

**Request for Information: Public Access to Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Publications Resulting From Federally Funded Research**

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**Summary**

Traditional business models for scholarly publication are a barrier to both public and scientist access to federally-funded research in the internet era. Agencies should require open access publication of federally-funded work as a condition of support.

Publishers provide a service that is fueled by researcher time, reviewer time, page charges and subscriptions; all of which are funded directly or indirectly by the federal government. All taxpayers should have access to the scholarly work they pay for.

It is of particular concern that Congress is considering H.R. 3699 that would establish anti-competitive protections when there are already many open-access alternatives available from both traditional publishers and innovators.

**Specific Comments on RFI:**

- (1) Funding agencies should assure that supported research is published through sustainable channels with public access. Current revenue problems at universities and research institutes have often resulted in the cancellation of many publication subscriptions based on cost rather than value demonstrating that traditional publications business models provide no archiving security.
- (2) Publishers have legitimate interests in operating a profitable service but the intellectual property rights should remain with the creators and the funders.
- (3) The federal government investment in central open archives such as Medline has paid huge dividends for medical research. It is, however, a large cost and there may be value in piloting a program to establish interoperability among multiple credentialed open access repositories.
- (4) The science of indexing and searching scholarly information is well advanced and support for existing initiatives as well as the exploration of new innovations would be a good investment.
- (5) While it is attractive to have a central authority establish clear standards and criteria for archiving and search, marketplace demand may well determine the specifications.
- (6) Subscription fees have unfortunately become prohibitive for many institutions and thus a move to front end payment and efficient electronic review and publication would be a large cost and capital savings for researchers, libraries and institutions.

(7) yes.

(8) There is no reason to have an embargo period in open access publishing models. Any delay slows down the progress of research

**Context:** The academic publication business is a big, rapidly changing marketplace. The very high prices that traditional publishers now must charge for physical or electronic access have severely restricted access for both the public and for an increasing number of researchers associated with institutions that can not afford the subscription fees. The result is that often neither the scientific colleagues for whom the publications are created or the taxpayers who paid for the research and its publication can access them.

The success of recent open access options that take full advantage of internet communication demonstrate that alternative and more cost-effective business models are legitimate and sometimes superior. Indeed, many traditional publishers have been leaders in open access models that use increased page charges and electronic distribution to offer full access to all interested researchers and the public.

There is no need for legislation such as House Bill 3699 to create anti-competitive rules for funding agencies in order to subsidize traditional business practices.

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**About Sage Bionetworks:** Sage Bionetworks is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit biomedical research organization created to change how researchers approach the complexity of human biological information and the treatment of disease.

Sage Bionetworks' mission has five interdependent themes:

- Research on computational network models of disease
- Pilot projects trialing disruptive models of research cooperation
- Rules and rewards that promote data sharing and collective research
- Building the computational platform for a digital Commons
- Activating public engagement and access

We are driving a cultural change around the elimination of disease by activating patients, shifting scientists to share the data and models needed to build better models of disease. To do this, we are building an open Commons called 'Synapse' where data can be shared and a compute space where predictive disease models can be co-evolved so that industry and academia can jointly benefit from understanding biology.

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