

On giving a talk about Open Access in my department

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Earlier this month I gave this talk in my department. It is basically a summary of two blog posts that I wrote in October during **Open Access Week** (Open Access Week: a researcher's perspective part I and part II), and I had given a similar talk in November in an Open Access workshop organized by the Helmholtz Association. But because this time my audience (researchers and clinicians in a university hospital) was less knowledgeable about Open Access, I added a few introductory slides in the beginning.

The discussion is usually the most interesting part, and this topic certainly has a lot of material for discussion. Interestingly, we talked mainly about the problem of **copyright**. Even though anybody who has ever submitted a paper to a (non-Open Access) journal has signed a copyright transfer agreement, the implications of this were not really clear to most people in the audience. Reuse of a figure or table in an academic seminar usually falls under **fair use**, but many journals still require a (free) permission.¹ And using the same figure in a medical conference can cost several hundred dollars, and it doesn't really matter that you are one of the authors of the paper (slides 15-17 in the presentation). Some of my colleagues have run into issues with copyright, usually when the talks of a conference were later redistributed on a CD or website.

Unfortunately there wasn't enough time to discuss some of the other issues raised in the talk, e.g.

- Why can't our Medical School Library afford an institutional subscription for Cell?
- Why is there no **institutional repository** at our university?
- Why is it very unlikely that we will have a mandate for Open Access in Germany in the near future?
- Why has the **Impact Factor** become so important in Medicine?

The seminar was also interesting in that this was one of the rare occasions where I talked publicly in my department about some of the topics that I regularly write about on this blog. I always felt that most of my colleagues don't really care about these topics, and that they probably think I should rather spend my

time working on the next paper or grant. I haven't gotten much feedback after the talk, but maybe I should reconsider that position.

¹ Many journals use Copyright.com, which makes this process straightforward.