

Chapter 4

Open Access Movement: A Journey From Birth

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ABSTRACT

Open access has now entered in every aspect of our life. OA movement has been passed through many phases and in a very short time and it has seen many drastic changes. Not very long time has passed when the concept was not noticed by much scholastic group. Since then, no one could imagine to take it in its present shape. The paper covers not only the international but national contributions also in making of the OA movement successful. It has been tried to elaborate all aspects of open access development and starts its journey from the birth of the concept. It focuses on free and voluntary contributions of such stuff which makes the human life easier. The paper explores into the journey of not only e-journal/ebooks but the IRs and open courseware also. The stakeholders which have made or are making this technological (or somewhat social?) movement a success have also been acknowledged by the authors. However, authors have focused upon the resources which are openly accessible.

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INTRODUCTION

The phrase ‘open access’ (OA) has now become a buzzword. If we start making a list of open access resources, we will realize that we use them even while sleeping (any how the air to breath is available open access). If we talk about the physical open access resources, it will start from our first minute of the day and continue till the last moment at night. In essence, the list is endless. The concept had been prevailing in the society for centuries before the phrase was invented.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, ‘Open’ means “Allowing access, passage, or a view through an empty space; not closed or blocked; a container not fastened or sealed; the mouth or eyes with lips or lids parted; exposed to the air or to view; and so on.

The same dictionary defines ‘Access’ as “The means or opportunity to approach or enter a place; the right or opportunity to use or benefit from something; the process of obtaining or retrieving information stored in a computer’s memory”.

After making the meanings of ‘Open’ and ‘Access’ clear separately, we can define ‘open access’ as ‘to use freely’, regardless of the nature and types of resources. To prove our definition we can again check the above said famous dictionary, which defines the phrase ‘Open Access’ as ‘Availability to all’. However, it does not define “what is” “available to all”, but it admits that the phrase encompasses the meaning of free use of resources without going into details of resources. Thus, on the basis of the above mentioned three separate definitions, we can conclude that open access means the free use of amenities which are available to all without any geographic, language, caste- creed or any other barrier which can restrain the free use. We use the word “Amenity” which is a very inclusive word and breaks the border fixed by the word ‘Resources’.

Although the phrase ‘open access’ was started with the initiation of free access to research output, but today if we think of this phrase in a broader context, it has an extensive meaning.

To understand the concept of ‘open access’, we can take a very realistic example of our TV channels. With the proliferation of satellite channels & DTH services, most of them are paid channels. In this money making era, still there are some channels which come under ‘free to air’ category. In other words, these channels give Open Access, or everyone has open access to these free channels. All you need to have is a DTH installation at home to gain access.

It can be better understood by another example of a cultural night. If you want to attend a live concert of a famous singer, you have to buy tickets to enjoy the concert. But some time the same singer may be called upon by the organizers for

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