

## Talking Points on CHORUS

SPARC fully supports the objectives of the White House Directive on Public Access to Federally Funded Research, which are designed to ensure that the public can freely access and fully use articles reporting on publicly funded research. SPARC also supports the implementation of solutions that *fully achieve the objectives* set out in the directive.

The plan currently sketched out in the *CHORUS proposal falls far short of achieving these objectives*, and does not represent a viable solution for federal agencies seeking to implement the White House Directive on Public Access to Federally Funded Research.

### Key Talking Points

- **CHORUS does little to advance the status quo.** Publishers have proposed this “link out” model for nearly a decade (starting from the time the successful NIH Public Access Policy was first proposed), and it has been repeatedly rejected as an insufficient solution. Under this plan, publishers would continue to control the sole point of access to articles reporting on federally funded research, and crucial objectives of the directive would remain unmet.
- **The solution presented in CHORUS does not fulfill the White House directive’s requirement to maximize reuse of articles reporting on publicly funded research.** The proposal makes no provision for critical uses such as text mining, computational analysis, data mining, and other forms of reuse that would enhance the value of these articles to the public. It simply allows the public to *link to* and *read* articles on disparate, proprietary publisher websites, and does not fulfill the directive’s explicit requirement that articles must be made available to the public to “read, download, and analyze in digital form.”
- **CHORUS does not present a solution that will achieve the directive’s goals of maximizing the federal research investment, and maximizing the potential to create new business opportunities.** Without explicit provisions for reuse of articles reporting on federally funded research, critical barriers remain in place for researchers, entrepreneurs, and commercial ventures to extract the full value from these digital articles.
- **CHORUS fails to meet the directive’s requirement for long-term preservation and access to articles.** Publishers’ websites are not archives, and should not be accepted as such. While the services alluded to in the CHORUS proposal (CLOCKSS, LOCKSS and Portico) are high-quality services, they only archive a fraction of the thousands of journals in which articles reporting on publicly funded research appear, and do not represent a comprehensive archiving solution. Moreover, the preservation services mentioned were also initiated by the library and funding communities, not by publishers, for whom preservation is not a primary function.
- **The CHORUS proposal undercuts government accountability.** Agencies fund researchers and research institutions – they do not fund publishers – yet the CHORUS proposal puts agencies in the position of relying on the publishers to ensure that the objectives of the White House directive are fully achieved. Under this plan, agencies would have little leverage to

ensure that this occurs, severely undercutting their accountability.

**CHORUS does not meet the directive's objective to enable integration and interoperability with other existing federal public access solutions.** It makes no attempt to leverage the existing NIH PubMed Central database, which already provides a successful public access solution for articles reporting on **half** of the U.S.'s ~\$60 billion annual research investment. PubMed Central provides more than 830,000 daily users seamless full-text searching of articles and interoperability with numerous other publicly funded databases, and must be a major component of any solution.

- **CHORUS does not meet the directive's requirement to maximize the interoperability between public and private platforms.** By continuing to rely on hundreds (possibly thousands) of individual publishers' proprietary websites as the sole point of access, interoperability is severely limited. Publishers use a wide variety of vastly different solutions for article formatting, presentation and hosting, making it difficult – and expensive – to implement the kinds of cross-platform services that would enhance the value of these articles.
- **The CHORUS proposal provides no mechanism – or indeed, any discussion of – provisions for linking articles to data.** The White House directive focuses on two primary outputs of publicly funded research: articles and data. Any viable implementation plan should include provisions for linking articles with primary research wherever possible. The CHORUS proposal fails to address this critical issue.
- **The CHORUS proposal appears to suggest that publishers should determine embargo periods for articles reporting on publicly funded research.** While they should certainly have input in the process of determining embargo periods, this is not an appropriate role for publishers alone to play. **Embargo periods should be determined by the agencies that fund the research** (in consultation with the scientific community they serve) and by the public.
- **CHORUS falsely promises a “no-cost” solution.** While costs for implementing the proposed CHORUS solution may not be passed directly along to agencies, costs will certainly be incurred. Currently, publishers receive the vast majority of their revenues through levying subscriptions to college and university libraries, as well as access fees to the general public. While gaining little in return, these stakeholder groups will almost certainly bear the costs of a system such as the one proposed by CHORUS.
- **CHORUS proposes that publishers be given governance rights over articles resulting from publicly funded research.** The governance structure envisioned by the backers of CHORUS includes a long list of publishers. While this group ultimately will include some federal agency representatives, this is not an acceptable model. Federal agencies should have governance over results of their funded research – including articles.