

Closing Questions & Remarks
Josianne Camilleri Vella - Library Manager Resources

FOSTER & UoM Training Event
Open Access and its Impact on Research and Scholarship
Dolmen Resort Hotel, Qawra, St. Paul's Bay, 29th May 2015

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege for me to bring today's event to a conclusion with a number of salient remarks. Allow me first of all to start by thanking the speakers for sharing their knowledge and expertise with us today, as well as, all participants for finding the time to be here to discuss, debate and share experiences related to Open Access. I would also like to express my special thanks to the organizing teams from FOSTER (Facilitate Open Science Training for European Research), EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) and my colleagues from the University of Malta Library for their commitment in the organization of this training event.

In my opinion, this has been a rewarding training experience, and the presentations and discussions have covered a wide range of pertinent aspects on Open Access, Open Science and Open Data. Many of the presentations have addressed the technical and economic aspects of Open Access. Other areas that were covered during this event dealt with scholarly communication, the advantages of Open Access for science and scholarship, benefits of Open Access for research dissemination, Gold and Green Open Access, research impact, institutional repositories and OpenAIRE2020. The presentation on the legal aspects of Open Access has focused on current policies in this area and has articulated the concerns of the authors when it comes to copyright, intellectual property rights, patents, peer-reviewing, plagiarism and embargos. Apart from the general presentations and discussion on these issues, interested examples and demonstrations such as OpenAIRE infrastructure and the operability of OAR@UoM have also been highlighted. While research and debate around Open Access will undoubtedly continue, it is vital that policies be developed and all key stakeholders including the publishing industry, academics, librarians, University administrators, research councils and other research-funding organisations work together towards practical implementation.

Open access is increasing in importance on a rapidly accelerated basis. It is thus highly stimulating to have spent a day with so many stakeholders who are keen to find out more about the future of scholarly communication and Open Access. My interest in this topic is further sparked by the interest shown by all participants who have expressed great interest and excitement at the vision behind Open Access. I have the impression that we are all keen to change the current publishing system and participate in a more open conversation about research output with peers. As you are aware, the commercial publishing world enjoys a strong monopoly over a number of prestigious academic journals which are essential for the dissemination of new ideas and research. This monopoly over knowledge has been one important factor behind the increase in the price of journal subscriptions, leaving some academic libraries with no choice but to reduce the number of their current subscriptions through cancellations as they can no longer afford to pay for their full range of journals. It is this common difficulty which has led to the rapid development of Open Access. The benefit of the Open Access movement is therefore *liberating research output from the constraints imposed on its dissemination by publisher restrictions and the increasingly prohibitive financial burdens of journal subscriptions*. Additionally, allow me to summarize the major reasons that motivate a researcher to publish her/his work in Open Access:

- Open Access enhances visibility of research output

- It offers free access to research output without restrictions on use as commonly imposed by publisher's copyright agreements
- It helps disseminate research at a faster pace
- It records and archives research results
- It helps share new findings amongst academic peers
- It facilitates feedback from experts/peers
- It offers recognition by the scientific community, and
- It transmits results to the public, funding bodies, and other stakeholders

When it comes to impact factor, recognition has always been largely measured by citations. However, today with more frequent usage of social networks, we should broaden our view and associate credit for scientific work also with mentions, likes, or tweets. The latter attributes of modern communication in social networks is evolving into an immediate and uniquely fast way to provide and earn credit in scholarly publishing. Citations are important, but it is the article and the individuals who authored that work which should get credited. And there is growing evidence that papers published in Open Access are being heavily consulted and ultimately cited more often.

My conclusion can therefore be considered as an invitation to researchers so as to:

- substitute pay-walled journals with new open science technologies to publicly publish scientific results or allocate funding for APCs (Article Processing Charges) while drafting project proposals
- continue to use social network tools to communicate about and discuss recent research with others
- adopt alternative metrics to measure scientific relevance in addition to citations

Subsequently, researchers should not be reluctant of publishing in Open Access or submitting their work to an alternative open science platform. Open Access and active communication about new results in science via social media and open science platforms, can increase both usage and impact on one's academic work. Open Access dramatically increases the number of potential users of any given article by reaching out those users who would otherwise have been unable to access it.

Finally, I would like to thank you all once again for your participation and support. I hope you have found this training event rewarding and thought-provoking. Before I close, I would like you to give a round of applause to Mr Kevin Ellul, Director Library Services, as the organisation of this event was possible thank to his initiative in submitting a FOSTER proposal.

Thank you