

Editoriale | Editorial

Encyclopaideia 2.0

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Beginning with this edition, EnCP (Encyclopaideia) will become an open-access online journal. Shifting to open access (OA) is a long-meditated choice, and based on cultural, scientific and even political reasons. As is well known, given the crisis of the Italian academic publishing industry, today more and more journals see the light online, on open source platforms provided by various institutions. According to the Directory of Open Access Journals ([DOAJ](#)) (a service provided by the University of Lund in Sweden), in 2013 there were 283 OA journals published in Italy; around 60 of them began publishing in 2013 alone (at the time of publishing, the DOAJ has recorded 294 OA journals in Italy). Less frequent is the case of well-recognized journals, with an established history and sound scientific reputation that freely choose OA for cultural, scientific and even political intentions without being forced by economic or organizational reasons.

EnCP deliberately chose to pursue the path of the so-called *gold road* to OA, one of the two strategies by which the philosophy of open access to scientific knowledge develops: to create high quality and impact journals that offer their contributions available free of charge to the wider scientific community via the internet (the other way, the *green road*, consists in self-archiving within institutional repositories, or even in personal websites). We do believe that knowledge should be spread as widely as possible and that, recently, academic publishing has been polarized between two poles: on the one hand gigantic multinational oligopolies that make huge profits on the hyper-qualified work offered for free by the scientific community, and on the other hand national small publishers who are struggling to stay on the market (also for the excessive power of the former) and are not any longer able to offer a distribution and an adequate promotion of cultural products, of which they hold the copyright. Despite this perverse outcome of the market globalization, there is a side effect that is today made possible thanks to the potential offered by the Web. Notwithstanding a romantic and nostalgic affection for the printed paper and the fragrance of the ink on the pages of a journal hot off the press, it is a fact that we all use scientific articles (sometimes paying a fee) across the web, by consulting databases, information aggregators, or accessing our libraries catalogues from home (which now are divesting subscriptions to print versions of the journals). Therefore, limited to publishing scientific journals, of course only to that, the turning towards the online goes in the direction of the established habits of using scientific literature offered by international journals.

However, we especially wish to highlight here that open access is mostly a cultural and political choice for the widest possible dissemination of the knowledge produced through research. A wide, open and free circulation is particularly useful for human and social sciences and education in particular for at least two reasons. First, because knowledge cannot and must not remain confined in narrow academic circles, circulated through very expensive journals, with little or no distribution by publishers and therefore little and badly read only by experts. That results in deepening the dangerous

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gap between theoreticians and practitioners, experts and laymen. Secondly, because knowledge, even purely academic knowledge, only makes sense with comparison and exchange. Ideas must be circulated for comments, quotations, questions and eventually criticisms, that must become a prerequisite for further research and documentary evidence for other.

With reference only to journals, this diffusion of ideas and knowledge generated through research can not take place if knowledge is caged within scientific journals that do not circulate anymore: you cannot buy them in book store any longer, they often have unaffordable prices, they have less and less individual subscriptions and also in the specialized libraries the number of institutional subscriptions has been gradually decreasing. Technology, especially the Internet, have offered an alternative, enabling a quick and extensive dissemination of knowledge, with relatively affordable costs (though never entirely absent). The principle of OA was immediately acknowledged by the avant-garde of the scientific community since the nineties and subsequently processed in such statements as that of [Budapest](#) in 2002 and then in [Bethesda 2003](#) and especially in [Berlin 2003](#), which on the basis of the first two pioneering gatherings, defines the principles and criteria of OA to scientific literature, foreshadowing possible outcomes for the dissemination of knowledge allowed by the new communication and information technologies. By the way, the Berlin Declaration was signed by 16 major Italian universities and from the same Italian University Rectors' Conference (CRUI).

Since those pioneering and somewhat visionary statements, OA has now received an official recognition and normative regulation in various countries worldwide, including our country. In Italy, for example, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Art. 4 of the Law October 7, 2013, n. 112 (OJ 236 of 08.10.2013), that converts into law the decree of preceding August about the "Urgent measures for the protection, enhancement and recovery of property and cultural activities and tourism", in fact open the road to open access for the publication of research results (for a review see: <http://www.roars.it/online/la-legge-italiana-sullaccesso-aperto-agli-articoli-scientifici-linizio-di-un-percorso-normativo/>). The principle of open access to scientific publications has finally found also in Italy a law recognition which incorporates the most relevant regulatory models starting from the 2012 [European Commission Recommendation](#) no. 4890 of 17.07.2012.

These indications are in turn based on the US model for the [research funded by the National Health Institute](#) and subsequently [made permanent](#), but also Spanish ([artículo 37 \(Difusión en acceso abierto\) della Ley 14/2011, de 1 de junio, de la Ciencia, la Tecnología y la Innovación](#)) and German ([\[the law 1° October 2013 \(BGBl. I S. 3714\), Gesetz zur Nutzung verwaister und vergriffener Werke und einer weiteren Änderung des Urheberrechtsgesetzes, has added a new part to the paragraph 38 of the German law about the copyright.](#)

According to its basic regulatory principle the publicly-funded research should have the widest dissemination free of charge. But in the European recommendation, which has already permeated many regulations of the Italian Ministry of Education as well as the scope of the recent Horizon 2020 call for proposals goes even further when it states that OA scientific publications should also be recognized in the evaluation systems of the university production. In this sense, it calls upon member states to implement policies by "adjusting the recruitment and career evaluation system for researchers and the evaluation system for awarding research grants to researchers so that those who participate in the culture of sharing results of their research are rewarded. Improved systems should take into account research results made available through open access and develop, encourage and use new,

alternative models of career assessment, metrics and indicators" (Official Journal of the European Union, 27.7.2012, p.6 / 41). This legislative recognition and urgent call (sometimes a real obligation, as in the case of projects financed in H2020) for publishing OA the results, has forced also commercial publishers to provide more open access services, although often bound to a questionable payment of a fee for publication (Article Publishing Charge or APC), which reduces or cancels the period of embargo during which the contribution is protected by copyright.

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As can be imagined, many fears and concerns still remain about publishing OA scientific contributions, and they are, in part, well founded. However, there is evidence that these doubts about OA are dwindling each year, while the awareness about its benefits is growing among authors and journals scientific boards, as demonstrated by research, certainly impartial because its aim is not to promote open access, as the one recently conducted by large commercial publisher [Taylor & Francis](#).

Thinking in particular of EnCP, I try to summarize below the main fears and concerns, and sometimes the prejudices, surrounding OA publishing and in particular what restrains journals from taking the gold road for peer review publications. To those who know even a little about open access and its principles and its procedures, the answers to these fears that we have provided here may seem silly and trivial, but we prefer, here, not to take anything for granted and instead to show the path that, after careful analysis and on the basis of convincing evidence, persuaded us of the adequacy of our choice.

1) *The OA journals are of lower quality than the commercial ones.* Actually, the open access approach does not affect the quality and, if anything, can offer instruments for certifying it, as, for instance, by making it possible to publicly track the entire peer review process. As has been noted, open access does not replace or otherwise elude or eliminate the mechanisms of quality already established for the scientific production. In other words, it does not call into question the system of expert review, which is the principle that nowadays is the basis for the selection of research contributions and its communication, as currently accepted by the scientific community (Suber, 2012 p.103).

Indeed, some have tried to prove the thesis of the lower quality of OA journals, by 'demonstrating' that some of them (but only those publishing upon payment of fees) would have accepted a fake article for publication, one which contained deliberately incorrect research data. For this, see the controversial and questionable article published open access (!) in the journal *Science* in defence of traditional publishing ("The dark side of open access"), which summarizes a special issue of the American edition ([Science 4 October 2013: Vol. 342 no. 6154 pp. 56-57 DOI:10.1126/science.342.6154.56](#)). In fact, it makes sense to doubt that the payment of a fee for publishing could undermine the neutrality of the peer review. As for EnCP, we have chosen not to charge any fees on the authors for publication, also to avoid this risk. But it should be stressed that the issue of the funding of OA journals remains a serious problem, because it is not true that OA journals, although free to the readers, can be produced at no cost, and in some cases, the choice to ask authors to pay, to not depend on funding agencies that could compromise the scientific and cultural independence, is not entirely farfetched. The more serious community of open access journals, however, is trying to protect itself, by posting and continuously updating the "black list" of so-called

"predatory publishers"; those publishers to be avoided because they are not serious or patently fraudulent. Refer to the famous *Beall's list* <http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/> about this issue.

'Predatory publishers', who publish for a fee and often hide real scams, must be distinguished from the thousands of open access journals that offer intellectual contributions of the highest level, with rigorous peer review process, recognized by national rating agencies (in Italy, for example, ANVUR and CRUI) and international databases such as ISI and Scopus, that equally accept commercial and open access journals, provided they satisfy the criteria for assessing the quality of journals established by them.

2) *The author will lose the intellectual property right of an article.* By publishing without a commercial copyright there is the fear that one also lose the intellectual property right? Of one's scientific contribution and that anyone else can appropriate and republish it under his or her own name. It is not true. The copyright is secured, for example, by the widespread [Creative Commons](#) licenses, specially designed for the protection of digital materials. There are different kinds of these licenses, but they only regulate the *commercial* use of the rights and the possibility to make a profit from them. The *intellectual property* of a scientific contribution, which is very different from the right to commercial use, it is never questioned. Depending on the type of Creative Commons license, one will be able to reuse all or part of a contribution published, with or without the explicit permission of the author, but always by quoting the source and the author's contribution. In particular EnCP has chosen the [CC BY](#) license, which is the less restrictive one, except for the public domain, which although initially viewed with concern by the authors and journals' editors, is also recommended by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA) and the [SPARC Europe Seal](#) (Europe Seal of Approval program for OA journals). The CC BY license allows one to freely share and even to manipulate the original text, provided s/he recognizes the authorship to the author indicating whether and what changes have been made to the original text.

3) *Texts published only online are volatile and not durable.* This fear is not so much related to the choice of OA, but basically to publish only online rather than in paper. This is certainly a sound argument and it should not be underestimated. In fact, one can legitimately question to what extent it would be possible to store and preserve materials which are by definition volatile, because somehow 'virtual'. In the case of EnCP, because the publisher of the journal is the University of Bologna, through a platform provided by its university library system, the matter is in the hands of an authoritative and well-established institution as well as of competent, qualified people, well aware (as experienced librarians) of the preservation problem. In particular AlmaDL (the service that hosts us), being born as an offshoot of the university library system, was one of the pioneering services in the field of so-called digital repository, having concluded agreements with the National Library of Florence for the first deposit in the server of the digital archive of the university's doctoral thesis and then participating in a large consortium that brings together national libraries to deposit all the articles published in the journals hosted on its server in [Magazzini Digitali](#). In this way one can guarantee "preservation and access over time to digital publications transmitted electronically just? Like the traditional paper record" (Vignocchi, 2012). Moreover AlmaDL also assigns two digital indicators, NBN and DOI, to each article published in EnCP, which allows one to track individual published articles on the web, making it impossible to lose track of them.

4) *The journal is no longer available in library catalogues.* This is also an unfounded prejudice. Indeed, while commercial subscriptions are steadily declining, due to the concomitant increase in the prices imposed by the cartel of huge publishing companies and the cutting of funds available to libraries, free OA journals increase their presence in the catalogues. Moreover, these are more easily viewed in the online catalogues of the universities than are other Italian journals. These other journals are published by small and invisible domestic publishers who do not have sufficient resources to provide library catalogues with? Its platform for online consultation that allow you to browse full text journals with just a few clicks from the general catalogue. To have a proof of this, I invite the readers to make a test and to try to access, for example, the articles of top class journals in e-Education from the catalogue of the library of your university, provided that the university continues to subscribe these journals.

5) *OA lowers the production standard.* The publishing quality and the editorial graphics of open access journals is generally lower than published journals; the lack of professionalism and experience of a commercial publisher can cause serious damage to the quality and to the cultural and scientific value of a journal. An editorial product, even online, requires skills, experience and style that can not be improvised. While the available open source platforms (such as the widespread digital platform OJS on which EnCP is located?) are of the highest level and allow one to create publishing products of good quality. However if one uses only the options that they can offer, it is likely to homogenise and standardize the contents based on of the templates available, creating rough journals from the editorial point of view and graphically anonymous. The contribution of professional publishing and graphics that commercial publishers can provide in producing journals is difficult to replace. But it is not impossible.

It is necessary to contact professional web and graphic designers - not only traditional publishers - that can ensure a quality editorial product, as always has been for EnCP in its in nearly 20 years history. For this purpose funds are essential. Therefore we would like to thank the Department of Life Quality Studies, University of Bologna, for allowing us to benefit of computer and graphic high-level professionals.

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Notwithstanding the more or less founded doubts and fears, the noteworthy benefits of open access scientific periodical publication are evident. Having briefly mentioned them at the beginning of this editorial, below I summarize in a schematic way:

1) *Widest circulation.* The possibility of free circulation in the internet exponentially increases both nationally and internationally the number of readers of each individual article. Since EnCP will continue to have regular and numbered issues, every new release will be preceded and followed by announcements sent to potential interested people thanks to the rich mailing list built along the years. With few clicks, those potential readers will be able to access the articles they are interested in. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the dissemination of the papers is also compatible with the recent European rules which impose open access publishing on most of the publicly funded research results.

2) *Higher visibility.* To the increasing number of readers, due to the fact that EnCP is online, corresponds the higher visibility, due to be open access. In fact you can make your contribution

available to personal website, blogs, and spread them through social media. With 'social media' here I do not refer to such teenagers' leisure like Facebook, (Although it is certainly used professionally for many groups and businesses) but mostly to professional social media like Almetric, ImpactStory, Researchgate, Academia.edu, Mendeley, Google Scholar, LinkedIn or, to some extent also the univocal researchers' identifier [ORCID](#), which also works as a professional social network. All these resources contribute both at disseminating the product of one's research work and, mostly, at measuring the 'impact' of one's work. Impact is a qualitative parameter, one that is still vague, but it is becoming more and more the unity of measurement of one's scientific 'value' instead of the controversial standard of numbers of quotations. Finally higher visibility due to open access allows one to link the full text of her/his papers to the institutional sites which collect personal records of every faculty member for many purposes: personal websites in your department, assessing scientific productivity, etc.

3) *Enhancement of data mining.* Thanks to higher visibility it is now possible to increase the so called data mining. Wikipedia, in this case a highly authoritative source of information, defines [data mining](#) as "the computational process of discovering patterns in large data sets involving methods at the intersection of artificial intelligence, machine learning, statistics, and database systems". In other words, since a huge amount of scientific information (published articles, metadata, research data etc.) is mechanically aggregated and analyzed, to know and to take advantage of the automatized search paths allows an easier availability of one's publications associated with similar information, and therefore more useful for readers/researchers. Every scholar aims to disseminate his/her research results among interested and competent people. We do so, and we will continue to do so, by attending conferences and through academic networks, but the web could represent a further level of diffusion of our work in combination with similar contents and according to reasoned and not casual logics. What once could do simple aggregators as subjects indexes in traditional library catalogs, now can do sophisticated content analysis tools, nowadays made available by the internet and the technological development of semantic analysis software. As for EnCP, the AlmaDL editorial support will maximize the dissemination of scientific knowledge through appropriate channels, allowing to produce new ideas and understanding, in a reasoned way, starting from the information that we will make available through our journal to the international community.

4) *Raising impact through a demonstrated citation advantage.* It is obvious that a higher reasoned and selective visibility within scientific interest groups will lead to an increase in, what nowadays, like it or not, is considered the unity of measurement of the scientific impact of an article: citations. It is evident that the more an article is visible, the more that it circulates through aggregators among interested researchers, and, thus? the more will increase the possibilities to be referred to, commented, criticized, and therefore quoted. The so called *citation advantage* of open access online journals is widely demonstrated and documented by endless sources: <http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/354006/1/oacitation-biblio-snapshot0613.html>.

5) *Faster publication time.* Another element in favor to getting online is the shortage of publication time. This is a benefit due more to be online instead of printed journal, rather than to be open access. Once the new publication process will be settled, EnCP will significantly reduce the publication time because, although quality selection will continue to take time, it will be possible to skip the printing, distributing and mailing steps, typical of the traditional editorial processes. This

significant time reduction will benefit authors who, according to the mentioned research by Taylor & Francis, mostly require journals to shorten publication time.

6) *Greater transparency in the peer review processes.* As we said the OA philosophy not only does not lower the peer review quality, but yet it enhance it since it allows the traceability of the entire process. The [Open Journal System](#) (OJS) software that manages the platform hosting EnCP provides a number of functions for tracking the peer review process. In particular, the whole correspondence about the evaluation process involving referees, author and editor, will take place through the system and no longer through email or regular mails. As long as the process will be entirely settled, manuscripts will be submitted through the site, where also the referees will post their evaluation, always leaving trace retraced of the whole process. In this way OA journal can operate in the same way used by the majority of journals published by big publishers, which use expensive and sophisticated platform such as ScholarOne, inaccessible for small national academic publishers.

7) *Multiple languages publishing.* A further advantage of online publishing is the possibility of publishing in multiple languages, i.e. both in the original language and in its translation. To promote a wide cultural osmosis, EnCP adopted the policy to translate as much as possible into Italian papers originally submitted in English and, vice versa, to publish in English articles by Italian authors. Because we do not have space limitations nor further editorial costs, we will be able to offer multilingual versions of the same article, if available.

To this opportunity of multiple language publishing is related the benefit to grant a wider visibility (and consequently a further citation advantage) to those who write in languages different from English, the lingua franca of the scientific community, that has actually created a disparity of opportunities in favor of Anglophone contexts. By enhancing multiple language publications, we will be able to access other networks nowadays made possible thanks to the increasing of OA journals. A good example of this are some OA journals platforms well established in Latin America such as Redalyc in Mexico (<http://www.redalyc.org/home.oe>) e Scielo (<http://www.scielo.org/php/index.php>) in Brazil, which collect and manage more than 2000 journals and are increasing visibility thanks to the open access. In short, in addition to the personal advantage of higher visibility, the choice of open access multilingualism promotes, in political terms, a greater diversity of languages, cultures, but also research paradigms that resist against the cultural monopoly imposed also by the oligopoly of a few large commercial publishers.

Finally it should be mentioned that the above benefits could not be well exploited and the above shortcomings not limited if we could not count on a very capable and competent staff, as well as available and motivated. The mission of AlmaDL Journal service offered by the University of Bologna, is to provide support to editorial staff of peer reviewed open access scientific journals published by Departments and research teams of the Alma Mater (Vignocchi et al., 2012). The project that has led to the open access online version of EnCP has been elaborated and implemented in close cooperation with that service, together with the staff of the University Library of the Rimini branch.

In conclusion, for a scientifically recognized and historically well established journal as EnCP the decision to go online and open access is certainly an important and courageous one, but the long process of reflection done hitherto, the careful evaluation of the pros and cons of this choice and the prediction of future developments of academic publishing have convinced us of the opportunity of this decision. We do believe to be the vanguard of a movement that in coming years will predictably grow.

Besides, being online has always been a priority for EnCP. In the 2008 editorial plan, ‘online’ was yet one of the six key words indicating the path to be followed in the future (other key words were: phenomenology, excellence, internationalization, collegiality and cross-boundaries): “[online] certainly represents a further perspective to be followed for a broader dissemination of the journal”. Six years later, while we reaffirm the centrality of all those key words in the EnCP editorial plan, for the next decade we add ‘open access’ as a feature able to enhance and multiply its cultural and scientific impact.

In ceasing the collaboration with Bononia University Press, the publisher who printed EnCP for the last four years, we would like to thank its staff for the professionalism and the competence with which accompanied us during this period. We would like to remind that 2010-2013 issues of EnCP are still available for purchase in the BUP website (<http://www.buonline.com/ita/catalogo.asp>) and single articles are downloadable in <http://www.digibup.com/collections/frontpage>.

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