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## CIS Society Officers

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## Immediate Open Access Is Welcome but ...



In this message, I am going to share my *personal* views on some important issues (this should not be taken as the view of the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society). There cannot be any debate that scientific results should be accessible to everyone. Then only it can be subjected to test by many, more people can benefit out of it, and science and technology can evolve faster. Conducting research requires fund, fund is also required for publishing and maintaining the data base of scientific literature. There are at least three cost components: cost of producing the results, cost of publishing and maintaining, and cost of open access (OA). The last two are related in some sense. Someone needs to pay for the research and its dissemination. Typically, either the researcher's organization or some agency provides the financial support for it. For publications, there are different journals with different models of publication. As per 2016 statistics, only about 15% journals make all articles immediately open access [1]. The remaining are: delayed OA (about 2%), subscription only (about 38%), and hybrid (about 45%) [1]. So there are about 83% of journals where an author can publish without any publication fee and in 45% of them an author can optionally make his/her articles OA by paying the Article Processing Charge (APC). However, for non-OA articles, the readers (usually readers' organization) need to pay the subscription fee for accessing them. This mix of different modes of publications has been catering to everyone's need quite satisfactorily and has stood the test of time. The subscription only and hybrid journals provide researchers some venues to publish their research outcomes irrespective of researcher's financial strength or the sources of funding.

If we could make our publication OA, it certainly reaches a bigger community and will have a bigger impact. But OA articles cannot generate revenues for the publisher. So, for the sustainability of the publisher, someone has to pay the APC (this should include not only the cost of publication, but also the associated cost of maintaining it). Who should pay for this? An immediate answer that comes to my mind is: it should not be the author who has toiled for months and spent many sleepless nights in the laboratory to obtain the results, unless there is an agency (funding agency or author's organization) who can pay. If there is no such agency, who should pay – the publisher or the readers? If the publisher pays, there has to be a business model. The typical business model is that either the readers buy access to individual articles directly or through their organizations, often by subscribing to a large collection. If a researcher pays the APC, the researcher would expect the article to be OA. If the research is funded by an agency, the agency may want the research outcome to be available to everyone without any paywall. This is also natural. But then we expect the agency to pay for the OA charges. This may sound a bit paradoxical that a funding agency, which has paid for the research needs to “buy” the results. In my view, it should not be seen this way as the funding was not for publishing and it is not “buying back” but making