

The Public Library of Science Initiative: Scientists Reclaiming the Scientific Literature

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The internet and the availability of large portions of the scientific literature in a digital format presents a great opportunity to make the scientific literature infinitely more accessible and useful. A major obstacle to fully realizing this potential is the restrictions scientific publishers place on access to and use of the material they publish. We believe that the scientific literature should not be privately owned and controlled, and 25,000 scientists from around the world have endorsed this proposition by signing a open letter we are circulating (see <http://www.publiclibraryofscience.org>) in which they pledge to restrict their publishing, reviewing and editing to those journals that place their contents into the public domain within six month of publication. This initiative has received a great deal of attention and has spawned numerous discussions (see, for example, <http://www.nature.com/nature/debates/e-access/index.html>). However, despite this strong statement from the scientific community, few journals have endorsed our position.

In this presentation I will discuss the Public Library of Science initiative - our reasons for starting it and its current status. I will also review the current publication policies of prominent scientific publishers, and discuss the various reasons they have put forth for rejecting our proposals. Finally, I will outline our plans to provide a comprehensive publication system that will put the principles of the Public Library of Science into practice.