

With a recent spate of media coverage, interest in the implications of the Elsevier lawsuit against the website Sci-Hub has spiked. Stories have appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *the Guardian* and NPR, and in blogs ranging from *TechDirt* to *Litigation and Trial*. The suit has provoked discussions on the legal aspects of the suit, from musings on whether systematic circumvention of copyright is ever justified to examinations of how current interpretations of jurisdiction in US case law may be working in Sci-Hub's favor. It has also provoked conversations on the appropriate role for copyright in the research environment, the continued rise in the cost of access to scholarly articles, and the ethical considerations of locking knowledge behind pay walls.

In [many of the articles](#), some version of the statement "Institutions have no choice but to pay the high fees. Their students and faculty need access to research..." has appeared. For our community, this question sits right at the heart of the matter. Do we really have no choice? Or might we finally have reached a point where the threads of the individual initiatives we have supported - investments in open access journals, creation of repositories, understanding of open licenses, the development of new open source technologies - can be woven together to create a robust enough fabric to fully support an alternative path forward?



Heather Joseph  
Executive Director, SPARC

## OPEN ACCESS

### #MoveFASTR

With the release of the long-awaited [Senate HSGAC report](#) earlier this month, the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research (FASTR) Act finally received clearance to move out Committee and onto the Senate floor. This means that FASTR is now free to either be considered by the full Senate as a stand-alone bill, or be attached to another bill that might be moving for a vote, with the latter scenario being the most likely. The legislation has also picked up additional important bipartisan co-sponsors with HSGAC Chairman Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) adding their names to the bill.

## **SPARC Europe Launches New Web Resource Highlighting OA Champions**

Noting that “Creating the cultural change needed to embrace and implement Open Access is a tough nut to crack...”, SPARC Europe has created a new resource showcasing the stories, motivations and visions of Open Access champions from senior management in research and education, as well as those from the research community, to help change the hearts and minds of their peers. To see their stories, visit the new [Europe’s Open Access Champions](#) website.

## **NISO Releases Draft Altmetric Quality Standards**

In late February, NISO released a [draft Altmetrics Data Quality Code of Conduct](#) for public comment. This effort, co-chaired by SPARC’s Greg Tananbaum, is part of a multi-pronged, multi-phase project that aims to build trust in and adoption of new methods of assessing impact. The draft Code of Conduct Recommended Practice is open for public comments through March 31, 2016. Further draft outputs from two other working groups, addressing altmetrics definitions, use cases, specific output types, and use of persistent identifiers, are expected to be released for public comment in the coming weeks.

# **OPEN EDUCATION**

## **SPARC Participates in National Department of Education OER Convening**

This fall the Department of Education launched #GoOpen, a campaign to encourage K-12 schools to adopt OER in place of expensive traditional textbooks. This month, the Department hosted the campaign’s first event, the [#GoOpen Exchange](#), which brought together more than 180 leaders from K-12 agencies, schools, technology companies, and nonprofits for a day-long event in California. SPARC was invited as a participant, and coordinated an introductory session on OER for participants. We also provided input on the program for a side event for K-12 librarians, who can be potential collaborators for academic libraries in their communities.

## **Member Highlight: Penn State University Hosts OER Summit**

This month, Penn State Libraries hosted their first annual OER Summit, which was held live in University Park and was also broadcast to 13 other campuses across the state. The summit included an introductory keynote from SPARC’s Nicole Allen (slides posted [here](#)), a panel of Penn State faculty working on OER, and a faculty workshop on how to use OER. Penn State currently has an OER Task Force charged with developing approaches to systematically implement OER to support teaching and learning, chaired by Dean of Libraries and former SPARC Steering Committee member Barbara Dewey. Check out the event’s enthusiastic twitterstream at [#oersummit16](#).

## **New Tracking Project for State OER Legislation**

The cost of textbooks has increasingly become an issue for state lawmakers and legislation relating to OER has proliferated in statehouses across the country. These bills often affect higher education institutions, and libraries are in a key position to provide guidance and expertise on shaping effective legislation on these issues. To help equip our members to be sources of information and expertise on this issue, SPARC is launching a new program to track and analyze state-level legislation relating to OER. We will provide

an updated state-by-state list of active OER legislation in our monthly member update, and provide assistance to members with policy analysis, talking points, and testimony preparation as needed. You can view our [preliminary tracking list](#) and we encourage you to share feedback as we develop this project.



## OPEN DATA

### **White House to Host Open Data Discussions**

The White House Office of Science & Technology Policy [has announced](#) it will co-host four open data roundtables as part of a continuing push to advance the open use of federal data – including research data. The sessions will bring together a limited number of technical, policy and legal experts from federal agencies, academia and the private sector — and collect input from the public — as part of an effort to accelerate the use of government open data sets. The roundtables are co-hosted and conducted by the Center for Open Data Enterprise, and will focus on four challenges confronting the open data community: Protecting Privacy, Improving Data Quality, Applying Research Data, and Leveraging the Private Sector. SPARC has received an invitation and will be participating in the roundtables.

### **Open Data Button Launches**

Earlier this month, the SPARC-supported Open Data Button released a beta version of its browser-based app that helps researchers find, request, and share their research data openly with just a few clicks. For researchers and students on your campus, the Open Data Button means less time asking for data to fuel their research, and more routes to increase the impact of their own research. The Button will also provide stories, data, and visuals to help further promote Open Data on campus. The Open Data Button has grown out of our student program and your support as a SPARC member continues to enable the incubation of these innovative projects. You can [download the beta](#) and find more information in our recent communication titled [Open Data Button Launches](#).

### **Coming Soon! The SPARC-Johns Hopkins University Digest of US Federal Data Sharing Policies**

In April, SPARC will launch a new resource produced in partnership with the Johns Hopkins University Library that summarizes key points of US federal data sharing policies that have been announced following the 2013 White House Directive. The online resource analyzes each plan across 13 criteria and will allow users to compare the policies of up to three agencies side by side. The digest is designed to help researchers, universities, and librarians better understand and comply with these new policies, and compare and contrast the approaches taken by each agency.



## STUDENT ACTION

### **OpenCon to Host Community Call on Supporting Early Career Librarians**

OpenCon is pleased to host an open community call specifically designed for early career librarians and MLIS students to discuss how they can be better supported in advocating

for openness in research and education on campus. Librarians are a central part of the OpenCon community, and the call will allow early career librarians to share their experiences and ideas for advancing open on campus. Please share the invitation to participate in this call, which will take place on April 5 at 12pm EDT, with any early career librarians on your campus who may be interested. Those who would like to participate can [register here](#).

### **Open Data in the Classroom**



Open Data and Open Education are often discussed as if they operate in separate worlds, but there is increasing overlap between the two. Using Open Data in the classroom can help ground assessments in reality, and produce outcomes for students and society more powerful than just grades. We invited Javiera Atenas and Leo Havemann, co-editors of [Open Data as Open Educational Resources: Case studies of emerging practice](#), to discuss the role of Open Data in Open Education on a recent [OpenCon webcast](#). Take 40 minutes to discover a whole new way of viewing Open Data.

### **OpenCon Alumni Continue to Make a Global Impact**

OpenCon Alum Ahmed Ogunlaja has been selected by the Obama Administration to receive a 2016 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders in recognition of his work opening up research and education in his home country. Ogunlaja, who founded Open Access Nigeria, will join other young leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa for a six-week fellowship in the US. Other leading alumni of OpenCon were featured at SPARC's 2016 MORE Meeting for their work, which includes working with the Fulbright Commission to create an Open Access policy, leading the campaign for OER at Simon Fraser University, and founding two national-level open advocacy organizations in Canada and Nepal. A video of the OpenCon panel at SPARC's MORE Meeting will be posted to the SPARC website shortly.

Credit: Student by Alex Auda Samora from the Noun Project | CC BY 3.0

### **Connect with SPARC online:**

 [@SPARC\\_NA](#)  
 [Facebook](#)

SPARC {domain.address}

[Click here to unsubscribe from this mailing list](#)

Thoughts on ways to improve this communication? Please send them to Shawn Daugherty, Assistant Director for Operations & Programs at [shawn@sparcopen.org](mailto:shawn@sparcopen.org)