THE INEVITABILITY OF OPEN ACCESS. WHY LIBRARIANS HAVE TO FOSTER IT.

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As it is said in the proposal of the course, the aim of this workshop is to provide a space to discuss why librarians must be committed to Open Access and foster it among authors, researchers and users.

The course is structured in two parts. As you may have different levels of knowledge and experience regarding open access, the first part will consist on a brief introduction to open science, open data and open access.

And we will deal with some of their main aspects, such as the purpose and benefits of these paradigms, routes to open access, business models of scientific publishing, legal issues (author rights and intellectual property), and funding agency policies.

The aim of this part is only to have a bit of background of open access and what we should know as librarians.

For the second and more interesting part, it will consist of a discussion following a methodology called Safari, similar in some aspects to the other one known as Knowledge Café. In this part, we will have the opportunity to discuss some issues, such as, what researchers need to know about open access; the special features of health repositories; how we should promote open access in our institution; and finally, open access publishing.

As Open Science is the framework that encompasses Open Access and Open Data, among other areas of the research process, I am going to start speaking about Open Science instead of the main subject of this course: Open Access.

According to the definition given by the OECD\(^1\) (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), open science ‘refers to efforts by researchers, governments, research funding agencies or the scientific community itself to make the primary outputs of publicly funded research results - publications and the

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research data - publicly accessible in digital format with no or minimal restrictions as a means for accelerating research; these efforts are in the interest of enhancing transparency and collaboration, and fostering innovation.

Open science includes many areas, such as: open access, post-publication peer review, open research data, open access to research materials, open research notebooks\(^2\), open source software, open collaboration enabled through Information and Communication Technology tools, citizen science and research crowdfunding.

However in this course we are focusing mainly on open access, and from the perspective of librarians: what we should know, how and why to be involved, how to promote open access, etc. All in all, what our role is in the open access movement.

So, backing to open science, we must keep this idea in mind: ‘Open Science is a means not an ends. Open science strategies and policies are a means to support better quality science, increased collaboration and engagement between research and society that can lead to higher social and economic impacts of public research.’\(^3\)

The key elements of OS are:

- **Transparency** in experimental methodology, observation, and collection of data
- **Public availability** and **reusability** of scientific data
- **Public accessibility** and **transparency** of scientific communication (publications)
- **Scientific collaboration** facilitated by using web-based tools

As we have seen, open science is more than open access to publications or data; and it includes many aspects and stages of the research process. And there are some requirements for open science, such as the scientific infrastructure must be interoperable, research methodologies must be open and shared; and finally, tools must be machine-friendly to allow, for example, text and data mining.

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\(^2\) Open notebook science takes this a step further by making day-to-day lab notes available in real time. By keeping notes online, rather than in an offline lab notebook, open notebook scientists are giving everyone direct insight into their work, and enabling easier collaboration. F1000Research. Guide to OS Publishing...

\(^3\) v. 1 OECD.
In brief, Open science is the concept of opening up all aspects of scientific research, to allow others to follow the process and collaborate.4

‘Research data’ refers to information, in particular facts or numbers, collected to be examined and considered, and as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation.

In a research context, examples of data include statistics, results of experiments, measurements, observations resulting from fieldwork, survey results, interview recordings and images.

Similarly to open science, OA to research data refers to research data that is available in digital form5 and to the right to access and reuse them, that it’s to say, end-user can normally access, mine, exploit, reproduce and disseminate research data openly free of charge.

One of the first examples of data sharing projects in biology was the human genome project. The sequencing of the human genome was a massive undertaking, by many researchers across the world. The results of their efforts have greatly advanced many areas of research and healthcare over the past decade and a half, but none of that would have been possible if the genomic sequences had not been widely available. Imagine if every time you wanted to align a DNA sequence or generate PCR primers you had to ask for permission, or worse, pay for use of the information.

Once we have seen what open science and open data are, we are going to focus on Open access.

The Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) arises from a meeting convened in Budapest by the Open Society Foundations (OSF) in December 2001. The purpose of the meeting was to accelerate progress in the international effort to make research articles in all academic fields freely available on the internet.6

As a result of that meeting, the Budapest Declaration was published in February 2002 and marked the beginning of the Open Access movement. In it, they define OA to scientific literature as its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself.

A year later, in 2003, a meeting organized by the Max Planck Society and the European Cultural Heritage Online project brought together international experts with the aim of developing a new web-based research environment using the Open Access paradigm as a mechanism for having scientific knowledge and cultural heritage accessible worldwide.

As a result of the meeting, leading international research, scientific, and cultural institutions issued and signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, a document that outlines concrete steps to promote the Internet as a medium for disseminating global knowledge. This declaration is considered another of the milestones of the Open Access movement.

As we did previously with open science, we must highlight the basic elements of OA.

Firstly, open access refers to scientific literature. It encompasses not only peer-reviewed scientific research articles published in scholarly journals, but also un-refereed manuscripts, "original scientific research results, raw data and metadata, source materials, digital representations of pictorial and graphical materials and scholarly multimedia material."

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7 OKNF.org [Internet]. Open Access Working Group. Definition of Budapest compliant open access. [cited 2016 May 23]. Available from: http://access.okfn.org/definition/
Secondly, this literature must be **publicly available on the Internet to the user-end**, without any restriction to access or barriers, such as to sign up on the page or to pay a toll to read it.

Ideally, to be considered open access, authors and copyright holders must “grant to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, **right of access to**, and a **license to** copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship”.

However, in practice, we have to consider **two stages of open access**:

**Gratis open access**: Where end-user gets access to the content and is able to read, download and print the paper; and,

**Libre open access**: Where authors, as always, hold the right of attribution and the integrity of the work, but grant the rights to reproduce, prepare derivative works and distribute it.\(^{12}\)

We will see these terms applied to open access journals later.

As authors are the first copyright holder as creator of the work, the success of open access depends on them. But, we will come back to this important issue later.

Now, we are going to see the purpose of open access. In words of the Budapest Open Access Initiative, “Removing access barriers to this literature will **accelerate research**, **enrich education**, **share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich**, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a **common intellectual conversation** and **quest for knowledge**.”

According to the Directorate-General for Research & Innovation of the European Commission, “Fuller and wider access to scientific publications and data helps to:

**Build on previous research results**, **encourage collaboration & avoid duplication of effort**, **speed up innovation** and involve citizens and society.”\(^{13}\)

\(^{12}\) Right to Display Publicly is related to artistic works and right to Perform Publicly is related to musical or dramatic works. These are the Author’s 5 Basic Rights. University of Washington Library [Internet]. Authors’ Rights: Retaining Your Copyright. Washington: University of Washington Libraries; 2016 [cited 2016 May 19]. Available from: http://www.lib.washington.edu/scholpub/facts/authors
The benefits of OA reach all the stakeholders (authors, researchers, institutions, scientific community, funding agencies, society and citizens) to a greater or lesser extent.

**For authors**: OA increases the visibility, exposure, and impact of their research through expanded readership. In addition, OA ensures long-term access to their outputs.

**For researchers and scientific community**: OA provides free online access to peer-reviewed research. Researchers can access relevant literature, not behind paywalls, and they are not limited by their institution’s subscriptions to a defined group of journals. This is especially relevant for researchers in developing countries. As a consequence, OA accelerates the research process and ensures that research is transparent and reproducible. In addition, practitioners can apply their research findings.

**For universities and authors’ institutions**: OA increases public visibility of research being undertaken at the university as it facilitates and reveals research activity, knowledge-sharing, and innovation. In the case of the Andalusia Public Health System, in addition to the previous benefits, open access facilitates the transfer of knowledge from basic to clinical research and evidence-based practices among its different institutions and health care centers.

**For funding bodies**: OA gives the best return on investment.

**For society**: OA provides people with information of high and unbiased quality. Advances in health sciences are spread widely and, as a consequence, health inequalities may be reduced.

But, maybe the best way to assess what the benefits of open access are, is to look back only two years ago (2014), when we lived one of the biggest and deadly Ebola outbreak.

This outbreak stimulated debate on open access, when researchers of the team in charge of drafting Liberia’s Ebola recovery plan found out that the presence of the Ebola virus in West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leon and Guinea) wasn’t a new

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phenomenon as was commonly believed, and were aware that the worst of this outbreak might have been avoided if key research had been open access, rather than locked up.\textsuperscript{16}

As you can read here, they say:

"We were stunned recently when we stumbled across an article by European researchers in Annals of Virology: “The results seem to indicate that Liberia has to be included in the Ebola virus endemic zone.” "In the future, the authors asserted, “medical personnel in Liberian health centers should be aware of the possibility that they may come across active cases and thus be prepared to avoid nosocomial epidemics,” referring to hospital-acquired infection.

And they finish:

\textbf{What triggered our dismay was not the words, but when they were written: The paper was published in 1982\textsuperscript{17}.}

So, this is the first paper warning about Liberia and the Ebola virus. In addition to this article, there were some more on antibody prevalence in northwestern Liberia, not far from its borders with Sierra Leone and Guinea, in 1986. However, no one appears to have been aware of the danger and of the necessity of being prepared against this highly contagious infection.

Part of the problem was that \textbf{none of the articles about Ebola virus was co-written by a Liberian scientist}. European researchers collected samples, returned home and published the results in European medical journals. Few Liberians were trained in laboratory or epidemiological methods. The other part of the problem is that \textbf{to download one single article costs $45, about half a week's salary.}

Then, during the most critical moments of the outbreak, publishers, such as Elsevier\textsuperscript{18} and Oxford University Press\textsuperscript{19} (more than 50 articles, free until 6th January 2016), in an 'act of generosity', offered some of their contents referring to Ebola on open access only for a few months (last term of 2014).

\textsuperscript{16} Floor64. Techdirt [blog]. Don't Think Open Access Is Important? It Might Have Prevented Much Of The Ebola Outbreak. From the paywalls-kill dept. 2015 Apr 10 [about 1 screen] [cited 2016 May 22]. Available from: https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20150409/17514230608/dont-think-open-access-is-important-it-might-have-prevented-much-ebola-outbreak.shtml


\textsuperscript{18} https://www.elsevier.com/connect/free-access-to-medical-information-for-african-countries-battling-ebola

Recently, there have been two pieces of news in the political field that give us an idea of the importance of the open access movement especially in terms of the return of public money invested in research.

Last January, Sander Dekker, Minister for Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands stated at the European Parliament, that to achieve open access to scientific journals was one of the priorities for Research & Development policy of the six month Dutch presidency.

He emphasized that “The fact is that research funded with public money is simply not open to that very same public. New scientific knowledge disappears behind a wall, out of the reach of doctors, of general practitioners; (and of) people who may want to know more about a certain disease. All these people are deprived of research and knowledge”.

Now, it appears that he kept his promise.

In April, as a result of a two-day conference called “Open Science – From Vision to Action” organised by him as part of the Netherlands EU Presidency, a document entitled Amsterdam Call for Action on Open Science was released. This action plan included specific objectives to accelerate the transition to open science in Europe.

- Full open access for all publicly funded scientific publications by 2020;
- Open data as the standard for all publicly funded research;
- New assessment, reward and evaluation systems;
- More open science to maximise its effectiveness and impact on society.

Based on this document, the last week of May, the Competitiveness Council, the gathering of ministers of science, innovation, trade, and industry of the E.U. member states, agreed on that all scientific papers must be freely available by 2020. The congratulations and negative reactions still carry on.

The second one took place last April when U.S. Vice President Biden ‘spoke at the convening of the American Association for Cancer Research on the need to speed up scientific research, development, and collaboration that can lead to better cancer treatments’, and said to researchers:

‘Right now, you work for years to come up with a significant breakthrough, and if you do, you get to publish a paper in one of the top journals. For anyone to get access to that publication, they have to pay hundreds or
even thousands of dollars to subscribe to a single journal. And here’s the kicker—the journal owns the data for a year. Your outfit does this.20

‘Taxpayers fund $5 billion a year in cancer research every year, but once it’s published, nearly all of that taxpayer-funded research sits behind walls. Tell me how this is moving the process along more rapidly’.21

If articles about new treatments against cancer are locked up, the lack of information about them among the practitioners produces inequalities in the access to these treatments, as he well knows first-hand.

He also adds:

‘The Gates Foundation funds a billion dollars’ worth of research every year. And their policy is crystal clear: The results have to be free and open to anyone from the minute they are published.’

The next statement is on the core of open science

‘Big Data and computing power together provide significant insights—can provide significant insights into how genomics, family medical history, lifestyle, genetic changes can trigger cancer.

There’s a growing recognition for the need for more team science (instead of—) and increased collaboration among the private sector, academia, patient foundations and the government.’

Here it is. I think this cartoon illustrates the inconsistency of the traditional scientific publishing business model, doesn’t it? (slide 16)

Now I am giving you a last example, not of the benefit of open access, but the need for it:

Have you heard about Jake Andraka? He is an 18 or 19-year-old that discovered an early detection test for pancreatic cancer, when he was only 15. He found out that a protein called mesotheline was present in early stages of pancreatic, ovarian and lung cancer. So he developed a test using carbon nanotubes.


21 Vollmer T. Creative Commons Blog [Internet]. Creative Commons; 2016 -. Vice President Biden: Taxpayer-funded cancer research shouldn’t sit behind walls; 2016 Apr 22 [cited 2016 May 16]; [about 1 screen]. Available from: https://blog.creativecommons.org/2016/04/22/vice-president-biden-taxpayer-funded-cancer-research-shouldnt-sit-behind-walls/
In an interview with Dr. Collins, Director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, he recognized that he could carry out his research thanks to the articles deposited in PubMed Central, plus others published in open access journals.

As a matter of fact, he had to pay for some articles, but when his mother saw them in the bin because they were useless for him, she refused to buy any more.\(^{22}\)

In a TED Conference, Jack Andraka explains how he developed his detection test, and says:

‘...through the Internet anything is possible. Theories can be shared, and you don't have to be a professor with multiple degrees to have your ideas valued. It's a neutral space, where what you look like, age or gender, it doesn't matter. It's just your ideas that count...You could be changing the world.

So if a 15-year-old who didn't even know what a pancreas was could find a new way to detect pancreatic cancer, just imagine what you could do.'\(^{23}\)

But, how can we make academic articles Open Access?

In 1995, Steven Harnard\(^{24}\) proposed in his Subversive proposal, that authors shared the preprints of their published articles through FTP files to make them freely available.

In 2002, in the mentioned Budapest Open Access Initiative, two strategies were recommended to make research articles freely available without barriers:

- Self-archiving (also known as Green open access route): It means that author, or a representative, deposits the published article or its pre-print or post-print version in an online repository before, at the same time, or after publication. Sometimes, the deposit is not permitted after a certain embargo, usually between 6 months and up to 3 years in the health sciences field.

- Open access journals (Gold route): It is a recent business model of scientific publishing (over 15 years), where open access is provided by the publisher and

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Video on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G55hlnSD1Ys


end user does not have to pay to gain access to articles. It is the author, or their institution, who usually pays a fee to publish the article. This payment is known as Article Processing Charge.

With regards to the permission or not for reusing the publisher's version of the article, there are two types of open access journals: those that are **gratis open access**, in other words, that the publisher only gives permission for the articles to be read, downloaded and printed; and **libre open access**, those that the author retains all the re-use rights, and articles may be shared, distributed, etc. As I said in the previous slide, many open access journals recoup their costs of publishing by requiring payments from authors.

Many traditional subscription-based journals have adopted a **hybrid model**. They offer authors an option to make their article free immediately upon publication by paying a fee, an Article Processing Charge, like in open access journals.

One of the OA advocates, Steven Harnard, has called this model **Fool's Gold**²⁵, because if an author pays for making their article freely available immediately upon publication, their institution pays a double payment: firstly, for publishing the article on open access and, secondly, for subscribing the journal. On top of this, article processing charges are usually more expensive on these journals than on purely OA journals.

Before speaking about self-archiving, we have to pause to clarify the most important question: **How we know if an article can be submitted to a repository**. The answer is apparently simple. In theory, it will depend on who retains the right to reproduce and to redistribute the work.

Although there are some differences among countries in Copyright laws, basically the author of a work obtains some **exclusive rights** from the moment of its creation and it has been “fixed in a tangible medium”²⁶.

**Authors’ rights** have two distinct components²⁷:

Moral rights: **attribution** and **integrity** (that is to say, the right to be identified as the author of the work and the right to object to any distortion or mutilation of the work which would be prejudicial to his or her honour or reputation). Moral rights are personal to the author and cannot be transferred to another person.

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Economic rights: They are, essentially, reproduction, distribution, public performance, public display and modification\(^{28}\) of the original work.

The author retains these exclusive rights unless and until the moment they sign a written agreement to transfer some or all of the economic rights. And this is the crux of the matter: The copyright transfer agreement.

If an author transfers their copyright (which means the exclusive rights of reproduction, distribution, modification of the original work, etc.) without retaining any rights, they may not be able to deposit the work in a public online archive, such as a repository, or to place it on/course Web sites/ or even reuse portions in a subsequent work.

SPARC Author Addendum helps authors to secure and hold back rights for themselves and others\(^{29}\).

In this flowchart we can see the different options and consequences of retaining all the author rights or transferring all or some of them to the publisher.

As we said before, an author retains moral and economic rights unless they sign an agreement with a publisher. Obviously, the author needs to transfer to the publisher the right to publish and distribute their paper. The problem starts when the publisher requires more rights than are necessary.

For libre open access journals the author transfers to publisher the right to publish and distribute their paper, but holds the re-use rights, even the possibility to distribute the PDF or published version, provided they cite where the article has been primarily published.

If an author chooses the open access option in a hybrid journal, the transferred rights are the same than in the previous type of journals.

However, regarding gratis open access and subscription-based journals, the author has to sign a copyright transfer agreement, where the publisher becomes the copyright holder, and the author may not retain any of the re-use rights.

This is especially important for self-archiving. Why? Because, in the best-case scenario, publishers may grant some re-use rights and permit self-archiving under certain conditions: where to deposit; authorized version(s) of the article; time to deposit; or any other condition or limitation that they are capable of imagining. In

\(^{28}\) Translation, conversion to another format, adaptation....

the worst case, they may keep all rights reserved, and as a consequence, articles cannot be submitted to a repository.

When authors retain all their rights, they may grant some re-use rights to end-user. Using Creative Commons licenses is a useful and simple way to show which rights are reserved and which ones are granted.

As we saw in the previous slide, if the publisher holds the re-use rights is up to them to permit the archive or not of one or more versions of the article. Those versions are related to the peer-review process\(^{30}\). However, there is no a clear pattern to discern why subscription-based and hybrid journals sometimes allow to self-archive the published version or PDF; others, any of the author’s versions; others, only one of them (either the accepted manuscript, so-called post-print version; or, the submitted draft or pre-print)\(^{31}\).

So, regarding **self-archiving** as green open access route\(^{32}\), the possibility of making an article open access by depositing it in an online open access archive will be depend, firstly, on who holds the copyright and on the business model and self-archiving policy of the scientific journal, where the article was published. And, secondly, on the involvement of the author, as we will see later.

An important aspect to be taken into account is that repositories must fulfill **interoperability standards**, especially those developed by the Open Archives Initiative\(^{33}\), to *ensure the preservation* of content in the long term and facilitate its dissemination. Therefore, they are usually chosen for funding agencies in their open access policy as the more appropriate place to deposit scientific publications.

For example, in the Open Access Guidelines for researchers funded by the European Research Council, they state that they support the principle of open access to the published output of research as a fundamental part of its mission.\(^{34}\)


\(^{31}\) Toro Sánchez-Blanco P. Self-archiving policies in the health sciences journals field: a perspective from an institutional repository. Journal of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries, 2016(12);2:13-16 [cited 2016 Jun 6]. Available from: [http://hdl.handle.net/10668/2208](http://hdl.handle.net/10668/2208)

\(^{32}\) ‘Road’ for S Harnard and maybe for US English

\(^{33}\) http://www.openarchives.org/

So, they request the deposit of an electronic copy of any research article, monograph or other research publication that is supported in whole, or in part, by their funding in a suitable repository immediately upon publication.

Open access should be provided as soon as possible and in any case no later than six months after the official publication date. For publications in the Social Sciences and Humanities domain, the delay could be up to twelve months.

However, most of the hybrid and subscription-based journals in the health sciences field impose an embargo of 12 months or more. Publishers, such as Elsevier, set embargo periods between 12 and 36 months as default policy; Mary Ann Liebert, 12 months; Oxford University Press, 12 months, although some of their titles require 3 years; BMJ, 12 months; and so on.

As you know, Horizon2020 is the European Union Framework programme for research and innovation from 2014 to 2020. It is the financial instrument of the European Commission and the goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.35

How can it be achieved? One of the aspects of the programme is that beneficiaries of actions must disseminate its results by disclosing them to the public by appropriate means. (art. 29.1 Obligation to disseminate results)36. So, 'each beneficiary must ensure open access (that is to say, free of charge, online access for any user) to all peer-reviewed scientific publications relating to its results'.

This OA mandate comprises two steps37:

1. depositing publications in repositories
2. providing open access to them

They may or may not occur simultaneously, depending on whether open access publishing (gold OA) or self-archiving (green OA) is used. And, in the case of self-archiving, depending on the embargo period, if any (as we have seen before).

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The deposited publication (either the published version or the final peer-reviewed manuscript accepted) must be a **machine-readable electronic copy**, that is, it must be in a format that can be used and understood by a computer, that it is standardised or otherwise publicly known, so that anyone can develop new tools for working with the documents.

The step 1, depositing publications in repositories, applies even where open access publishing (gold OA) is chosen, to ensure that the article is preserved in the long term.

**The latest acceptable time to deposit** a publication is the **date of publication**. It doesn't mean that the publication can be made open access from that very moment. If an embargo period applies, it shouldn't be longer than 6 months after publication (12 months for Social Sciences), as we saw previously.

Regarding the **digital research data** generated in the action, the beneficiary must (29.3) deposit (in a research data repository), **the data**, including associated metadata, **needed to validate the results presented in scientific publications** ASAP. The beneficiary must also provide information (via the repository) about **tools and instruments** necessary for validating the results. If specific parts of the research data couldn’t be made openly accessible, the beneficiary must put on record the legal, ethical or practical reasons for not giving access, for example to preserve patients confidentiality, if data are not de-identified.

OA access to research data implies that third parties can **access, mine, exploit, reproduce and disseminate** - free of charge - those data.

Finally, bibliographic metadata must be in standard format and must include, in addition to those that identify the deposited publication and data, all the following: certain terms regarding European Union and Horizon 2020; the name of the action, acronym and grant number; the publication date and length of embargo if applicable, and a persistent identifier.

As I said more than once, the **success of open access depends on the involvement and collaboration of authors**. Therefore, despite the fact that the compliance of many funding bodies are mandatory, Agencies like the Wellcome Trust in the United Kingdom and the US National Institutes of Health have started taking measures, more than two years ago, against those authors that didn’t fulfill their open access policy.

In this graph you can see the noticeable jump in the percentage of papers placed in PubMed Central since the moment the National Institutes of Health announced

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38 data protection, informed consent: limitations to clinical data, patient privacy, national security, Intellectual Property Rights)
that non-compliant researchers would be sanctioned, for instance, no renewing grants.

Although many other issues could be presented about open access, I want to finish my intervention, speaking about the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing\(^{39}\).

This statement was draft during a meeting held by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute on the 11th of April of 2003. There were 24 people. Although they participated as individuals, and not necessarily as representatives of their institutions, the truth is that the institutions involved were very relevant: the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Health Equity Division of The Rockefeller Foundation, The Wellcome Trust (of the) United Kingdom, the Health Sciences Library of the University of Virginia Health System, the National Library of Medicine of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), the Open Society Institute, the Public Library of Science, Biomed Central, BMJ Publishing Group, etc.

'The purpose of this document was(is) to stimulate discussion within the biomedical research community on how to proceed, as rapidly as possible, to the widely held goal of providing open access to the primary scientific literature'.

'Their (Our) goal was to agree on significant, concrete steps that all relevant parties (...) could (can) take to promote the rapid and efficient transition to open access publishing'.

Along with the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) and the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, the Bethesda Statement is another of the milestones of the open access movement.

But for me, this Statement is specially significant. Firstly, because is about open access in the health science environment. And secondly, because it considers libraries and librarians, as one of the relevant parties on the OA movement, along with research organizations and funding bodies; scientists that generate the research results, publishers, scientific community, and others who depend on access to this knowledge.

In fact, the document is divided into four sections: The first is a working definition of open access publication, and the other three are the reports or statements of

three working groups: the Institutions and Funding Agencies; the Libraries & Publishers; and, Scientists and Scientific Societies.

In the Statement of the Libraries and Publishers Working Group, Libraries propose to:

1. Develop and support mechanisms to make the transition to open access publishing and to provide examples of these mechanisms to the community.
2. In our education and outreach activities, give high priority to teaching our users about the benefits of open access publishing and open access journals.
3. List and highlight open access journals in our catalogs and other relevant databases.

As you can see, we have, as librarians, a roadmap since the Bethesda statement, that it has been updated and reinforced on the Tenth Anniversary of the Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2012. In a new statement, they reaffirm the ends and means of the original BOAI, and recommit themselves to make progress.

As a matter of fact, they say:

Nothing in the last ten years makes OA less necessary or less opportune. On the contrary, it remains the case that “scientists and scholars...publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment” and “without expectation of payment.” In addition, scholars typically participate in peer review as referees and editors without expectation of payment. Yet more often than not, access barriers to peer-reviewed research literature remain firmly in place, for the benefit of intermediaries rather than authors, referees, or editors, and at the expense of research, researchers, and research institutions40.

So, one of their main recommendations is:

(1.7) "We remind researchers that they need not work as authors, editors, or referees for publishers who act against their interests."

Here, there are other important recommendations of the BOAI10 that I would like to highlight:

"1.5. We discourage the use of journal impact factors as surrogates for the quality of journals, articles, or authors. We encourage the development of alternative metrics for impact and quality which are less simplistic, more reliable, and entirely open for use and reuse."

As many of you know, the impact factor is usually the only criterion for most of the researchers to choose a journal in which to publish their research results.

"2.1. We recommend CC-BY (Creative Commons Attribution) or an equivalent license as the optimal license for the publication, distribution, use, and reuse of scholarly work."

However, many hybrid journals require the use of more restrictive CC licenses when the author chooses the OA option. On top of this, if there is the possibility of choosing the CC-BY license, the publisher punishes the author with a higher fee, compared with the less open licenses.

"3.6. When subscription-based or non-OA journals permit any kind of self-archiving, or deposit into OA repositories, they should describe what they permit in precise human-readable and machine-readable terms, under an open standard. These descriptions should include at least the version that may be deposited, the timing of deposits, and the licenses that could be attached to deposited versions."

If a journal doesn't state its self-archiving policy on its web page, everyone must understand that all rights are reserved. So, there is no option for submitting any of the versions of an article published in it to a repository.

And finally, "4.1. We should do more to make publishers, editors, referees and researchers aware of standards of professional conduct for OA publishing, for example on licensing, editorial process, soliciting submissions, disclosing ownership, and the handling of publication fees. Editors, referees and researchers should evaluate opportunities to engage with publishers and journals on the basis of these standards of professional conduct."

The ethics of the publication process are one of the key aspects to be taken into account for authors before choosing a journal to publish in.