

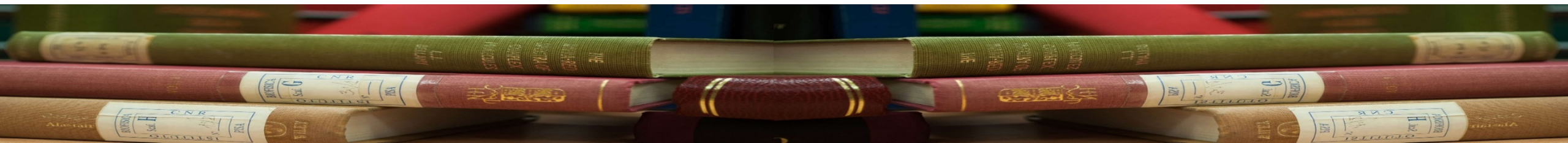


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Open Access: a never-ending transition?

Silvia Giannini, Anna Molino

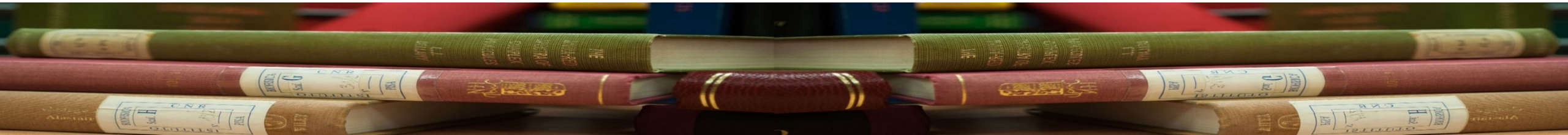
CNR, Istituto di Scienza e Tecnologie dell'Informazione "A. Faedo", Italy





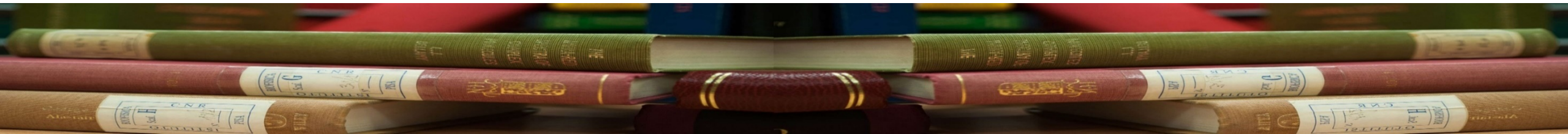
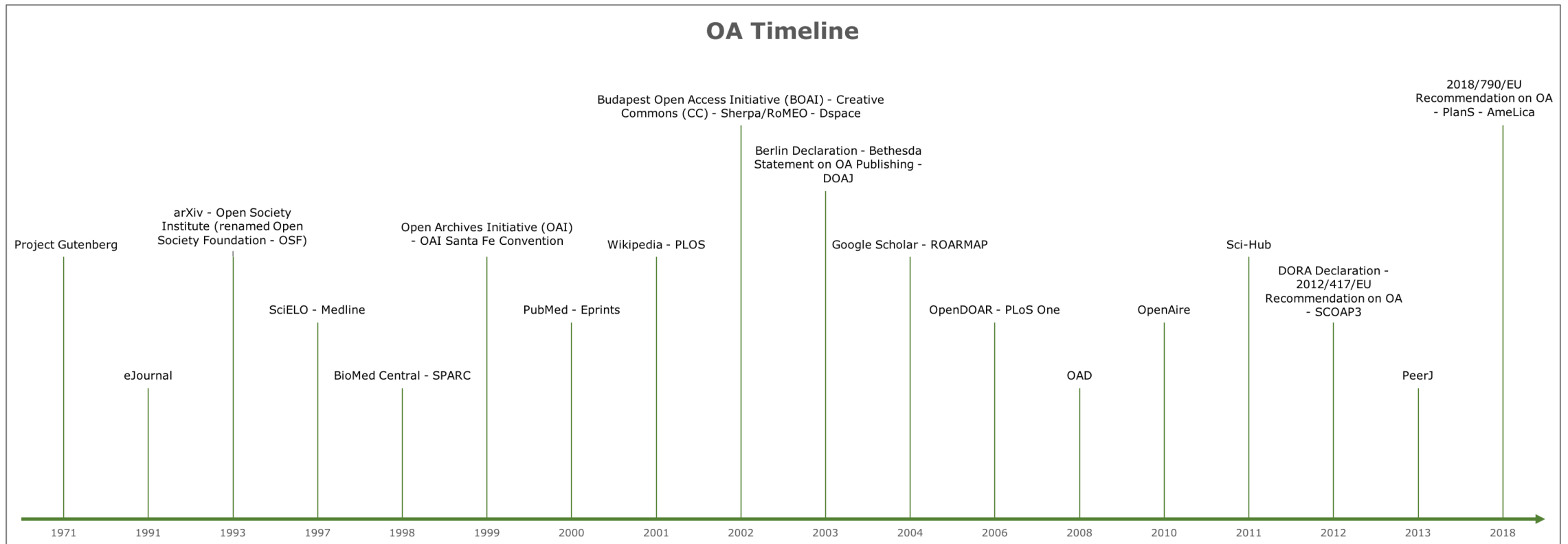
Outline

- A timeline for Open Access: from *Project Gutenberg* to *PlanS*
- The idea of Open Access at its origin
- Scholarly communication
 - *The world brain*
 - The “key” functions
- The business of scientific publishing
- Open Access in practice
- What went wrong?
- Conclusions





A timeline for Open Access





An “ancient” idea...

The idea of Open Access to knowledge goes far beyond 1971.

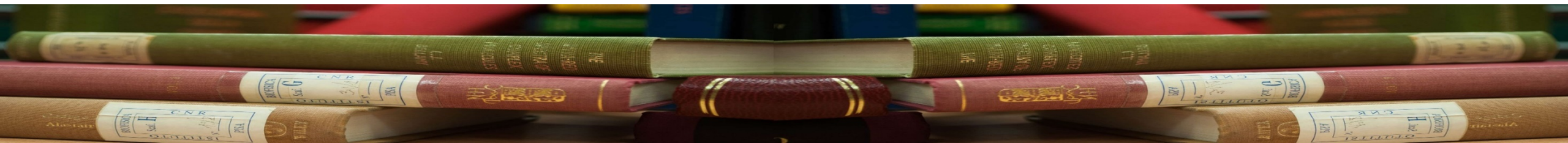
It originates in antiquity, when scholars used to gather in groups to debate on their opinions on different topics and matters.

They posed the first “research questions” and tried to answer sharing their ideas within their community.

In 1938, H.G. Wells proposed the image of the “world brain”: the connection between humans on a world scale is “*as inevitable as anything can be in human affairs*”¹.

This vision fits with the nature of the scholarly communication, seen as any form of exchange that contributes to knowledge development through critical discussions and conversations with fellow humans.

¹ From: *Future of Scholarly Publishing and Scholarly Communication*,
EC Report January 2019.





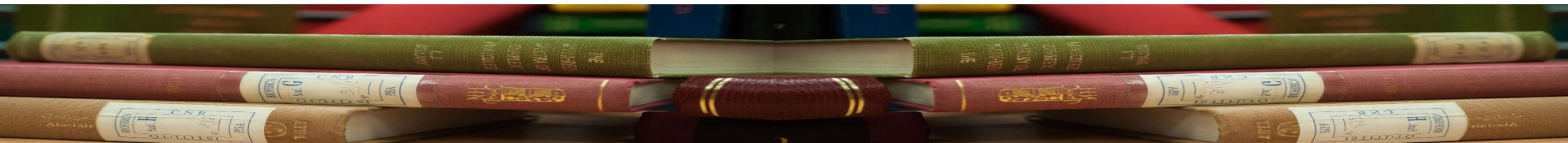
Scholarly communication: *the world brain*

«*The world has to pull its mind together, and this is the beginning of its effort.*¹»
Wells H.G. (1938)

The world brain

- Is a shared and open system, fully accessible by everyone, from the scholar to the citizen.
- Embodies the interconnected nature of scientific research.
- Represents the multiple forms of creation and dissemination of knowledge: *from informal exchanges to scientific publications.*

The vision of Wells clearly identifies the concept of “Open Knowledge”. At the same time, it pinpoints the significant efforts for its complete realization.





Scholarly communication: the “key functions”

- ✓ Henry Oldenburg and Robert Boyle (*Philosophical Transactions*, 1665) – 4 key functions of scholarly publishing:

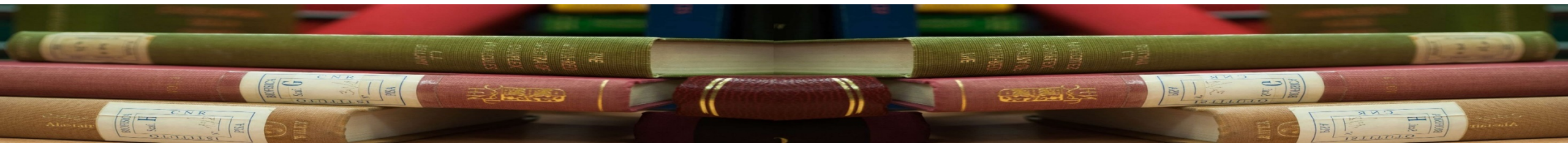
- Registration
- Certification
- Dissemination
- Preservation

A few decades later, the ***evaluation*** of research has emerged as an additional function of scholarly communication.

(Cfr. *Future of Scholarly Publishing and Scholarly Communication*, EC Report January 2019.)

“Research excellence” became central for researchers, research institutions, funders, and national research strategies.

(Cfr. Cameron Neylon, preprint August 2019)





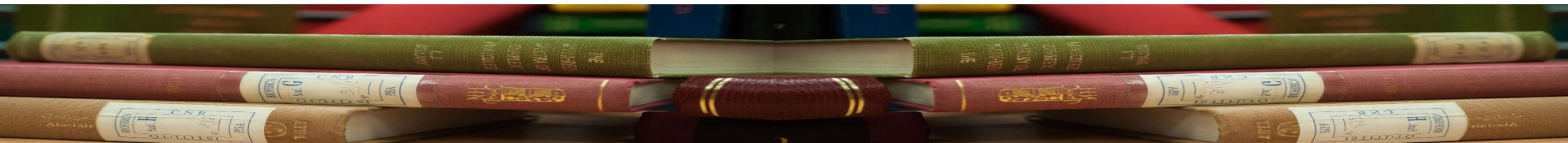
The business of academic publishing

How scholarly communication has been handled over the time?

Scientists create their work– funded largely by governments – and give it to publishers for free; who pay scientific editors to judge whether the work is worth publishing and check its grammar. However, the bulk of the editorial burden – i.e. *peer review* – is done by scientists on a volunteer basis. Publishers then sell the product back to government-funded institutional and university libraries, to be read by scientists themselves.

“What other industry receives its raw materials from its customers, gets those same customers to carry out the quality control of those materials, and then sells the same materials back to the customers at a vastly inflated price?”

(Stephen Buranyi, Is the staggeringly profitable business of scientific publishing bad for science?)





The «watershed» of Open Access

- 1980s: *serials crisis* => market contraction => different business models.
- 1990s: development of contemporary digital technologies and solutions => new opportunities.
- Creation of digital archives and online tools for storage and publication of digital contents.
- Affirmation of different marketing strategies: the *Big Deals* and direct sale of singular articles.

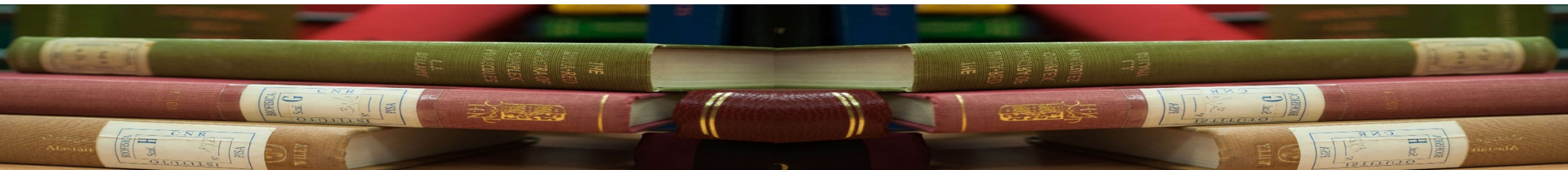
2002

Open Access becomes a fundamental issue with the *Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI)*

«The BOAI didn't invent the **idea** of open access but it was the first to:

- use the expression open access
- articulate a public definition
- propose complementary strategies to achieve it
- generalize its appeal to all disciplines and all countries.»

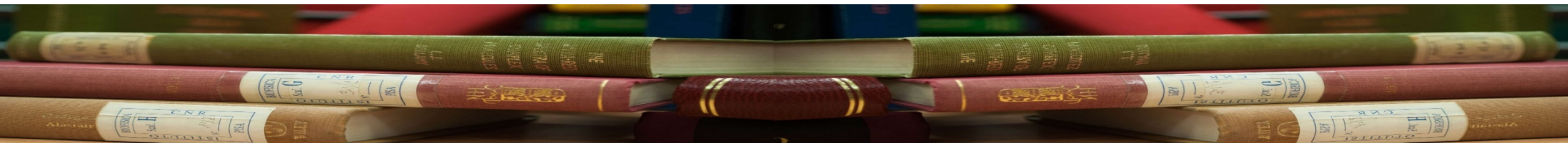
(<https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/boai-10-translations>)





Open Access in practice

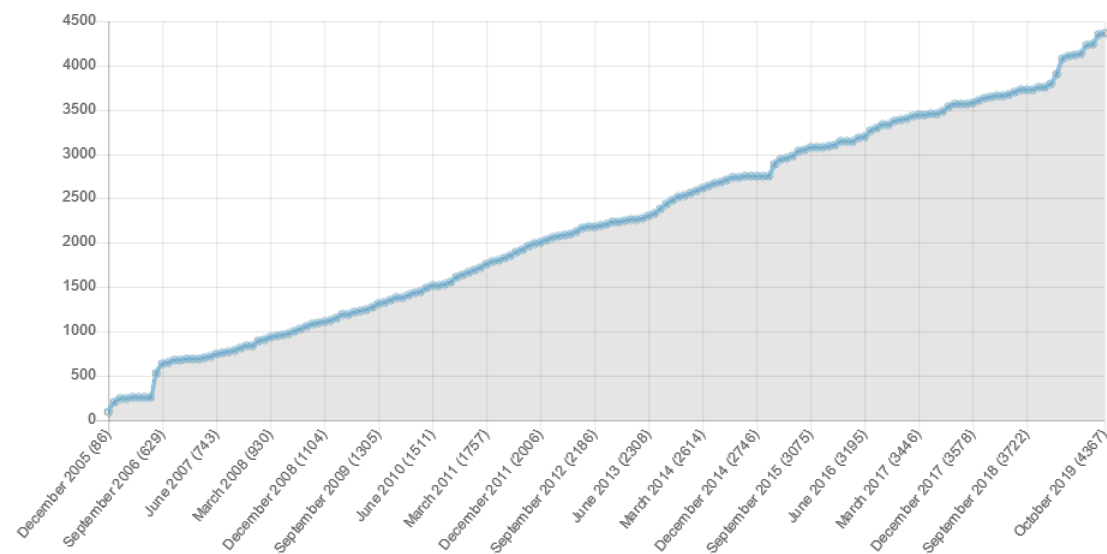
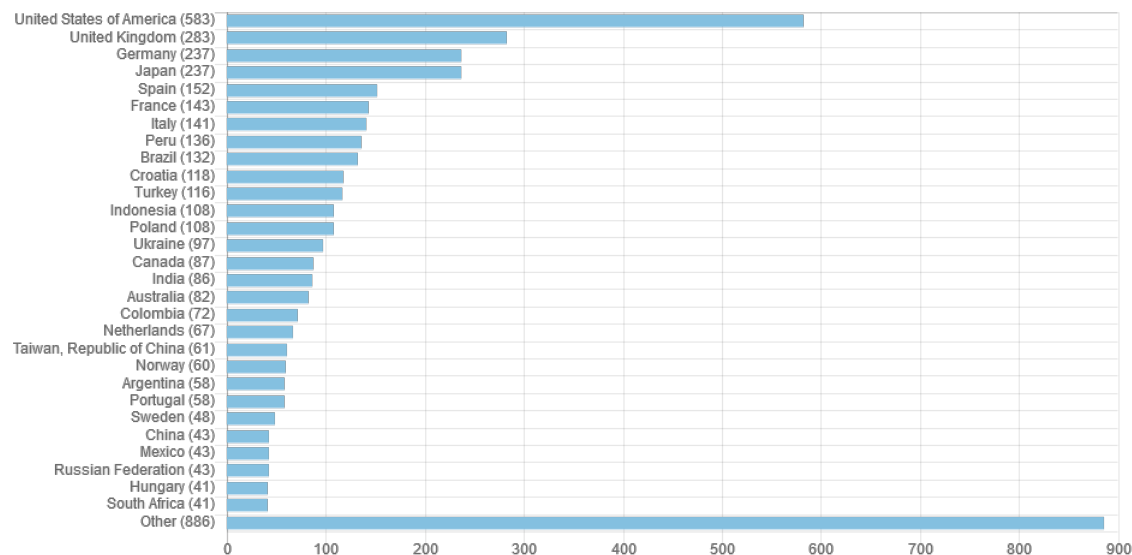
- Sustainability of the economic models for Open Access publication
 - ✓ From Green and Gold OA to Diamond and Black OA
- Major changes in the editorial landscape
 - ✓ APCs system
 - ✓ Transformative agreements
- Publication of policies, recommendations, laws at local, national and transnational level
- Development of tools for OA



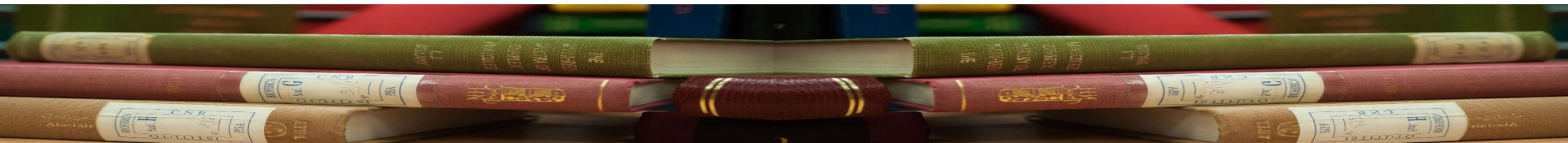


Open Access in practice via OpenDOAR

Repositories by Country

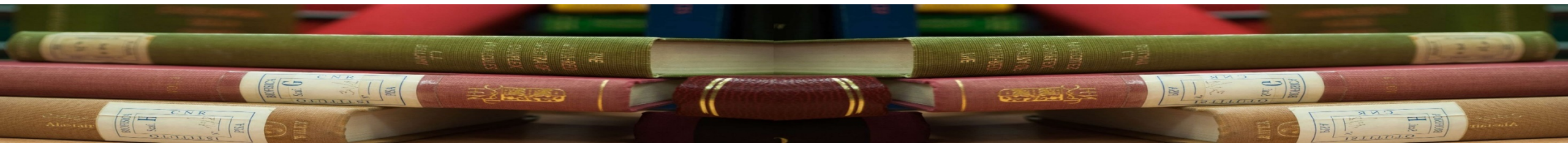
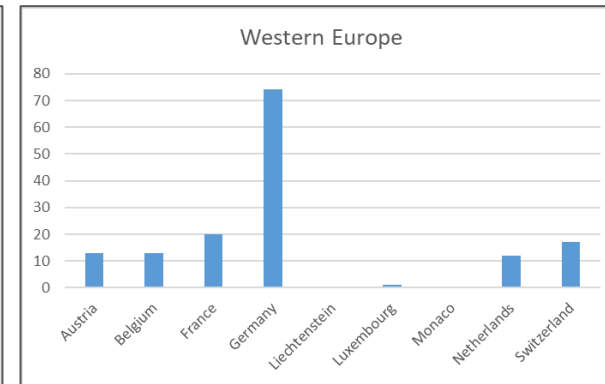
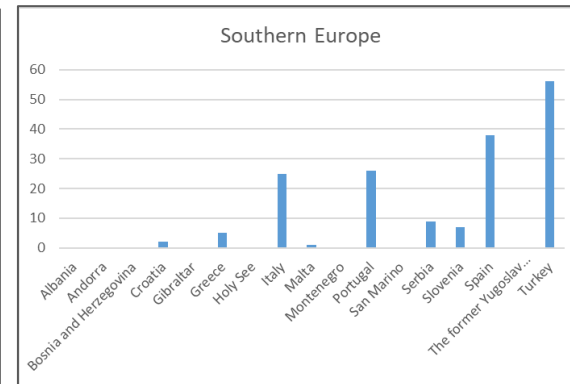
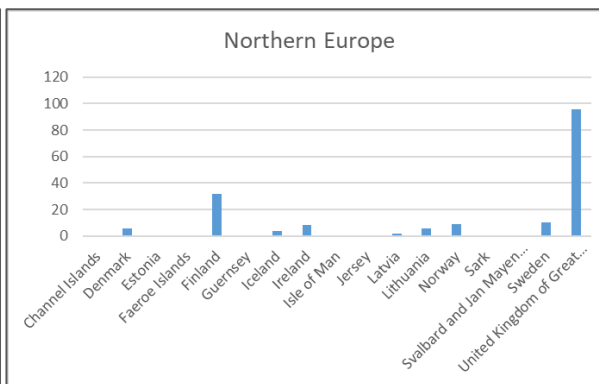
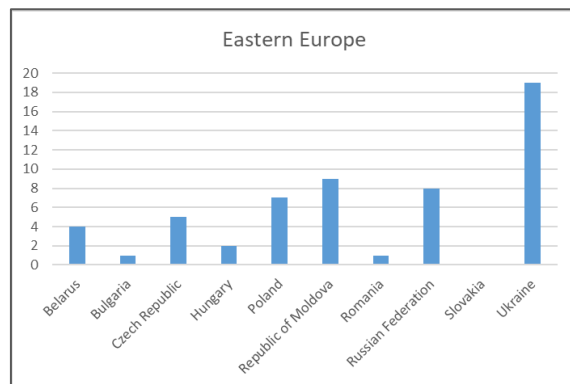
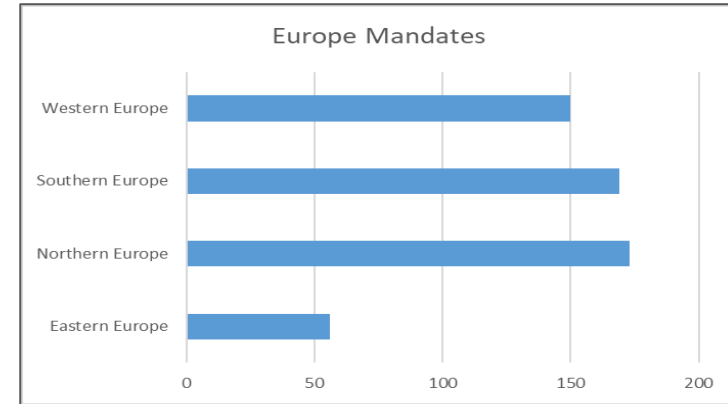
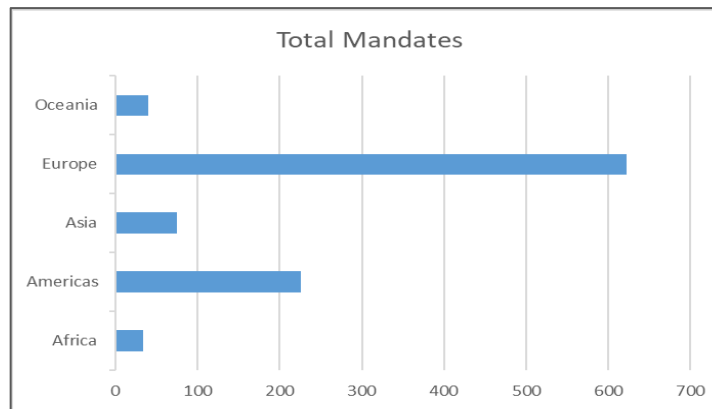
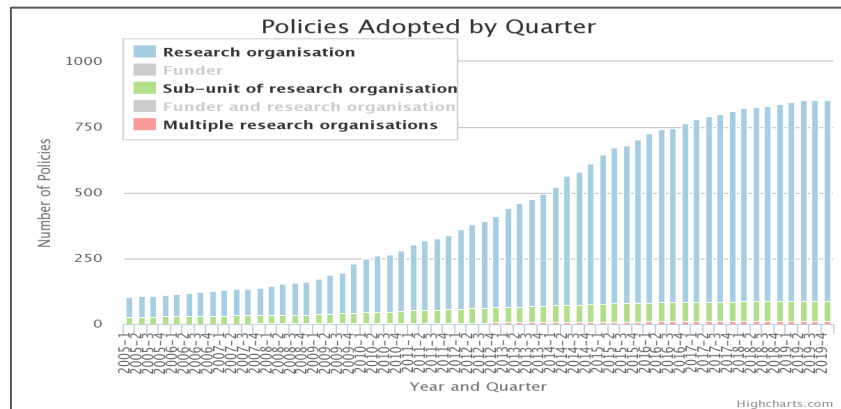


Growth of OpenDOAR





Open Access in practice via ROARMAP





A slow and difficult transition?

Plan S

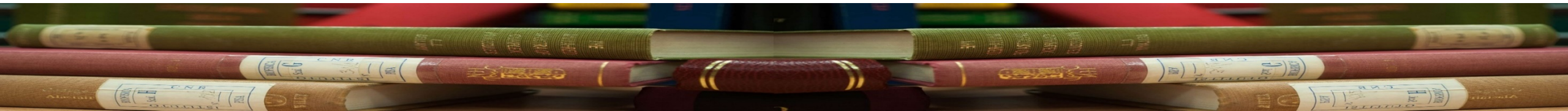
- Born in the European context, where the use of scientific contents is closely related to commercial systems.
- Its purpose is to regulate the agreements between institutions and publishers.

Two realities based on different historical and cultural backgrounds with a common goal.

To transform Open Access into an effective reality.

Amelica

- Born in the Latin American context, where the scientific publications belong to the academic institutions.
- It starts from the scientific publication itself and develops its objectives around it.





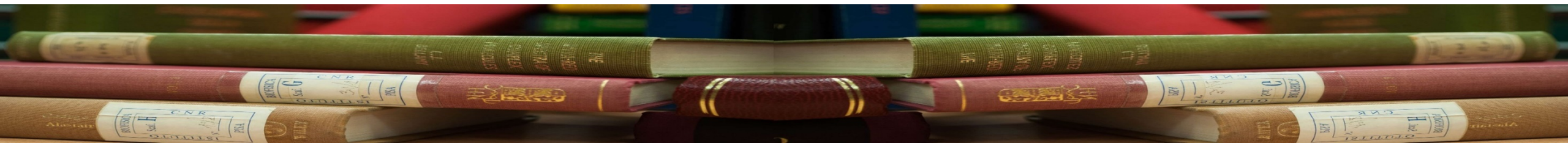
What went wrong?

- Major publishers remained “the most influential players” and maintained their oligopoly.
- Exploitation of the licensing market by big players.
- Research evaluation mainly based on bibliometric measures as journals’ Impact Factor.
 - Researchers are moved by a misleading system of incentives.

In-elastic market:

- Customers (e.g. academic libraries and consortia) and suppliers (e.g. authors, reviewers, editors) have no bargaining power.
- Different business models (e.g. OA publishers) and technology solutions (e.g. repositories) do not represent a threat.

(Cfr. Bo-Christer Björk, 2017)



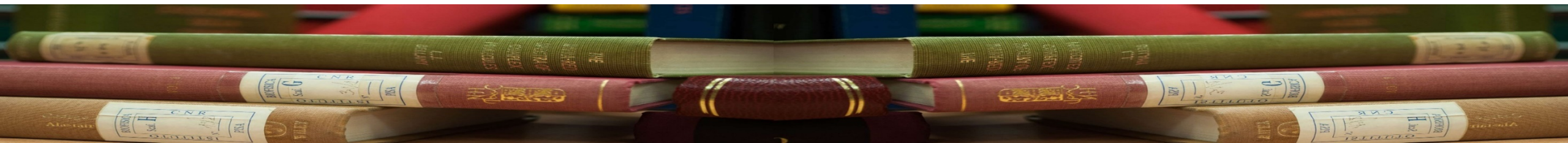


Conclusions

Open Access is now a reality that it is (still, too) slowly consolidating.

How to **accelerate** the process?

- Inform both scientists and citizenships about the benefits of Open Access.
- Dismantle the current evaluation system promoting initiatives on a different pathway.
- Monitor the revenues of big market players and favor contracts' transparency.
- Support the transition to Gold OA and promote self-archiving among scientific communities.
- Foster alternatives to commercial publishers, funneling public expenditures into more sustainable initiatives.





Thank you for your attention!

