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## Review of Open Access: What You Need to Know Now

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## OPEN ACCESS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW

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OPEN ACCESS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW. Walt Crawford. *Chicago, IL: ALA, 2011, 76 pp., ISBN 978-0-8389-1106-8, soft cover, \$45.00.*

Open access is a very hot topic and its important issues and aspects are succinctly covered by Walt Crawford in this special report. Geared toward librarians, this book is a good introduction to what one needs to know about open access (OA). The first chapter explains the reasons why librarians should care about OA, including moral and pragmatic arguments along with potential benefits, such as literature being freely available anywhere, anytime, to anyone with Internet access. The current budget shortages being experienced by libraries make this a very timely and relevant subject especially for academic libraries.

The following chapter provides several basic definitions of OA and others that correlate with different levels of access, such as green and gold OA. Alternate terms for OA are also considered. An explanation of author-side fees further sheds light on the difference between true open access and partial open access. The author concludes that OA primarily refers to peer-reviewed articles, which would ultimately produce the greatest benefit to libraries.

Issues and controversies that affect and limit OA journals are covered in the next two chapters. The main issues are inertia and invisibility. Further examples of issues, which the author defines as situations needing “attention and study,” are: competition, open access entrepreneurs, partial access, repository issues, long-term, and universal access. Some specific issues for libraries are searchability and access and realization of cost savings. Crawford stresses that none of these issues are deal-breakers, but they do require more attention than they have been given so far. Controversies are broken down into legitimate ones: such as cost, added value from publishers, and quality compared to subscription journals. Some common OA myths and misunderstandings (pseudo-controversies) are the undermining or weakening of peer review, the cost reducing available funding for research, and the elimination of or negative effect on

copyright. Getting through the first four chapters is a bit painstaking with all of the definitions and explanations. However, these chapters, and the book as a whole, are valuable as a reference guide on open access.

This book really picks up speed in the “Taking Action” chapter by providing practical advice on how librarians can begin to promote open access. First listed are the five basics that all library staff should consider. Also covered is a section with tips on how to work with researchers and scholars, ways to start OA publishing, and avenues for contributing to OA research. The author aptly sums up open access as both a frustrating and exciting field where slow progress is being made. More people are gaining more access to more knowledge with fewer barriers to overcome, which is one of the main goals of open access as well as librarianship. Finally, there is a chapter containing an annotated list of resources for further and continuing study on open access.

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