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Scientific publishing

A position statement by the Wellcome Trust in support of open access publishing

The mission of the Wellcome Trust is to "foster and promote research with the aim of improving human and animal health." The main output of this research is new ideas and knowledge, which the Trust expects its researchers to publish in quality, peer-reviewed journals.

The Trust has a fundamental interest in ensuring that neither the terms struck with researchers, nor the marketing and distribution strategies used by publishers (whether commercial, not-for-profit or academic) adversely affect the availability and accessibility of this material.

With recent advances in Internet publishing, the Trust is aware that there are a number of new models for the publication of research results and will encourage initiatives that broaden the range of opportunities for quality research to be widely disseminated and freely accessed.

The Wellcome Trust therefore supports open and unrestricted access to the published output of research, including the [open access model](#) (defined below), as a fundamental part of its charitable mission and a public benefit to be encouraged wherever possible.

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Specifically, the Trust:

- welcomes the establishment of free-access, high-quality scientific journals available via the Internet;
- will encourage and support the formation of such journals and/or free-access repositories for research papers;
- will meet the cost of publication charges including those for online-only journals for Trust-funded research by permitting Trust researchers to use contingency funds for this purpose;
- encourages researchers to maximize the opportunities to make their results available for free and, where possible, retain their copyright, as recommended by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), and as practiced by BioMed Central, the Public Library of Science, and similar organizations;
- affirms the principle that it is the intrinsic merit of the work, and not the title of the journal in which a researcher's work is published, that should be considered in funding decisions and awarding grants.

As part of its corporate planning process, the Trust will continue to keep this policy under review.

Definition of open access publication¹

An open access publication is one that meets the following two conditions:

1. The author(s) and copyright holder(s) grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual (for the lifetime of the

applicable copyright) right of access to, and a licence to copy, use, distribute, perform and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works in any digital medium for any reasonable purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship², as well as the right to make small numbers of printed copies for their personal use.

2. A complete version of the work and all supplemental materials, including a copy of the permission as stated above, in a suitable standard electronic format is deposited immediately upon initial publication in at least one online repository that is supported by an academic institution, scholarly society, government agency, or other well-established organization that seeks to enable open access, unrestricted distribution, interoperability, and long-term archiving (for the biomedical sciences, PubMed Central is such a repository).

Notes:

1. An open access publication is a property of individual works, not necessarily of journals or of publishers.
2. Community standards, rather than copyright law, will continue to provide the mechanism for enforcement of proper attribution and responsible use of the published work, as they do now.

The definition of open access publication used in this position statement is based on the definition arrived at by delegates who attended a meeting on open access publishing convened by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in July 2003.

The Trust commissioned SQW economic and management consultants to undertake an economic analysis of the scientific publishing market, which helped to inform this position statement. View the [Economic Analysis of Scientific Research](#) report.

SQW were commissioned to undertake a second report entitled [Costs and Business Models in Scientific Research Publishing](#).