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Public Access to Digital Data Resulting From Federally Funded Scientific Research

I wrote an essay about that about the general topic of funding digital public works about a decade ago for the Markle Foundation when they requested comments on "Policy for a Networked Society":  
<http://www.pdfernhout.net/on-funding-digital-public-works.html>

A shorter version of that is here:

<http://www.pdfernhout.net/open-letter-to-grantmakers-and-donors-on-copyright-policy.html>

Copies of both are attached.

From the executive summary of the shorter one:

"Foundations, other grantmaking agencies handling public tax-exempt dollars, and charitable donors need to consider the implications for their grantmaking or donation policies if they use a now obsolete charitable model of subsidizing proprietary publishing and proprietary research. In order to improve the effectiveness and collaborativeness of the non-profit sector overall, it is suggested these grantmaking organizations and donors move to requiring grantees to make any resulting copyrighted digital materials freely available on the internet, including free licenses granting the right for others to make and redistribute new derivative works without further permission. It is also suggested patents resulting from charitably subsidized research research also be made freely available for general use. The alternative of allowing charitable dollars to result in proprietary copyrights and proprietary patents is corrupting the non-profit sector as it results in a conflict of interest between a non-profit's primary mission of helping humanity through freely sharing knowledge (made possible at little cost by the internet) and a desire to maximize short term revenues through charging licensing fees for access to patents and copyrights. In essence, with the change of publishing and communication economics made possible by the wide spread use of the internet, tax-exempt non-profits have become, perhaps unwittingly, caught up in a new form of "self-dealing", and it is up to donors and grantmakers (and eventually lawmakers) to prevent this by requiring free licensing of results as a condition of their grants and donations."

--Paul Fernhout (Edinburg, NY; Software Developer and Homeschooling/Unschooling Parent)

<http://www.pdfernhout.net/> ===== The biggest challenge of the 21st century is the irony of technologies of abundance in the hands of those thinking in terms of scarcity.