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Maximizing the visibility of research outputs: COAR call for action

Open letter to Youngsuk (Y.S.) Chi - Chairman, Elsevier Management Committee and Head of Global Academic & Customer Relations

The Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) joins the research community in condemning Elsevier for its recent business practices and lobbying that undermine policies and activities promoting open access to scholarly literature. While many commercial publishers are working to adapt their business models to rising demands for open access, Elsevier has systematically acted to counter progress being made in the scholarly community towards this end.

One easy way of achieving open access is through the deposit of articles into online open access repositories. COAR strongly opposes the changes made by Elsevier to its article posting policies. These policies prohibit authors affiliated with institutions or agencies that have open access mandates to deposit copies of their articles into an open access repository unless their institution signs a very restrictive agreement with Elsevier. Despite their public commitment to "universal access", Elsevier's policies are greatly limiting access to scholarly literature.

These policies are in direct conflict with the objectives of COAR's members and partners as well as the broader scholarly community, which aim to maximize access to and use of research literature. Therefore, COAR is discouraging its members and others from entering into agreements with Elsevier or other publishers that undermine open access mandates and intervene with already established and emerging author practices of article deposit.

COAR urges Elsevier to reconsider its prohibitive approach to open access and revise its policies to allow the deposit of research articles with minimum delay. We encourage publishers to work closely with the library and repository communities to develop effective and sustainable methods for article deposit that serve the needs of researchers, their institutions, and society as a whole. In addition, COAR welcomes like-minded organizations - such as licensing agencies, library consortia, etc. - to join us in developing and adopting best practice for policies and procedures regarding article deposit into open access repositories.

The Confederation of Open Access Repositories is a not-for-profit association of repository initiatives that aims to enhance visibility and application of research outputs through global networks of Open Access digital repositories. COAR represents over 80 institutions from 24 countries from throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia, and North America.

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Chair of the Executive Board, COAR