

The ethics of open access publishing

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Abstract

Should those who work on ethics welcome or resist moves to open access publishing? This paper analyses argument in favour and against the increasing requirement for open access publishing and considers their implications for bioethics research. In the context of biomedical science, major funders are increasingly mandating open access as a condition of funding and such moves are also common in other disciplines. Whilst there has been some debate about the implications of open-access for the social sciences and humanities, there has been little if any discussion about the implications of open access for ethics. This is surprising given both the central role of public reason and critique in ethics and the fact that many of the arguments made for and against open access have been couched in moral terms. In what follows I argue that those who work in ethics have a strong interest in supporting moves towards more open publishing approaches which have the potential both to inform and promote richer and more diverse forms of public deliberation and to be enriched by them. The importance of public deliberation in practical and applied ethics suggests that ethicists have a particular interest in the promotion of diverse and experimental forms of publication and debate and in supporting new, more creative and more participatory approaches to publication.

Keywords: Ethics, Bioethics open access, Publishing ethics, Gold model, Universities humanities