

Dear members of the science and technology policy office,

although I am not based in the US, I would like to provide some input on the public availability of scientific results.

The public interest in science seems to be steadily increasing, thanks to the ease of accessing information on the internet and thanks to the efforts of many scientists and writers who try to make science accessible to laypeople. Since we live in a time where knowledge of science and technology and their impact is highly important for every citizen, anything that hinders the public in freely accessing scientific information seems to me to be politically unwise, especially if the research results are produced with tax-payer funding. It would seem strange to me to deny tax-payers access to the results that they have actually payed for.

The current NIH policy that requires publications to be made accessible after 12 month is therefore a laudable step in the right direction. That even this 12-month-period may be unnecessarily long can be seen from the current practice in the physics community, where papers are directly uploaded to preprint-servers and are accessible to everyone even before they are accepted for publication in a journal.

Anything that restricts open-access for publicly funded research strongly hinders the public outreach of scientists. It may also reduce the impact of US-based research, since research institutes that are not well-funded may not have access to this research, thus reducing its visibility.

Best regards,

Martin Bäker, Ph.D.

Priv.-Doz. Dr. Martin Bäker
Institut für Werkstoffe
Technische Universität Braunschweig
Langer Kamp 8
38106 Braunschweig
Germany