

# Policy Forum on Public Access to Federally Funded Research: Phase Two Wrap-Up

By Diane DiEuliis

Today marks the final day of Phase Two of our public access policy forum.

Thank you to everyone who shared thoughts and ideas about the technologies and features that will best promote public access. As we know it is difficult to find extra time to provide commentary during the holiday season, we greatly appreciated the extensive comments, links and data. In order to make sure that everyone has a meaningful opportunity to weigh in, we will be revisiting these topics during a bonus comment period in January.

Phase Two sparked a dynamic discussion of the technological specifications that would best serve public access. Participants analyzed the relative benefits and disadvantages of a wide range of formats, noting that some would make it easier to search while others may facilitate submission – and therefore compliance. Many participants pointed to the benefits of enabling public feedback on submitted articles, but disagreed upon whether moderation would of such input would foster or impede a productive discussion between participants. In terms of metrics, some suggested the simplest way to measure success would be to quantify the number of submissions freely available as well as the number of downloads or page views. By providing hyperlinks throughout their comments, many participants showed us some of the best examples of usability known to date. Thank you! Still others ventured beyond today's needs to suggest the challenges and opportunities the future may bring to public access endeavors. Overall, participants underscored the importance of simplicity - in terms of standards, flexibility, and adaptability to evolving technologies.

Tomorrow, the new year will usher in Phase Three of the public access policy forum. Phase III will focus on Management and run through Thursday, January 7th. After Phase III draws to a close, we will carefully read and process your comments in preparation for the two-week extension to our blog schedule.

Again, we will be using those final two weeks to revisit, on a more detailed level, all three focus areas that you will have addressed — and we may ask you to delve deeper into a few specific areas for which we'd like a more detailed discussion.

Thanks again to all of you for your continued diligence and participation, especially over the busy holiday season. We look forward to your continued commentary into the New Year!

*Diane DiEuliis, Assistant Director, Life Sciences, Office of Science and Technology Policy*

This entry was posted on Thursday, December 31st, 2009 at 7:59 pm and is filed under OpenGov, Public Access Policy, Requests for Comment. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed.

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## Responses to "Policy Forum on Public Access to Federally Funded Research: Phase Two Wrap-Up"

Julia Whelan said on January 6, 2010 at 4:40 pm:

I am a strong supporter of the open public access initiative. Continued implementation and enforcement of the NIH mandate will allow more people to access government funded research and help eliminate information access disparities. In addition, even the most well endowed university libraries can no longer afford to subscribe to all the journals in which their faculty publish. Therefore they can not offer their students and faculty full access to the body of knowledge generated in their own scholarly community.

To improve compliance I would suggest expanding the role of libraries in facilitating deposit in PubMed Central. Libraries can serve a number of functions including publicizing the mandate, educating faculty about copyright addendum, assisting with deposit and monitoring compliance among institutional researchers. Due to the recession many libraries, have had to cut personnel so providing funding to support staff effort would help and would also create jobs. Many sponsored programs offices have not been able to take on this task and since the policy benefits libraries they are a natural source for services supporting open access.

In addition, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine and scholarly scientific associations should be educating researchers at conferences and meetings and on their websites. There seems to be a good bit of "head in the sand" attitude prevalent at this time. Publicizing the ease of compliance and the sanctions for noncompliance is essential.

Julia Whelan

Margaret Phillips said on January 7, 2010 at 7:57 pm:

The University of California is among the nation's leading public research universities. We take seriously our responsibility to serve the people of California, the U.S. and the world through our mission of education, research and service. Integral to that mission is the dissemination of scholarly information as broadly and freely as possible, in order to further scientific discoveries, create innovative solutions to pressing problems and improve the lives and well-being of individuals and society. From the beginning, we have been supportive of the NIH public access policy and support all efforts to make all federally funded research articles freely available to the public.

The UC Berkeley library offers the following comments on phase two (Despite missing the submission deadline we hope that you will still consider our input.)

\*\* In what format should published papers be submitted in order to make them easy to find, retrieve, and search and to make it easy for others to link to them? Authors should be able to submit their research findings in whatever format is commonly used in their field. If complying with the policy is too onerous then researchers will not be supportive of the policy. It is the responsibility of the repository to convert the document into an accepted standard such as XML. The repository should convert the documents into a format that facilitates rich text searching and allows linking and text mining. PDF's will not work for this purpose. Repositories will need to adopt a common standard document type (DTD). The NLM DTD should be considered as a standard.

\*\* Are there formats that would be especially useful to researchers wishing to combine datasets or other published results published from various papers in order to conduct comparative studies or meta-analyses? This is an important question that would best be answered by consulting with researchers and scholars in the field.

\*\* What are the best examples of usability in the private sector (both domestic and international) and what makes them exceptional? The University of California recently unveiled a new publishing platform at <http://www.escholarship.org>. We invite you to browse the UC Berkeley departmental repositories (<http://www.escholarship.org/uc/search?smode=browse;browse-department=ucb>) to view features which allow readers to see complete citations, permalinks, and other metadata along with the ability to search within the document and to see similar items.

\*\* Should those who access papers be given the opportunity to comment or provide feedback? This does not seem necessary. The overhead of managing reader feedback could prove to be too much of a burden (both for authors and intermediaries).

Maher Amer said on January 8, 2010 at 12:47 pm:

Following all the inspiring discussions for this very important subject, I truly believe that making all the results of all tax-payer funded research available at no cost to the public is a must. We have to consider, however, the vital role played by scientific journal publisher in disseminating such important results. Scientific journal publishing is a for-profit business and their income of subscription fees and reprints is an important element of their success that we cannot deprive them from. In addition, research results generated using American tax-payers, should not be made available to non-Americans for free. Hence, I believe that all American tax-payer supported research should be available for American academic institution for free. Scientific journal publishers should be relying on subscription fees from industrial institution and the rest of the world's institution as their return on investment. I have no doubt that policies along these lines can be made to grantee the return on investment for both the American society and publishing industry.