All agree: there is no need for the publisher's authorized version

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Abstract

Recently, a statement of librarian Rick Anderson has made the rounds: Of course, when you can get the same content for free, why should you pay for it? Apparently, Mr. Anderson does not value the work a publisher has put into their version of a scholarly article enough to pay for it, at least not compared to the author's copy in the 'green' OA repository.

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Recently, a statement of librarian Rick Anderson has made the rounds:

> *if I know that a publisher allows green deposit of all articles without embargo, then the likelihood that we'll maintain a paid subscription drops dramatically*

Of course, when you can get the same content for free, why should you pay for it? Apparently, Mr. Anderson does not value the work a publisher has put into their version of a scholarly article enough to pay for it, at least not compared to the author's copy in the 'green' OA repository. Scientists have long asked what this supposed value actually is, so scientists and libraries seem to agree that whatever it is publishers add to a scholarly article, it's not worth a whole lot. Now, Joe Esposito chimes in and also agrees:

> *Now you can find an article simply by typing the title or some keywords into Google or some other search mechanism. The Green version of the article appears; there is no need to seek the publisher's authorized version.*

This must be a first: librarians, scientists and publishers all agree, *there is no need for the publisher's authorized version*. Then please remind me, why do we need publishers? What is it they are doing, if nobody can put a finger, let alone a price tag on it?

Apparently, not only in academic publishing people are asking similar questions: in this interview, Tucker Max writes that brand-name publishers "are all essentially dead companies walking, milking their backlist cash cows for as long as they can until they disarticulate and die". The same can be said of legacy academic publishers.

P.S.: I think Stevan Harnad might have two answers: 1. to put their stamp of approval on the paper and 2. without publishers no green OA and without 100% green OA no fair gold OA. WRT 1, I'd argue that there is no evidence of journals differing in the quality of the papers they publish. WRT 2, I'd argue that green OA is not the only way to a modern scholarly infrastructure for text, data and software.