

To be Read or Not

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In this age of “publish or perish” culture in academia, having access to the conventional journals and the costs associated with their subscriptions and the possible alternatives is making a sound debate across various platforms. Many a time, it is a hindrance to the growth/spread of knowledge when one sees messages like “for access to the full text of the article, please login or subscribe.” Majority of the readers who are denied access to full text of the articles come mainly from developing countries where more and more people are getting involved in scientific research. A good example to illustrate this scenario is the research carried out in understanding the malarial parasite, *Plasmodium*. Though the initial discovery of the lifecycle of the malarial parasite happened in India, the country is struggling to access current breakthrough in the field owing to the raising prices of journal subscriptions. A similar scenario is observed among other developing countries as well as developed countries as the research budgets are shrinking. After all, academic science is mostly carried out by government aided research funds essentially making every citizen of the country a stake holder in the outcome. Unfortunately, not everyone interested in knowing the fate of their tax dollars has access to the results of this research work. One of the major impediments is that they may have to shed lot of money to get access to the journals in which the work is published. Now the question that a layman would like to ask the scientific community is “Is it fair?” Is this the only scenario where the stakeholder has to pay to know the result of his investment?

In light of this, Open Access (OA) is gaining ground (for a detailed primer on OA, please refer to Peter Suber’s book on OA [1]). It is heartening to see the efforts of several countries pushing towards OA of the government funded research [2-4]. In a recent opinion piece on “how journals like Nature, Cell and Science are damaging science,” the ill effects of paid and high impact journals (the so called luxury journals), were outlined by Schekman R [5], 2013 Noble Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine. He rightly suggests a better way to serve the scientific community “through the new breed of open-access journals that are free for anybody to read, and have no expensive subscriptions to promote.” Publishing in an OA journal is very

much equivalent to publishing in any of the conventional journals since the process from manuscript submission, peer review, and acceptance/rejection of an article goes through the same rigors in both cases. The readership of any conventional journal is lesser compared to say a freely available content on the World Wide Web. So one of the added advantages of OA is that it will have a wider audience and especially those from developing countries where more young and talented students and scientists are pursuing active research. In essence, an article in an OA journal will be read and the knowledge will be disseminated to more people than any of the conventional journals.

Here at Enliven, we believe that knowledge should be shared with everyone with no or very minimal, if any, barriers. As an advocate for open access, Enliven thrives on supporting publishing of scholarly work in varied research subjects including interdisciplinary fields. “Enliven: Microbes and Microbial techniques” is one such journal aimed at providing a perfect platform for publishing high quality research work in the field of microbiology as a whole. Some of the focus areas include plant, industrial, and aquatic microbiology, systems and molecular microbiology, cellular and evolutionary microbiology, microbial genetics, environmental microbiology and bioremediation, and microbial diseases. One great advantage of publishing in Enliven is the availability of the articles in more than one format (i.e. pdf, html, and xml as well as video/audio versions) facilitating a broader audience for the published scientific work. Apart from providing variety of options to read/listen/view the published articles, Enliven also provides links to the video versions in social network sites making the circulation of the articles more rapid. We invite scientists and research enthusiasts across the globe to benefit from this initiative and make this a great success by submitting your manuscripts to the journal. On behalf of the editorial team, I would like to welcome one and all to make this noble endeavor a great success.

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