

nologies, we have formed consortia, regional and international associations and other cooperative networks in order to pool resources and to learn from one another. One of the benefits of enhanced communication technology is that there is a more pervasive communitarian sense of a global fellowship -- that we can derive progress from collective effort. ICT has thus paved the way for greater efficiency and collaborative learning

In academic publishing, we have only evolved halfway towards achieving the benefits of the electronic age. The publication processes have been automated and the products are digital, certainly in a drive towards greater efficiency. Publishers have exploited Internet technology to link articles and citations in databases that span wide areas of knowledge. These facilities offer great convenience and those that have desktop access to them certainly save time. But we are not yet saving money. The widely anticipated financial savings that was forecast for the electronic medium has not come about; instead, we are finding scholarly journals to be more expensive. Publishers who have invested millions in developing electronic platforms have undoubtedly passed on the cost to subscribers. Academic libraries across the world have been forced to cut journals even as they spend more on them. So, electronic publishing has achieved some time efficiency but at a greater financial cost.

Open access publishing aims to achieve not only the efficiency factors of time and money, but also to advance the progressive dimension of sharing and collaboration towards a collective public good. While no one would contest this worthy aim, there is a flurry of debate and growing tension around the notion of open access publishing at the moment. The reason for this free for all is that open access presents a real possibility of destabilising a publishing tradition that has been with academe for over two hundred years. On one side, a group of advocates steadfastly claims that open access can overcome the ills of the serials crisis and liberate scholarly information; on the other side, we find the representatives of a \$3.5 billion industry whose interest is in maintaining the profitable status quo, flanked by non-profit publishers who play the quality and integrity card, but whose survival is threatened. In between are the policy makers and government agencies that have the power to regulate the industry by weighing in their considerable support where they see the greater efficiency and public good.

The development of open access publishing

There is no doubt that the Internet has been the catalyst for open access. Alongside the transition to electronic subscription journals, we have seen a growing diversification of electronic publications, each of them parallel