**Stakeholder consultation on the future of  
scholarly publishing and scholarly communication**

In January 2019, the European Commission published the “[Future of scholarly publishing and scholarly communication](https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/464477b3-2559-11e9-8d04-01aa75ed71a1)”, a report of an Expert Group on the [Future of scholarly publishing and scholarly communication](http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3463&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1). The report examines the current system – with its strengths and weaknesses, and proposes a vision for the future.

**In view of planning policy actions, the European Commission is inviting relevant stakeholders to react on the vision put forward, in particular on how to operationalise the principles expressed by the Expert Group. The Commission intends to publish the results of this exercise.**

You are encouraged to take a broad and creative look towards the future, also taking into consideration current trends in scholarly communication, as well as imagining your role as an actor in the scholarly communication system fifteen years, or more, from now.

1. In practice, how do you imagine the vision of an ideal state of scholarly communication put forward by the expert group and, more specifically, your role as an actor in that future system? You may depart from the suggested vision, if you think necessary/you disagree.
2. What would you as an actor concretely need to do – and/or not do, to get us from where we are now to the state of affairs described in the vision put forward by the expert group? Critically, what would other stakeholders have to do – and/or not do?

Please respond by the 3rd of April

* Guidance to answering the questions is offered in Annex I.
* An abbreviated version of the Expert Group’s vision for the future of scholarly communication is offered in Annex II.

**Annex I: Guidance to answering the questions of the consultation**

Please address the following elements:

**Question 1:**

In discussing how the vision put forward by the expert group might look in its specifics and your role in the system envisioned, please discuss at least how the following elements of the system of scholarly communication may look like:

* **Actors and their roles/functions** **in the scholarly communication system.** The main actors, their functions/roles in the system, their balance, new actors. How do you see specifically the role/the functions of [your specific stakeholder group] (e.g. researchers, or research institutions or funders etc.) in such an ecosystem? Which functions of scholarly communication will/should your group fulfil? Will it fulfil all four functions discussed in the report, or only some of them?
* **Evaluation of research**. How does the evaluation of research and researchers look like in a system that evaluates a variety of research outcomes (e.g. data, publications, software etc.) on their own quality and relevance? What kind of indicators (qualitative and quantitative) or metrics are used to evaluate research and researchers and their scientific and social significance and impact such that do not use journal names? Are there specific indicators which support the engagement with Open Science? Are there specific approaches for particular scientific endeavours? What is the role of peer-review in general and in the evaluation process in particular?
* **Types of scholarly contributions** and their relative significance (articles, monographs, data, others/new ones?); **Venues/paths for dissemination** and their relative significance (journal, platforms, others/new?); **Business models and financial aspects** of scholarly communication. What are important business models? How is scholarly communication paid for?; Other topics as you see fit: e.g. role of emerging and new technologies, artificial intelligence, data science, social innovation, involvement of underprivileged groups, cultural change etc.

**Question 2:**

* Taking as a point of departure the recommendations of the Expert Group that may affect your stakeholder group, concretely how can they be implemented so the vision of the EG materializes?
* Are there other/more/different specific actions to be implemented beyond what the Expert Group recommends by your stakeholder group?
* How could the EC support your actions in order to move closer to the proposed vision?

**Annex II: an abbreviated presentation of the vision for the future of scholarly publishing and scholarly communication by the Expert Group.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Principles for scholarly communication** | 1. **EG vision** | 1. **Current situation (‘shortcomings’)** |
| **Maximizing accessibility** | Open access prevails and content is reusable at dissemination. It is discoverable as well; barriers between discovery and access are eliminated | Less than 50% of content openly available; subscriptions and other barriers; expensive to access content; interoperability a problem for discovery; fragmented environment with proprietary services and content. TDM and legal situation difficult for advanced discovery activities. |
| **Maximizing usability** | Research contributions are readily usable and understandable by people and machines; open infrastructures are supported; broad network of public institutions oversees effective mechanisms for active stewardship and preservation of research contributions for the long term | Only a minority of articles with clear licensing conditions for reuse; inconsistencies in format prevent computational reuse, lack of semantic context; long term preservation unsolved issue |
| **Supporting an expanding range of contributions** | All research contributions are registered, certified, disseminated, preserved and evaluated on the same footing as formally-published texts. They are FAIR and made accessible as early as possible. They are open to commenting. | Digital objects are mostly not FAIR; current evaluation processes do not favour the reward of a wide range of research contributions but mostly of publications; barriers are more cultural than technical |
| **A distributed, open infrastructure** | A globally interconnected infrastructure meets researchers’ needs. Elements essential for the function of the core system are in public hands, different types of services offered by various actors. No single organization has undue dominance of the SC system. Agile services, fit for purpose, open governance. Researchers actively participate in shaping tools and services and are rewarded for this. | Progress in open infrastructures; interoperability of platforms and workflows limited; fragmented systems. |
| **Equity, diversity and inclusivity** | All have equal chances to participate in the production and use of knowledge. Diversity in representation in scholarly infrastructures; balancing the interests of all participants against excessive dominance and consolidation of power among a very few. Production and dissemination of knowledge is a public good. | Access to and participation in the production of scientific knowledge shaped by structural inequalities at various levels. Structure of research is hierarchic and competitive; flows of information to the less privileged constrained and limited. APCs are a financial barrier that hampers communication between researchers and a problem with low-income countries and less-funded institutions and academics in wealthy countries. |
| **Community building** | Global networks of colleagues balance quest for speed with attention to integrity and reliability. Researchers collaborate widely across the world. Building and sustaining research communities and supporting communication and connectivity between different communities is recognized and rewarded as a ways to enhance reliability and integrity of the scholarly process. | To a large extent, the digital revolution can facilitate the building of scholarly communities through tools facilitating comments and discussions, but journals as they often work nowadays do not favour this objective, and neither do most platforms in their present design. |
| **Promoting high quality research and its integrity** | Certification and quality assurance rest on entirely transparent peer review procedures; such procedures are reviewed and modified according to need; peer-review is not pre-publication but post-registration. Peer-review is recognized as research contribution | Peer-review and the relevant standards; concerns about how it is performed and transparency; concerns that aside from assessing the rigor of work (certification) PR is used to assess importance of work, i.e. to evaluate the work. |
| **Facilitating evaluation** | Evaluation encompasses the full range of research contributions, it is sensitive to requirements of different disciplines and kinds of research, employs an appropriate broad range of tools and techniques. Criteria, methodologies, benchmarks, data and metrics are transparent and fair; diverse, qualitative and quantitative; they are regularly reviewed. They are fit for purpose. | Pervasive effects of the dominant JIF used for evaluation; research evaluation heavily relies on metrics largely based on citation from journals, often inappropriate and not discipline-specific. This leads to skewed rankings, which point to perceived prestige rather than quality |
| **Promoting flexibility and innovation** | Balance between standardization and meeting the needs of various communities achieved; regular dialogue between different research communities and specialists in designing processes and socio-technical aspects of scholarly infrastructures and with the full range of service providers and agents in Sc. Services revised and reconfigured as a result. Regular flow of new experiments and new entrants. value and effectiveness, scalabity and sustainability are tested fairly and transparently | Small number of publishers and other entities have increased their dominance in provision of content and services; lock-in and barriers to new entrants; latter often acquired; while there is innovation pace and orientation of innovations in hands of few. innovations by institutions tends to follow traditional forms of scholarly communication (books, journals); innovative ways of sharing practiced by few with little effect on system of SC. |
| **Cost-effectiveness** | Costs, price settings and revenues are transparent, as well as financial flows between all parties. Clearly defined relationships between costs and kinds and levels of service provided; services are affordable to buyers; new systems and processes are significantly different from those of the pasts; they have the potential to reduce costs of core activities and services; income to support services comes from a range of sources; research funding schemes are designed to support experimentation and an enhanced range of services to meet changing needs | Prices continue to climb despite expectations of digital era, partly because of growing number of production but mainly because pricing of scholarly publications not related to costs of production in a clear fashion; scholarly publishing stands obliquely with regard to market forces; lack of transparency of costs enabled by exercise of control of academic publishing by few companies; |