

## PREFACE

I have worked full-time for a decade to foster open access (OA) to science and scholarship. During that time I have often boiled down the big message into short talks and written long articles exploring small subtopics in detail. This book is an attempt at something in between: a succinct introduction to the basics, long enough to cover the major topics in reasonable detail and short enough for busy people to read.

I want busy people to read this book. OA benefits literally everyone, for the same reasons that research itself benefits literally everyone. OA performs this service by facilitating research and making the results more widely available and useful. It benefits researchers as readers by helping them find and retrieve the information they need, and it benefits researchers as authors by helping them reach readers who can apply, cite, and build on their work. OA benefits nonresearchers by accelerating research and all the goods that depend on research, such as new medicines, useful technologies, solved problems, informed decisions, improved policies, and beautiful understanding.

But OA only does this good work insofar as we actually implement it, and the people in a position to implement it tend to be busy. I'm thinking about researchers

themselves and policymakers at stakeholder institutions such as universities, libraries, publishers, scholarly societies, funding agencies, and governments.

My honest belief from experience in the trenches is that the largest obstacle to OA is misunderstanding. The largest cause of misunderstanding is lack of familiarity, and the largest cause of unfamiliarity is preoccupation. Everyone is busy. There has been organized opposition from some publishers, but that has been a minor impediment by comparison.

The best remedy to misunderstanding is a clear statement of the basics for busy people. Only some fellow specialists will wonder, with me, whether I've been too brief with some essential subtopics. But I knew that a larger book would miss the audience of busy people. Elaboration, documentation, research findings, case studies, and finer-grained recommendations are available in the voluminous literature online (most of it OA), including my own articles (all of them OA).<sup>1</sup>

This book will itself be OA twelve months after it appears in print. (I'm glad you asked.) If you can't wait, everything I've said here I've said in some form or another in an OA article.

I have freely incorporated some relevant earlier writings into this book, improving on them when I could. Notes at the end of the book indicate which pieces I adapted or

incorporated into which sections. I chose this method as a solution to a pair of dilemmas. I did not want to hide the fact that I was making use of my previous work, but neither did I want to make any section into a stream of self-quotation and self-citation. I did not want to fail to benefit from my own previous work, but neither did I want to miss opportunities to clarify, update, or improve it.

This little book doesn't say much about kindred topics such as open data, open educational resources, open government, free and open-source software, or open science (combining OA texts, open data, and open-source software, and providing these sorts of openness at every stage of a research project, not just at the end in reporting results). Some of the kindred forms of scholarly openness might soon be covered by other volumes in this series.

I would not have been able to give my full time to OA for so many years without grants from the Open Society Foundations, Wellcome Trust, and Arcadia and without financial or institutional support from Earlham College, Public Knowledge, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), the University of Maine, Data Conversion Laboratory, the Information Society Project at Yale Law School, the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, the Harvard Law School Library, and the Harvard Office for Scholarly Communication. For their generous support for OA and my work I thank Fay Bound Alberti, Peter Baldwin, Jack Balkin,

Douglas Bennett, Len Clark, Darius Cuplinskas, Robert Darnton, Urs Gasser, Melissa Hagemann, Rick Johnson, Heather Joseph, Robert Kiley, Sue Kriegsman, Harlan Onsrud, John Palfrey, Lisbet Rausing, Stuart Shieber, David Skurnik, and Gigi Sohn.

I dedicate this book to the thousands of people in every field and country who have dedicated themselves to the realization of OA. The ones I know personally are already too numerous to thank by name in the preface to a short book, and the fact that there are more than I could thank by name—even if I tried—fills me with admiration, gratitude, and optimism.