



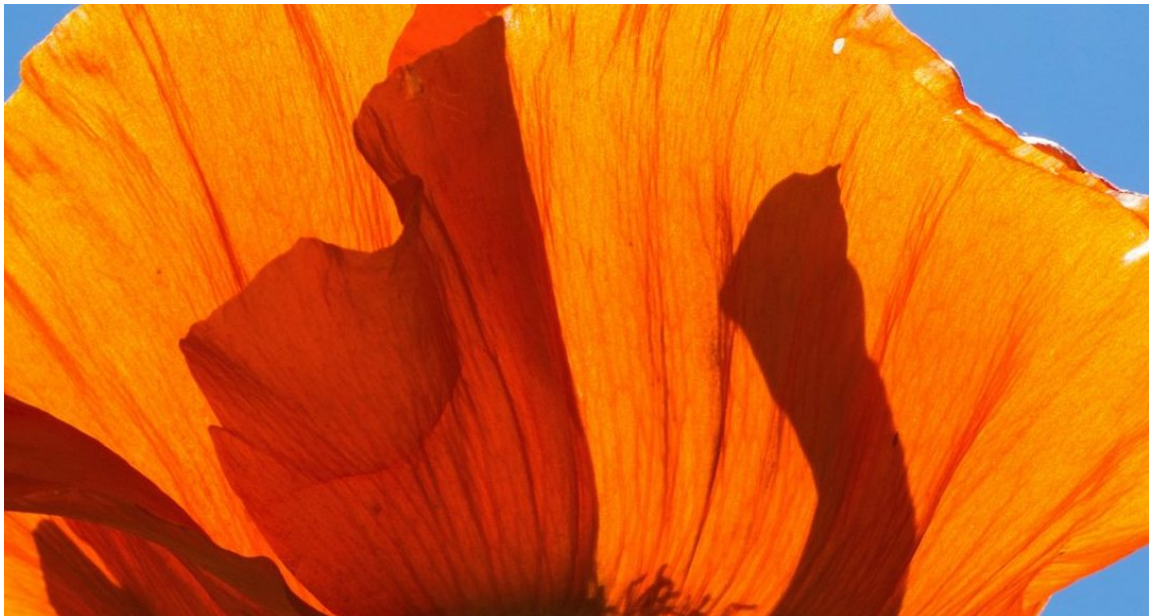
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The Budapest Open Access Initiative's 20th Anniversary Recommendations

by Caroline Winter | 15 September 2023 | English, Observations, Observations and Responses | 0 comments



Lisez-le en français

This observation was written by Jesse Thomas-Kern and Caroline Winter, with thanks to Shawn Martin for his feedback and suggestions.

At a glance:

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On March 15, 2022, the [Budapest Open Access Initiative \(BOAI\)](#) celebrated its 20th anniversary by releasing [four new high-level recommendations](#)—along with detailed sub-recommendations and further elaborations—focusing on community-led open access (OA) and global equity, and addressing key

challenges for the coming decade (BOAI 2022).

The BOAI began in Berlin in 2001 with a meeting of the Open Society Institute (OSI). In an episode of the *Unsettling Knowledge Inequities* podcast, the steering committee reflects on the origins of the term “open access.” Peter Suber considers that the group was, maybe without realizing it, inspired by the term “open source software,” a term which had been coined a few years before to describe software that could be copied, shared, and modified without restriction. The original declaration says:

By “open access” to this literature, we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited. (BOAI 2002)

The 2002 declaration made two calls to action: for organizations to launch new OA journals without subscription fees and for scholars to self-archive their work in OA archives and repositories. Although acknowledging that OA publishing was not free to produce, the declaration suggested alternative funding methods, such as institutional funds, endowments, government funding, and individual researcher contributions.

In 2012, the BOAI celebrated its 10th anniversary by reaffirming—and elaborating on—its commitment to OA. The recommendations centred on coordination and advocacy, licensing for access and reuse, development of OA-centric documentation and policy, and sustainable infrastructure. These recommendations were mainly aimed at publishers, academic institutions, and government funding, and provided more nuance and specificity than the original declaration. The focus on sustainable infrastructure is reaffirmed in the 20th Anniversary Recommendations’ call for open infrastructure platforms.

The 2022 recommendations were informed by community consultations and are aimed at both organizations and individuals. The recommendations define OA as

- making research available through open infrastructure led by the academic community and non-profit organizations,
- reforming research assessment and improving incentives, and
- ensuring that authors are not excluded for economic reasons, such as scholar-funded publishing through article-processing charges (APCs).

The emphasis on open source, community-controlled platforms and academic-led infrastructure is in line with the 2002 declaration which, although it did not make an explicit call to avoid commercial platforms, did call for scholars to place their work in archives that conformed to the Open Archives Initiative’s interoperable web content standards.

Responses from the INKE Community

Juan Pablo Alperin of the Public Knowledge Project (PKP, an INKE Partner) led a webcast discussion with members of the steering committee—including Heather Joseph, Peter Suber, and Dominique Babini—about the BOAI’s 20th Anniversary Recommendations.

In August 2022, the University of Victoria Libraries (an INKE Partner) celebrated the BOAI’s 20th anniversary, calling the initiative a “continuous inspiration” for UVic and the for the OA movement more broadly (Schmidt 2022).

Open access is one of the core [principles guiding the work of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries \(CARL; an INKE Partner\)](#), which is a signatory to the BOAI and to the [Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities](#).

Responses from the Broader Academic Community

The [EUI celebrated the BOAI's anniversary](#) by endorsing the new recommendations, highlighting their focus on APCs, read-and-publish agreements, research assessment, and open infrastructure.

The [ACRL Insider blog](#) marked the anniversary by sharing a list of ACRL resources, including their books on OA, workshops, and a scholarly communication toolkit.

Diving deeper into the implications of the new recommendations, A. J. Boston's article "[Open Access and the Direction Moving Forward](#)," published by *the Scholarly Kitchen*, describes what they consider a troubling tendency in the OA movement: transformative agreements. These agreements seek to move away from the subscription-based model toward read-and-publish agreements, which bundle the cost of publishing with the cost of subscriptions (see "[Open Access Agreements](#)"). While this addresses the "funder-led push for authors to make their work OA," it excludes authors whose institutions do not have the funding to enter into read-and-publish agreements. Boston sees the 20th Anniversary Recommendations as a course correction: a reminder that OA is "meant to encompass equity, quality, usability, and sustainability" (Boston 2022).

The BOAI's 20th Anniversary and Open Scholarship

The 2002 declaration was one of three [definitional OA statements](#), along with the [Bethesda Statement on OA Publishing](#) and the [Berlin Declaration](#), both released in 2003 (see "[Three Defining Statements on OA](#)").

The new recommendations focus on addressing inequity in OA, including the exclusion of authors whose institutions cannot afford APCs and the erasure of labour; this highlights the importance of social justice concerns to the OA Movement and other Open movements more broadly (see Roh et al, 2020). This focus on addressing inequity is also part of a broader movement toward diamond OA, a mode of OA publishing that does not charge fees to authors or readers (see "[An Action Plan for Advancing Diamond Open Access](#)"). Kristin Ratan places the 2022 recommendations' call for open infrastructure in the context of a broader conversation that includes the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#) and the endorsement of diamond OA by [Harvard Library](#) (2022; see "[UNESCO's Recommendation on Open Science](#)").

Ratan also discusses policy developments in the US—specifically, the [Nelson Memo](#)—noting that it will likely lead to a "massive wave of open research publications" (2022; "[The Nelson Memo: Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research in the US](#)"). Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe argues that, since the Nelson Memo calls for publication in OA repositories by default and allows researchers to build article publishing costs (APCs) into their grant budgets, the result will likely be a further entrenchment of APC-based OA in the US through a variety of OA agreements (2023).

A guiding force in this shift toward diamond OA is the [OA Diamond Journals Study](#), which was supported by a number of European organisations and initiatives, including [SPARC Europe](#), the [Directory of OA Journals \(DOAJ\)](#), and the [European Network for Research Evaluation in the Social Sciences and the Humanities](#) (Bosman et al. 2021).

The BOAI 2002 declaration envisioned "a future in which research and education in every part of the world are that much more free to flourish." While sensitive to the potential need for change and experimentation, the 2022 recommendations remain dedicated to this goal, and they point to the broader aims that the Open Access Movement is working towards. Reflecting on the movement over the past two

decades, the steering committee notes that,

We became increasingly clear that OA is not an end in itself, but a means to other ends, above all, to the equity, quality, usability, and sustainability of research. We must assess the growth of OA against the gains and losses for these further ends. We must pick strategies to grow OA that are consistent with these further ends and bring us steadily closer to their realization. (BOAI 2022)

In emphasizing the need for open infrastructure, policy and cultural shifts, and even greater attention to issues of equity, the 2022 BOAI 20th Anniversary Recommendations reaffirm the vital role of OA in the open scholarship ecosystem.

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