



Open access to scientific publications

The practical realities and the economics of the diffusion of scientific knowledge and cultural heritage have been radically changed with the spread of the internet.

In view of these new realities it is becoming clearer that the university mission to disseminate knowledge will only be accomplished if the corresponding information is rapidly made available to society at large through the new paradigm of Open Access via Internet.

The debate about the access to scientific publications has intensified over the last years, in particular with respect to peer review journal's publications. This results from the recognition that the present system, by limiting the accessibility, and subsequently the use of research results, represent a major obstacle to the scientific and technological progress.

With the aim to overcome the present limitations several initiatives have been developed to promote a better access to scientific literature, now currently referred to as **Open Access**. This new trend for Open Access to scientific literature has given raise to different **Declarations** and **Recommendations**, of which the Budapest Open Access Initiative and the Berlin Declaration on the Open access to knowledge are highlighted (already signed by a large number of Universities and Rectors). Recently, also the European University Association has established a working group on Open Access.

The merits of Open Access to scientific publications have been increasingly recognised at international level. Open Access promotes visibility, accessibility, and diffusion of results of scientific activity of each single researcher, each university or research institution, as well as each country, allowing its use with the subsequent impact in the international scientific community. An increasing number of studies have revealed that scientific papers accessed for free over the Internet are more quoted and cited and therefore have a greater impact when compared to those that are not freely accessible.

The benefits of Open Access for each researcher and author of scientific publications, can be observed, not only in a larger dissemination and impact of his/her results, as well as a better access to research carried out by other researchers in its scientific area.

For each University and Research Institution, Open Access may imply not only a greater visibility and recognition of his/her scientific performance, but also an added opportunity towards the establishment of partnerships and collaborative projects with other institutions and national and international companies.

For Portugal, Open Access may result in a greater visibility in the international scientific community and also facilitate scientific information to be accessed by companies and citizens, promoting on larger scales transference of knowledge and innovation.

As a result the Council of Rectors of the Portuguese Universities decided to adopt the following position:

1. To state its support and adhesion to the Open Access to scientific publications principles, subscribing, through its President, the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to knowledge.
2. To recommend all Portuguese Universities to establish by themselves or on a cooperative basis, institutional repositories where researchers may archive their scientific and academic publications.
3. To recommend all Portuguese Universities to define institutional policies calling for its members to archive their scientific and academic publications in those repositories and making them available for open access whenever possible.
4. To recommend the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES) to enforce policies determining that publications resulting from research projects directly or indirectly funded by the MCTES be placed at least in one Open Access repository, therefore making publicly available results from research supported by public funds (following present discussions in the USA – Federal Research Public Access Act 2006 - and the EU recommendations – Study on the Economic and Technical Evolution of the Scientific Publication Markets in Europe).
5. To support networking and interoperability between institutional repositories of Portuguese Universities and the establishment of a single portal website for accessing national scientific publications and requesting to the relevant Government authorities and agencies the necessary financial support for this project, which is critical for the production and dissemination of knowledge, innovation and technological development.

Council of the Rectors of Portuguese Universities
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