

“Open science and open access as a disruptive technology is an essential part of UKeIG’s portfolio.”

INSIGHT

UKeIG

Open Access and monographs

UKeIG, the UK e-information Group – formerly known as the UK Online User Group – was launched in 1978 to satisfy the overwhelming interest in online search skills.

It was instrumental in ensuring that the information community in the UK could take advantage of digital information services. UKOLUG’s inaugural conference was held in York in 1984 and it went on to provide CPD courses, state-of-the-art networking events, bursaries, awards, newsletters and reference guides sharing expertise, good practice and ‘how to’ advice.

To explore further, please visit Chapter 7 of Sandra Ward and Martin White’s *Evolution and impact: a history of the Institute of Information Scientists 1958 – 2002* at <https://bit.ly/3ELE8mq> where the origins of UKeIG are excavated against the backdrop of two World Wars and the explosive increase in scientific research and scholarly publications.

The Group showcases and celebrates digital knowledge and expertise, ensuring that members from all sectors are savvy with R&D and innovations across the information industry. Core topics for consideration include digital literacy, effective information retrieval and search technologies, intranets and enterprise search, social media, research support, scholarly communication and publishing. The blooming paradigm of AI is driving an exciting new direction and agenda.

Open science and open access as a disruptive technology is an essential part of UKeIG’s portfolio. Please visit back issues of our e-newsletter *eLucidate* for some examples: <https://bit.ly/3Zzb0oV>.

UKeIG Chair David Ball has written and presented extensively on the emergence on OS/OA, Open Monographs, Open Data and Open Peer Review. He emphasises that this developing paradigm goes way beyond STEM subjects and impacts on social science, arts and humanities. ‘The

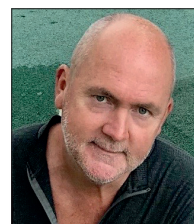
concept of Open Access to research outputs has been common currency for many years. The rapid growth of the Internet has made different publication models easily available. More recent thinking has expanded the concept of openness even further, to Open Science, which aims to transform science by making research more open, global, collaborative, creative and closer to society. This approach is being embraced by all academic disciplines. The shift is extremely important for the development and exploitation of research, and hence for the professionals who support it.’

In this inaugural UKeIG Insight column, David writes about Open Access Monographs.

There has been exponential growth over the past 50 years in the number of academic research journals and the articles they contain. The huge majority of such articles treat science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects and are impenetrable to (lay) readers outside their discipline.

Over the past 20 years the Open Access (OA) movement has brought about a fundamental change in the traditional publishing model for STEM journals, ensuring that a high proportion of the research funded, directly and indirectly, by the tax payer and charities is available free to anyone with an Internet connection. While this is a major benefit to the global research community in STEM, the highly specialised content is generally not accessible outside STEM researchers.

However, we are now seeing the application of the Open Access model to the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS), where publication of research is generally through long-form books (monographs), whose content in many instances is both accessible and of interest to the lay reader. One critical driver is the recent insistence by UK Research and Innovation (the seven research councils), that ‘from 1 January



Gary Horrocks (info.ukieg@cilip.org.uk) UK e-information Group.



David Ball is Chair of UK e-information Group.

2024, monographs, book chapters and edited collections that acknowledge UKRI funding will... need to be published Open Access’. (www.ukri.org/news/open-access-policy-update-december-2022/)

To give some indication of current numbers, the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB – www.doabooks.org/en) comprises over 65,000 academic peer-reviewed books in a wide range of subjects from many different publishers. These numbers are expected to increase as the new movement towards university presses takes hold. Most of these new presses are exclusively Open Access. One of the first of this new generation, started in 2015 and now well established, for instance, is UCL Press (www.uclpress.co.uk).

Raising awareness, and the means of retrieval, of this growing, free, accessible resource is of direct benefit to the public; it also increases the real-world impact of the underlying funded research.”

And coming up in May, a half day course on Open Access and how to exploit it. Find out more at <https://bit.ly/2okJgFM>. **IP**