

# AISA 2015 – Pisa

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Open Access is

ABOUT

Scholarly communication

Not existing means of communication

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**Journals** developed as an  
affordance of **print**.

They are a bundle of services

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*Services vary with time*

*They can be unbundled!*

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The emerging digital context reveals the constructed dimensions of journals

- Journals structure communities;
  - Journals filter;
- Journals also orient problem choices

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## Journals have also affected evaluation

- Journal editors organize peer review
- Journals compete with each other in terms described as “quality”

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Up to WWII, a majority of journals were under the direct control of scientists and scholars

- Scientific societies
- University presses
- Some commercial presence, relatively modest, mainly in Germany (e.g. Julius Springer)

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## After WWII

- Growth of the literature is enormous
- Bibliographies have trouble following
  - New tool appears in '60's: SCI

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## Some consequences of SCI

- Science is divided into “core” and “the rest”
  - “The rest” is *de facto* excluded
- Number of citations is linked with quality, not visibility
  - A citation calculus is invented: the impact factor



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Beyond journals, the **impact factor** becomes the **basic measurement unit** of **scientific quality**: individuals, institutions, countries...

**THIS IS THE BASIC CONDITION NEEDED  
TO FORM A SYSTEM  
OF  
GLOBALIZED COMPETITION**

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This shift is marked by a vocabulary shift:

**EXCELLENCE**

rather than

**QUALITY**

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Robert Maxwell understood two things:

- 1) Core science = inelastic market
- 2) Impact factor aligns quality (baptized as excellence) with market share

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## NOW, THE SCENE IS SET

Commercial publishers can begin to take over

Consequences?

- Subscription prices soar
- They become dominant in “core science” publishing

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## BUT THIS IS NOT ALL!

- Large commercial publishers increasingly own journal titles (through buy out or creation)
  - Now, they CAN NAME editors
- Now they CAN SELECT publishing areas in terms of trends (fads?) observed in “core science”

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**Publishers** exclusively go by the measurement standard of **excellence**: the **IF**

**Institutions** (universities, research centres, funders) have bought into this **flawed** scheme to **EVALUATE**

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## Consequences:

- 1) A scientific oligopoly of researchers found in leading laboratories and institutions, allied with the largest publishers STEER scientific research worldwide
- 2) This is the present, globalized, state of scientific research
- 3) To which we must oppose a truly universal science

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This is the context where

OPEN ACCESS

INTERVENES



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Only through digitization is OA possible

OA also builds on the perspectives  
opened by digitization (e.g. journals and publishers as bundles of  
services)

It helps refocus on communication rather than means of  
communication

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What are the sensitive points  
OA  
should aim at?

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**ACCESS  
FOR  
ALL!**

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But also:

- 1) Restore quality at the level of work: evaluation of all science, not just “core”
- 2) Restore the right to **INITIATE** questions anywhere
- 3) Add access to data to allow better **reliability** of results
- 4) Value small as well as large contributions (**the free software model**)

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How to get there?

- 1) **Network repositories**
- 2) **Repackage content in many ways**
- 3) **Repackage content also according to questions, not exclusively disciplines**
- 4) **Create an evaluation layer over the repository network**

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In terms of Gold OA

1. Favour mega-journals
2. Avoid Article Processing Charges: they make “predatory” journals possible
3. Refuse Hybrid journals
4. MAKE MEGA-JOURNALS AND DEPOSITORY NETWORKS CONVERGE

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*Molte Grazie !*

