

EUR 2.5m available for Open Access to research results

Utrecht, 3 February 2010 – Open Access – meaning free access to scientific and scholarly information – is winning ground, and more and more information is becoming freely accessible to the public. The parties concerned – including publishers – are increasingly accepting Open Access as the norm. At the [Open Access seminar](#) organised by SURF in Amsterdam, Prof. Jos Engelen, chairman of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), announced that his organisation would be providing a special Open Access budget of EUR 2.5m.

At the well-attended seminar – held to mark the conclusion of SURF's 'Open Access Year 2009' – discussion focused on the issue of how we can speed up progress towards achieving the Open Access ideal. Much has already been achieved in the Netherlands. More than 200,000 publications have now been made freely accessible via the [NARCIS scientific portal](#). These will now be joined by publications by the lecturers who organise knowledge networks at Dutch universities of applied sciences.

Unanimity

Leading figures from the world of higher education and research expressed unanimous support for the view that scientific and scholarly publications that have been financed by the taxpayer should be available online free of charge. Derk Haank, CEO of the Springer publishing group, went so far as to say that if scientific and scholarly publishing were to start again today, Open Access would be the logical route to pursue.

Publishers

The Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) has reached agreement with Springer that in 2010 all articles by Dutch researchers in Springer journals will be made available Open Access, subject to the author agreeing. Other publishers too are providing opportunities for Open Access publication because they are following Springer in allowing researchers to arrange for Open Access when publishing their articles. Almost all publishers already allow researchers to upload the definitive author's version of their article to their institution's repository.

Problem

One problem for scientists and scholars is the need to publish in prestigious and expensive journals so as to receive a good rating, which is important when applying for grants from organisations such as the NWO. Prof. Engelen said that the NWO would investigate ways of ensuring that publications in Open Access would count more significantly towards the author's 'impact factor'. Paul Doop – a member of the board of Amsterdam University and Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, and chair of the ICT and Research platform board of SURFfoundation – argued that the problem could be solved by including a provision for mandatory Open Access in collective labour agreements. Many of those attending the seminar thought that was going too far. Prof. Engelen said, however, that his organisation was keeping close track of developments and that if insufficient progress had been made in a year's time, the NWO would see whether it could make Open Access obligatory, as its sister organisations in the United Kingdom and the United States have already done.

More information on the Open Access seminar, including the video registration (in Dutch) can be found on the [website of SURFfoundation](#) .