



**The Linnean Society of London** is pleased to respond to the Office of Science and Technology Policy's November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 Federal Register Notice of Request for Information regarding:

**Public Access to Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications Resulting from Federally Funded Research**

To provide recommendations on approaches for ensuring long-term stewardship and broad public access to the peer-reviewed scholarly publications that result from federally funded scientific research.

***Background information on the Linnean Society of London and its Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications***

The Linnean Society of London is driven by a single purpose as outlined in its first charter, 200 years ago, *'The cultivation of the Science of Natural History in all its branches'*.

The Society uniquely embraces the entire sweep of natural history, promoting the study of all aspects of the biological sciences, with particular emphasis on evolution, taxonomy, biodiversity and sustainability, as well as maintaining internationally important historical collections in the biological sciences.

The Society encourages and communicates scientific advances in these and associated fields through its three world-class journals, special publications, meetings and website. At the same time, the Society reaches out to future biologists through schools and educational programmes. The Society's meetings are open to all – both Fellows and the general public.

The Society's Fellowship is international, and its Fellows are drawn from all walks of life, ranging from leading professional scientists to amateur naturalists. For further information on the Linnean Society, please visit [www.linnean.org](http://www.linnean.org).

The Society publishes its three scholarly journals through Wiley-Blackwell, which is North America's oldest independent publisher and one of the foremost academic and professional publishers in the world, employing around 2,600 staff in the United States. The Society's journals are widely subscribed to by academic and scientific institutions throughout the United States. The revenue that the Linnean Society receives from the subscriptions to its journals is fundamental in supporting the Society's activities listed above.

### ***Comments and Recommendations from the Linnean Society of London***

The Linnean Society's comments and recommendations concur with those made by the Society's publishers, John Wiley & Sons, in their recent submission.

The fundamental point to be made here is that taking the results of research through the peer review and publication process (including the value-adds of indexing/storing/content mining/retrieval, stewardship, etc) to achieve a verified 'Version of Record', is costly – and *someone has to pay*. Currently, this is achieved, either through journal subscriptions (or payment on a per article basis) by institutional libraries/individual users, or through authors paying a page charge (as used for current 'open-access' journals).

Because of the considerable investments in digital and on-line technology by publishers and Societies such as the Linnean Society of London, there is more access to more content by more users now than ever before: thus 'broad public access' is already a reality.

There is no evidence that making the current broad public access to the journal literature free will improve research productivity or the public wealth. On the contrary, free access, like copyright piracy, is likely to have the opposite effect. Access to the research literature is not a constraint on creativity and economic growth.

Normally, any grant funding body, including federal government funding, will require that the grantee provides a report of the results generated. These research summaries are the natural vehicle to provide public access to federally funded research results.

Importantly, these research summaries may contain negative data and/or applied research results which are seldom published but nevertheless may well be valuable in informing the direction of future research projects. It is therefore important that such data should be made available.

Thus, we support ***the recommendation*** that the federal government should make the content of these research summaries discoverable and, furthermore, link it to the journal literature, working with private sector publishers to achieve this end. This would provide a two-way flow, sending users from publisher websites to the funder website to view free government-sponsored research reports, and sending users from funder sites to view free abstracts and links to the Version of Record of articles connected to a particular research report or funded project.

In addition to enhancing public access to the results of federally-funded research, this approach would provide benefits to the federal government insofar as it would facilitate identifying all agency-funded research within publisher offerings, provide access to useful metadata, as well as the ability to assess the impact of the funded research through bibliometric and other tools developed by publishing companies.