

Dear colleagues,

I hope that the pandemic is on its decline; at least, we have received an opportunity to return to our laboratories. Life has come back to normal but, as they say, it will never be the same with continuous handshakes and traditional hugs...Now we are used to undergoing temperature measurement and wearing masks in public places. Every day we undergo these procedures in our Institute like some kind of routine. The accustomed wishes for health get their original meanings back. I deliberately try to record these signs of the times to leave them in history...and to allow one to perceive them many years later, reading again our Journal. The pandemic will be remembered by the full cancellation of conferences and, at the same time, growth in publication activity which is very encouraging.

Due to an upsurge in the activity of authors, I would like to refer once again to the problem of access to scientific information. Supporting the global movement of researchers for the free exchange of information, we initially planned to publish INEOS OPEN in an open access format. This format is aimed at liberating scientists from the financial burden of large publishers. I would like to remind you that the financial well-being of the publishers is based on the exploitation of researchers. We create new knowledge, embody it into publications, review these publications, correct their shortcomings, and then pay good money for a possibility to access the publications of our colleagues. All this has become a big business and the open access movement was formed to return to the free exchange of scientific information. Unfortunately, this format could not exist without financial support and it inevitably lies on the authors, but it must be minimized and available. It almost seemed to be the end of exploitation, but no such luck.

The publishers, like other business people, appeared to be smarter and faster than researchers. They have rapidly estimated the situation and launched new open access analogs of their top-ranking journals, which feature the same scope and are intended for the same audience. This became a new *El Dorado* for them, in full consistence with the conventional wisdom: if you can't beat them, join them. Consider: having proceeded to online versions and drastically curtailed the publishing expenses (from paper to printing services), they, nevertheless, drove the prices up to the levels which paper journals have never dreamed of...In other words, we have to pay again for our own work. Scientific knowledge is still a subject of goods–money relationships and, most remarkably, without the participation of authors. We continue to be exploited...isn't it a vicious circle?

This circle can be broken by the introduction of a new category of open access journals—*noncommercial* journals. These journals require the authors to pay article processing charges but only to cover the editorial expenses. Obviously, these journals can exist only at major research institutes and universities which are able to provide high-level expertise, professional scientific editing, creation and maintenance of a publishing platform. They can also compensate the costs owing to advertising, further reducing the

processing charges for authors. I would like to suggest an abbreviation for such journals—*NCOA* (*noncommercial open access*). INEOS OPEN fully complies with this format and I believe that *NCOA* journals are the future!

Let's clean science from the elements of exploitation and make our exploiters—the publishers that work in scientific fields—turn to public services: direct their forces for the promotion of scientific advances and popularization of science in cooperation with researchers as their partners rather than the slaves.

Hence, altogether we not only publish our scientific knowledge but also simultaneously promote a new movement for open access to scientific information, which is a key for the development of science as a tool for investigation of the world and, at the same time, one of the highest culturological valuables of human civilization! Viva *NCOA*!

Sincerely yours,

Editor-in-Chief

Prof., Full Member of RAS

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