

Deakin University Library celebrates Open Access Week 2010

A Deakin University Library forum to celebrate international Open Access Week 2010 provided an opportunity to explore the hotly debated issues surrounding improved access to research. The forum tackled the challenging question - how do we make research freely, immediately and permanently available online to anyone via Open Access?

University Librarian at Deakin, Ms Anne Horn said Open Access literature is digital, online, free of charge, free of most copyright licensing restrictions and compatible with peer review.

"What makes Open Access possible is the technology of the internet and the consent of the author or copyright holder," Ms Horn said.

"The question is not whether scholarly literature can be made costless, but whether the costs can be met through business models that don't create barriers to access," she said.

The forum, held on Thursday, 21 October 2010 drew attendees from 10 Universities and Institutes. It featured keynote speaker Professor John Houghton, Professorial Fellow, Victoria University, who has examined the economic implications of various scholarly publishing models, including Open Access.

"Studies in Australia, the UK, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and the US suggest that not only are Open Access publishing models lower cost than the subscription or toll access model, but they also have wider cost implications through access and authentication system and library handling cost savings," Professor Houghton said.

"They have even wider economic and social benefits, as open access to the findings of research enables us to realise higher returns on public investment in research by making it more widely and freely available and maximising its impact.

"National, sectoral, funder or institutional Open Access policies and self-archiving mandates can improve access to research and improve efficiency at relatively little cost and with no immediate disruption to scholarly publishing practices and traditions," he said.

Professor Houghton, whose presentation reviewed the major issues concerning academic publishing via Open Access and the lessons learned from the US and Europe concluded that the benefits of more open access exceeded the costs. The benefits accrue in the form of cost savings and, more importantly, by increasing the efficiency of research and making it more accessible, Open Access increases the return on investment in R&D.

Professor Houghton said the benefits were likely to be positive for both open access publishing (Gold OA) and for parallel-subscription publishing and self-archiving (Green OA).

"At the institutional level, research has shown that the benefits would be likely to outweigh the costs for all but the most research-intensive of universities," he said.

"Self-archiving alternatives appear to be the more cost-effective, given the capacity to enhance access at very little cost, although whether self-archiving in parallel with subscriptions is a sustainable model over the longer term is debatable."

Professor Houghton added Open Access self-archiving mandates have been adopted widely overseas, including the National Institutes of Health, Harvard University, Stanford University and MIT, however, few mandates have been instituted to date in Australia.

The forum gave researchers, academics, publishers and librarians the opportunity to learn more about Open Access and to debate Open Access issues in Australia.

Other speakers at the forum were Mr John Lamp, Senior Lecturer, Deakin University, speaking on 'Where is Open Access in the ARC's ERA?' and Springer's Mr James Mercer speaking on 'Open Access: An Academic Publisher's Perspective'.

All presentations plus an audio recording of the proceedings are available through Deakin Research Online: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/dro/view/DU:30030956>



Open Access Forum (L-R): James Mercer - Licensing Manager Oceania, Springer; Professor John Houghton - Professorial Fellow, Victoria University's Centre for Strategic Economic Studies (CSES) and Director of the Centre's Information Technologies and the Information Economy Program; Sue Owen - Associate Librarian, Client Services, Deakin University; John Lamp - Senior Lecturer, School of Information Systems, Deakin University; Anne Horn - University Librarian, Deakin University

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