

# The quality imperative of Open Access

Leo Waaijers  
presenting SURF's

**'Clearing the gate' initiative**

Open Access co-ordination workshop  
INFSO-RTD, Brussels 4<sup>th</sup> May

# EC's ambition

“The aim for 2020 is to achieve a genuine **European Knowledge Area**, underpinned by a world-class knowledge infrastructure, **in which all actors** (students, teachers, researchers, education and research institutions and enterprises) **benefit from the free circulation of** people, **knowledge** and technology.”

[EC on the future “EU 2020 strategy”](#), November 2009.

# Academia strives for Open Access

Protagonists

[Stevan Harnad](#), [Andrew Odlyzko](#)

Open letters

[Open letter to the publishers](#) by 38.000, [petition to the EC](#) by 28.000

Declarations

[Budapest](#), [Bethesda](#), [Berlin](#) signed by hundreds of institutions, ...

Statements

[ERC](#), [ESF](#), [EURAB](#), [EUA](#), [EUROHORCs](#), [Wellcome Trust](#) and more

Studies

[OFT UK 2002](#), [EC 2006](#), [Houghton studies 2009](#)

Projects

Numerous local and (inter-)national projects culminating in [OpenAIRE](#)

Funds

[Open Access Compact](#) and many others

**Gap between beliefs and actions:**

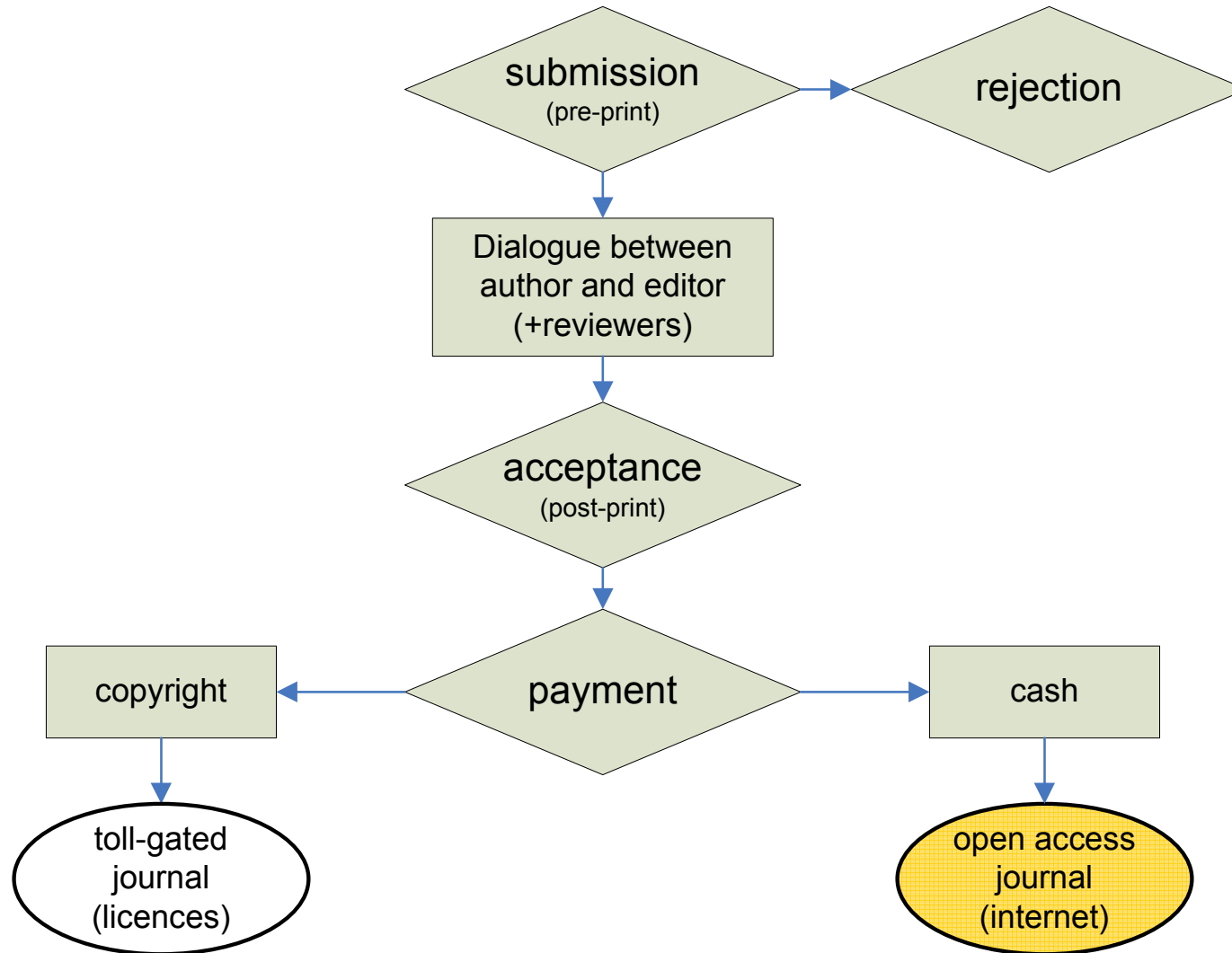
Major limitation: (perceived) lack of high-quality OA journals

Major barrier: fees and funding

**Sizable country-by-country | and discipline-by-discipline difference**

**One size does not fit all !**

# Academia: two processes



# Publishers: two business models

|                    | Classical                                                                                                                 | Modern                                                                         |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Competition</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> based on copyright monopoly (malfunctioning market)                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> based on price-performance competition                |
| <i>Complexity</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> multi transaction model (copyright transfer, subscriptions/licences, copyright clearance agency) | <input type="checkbox"/> single transaction model (publication fee)            |
| <i>Cash flow</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 year contract+5%/y, prepaid                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> paid upon article acceptance                          |
| <i>Service</i>     | <input type="checkbox"/> restricted access (authorised users only), conditional reuse                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> free access and reuse via internet (Creative Commons) |

# So ...

profile seeking authors say,

“OA journals are not good enough”,

profit seeking publishers say,

“OA journals are not good enough”.

What does the most powerful party say,  
i.e. the funders?

# So far funders

- signed OA declarations<sup>1</sup>
- released pro OA statements<sup>2</sup>
- have given 'soft mandates'<sup>3</sup>
- have created OA funds<sup>4</sup>

1 and 2: Expressing their Corporate Social Responsibility

3: Addressing the depositing of post-prints

4: Addressing the money barrier of OA publishing (2<sup>nd</sup> in the SOAP list)

**Why not tackle the main obstacle?**



# Clearing the gate

A SURF initiative aiming at  
persuading **funders** to assign  
**a preferential status to high-quality OA journals**

**Assumption:**  
**by doing so high quality OA journals will proliferate.**

# The aim of this presentation is

neither to merely explain what Clearing the Gate is about,

nor to convert you to a Clearing the Gate *aficionado*  
(although ... ☐),

but

to invite funders to a feasibility tour.

# A feasibility exploration

| stages                                      | who                                        | result                                 |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Applicable quality definition of journal | funders<br>(= EUROHORCS/ESF +)             | guidelines                             |
| 2. Apply guidelines to DOAJ                 | disciplinary expert teams<br>(via funders) | identification of 'α' journals in DOAJ |
| 3. Pay publication fee for 'α articles'     | funders                                    | first preferential step                |
| 4. Include hybrid journals?                 | funders (in consultation with publishers)  | additional guidelines, more α journals |
| 5. Further preferential steps               | funders (in consultation with disciplines) | more preferential steps                |
| 6. Quo vadis ....?<br>(Maintenance!)        | ....                                       | ....                                   |

go-  
no go

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no go

# Plus one for the debate

What role could stakeholder organizations like

SPARC Europe, OASPA, OAPEN, DOAJ, ..

play?

# Thanks

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