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The Merit of Cream of Science: A Perspective from the UK on Scholarly Communication

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Chief Information Officer
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University of Nottingham, UK

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Overview

- Discussion of current trends in open access (OA) scholarly communication

- Report on lessons learned from the Merit project

- Perspective:

  - A library and information services manager in a UK research-led University

  - Director of the Centre for Research Communications, Nottingham

  - Former Chair of the Merit Project Board

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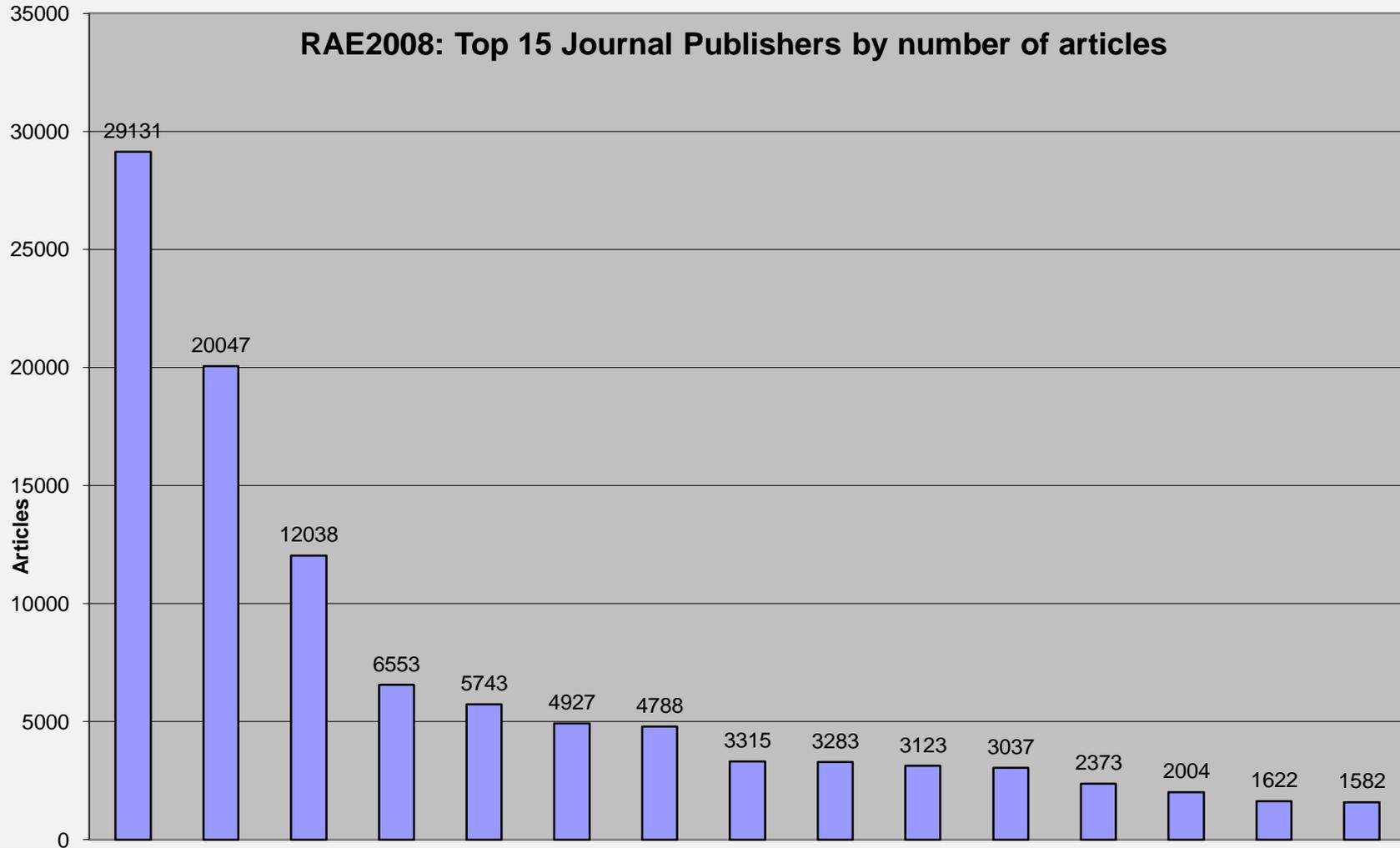
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Merit Project

- Aimed to create a UK 'Cream of Science'

- Ran during 2008-2009

- Funded by JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee)

- To be based on the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2008

- Mission:

  – to provide access to the best UK research for universities, schools and colleges, government, business and industry, the third sector and individual citizens

  – to create a partnership between everyone involved in the scholarly publishing process

  – to offer a guide to the best UK research and researchers, to assist raising their profiles and providing users with a route to identify them

  – to make the service visible through Google and other standard search engines

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RAE 2008 Outputs

- Each researcher normally submits four outputs for assessment – the planned basis of Merit

- Nearly 212,000 outputs submitted from UK institutions

- 159,000 (75%) journal articles

- Nearly 80% of the journal outputs in the collection were published by four publishers

- Outputs already collected in electronic form for assessment purposes

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RAE2008: Top 15 Journal Publishers by number of articles

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Key Issues

- Content: journal articles, other outputs?

- Architecture: central v. distributed?

- Added value: analysis, bibliometrics, etc?

- Sustainability: funding, ongoing collection policy?

- Audiences: academic, others?

- Publisher role: active involvement?

- Other stakeholders' roles: support required?

- Institutional repository role: instrumental, supporting?

- **The decision: Not to proceed with Merit**

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Acceptance of OA in Principle

- "Publicly-funded research should be publicly available"

- Greater acceptance in the academic community and beyond

- Resonates with wider policy issues of value for money, transparency and freedom of information

- Resonates with wider cultural expectations of free online information

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Government Acceptance: Example

"Transparency is at the heart of the Government's agenda, and this also applies to published research. In a recent discussion with members of the research community and publishers I stressed **the importance of open access** to this information for everyone, and I'm delighted that the Research Councils and HEFCE have committed to taking this forward."

David Willetts

UK Minister for Universities and Science, in a speech to the Association of British Science Writers, 24 May 2011

(emphasis added)

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'Open Access' v. 'Universal Access'

- Open access:
  - "Where content is fully, freely, immediately and permanently available, and can be accessed and reused in an unrestricted way." (Pinfield, 2011)
- Universal access:
  - The "goal of enabling the broadest possible access to quality research content in ways that meet constituent specific needs sustainably." (Elsevier)

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Benefits of OA are becoming clearer

- Well-established case for improving the research process itself: impact, access etc.

- Houghton et al reports and cost-benefit models
  - UK (2009) [1]
  - Netherlands (2009)
  - Denmark (2009)
  - Three country comparison (2009)
  - Germany (2010)
  - US (2010)

- Cook et al report (2011) [2]
  - UK study focusing on transition models costs and benefits

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Springer acquisition FAQ

1. Why has Springer bought BioMed Central?

2. Will this acquisition affect existing contract(s) with BioMed Central?

3. Will the acquisition affect consortium negotiations?

4. Will BioMed Central online platform remain separate from SpringerLink?

5. Will BioMed Central journal content be mirrored on SpringerLink?

6. Will Springer retain the Open Choice option on its traditional titles?

7. Will BioMed Central's article processing charges be raised to match those of the

8. How will the sale affect invoices and payments?

9. Will BioMed Central's research content remain 100% open access?

1. Why has Springer bought BioMed Central?

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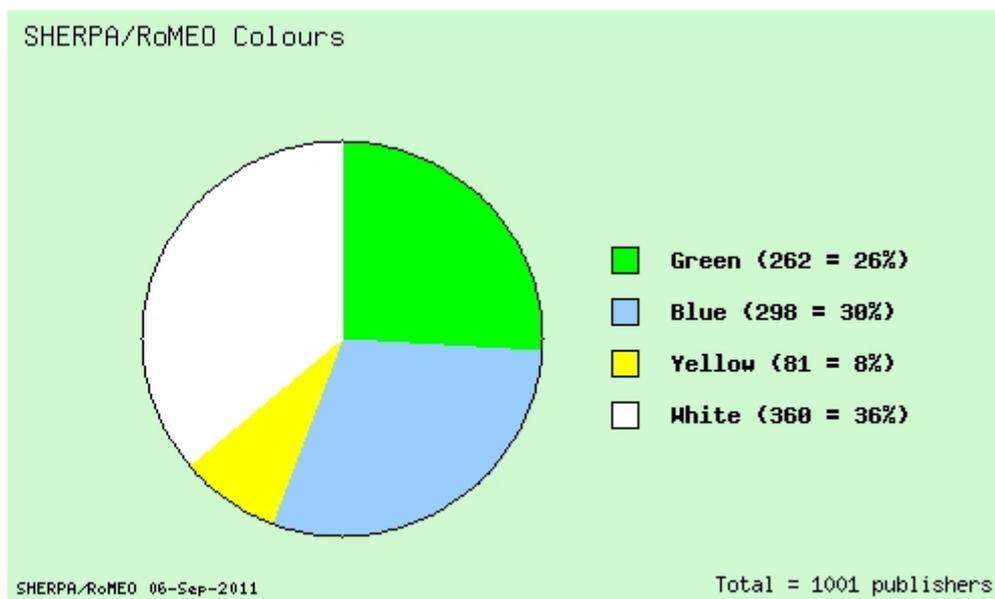UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

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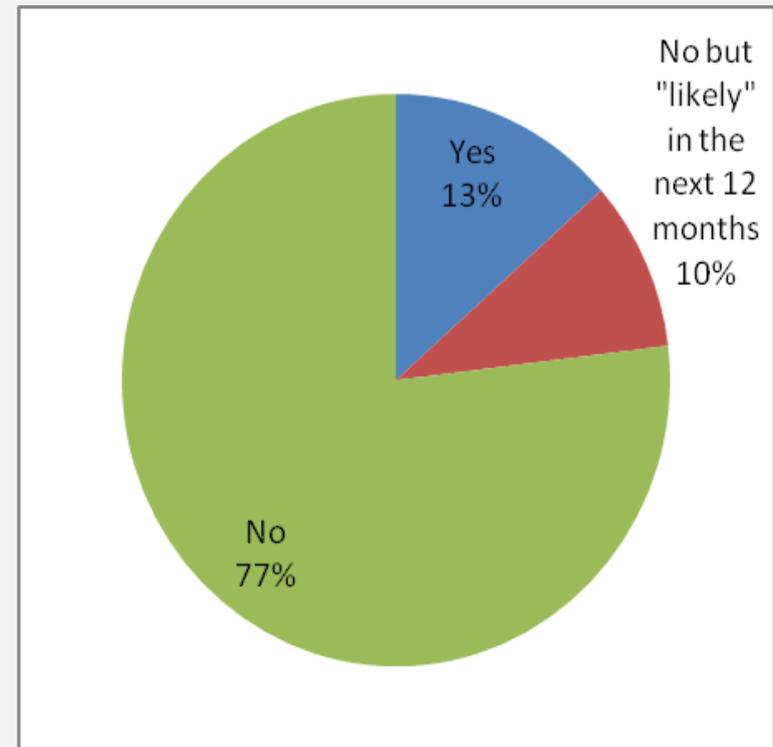
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Statistics for the 1001 publishers in the RoMEO database

RoMEO colour	Archiving policy	Publishers	%
green	Can archive pre-print and post-print	262	26
blue	Can archive post-print (ie final draft post-refereeing)	298	30
yellow	Can archive pre-print (ie pre-refereeing)	81	8
white	Archiving not formally supported	360	36

Summary: **64%** of publishers on this list formally **allow** some form of self-archiving.

SHERPA/RoMEO Colours

Green (262 = 26%)
Blue (298 = 30%)
Yellow (81 = 8%)
White (360 = 36%)

SHERPA/RoMEO 06-Sep-2011

Total = 1001 publishers

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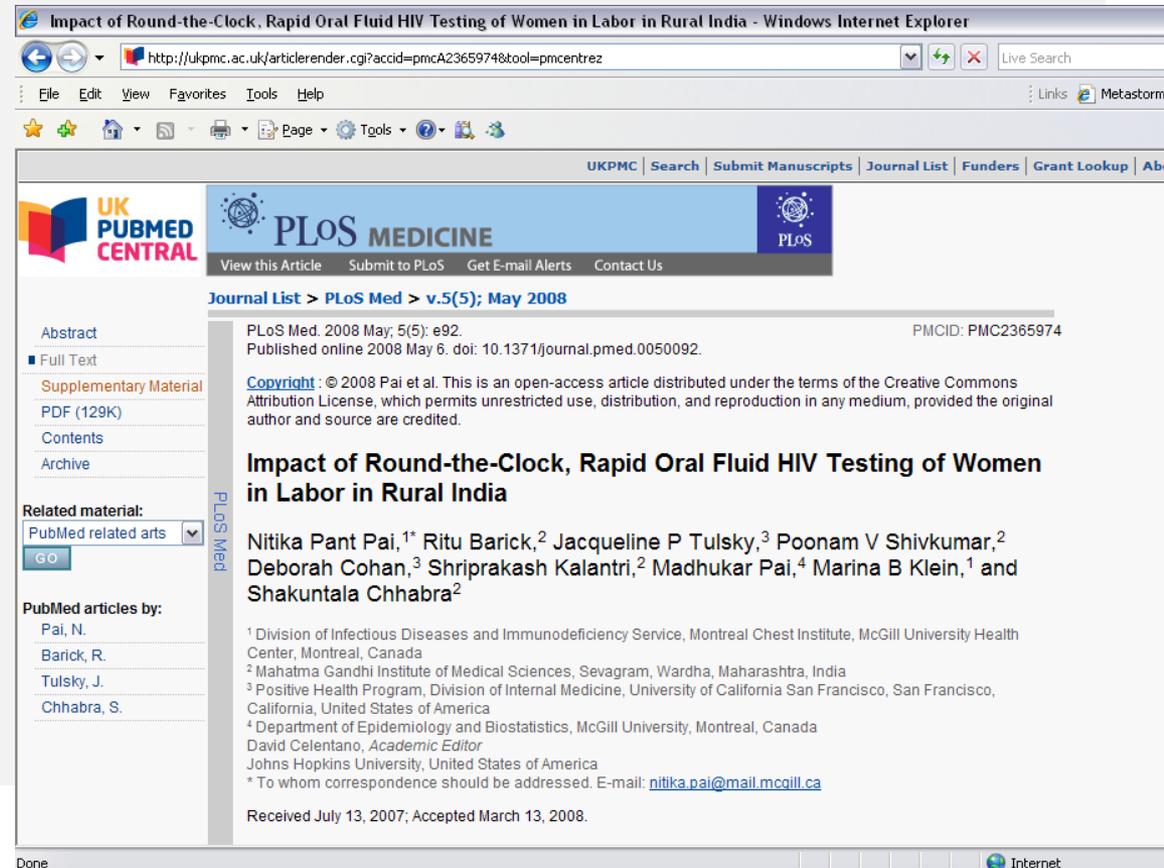**Nottingham**

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Policy v. Practice

- Research funder policies/mandates
- Institutional policies/mandates
- Encouraging compliance
- Funding streams and business processes
- Support and advocacy
- Funders as drivers - institutions as implementers

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Institutional OA publication funds: UK

"Do you have an institutionally-coordinated approach to payment of per-article OA fees (such as a central fund)?"

- "Yes": 7 institutions (13%)

- No but "likely" in the next 12 months: 5 (10%)

- Data collected in July/August 2011

- Very little change since July/August 2009

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'Open computation'

- Reuse
- Text/data mining
- Services

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OA Systems and Research Management

Combining:

- Research proposal/costing support systems
- Research awards management systems
- Publications record systems
- Full text repositories
- Data repositories
- Citation analysis support systems
- Reporting systems (e.g. for research assessment)

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OA and other 'Open' Agendas

- Other open agendas
  - Open source
  - Open data
  - Open educational resources
  - Open bibliography
  - Open Knowledge/Open Science
  - etc
- Overlapping rationale
- Synergies?

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New Forms of Scholarly Communication

- New approaches to traditional processes e.g. open peer review

- New vehicles for communication e.g. social networking technologies

- New types of content e.g. rich media

- New synergies across different outputs/venues e.g. linked data

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