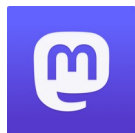


Progress and disappointments of 20 years of fighting for open access

OA Week – UNIGE

Marc Robinson-Rechavi



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1

My path

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2

The start: the Public Library of Science

Open Letter

In 2000 Harold Varmus, Patrick Brown, and Michael Eisen circulated an open letter that would eventually be signed by 34,000 scientists from 180 countries and spark the foundation for PLOS

Signed on 5 Jan 2001

“

We support the establishment of an online public library that would provide the full contents of the published record of research and scholarly discourse in medicine and the life sciences in a freely accessible, fully searchable, interlinked form. Establishment of this public library would vastly increase the accessibility and utility of the scientific literature, enhance scientific productivity, and catalyze integration of the disparate communities of knowledge and ideas in biomedical sciences.

We recognize that the publishers of our scientific journals have a legitimate right to a fair financial return for their role in scientific communication. We believe, however, that the permanent, archival record of scientific research and ideas should neither be owned nor controlled by publishers, but should belong to the public and should be freely available through an international online public library.

To encourage the publishers of our journals to support this endeavor, we pledge that, beginning in September 2001, we will publish in, edit or review for, and personally subscribe to only those scholarly and scientific journals that have agreed to grant unrestricted free distribution rights to any and all original research reports that they have published, through PubMed Central and similar online public resources, within 6 months of their initial publication date.

Harold Varmus, Patrick Brown, and Michael Eisen
PLOS co-founders

Aims and hopes 20 years ago

1. All research outputs freely available to all
2. Lower costs of publishing
3. Shifts in scientific publishing models (IF, peer review...)



LE TEMPS

ÉCONOMIE OPINIONS CULTURE SOCIÉTÉ SCIENCES SPORT DATA ÉVÉNEMENTS VII

ACCUEIL > OPINIONS

Le libre accès, bon pour la science, indispensable pour la société

Dans un monde libre, il paraît de plus en plus étonnant que les résultats de recherches scientifiques ne filtrent qu'au compte-gouttes dans des publications onéreuses. Mais un modèle nouveau émerge, celui du «open access». La Suisse ferait bien de s'y intéresser, estime Marc Robinson-Rechavi, professeur à l'Université de Lausanne, chef de groupe de l'Institut suisse de bio-informatique

Marc Robinson-Rechavi

Publié le 24 juin 2012 à 22:48.



bioRxiv
THE PREPRINT SERVER FOR BIOLOGY

47 Results for author "robinson-rechavi"

Items/Page 10 Order by Oldest First

Inference of evolutionary forces acting on human biological pathways

J.T. Daub, I. Dupanloup, M. Robinson-Rechavi, L. Excoffier

bioRxiv 009928; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/009928>

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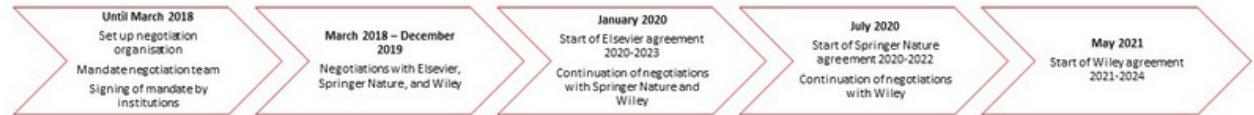
What to compare and how: comparative transcriptomics for Evo-Devo

Julien Roux, Marta Rosikiewicz, Marc Robinson-Rechavi

bioRxiv 011213; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/011213>

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1st Round of Big Deal Negotiations 2018–2021



2nd Round of Big Deal Negotiations 2022–2025



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Road and bumps

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Science Magazine Sting

The screenshot shows the top portion of a Science magazine article page. At the top left is the 'Science' logo in red. To its right are navigation links: 'Current Issue', 'First release papers', 'Archive', and 'About' with a dropdown arrow. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'HOME > SCIENCE > VOL. 342, NO. 6154 > WHO'S AFRAID OF PEER REVIEW?'. A red lock icon is followed by 'SPECIAL ISSUE NEWS'. On the right are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The article title 'Who's Afraid of Peer Review?' is in large black font. Below it is the author's name 'JOHN BOHANNON' with a link to 'Authors Info & Affiliations'. A metadata line reads: 'SCIENCE • 4 Oct 2013 • Vol 342, Issue 6154 • pp. 60-65 • DOI: 10.1126/science.2013.342.6154.342_60'. At the bottom of the article preview are download and citation counts: '12,786' and '87'.

On 4 July, good news arrived in the inbox of Ocorrafoo Cobange, a biologist at the Wasee Institute of Medicine in Asmara. It was the official letter of acceptance for a paper he had submitted 2 months earlier to the *Journal of Natural Pharmaceuticals*, describing the anticancer properties of a chemical that Cobange had extracted from a lichen.

In fact, it should have been promptly rejected. Any reviewer with more than a high-school knowledge of chemistry and the ability to understand a basic data plot should have spotted the paper's short-comings immediately. Its experiments are so hopelessly flawed that the results are meaningless.

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October 2023

Impact Factor

5.3

SI: Evolutionary Biology
7 out of 52

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Alternative approaches



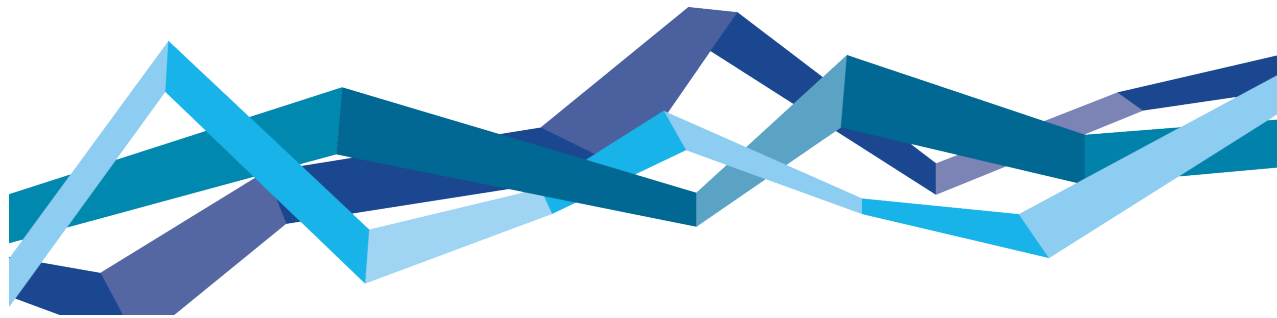
Institutional response

- 2014 DEAL project  mandated for "transformative agreements"
 - **Publish and Read Fee**
- 2017 VSNU  cancels deal with OUP motivated by lack of progress towards open access
- 2018 **Plan S**: all papers must be open access
- 2020 Swissuniversities  cancel deal with Springer-Nature while negotiating transition deal

Agreement signed by Swissuniversities and SNSF

— AGREEMENT ON REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

20 July 2022



Alternative ideas?

PERSPECTIVE

Plan U: Universal access to scientific and medical research via funder preprint mandates

Richard Sever^{1*}, Michael Eisen^{2,3}, John Inglis¹

If all funding agencies were to mandate posting of preprints by grantees—an approach we term Plan U (for “universal”)—free access to the world’s scientific output for everyone would be achieved with minimal effort.

Progress

- Big deals: in Europe, OA is central
- From the margins to the center of academic discourse
 - rectors, funders, libraries...

Disappointments

- Lack of early support by scientific societies
- Lack of support by journalists
- Susceptibility of researchers to manipulation by publishers

- Costs 
- Most science still 
- Transformation?

Transformative, where to?



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