned. Once published its out there it has life of its own, it shouldn’t have strings attached.” - Sociology
- “I try to favour society journals over commercial journals. Because they put something back.” - Chemistry
- “What’s science for if you don’t have things available.” – Comp Sci

# But they are concerned OA might affect their academic standing

- “I wouldn’t want to publish where I can’t get an impact factor” – Chemistry
- “There are all sorts of copyright restrictions. In the US you sign a contract for sole publication rights. [Self depositing] is only for short term gain.” - Sociology
- “There are a couple of chemistry journals that are OA but there is nothing of importance in them. I don’t think we get any credit for it.” – Chemistry



# Summary of findings

1. Disciplines differ
2. No-one is talking to the academics
3. Academics are really busy
4. Management fatigue
5. Repository ignorance



# So to those implementing a repository:

- Go and talk to your academic staff
- DON'T make assumptions
- It has to be easy
- Tread carefully – they are fed up