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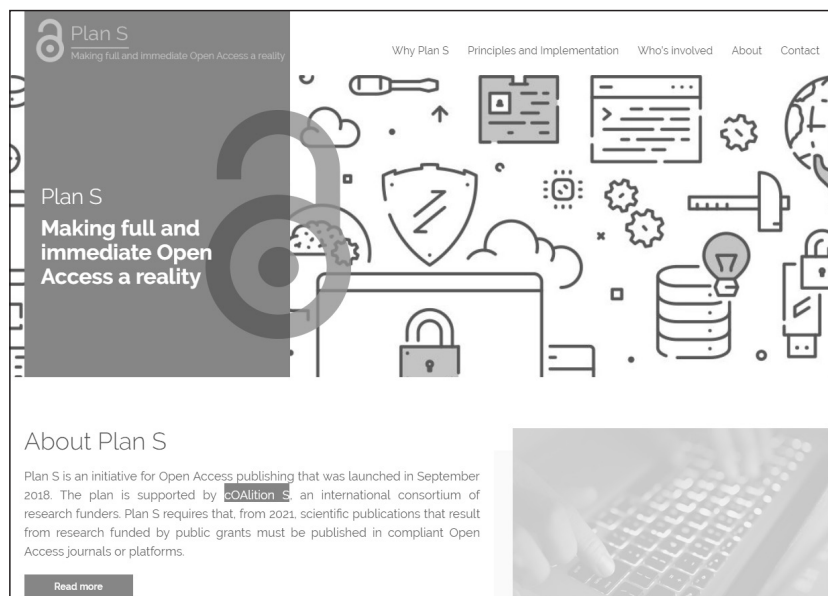
cOAlition S website

<https://www.coalition-s.org/>

Since the release of the principles of the Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002, the free online access to the results of research has always been one of the hottest topics in academic publishing.

In September 2018, cOAlition S, an alliance of 11 national research funding organizations supported by the European Commission and the European Research Council, announced the so-called “Plan S”, that aims to accelerate the transition to a full open access model, characterized by an unrestricted use and re-use of scholarly publications.

“No science should be locked behind paywalls” says a very powerful declaration on the “Why Plan S” page of the cOAlition S website.



The main principle of Plan S is the following:

“With effect from 2021, all scholarly publications on the results from research funded by public or private grants provided by national, regional and international research councils and funding bodies, must be published in Open Access Journals, on Open Access Platforms, or made immediately available through Open Access Repositories without embargo.”

In addition, 10 specific principles have been developed, covering different aspects of the OA model, from authors' copyright to hybrid model (the list of principles, reviewed in May 2019, is available at <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>).

There is no doubt that open access has many benefits, such as greater access to up-to-date research for researchers in developing nations, higher citation counts for published papers and better transparency in the disclosure of research.

Nonetheless, Plan S has received a mixed reaction. Immediately after its launch, a group of over 1700 researchers, ranging from master students to Nobel laureates, signed an open letter that, even if supporting the initiative and its intentions, highlighted some practical problems that this approach may cause. In May 2019, cOAlition S released a revised version: the key principles were modified to take into account some of the researchers' proposals and the launch date was delayed to 2021. Still, concerns remain, especially about APC-based publishing and the effects of Plan S on the quality of peer review and international collaborations.

And what about publishers and journal editors? Many established scholarly publishers have been perceived as resistant to these changes. Certainly, to adhere to Plan S guidelines means a complete change of business model, and time is required to build a new and sustainable approach. Even if publishers are sometimes accused of monetizing publicly-funded research, selling the results of the research back to academia at inflated profits, they do add value: arranging peer-review, managing ethics and authorship discussions, assuring copy-editing and proofreading, and allowing findability of research.

“We will not see a ‘one-size fits all’ open access publishing ecosystem as proposed by cOAlition S in Plan S” comments David Sampson, Vice President and Publisher, American Society of Clinical Oncology. “Leading journal brands in many disciplines will endure and publish both open access and paywalled content as authors and readers continue to recognize the importance of rigorous, traditional peer review, as slow and archaic as it may seem”.

In any case, following the cOAlition S website and its future development seems a must for all those who work in academic publishing. If the initiative is implemented, more information about how Plan S would work in practice will be available. And don't forget that the ESE blog is always open to anyone who wants to discuss this stimulating topic (<https://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.com/>).

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