Chapter 13
Best Practices and Navigating the Effects of Open Access Journals in Scholastic Publication

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ABSTRACT

Open access (OA) journals have transformed the academic publication to a different realm, which was unfathomable years ago. The early 1990s witnessed OA journals founded by individual scholars which are now in the hands of major publication players using them as another disruptive business model. The benefits of an OA system outweigh its disadvantages. Growth in accessibility, visibility, citations, and impact on research work are some of the promising outcomes of OA. Though it has been contemplated as an inevitable element in scholastic writing for a long time, there are many misconceptions loaded with open access. The present study aims to navigate into the perceptions of open access journals among researchers intriguing into the fine clauses established in the scholarly publication arena. The chapter also intends to examine the features of major publishing houses in a global perspectives and probe into the best practices of open access from different publishing houses in an effort to enhance the overall capacity of the open access and to create a knowledge-based economy.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has led to a series of overwhelming set of strains to publishers with the drop in demand for printed text books. However, demand for online learning segment made them got out of that predicament. The Publishing empire is currently at a pivotal moment where digital publishing is taking over the traditional print publication. The publishing houses and universities embarking on this journey of open access would have a competitive advantage of knowledge, cutting edge research and innovation. Placing research results in a public domain encourages dissemination of knowledge and strengthens the research expedition. The principles of transparency and best practices for scholarly publications in Open Access directories is identified and coded as criteria by Open Access Scholarly Publishers' Associations to evaluate the suitability for membership in their OA directories. The best practices are collaboratively established by the organizations comprising 'The Committee of Publication Ethics' (COPE), 'Directory of Open Access Journal' (DOAJ), 'The Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association' and 'The World Association of Medical Editors'.

Directory of Open Access Journals (doaj.org) suggest best practises and transparency to be maintained by publishers for scholarly publishing work. The website being the first landing page for any information insists on detailing the aim and scope without misleading information and separate ISSN number for print and electronic version. This also emphasizes that the website of the journals should clearly inform the reader on following aspects like, type of review process adapted, publication time period, publication charge if any, publication ethics, access, archiving, editorial team details, copyrights and licensing. One practise which is recently introduced by 'Elsevier' publisher is 'open access mirror journals' which share common editorial board, aim, scope and peer review policy where visibility and reachability is the same as parent journal.

The other best practices the Open Access directories abide by is that the OA digital libraries do not recommend the sale of eBooks through their directories. This practice is adopted by JSTOR which prohibits selling eBooks in their platform and obtains authorisation from the publishers who wish to host their book in the JSTOR platform as a legal requirement. This practice is applicable for any gold or green OA titles, or the publisher has been selling the title and now wishes to convert as OA. JSTOR also mandates book-level metadata which enables their system to properly process the file and also ensure students and faculty find the book in their delivery platform.

Significance and Scope of the Study

The progress of the publishing industry has been phenomenal in the last two decades with the emergence of OA business models. Across the globe, although the numbers of publishing houses are mushrooming, the proliferation of journals in comparison with the value and quality of academic publication has always been a matter of discussion in academics. Though the open access publishing industry is established with well written policies, many researchers are ignorant of OA publishing, its worldwide audience and elite visibility and reach of their work. Along with this, many had bitter experiences with predatory publishers as they exploit the OA business model and charge authors huge publishing fees but fake or neglect peer-review and editorial services. This has caused distrust from authors and readers who believe Open Access articles are not peer-reviewed and of poor quality.

An understanding on important features of major publishing houses in a global perspective as they account for fifty percent of open access publishing and the perceptions of open access journals among

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