Subject: **Request for Information: Public Access**
Date: January 2, 2012 4:41:04 PM EST

I am writing in response to the Request for Information regarding
public access to peer-reviewed scholarly publications resulting from
federally funded research.
It is self-evident that, being the group paying for federally funded
research, the taxpaying general public can assert an ultimate right of
ownership over the data and papers directly resulting from such
endeavors. Anything less than full and open public access to these
materials – including unlimited right of reproduction – amounts to
government-authorized theft of intellectual property from the citizens
of the United States. It is therefore encouraging to see the
government taking positive steps toward a strong open access policy.

While the stated goal of "grow[ing] existing and new markets related
to the access and analysis of peer-reviewed publications" is worthy in
and of itself, it must be understood that any policy toward this
objective must be entirely subservient to the rights of the taxpayers
funding this research. That said, when considering the economic
implications of any public access policy, it would be wise to focus
less on the fate of the narrow special interests who benefit from the
current scheme of things, than on the wide and cascading array of
possibilities opened up by greater public access to scientific
knowledge. We must be careful not to protect the buggy whip
manufacturers at the cost of the automobile industry, so to speak.

As for "interoperable search, discovery, and analysis capacity across
disciplines and archives": This isn't a topic that the government
needs to concern itself with in too much detail, beyond simply
specifying a minimal, structured, and consistent format for the
representation of open access documents. The Internet community
excels at coming up with innovative new ways of organizing and
presenting data; as long as the data is out there in a usable format
and is licensed for unlimited public reproduction, the rest will
follow automatically.

Thank you for your time.

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