



Open Access Publishing

An Ethical Imperative
for Government Publishers

Angela Anderson, Director, Marine Corps University Press

Introduction

Marine Corps University Press

MCUP was created in 2008 in the wake of a review board that noted the university needed a publishing house to support its professional military education mission. The press published its first open access journal and monographs in 2010.

I was hired as the director in 2013, and my primary objectives were to professionalize the work being done, standardize our processes, and obtain membership in the Association of University Presses in support of those goals. MCUP became an introductory member in 2016 and a full member in 2020.

Now, celebrating 15 years of service, MCUP represents a growing trend in the university press ecosystem where open access is the only business model.

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Today's Objective

The Ethical Imperative for Federal Government Publishers

Open access (OA) publishing is still in its infancy for many university presses. Organizations within the federal government have operated using this model for some time, but the real question is **WHY?**

Why is it critical that the American people, the intellectual community, and the world's population have access to research paid for by U.S. tax dollars?

To answer that question, we must first understand what we mean by OA and what is driving these initiatives.

Open Access

Understanding Open Access

The Budapest Open Access Initiative offered an early definition of OA publishing in 2001:

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.

“Budapest Open Access Initiative” (findings, Open Society Institute, Budapest, 1-2 December 2001).

The background of the slide features several thin, curved lines in a light gray color, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of motion and depth. On the left side, there is a large red speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Open Access'.

Open Access

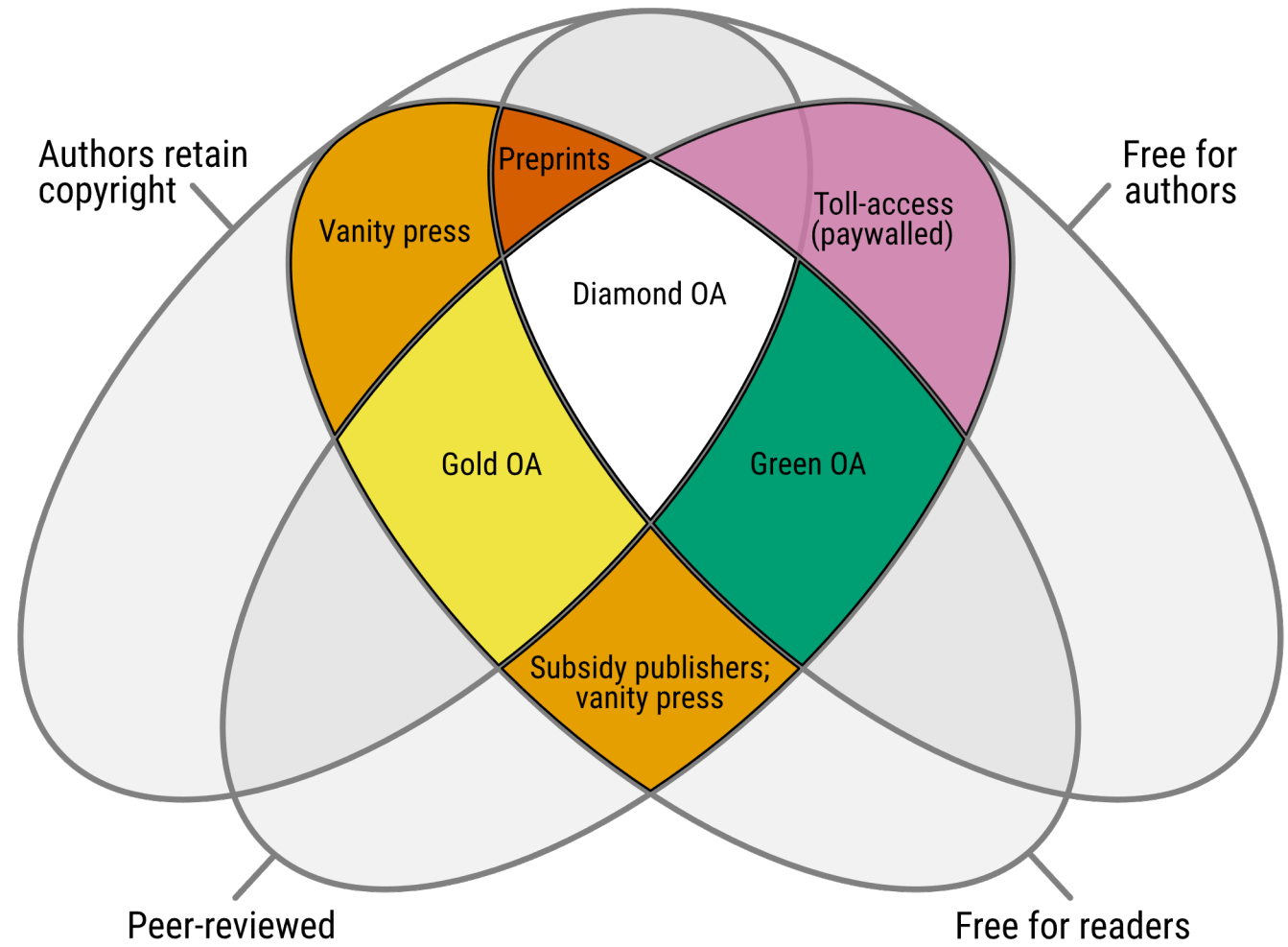
Why is this distinction important?

The consensus of the attendees at the Open Society Institute meeting in Budapest was that removing access barriers to this literature will accelerate research, enrich education, share the learning of the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge.

OA Models

- **Hybrid:** this style depends on some financial subventions to support the program. The content may be embargoed for a time to generate revenue and then made open later; the author may be required to pay a fee (author processing charge) or the parent institution or external organization provides a subvention.
- **Green:** refers to a model of publishing or archival repository where a version of the content is made freely available, but it is typically not the publisher's version, so it does not include copyediting, proofreading, typesetting/design, indexing, or placement on the publisher's website. Embargoes may be in place for this content, there may be barriers to use, there may not be any licensing assigned, and/or the author may not retain copyright.
- **Bronze:** content may be free to read or download but without an open license that permits use or sharing. Bronze OA is typically available for a specific period and the publisher can remove access at any time.
- **Gold:** content is immediately and freely available. Gold OA has licensing assigned for use, but author fees or institutional support may be funding the publishing model. The author may retain the copyright on the content and in most cases barriers to use have been removed.
- **Diamond/platinum:** the most open publishing model and the content is presented with zero barriers to use. The content is available immediately and there are no fees for authors or users. Copyright is retained by the author and the licensing indicates open use and sharing.

OA Models



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Federally Funded Research

Presidential Mandates for Open Access

In 2013, President Barack H. Obama released a memorandum through the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) titled “Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research” directing that:

Each Federal agency with over \$100 million in annual conduct of research and development expenditures to develop a plan to support increased public access to the results of research funded by the Federal Government. This includes any results published in peer-reviewed scholarly publications that are based on research that directly arises from Federal funds.

Federally Funded Research

What does this mean for federal organizations?

Each agency must have:

- a strategy for leveraging existing archives and fostering public/private partnerships with scientific journals relevant to the agency's research;
- a strategy for improving the public's ability to locate and access digital data resulting from federally funded scientific research;
- an approach for optimizing search, archival, and dissemination features that encourages innovation in accessibility and interoperability, while ensuring long-term stewardship of the results of federally funded research;
- a plan for notifying awardees and other federally funded scientific researchers of their obligations;
- an agency strategy for measuring and enforcing compliance with its plan;
- identification of resources within the existing agency budget to implement the plan;
- a timeline for implementation; and
- identification of any special circumstances that prevent the agency from meeting any of the objectives set out in this memorandum.

Federally Funded Research

2022 Updated Mandate

In the wake of lessons learned from the global pandemic, President Joseph R. Biden renewed the government's commitment to open access and published an updated memorandum titled "Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research" with the intent to ensure that federal agencies:

- update their public access policies as soon as possible, and no later than **31 December 2025**, to make publications and their supporting data resulting from federally funded research publicly accessible without an embargo on their free and public release;
- establish transparent procedures that ensure scientific and research integrity is maintained in public access policies; and,
- coordinate with OSTP to ensure equitable delivery of federally funded research results and data.

A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text 'The Big Question'. The bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom left.

The Big Question

How do federal agencies, private organizations, and university presses meet this mandate?

OPEN ACCESS

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Federal Government Publishing

How does a university press operate within the federal government?

A government university press—or any research-based federal organization for that matter (e.g., USDA, NOAA, NASA, NSF, NIH, NARA, EPA, DOD, etc.)—operates as a nonprofit, academic publishing house that focuses on scholarly monographs and journals, and they are integral components of degree-granting, research institutions.

A federal government university press is committed to providing their authors and readers with content known for scholarly excellence, and their best practices highlight ethical publishing policies, peer review, rigorous research, emerging trends in scholarship, and specialized topics. Most importantly, it does so with zero barriers to its content.

A large red graphic consisting of a horizontal bar at the top and a larger rectangle below it. The bottom rectangle has a small triangular point at its base center, pointing downwards.

MCUP

**DIVERSE
INCLUSIVE
EQUITABLE
RESPONSIBLE**

MCUP's Ethical Imperative

MCUP publishes original scholarly, peer-reviewed research (books, journals, and other forms of research) in military history, national security, international relations, and political science realms for worldwide communities. As a government military publisher, the press disseminates these products to research libraries, institutions, and scholars at no charge in multiple digital and print formats.

MCUP is a platinum open-access press, which means that we provide permanent and free access to all publications to the public in both print and digital formats. MCUP adopted this model of publishing in the belief that knowledge is a public and social good and should be shared without barriers to access. This includes financial barriers for the author by eliminating publishing fees and for the reader by providing free access to federally funded publications for the public good.

Why OA Publishing?

Open access publishing matters because:

- It provides fair and transparent use of taxpayer's money.
- It offers free and fast access to scholarly debate and research data.
- It directly supports the academic ecosystem and the intellectual health of an organization.
- It ensures that research achieves greater visibility with minimal or no barriers to readers or authors using advanced searchability and long-term archiving tools.
- It leads to greater recognition in the industry and your organization, possibly leading to collaboration opportunities and new content creation.
- It encourages efficient research and innovation, lifelong knowledge, and greater participation in democratic processes.
- It supports diversity, inclusion, and equity in all populations.
- It ensures that geography, demographics, income, and social status are no longer barriers to knowledge.

Q&A

Want more information?

[2013 OSTP Memorandum](#)

[2022 OSTP Memorandum](#)

Toolkits and Associations

AUPresses <https://aupresses.org/resources/tags/open-access/>

OAPEN www.oabooks-toolkit.org

OASPA www.oaspa.org

DOAB/DOAJ www.doabooks.org and www.doaj.org

Questions: angela.anderson@usmcu.edu

www.usmcu.edu/mcupress

MCUP|15 YEARS