



Open wide the access. On the duties and demons of open scholarship

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Over the last three years the “Open” movement has rapidly been gathering momentum in higher education and research. Open data for access to monstrous volumes of raw information; open publication, in various flavours, for unrestricted, or significantly less restricted, access to articles, reports and books; and more recently, open access to courses, teaching, materials and even assessment – all this courtesy of the Internet.

Not surprisingly, libraries have been re-examining the architecture of information creation, collection, preservation and curation under what may turn out to be a very different set of operating principles. And publishers have been running for cover. The textbook market, the monograph market, and the journals market are all under threat, especially when governments are starting to mandate open access to the results of research which are funded from public monies.

The word “open” is a generally positive word. Its antonyms like “closed” or “restricted” imply various degrees of stricture between the material and the would-be consumer. But quality control in an “open” context is not unproblematic. And if the Open Movement is successful in pushing through some of its more far-reaching goals, some of the operating principles of publishing, education and libraries will need to be rethought and redrawn.

This presentation examines some of the key issues presented by aspects of the Open Movement, and explores some of the duties and demons of the reshaped world of information, its curation and access, in a brave new world of openness.