

Tensions in creating discussion spaces in the French Open Access landscape: a necessary evil?

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Short abstract

This paper explores the behind-the-scenes work in building a law article on scholarly OA in France. Through a participant observation in a professional association, it traces arguments put forward by stakeholders in a year-long process and reveals frictional processes around impact studies.

Long abstract

This paper is a tentative to explore OS as co-shaped by negotiation processes promoted by different stakeholders, where friction appears as soon as actors try to collaborate. This work is anchored in an analytical framework which aims to approach the academic publishing market through market-agencement (Callon 2016). Through a description of a series of meetings in a professional association and its OA group, I propose to study the implementation of an OA policy in France, up to the adoption of a law setting embargo periods. Initially conceived as a forum of exchange, this group, animated by a respected scholar in information sciences, gathers representatives of stakeholder organisations: public research organisations (PRO), funding body, ministries, publishing industry, national publishers' association. This research relies mainly on qualitative data obtained by a participant observation over a one year period.

I will explain how tensions emerged around writing a joint position statement in a specific context: an online consultation on draft "Digital Republic" law, where citizens and stakeholders were invited to comment on proposals and suggest changes. During this process, the OA group's discussions focused on the status of French-language learned journals and lack or incompleteness of impact studies. I will describe the sequence of events which lead to the disruption of the group, and a redefinition of its missions. I suggest considering this group as a space of temporary transactions, where actors were required to discuss and produce knowledge in the frame of a legislative context which was also an experiment.