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Ambivalent Open Science Practices

The View From a Swiss Institution

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20 Years of Open Science Developments

Open Access to research brought about:

- Free and fast digital access to scientific knowledge.
- Significant shift in the academic publishing landscape.
- Building boom of global, digital infrastructure, services and know-how.

...but it somehow also....

- Maintains certain structural, technical and ethical inequities.
- Perpetuates financial inequities with the prevalent business model of Author Processing Charges.

u^b The issue of ambivalence

Attempt at a thesis

1. Research institutions are caught in an ambivalent situation between the expectations from researchers and the interests of publishers.
2. This ambivalence prevents the overcoming of inequities that are inherent in the scholarly communication system.

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Author Processing Charges (APCs)

An example of financial inequity

- APCs constitute a shift from pay-to-read to pay-to-publish. Most commercial publishers favor APC-based Open Access because it is very profitable (more profitable than traditional subscriptions).
- The average APC is approx. USD 2650. There is a tendency that highly cited journals have higher APCs.
- Since APCs are paid by authors, their institutions or their funders, they often prevent participation in scholarly communication and perpetuate existing inequalities in research.
- Since APCs are highly inequitable, OA agreements based on APCs (such as transformative agreements or Read & Publish) are also inequitable.
- Studies show that APCs lead to lesser publications from authors from the global south.

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Ambivalence at the University Library Bern

An example

Supporting equitable Diamond Open Access

- Cooperation and support (e.g., Redalyc).
- Offering infrastructure and services for Diamond Open Access.

=> To reach an equitable and sustainable scholarly communication; Open Science offers the right path.

Supporting APC-based Open Access

- Read & Publish contracts
- APC fund

=> The library's mandate is to support researchers at our institution.

=> Researchers do not want to worry about handling APCs.

=> Competition between universities (publications, researchers, prestige).

=> Path dependencies: A switch from subscription to Read & Publish is not as complex as from subscription to non-APC models.

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