

Hybrid Models for Open Digital Archives: Necessity?

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The creation of open archives i.e. archives where access is regulated by open licensing models (content, source, data), should be seen as part of a broader socio-economic phenomenon that finds legal expression in specific organizational and technical formats. This paper examines the origins and main characteristics of the open archives phenomenon. We investigate the extent to which different models of production of economic or social value can be expressed in different forms of licensing in the context of open archives. Through this process, we assess the extent to which the digital archive is moving towards providing access that is deeper (meaning, that offers more access rights) and wider (in the sense that most of the information given is in open content licensing) or face a gradual stratification and polarization of the content. Such stratification entails the emergence of two types of content: content to which access is extremely limited and content to which access remains completely open. This differentiation between classes of content is the result of multiple factors: from purely legislative, administrative and contractual restrictions (e.g. data protection and confidentiality restrictions) to information economics (e.g. peer production) or social (minimum universal access).

We claim that with respect to the access management model, most of the current archiving processes include elements of openness. Usually, this is the result of economic necessity expressed in licensing instruments or organisational arrangements. The viability and the socio-economic importance of the digital archives also contributes to the use of open archiving practices. In such a context, although pure forms of open digital archives may remain an ideal, the reality of hybrid open digital archives is a necessity.

Keywords: Creative Commons, Open Access, Intellectual Property.

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