

Burgeoning Open Access Movement

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In January 2012, a distinguished mathematician at the University of Cambridge began a protest against Elsevier's ruthless business practices, exorbitantly high prices, and lobbying efforts against open access. Since then over 9,000 faculty across the world have signed an [online pledge](#) stating that they will not support any Elsevier journal, including publishing, editorial work, and refereeing unless Elsevier radically changes how they operate.

Libraries have protested against Elsevier's (and other large publishers') high-pricing model for years, but this unprecedented groundswell from faculty may very well produce change in academic publishing. It's the scholars who produce, peer review, and edit the articles that ensure the high-quality articles that publishers sell back to their customers. At the very least, the protest provides an opportunity to educate faculty about open access publishing opportunities.

The Open Access (OA) Movement is the worldwide effort to provide free online access to scientific and scholarly research literature. According to some timelines, the movement can be traced back as far as 1966 (pre-World Wide Web), but the number and variety of OA publishing models have increased significantly in the last 15 years. A recent [report](#) states that the average annual growth rate since 2000 for OA journals has been 18% for the number of journals and 30% for the number of articles.

Certainly the increase in low-cost electronic publishing models now available through the Internet is one factor, but the growing support of scholarly societies, universities, and individual faculty has also contributed to this growth. In 2011, over 500 scholarly societies published over 600 OA journals. Many universities are signatories to Open Access Initiatives such as the Bethesda, Budapest, and Berlin declarations. A growing number of individual faculty and faculty senates are vowing to archive their research articles in open access institutional repositories and many individual faculty, such as those joining the [Cost of Knowledge](#) boycott against Elsevier, are refusing to publish in any commercial journals.

Last fall, in response to the growing OA movement, the Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI) Board of Directors created the Open Access Subcommittee. The charge to the subcommittee is to "propose an explicit statement endorsing OA objectives and activities in ALI libraries. The Subcommittee will examine OA mandates at academic institutions in the United States and develop a basic template to serve as a model for ALI institutions interested in adoption and implementation of an OA policy."

The Subcommittee created a wiki with links to sample policies and endorsements from Columbia, Duke, Harvard, IUPUI, MIT, and developed a draft Open Access endorsement statement and a template for ALI member libraries to use at their institution. At the February ALI Board of Directors Meeting, after much discussion, it was recommended that the Subcommittee bring forward a motion calling for ALI (as an organization) to specifically endorse the [Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities](#).

The *Berlin Declaration* was issued in 2003 and now has 374 signatories, including Purdue University. The *Declaration* asks that authors grant to "all users a free, irrevocable worldwide, right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution and responsible use of the published work....," and that a complete version of the work be deposited in at least one online repository that supports open access, unrestricted distribution, and long-term archiving.

The ALI Open Access Subcommittee will be meeting soon to work on this recommendation. The Subcommittee recognizes that this is just a first step toward recognizing the importance of open access to the creation and dissemination of human knowledge, and will propose to the Board that it become a standing committee of ALI and its charge be expanded. In our discussions about the state of the OA movement on our campuses, it was agreed that most faculty have a lot of misconceptions about open access publishing and archiving, but once educated about OA, they are more supportive and willing to consider OA alternatives. The Subcommittee sees a role for ALI in educating librarians and faculty about open access and its impact on their careers, university and library budgets, and the progress of human civilization.