

Dear Science and Technology Policy Office,

Thank you for extending the deadline for comments on Public Access to Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications Resulting From Federally Funded Research. The Research Works Act has only very recently come to the notice of scientists, and it is because of this extraordinary proposal that it is now apparent to us that we need to reaffirm what we thought was settled: that OF COURSE scientific work funded by the public should be freely accessible to the public. I do not understand how this can even be a matter for discussion. The public pays: the public should benefit in every way possible.

The language in the RWA is highly misleading, attributing to publishers far more input into the scientific process than they really have. The truth is that scientists (often funded by public money) provide the underlying research, the writing and the figure preparation that result in a manuscript submitted for publication. Other scientists then provide the editorial services and (contra publishers' claims, as can be easily verified) the peer review, usually for free as a service to the field! In contrast, the latest figures show profit margins of 20-40% for the major academic publishers-- do they really need to be handed a bigger windfall? Consider that it is the science community that needs to be better served, by open access.

Publishers' contributions are limited essentially to typesetting, the provision of web hosting, and sometimes a very limited amount of compensation for senior editors only (usually not the handling editors who actually deal with authors' works). In my case I get ~\$250 per year as a token fee for my >20 annual hours of work for Elsevier, which are nominally worth over \$150/hr as per my university salary). I am an Associate Editor for an Elsevier journal (Theoretical Biology) and can say this with total confidence based on my 5 years working for them.

The notion that such a minor contribution should suffice to hand publishers, rather than the public, the right to determine how, where and under what regime the resulting works are disseminated, is ludicrous. It would be laughable if it were not so iniquitous. Please do not support this act.

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