

This issue marks the midpoint of *Information Technology and Libraries*' fifth year as an open-access e-only journal. The move to online-only in 2012 was inevitable, as *ITAL*'s print subscription base was longer covering the costs of producing and distributing the print journal. Moving to an e-only model using an open-source publishing platform (the Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal Systems) provided a low-cost production and distribution system that has allowed *ITAL* to continue publishing without requiring a large ongoing investment from LITA.

The move to open access, however, was not inevitable, and I commend LITA for supporting that move and for continuing to provide a base subsidy that supports the journal's ongoing publication. I also thank the Boston College Libraries for their ongoing support in hosting *ITAL* along with a [number of other OA journals](#). Since *ITAL* is now open, access to it can no longer be offered as an exclusive benefit that comes with LITA membership. Regardless of the publishing model, though, *ITAL* has always relied on voluntary contributions of the time and expertise of reviewers and editors. I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of our past and current Editorial Board members, who play a key role in ensuring the ongoing quality and vitality of the journal. We will be adding a few additional Board members shortly, to help ensure that review of submissions to the journal are completed as quickly and effectively as possible.

Speaking of peer review, one of the recent innovative startups in the scholarly communication space is a company called [publons](#), which tracks and verifies peer-review activity, providing a mechanism for academics to report (and possibly receive institutional credit for) their peer-review work, an undervalued part of the scholarly communication framework. (Full disclosure: at University of Queensland we are conducting a pilot project with publons, to integrate the peer-review activities of our academics into our institutional repository.)

In addition to new approaches to peer review, such as publons and [Academic Karma](#), there are quite a few recent examples of innovations in various aspects of scholarly communication that are worth keeping an eye on. These include new collaborative authoring tools such as [Overleaf](#), impact-measurement tools such as [Impactstory](#), and personal digital library platforms such as [Readcube](#). On a broader scale, initiatives such as [PeerJ](#) are building open access publishing platforms intended to dramatically improve the efficiency of and drive down the overall costs of scholarly publishing.

February marked the 14th anniversary of a key trigger event in the Open Access movement—the launch of the [Budapest Open Access Initiative](#) in 2002.

Bob Gerrity (r.gerrity@uq.edu.au), a member of LITA and the Editor of *Information Technology and Libraries*, is University Librarian at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.

Much has happened in the 14 years since the Budapest Initiative, on various fronts:

- policy—introduction and widespread adoption of funder and institutional OA mandates;
- technology--development and widespread adoption of institutional repositories, recent development of mechanisms to facilitate the discovery of OA publications (e.g., [SHARE](#) on the library side and [CHORUS](#) on the publisher side);
- publishing—establishment of new OA megajournals (e.g., PLOS, BioMed Central), embrace of hybrid OA models by mainstream commercial publishers.

Yet despite all the hype, acrimony, and activity triggered by the OA movement, a [recent analysis in Chronical of Higher Education](#) suggests the growth of OA has been slow and incremental: the percentage of research articles published annually in fully open-access format has increased at an average rate of around one percent a year, from 4.8% in 2008 to 12% in 2015. At this rate, the tipping point for OA still seems very far away. Lots of energy has been and continues to be invested by different stakeholders in different approaches, and the green vs. gold argument still predominates.

Recent developments suggest momentum is gaining for a more radical shift.

In December 2015, the Max Planck Institute, a key player in the launch of OA with the [Berlin Declaration on Open Access](#) in 2003, hosted the 12th version of its annual OA conference to further the discussion around open access. Ironically, unlike previous meetings and seemingly in philosophical conflict with the underpinnings of the OA movement, the meeting was by invitation only. Given the topic, though, a “Proposal to Flip Subscription Journals to Open Access,” the closed nature of the meeting is understandable. Underpinning the proposal was a [2015 paper](#) from the Max Planck Digital Library that suggested that the amount of money currently being spent (largely by libraries) on journal subscriptions should be sufficient to fund research publication costs if applied to a “flipped” journal publishing business model, from subscription-based to gold open access.¹

In the Netherlands, the university sector has adopted a national approach in negotiating deals with several major publishers (Springer, SAGE, Elsevier, and Wiley) that allow Dutch authors to publish their papers as gold OA, without additional charges (but, depending on the publisher, with limits on total numbers and/or which journals are available within the deals).² The so-called “Dutch Deal” by the VSNU (Association of universities in the Netherlands) and UKB (Dutch Consortium of University Libraries and Royal Library) takes a national approach to flipping the model, attempting to bundle access rights for Dutch readers with APC credits for Dutch authors.

The Dutch government, which currently holds the EU presidency, is pushing hard for a Europe-wide adoption of this approach. Last month, the EU's Competitiveness Council agreed that all scientific papers should be freely available by 2020.³

Meanwhile, in the US, the [“Pay it Forward” research project](#) at the University of California is examining what the institutional financial impact would be with a flipped model. The study is looking at existing institutional journal expenditures on subscriptions and modeling what a future, APC-based model would look like based on institutional research publication output and estimated average APC charges.

Who knows when or if a global flip might occur, but it does strike me that the scholarly publishing world is overdue for a major shakeup. From the point of view of a university librarian, focused on keeping journal subscription costs in line (unsuccessfully I might add), I think there is real danger in not considering what a flip to a gold model might look like. The commercial publishers we all complain about are successfully exploiting the gold model as an additional revenue stream which, for the most part, academic libraries have been ignoring, since the individual APCs typically are paid from someone else's budget. This has allowed the overall envelope of spending on research publication (subscriptions and APCs) to grow significantly.

Perhaps a more interesting question is what the impact of a flip on libraries would be. If gold OA became the predominant model, we would no longer need all of the complex systems we've built to manage subscriptions and user access. To quote Homer Simpson, “Woohoo!”

In the “watch this space” arena, EBSCO's recently-launched open-source library services platform (LSP) initiative is beginning to take shape. It now has a name—FOLIO (for Future of the Libraries Is Open)—and as Marshall Breeding put it, the project “injects a new dynamic into the competitive landscape of academic library technology, pitting an open source framework backed by EBSCO against a proprietary market dominated by Ex Libris, now owned by EBSCO archrival ProQuest.”⁴ Publicly listed participants in the project include (in addition to EBSCO) OLE, Index Data, ByWater, BiblioLabs, and SIRSI Dynix.⁵ The platform release timetable calls for an initial, “technical preview” release of the code for the base platform in August 2016, and an anticipated release of the apps needed to operate a library in early 2018.⁶

1. Ralf Schimmer, Kai Karin Geschuhn, Andreas Vogler, *Disrupting the Subscription Journals' Business Model for the Necessary Large-Scale Transformation to Open Access*, (2015), doi:10.17617/1.3
2. Frank Huysmans, *VSNU-Wiley: Not Such a Big Deal for Open Access*, Warekennis (blog), March 1, 2016, <https://warekennis.nl/vsnu-wiley-not-such-a-big-deal-for-open-access/>
3. Martin Enserink, “In dramatic statement, European leaders call for ‘immediate’ open access to all scientific papers by 2020,” *Science*, May 27, 2016, doi:10.1126/science.aag0577.

-
4. Marshall Breeding, EBSCO Supports New Open Source Project, *American Libraries*, April 22, 2016, <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/04/22/ebsco-kuali-open-source-project/>
 5. <https://www.folio.org/collaboration.php>.
 6. <https://www.folio.org/apps-timelines.php>.