OPENNESS: THE ESSENTIAL QUALITY OF KNOWLEDGE
The Open-Access University

- Openness is an essential quality of knowledge, and drives the knowledge economy
- Closure, whether through the misuse of copyright and patent legislation, rent-seeking or proprietary controls, restricts innovation and is alien to the essential qualities of the university and similar institutions
- What would a fully open-access university, structured around an open access repository for publications, resources and data sets, look like?
Openness

The qualities of knowledge:

- Intangible
- Non-excludable
- Impossible to contain (spillover effects)
- From tacit to codified
- Cumulative (with a tendency towards exponential)
“Systems of knowledge openness relate to public (or semipublic) spaces in which knowledge circulates. Such spaces can include areas in which exclusive property rights cannot be granted, either constitutionally (in the vase of open science) or within the framework of organizations specially designed for the purpose (research networks where partners share their knowledge) and markets whose modi operandi are conductive to efficient knowledge dissemination. In such circumstances, a fundamental economic issue is the design of private incentives (to give credit to the knowledge producer) without creating exclusivity rights...” (Dominique Foray Economics of Knowledge 2004:165).
The guilt of M. Mouse

- Knowledge systems have traditionally been open, from the earliest books and in the world’s founding universities
- Hallowed ground for information professionals: the University of Salford, site of the first public library, the first public park
- The Disney Corp, and the entertainment industry, changed all this
Closure

- What you all know: the scandal of increasing subscription charges
- Copyright abuse: intended to ensure rights of the author, not to make profits for private companies
- The current system: a massive, voluntary and unpaid contribution by publicly funded institutions to ensure continuing profits for private shareholders
Open Access

- Green, Gold, or both?
- Open Access Repositories are key
- Very soon, a standing requirement of all major research Councils
- Does not mean giving away IP
- The future for publishers? Add value, rather than extracting rent
The Open Access University

- Based on principles of open access, open learning and open innovation
- Core: Open Access Repository with both digital and analogue information
- Intermediary and interpretive structures that “make sense” of the Open Access Repository by organizing an interpreting content
- A node in a wide network of both similar organizations and other kinds of structure. Analogue and digital axes extend outward to join together other “knowledge nodes”, while intermediaries, such as networks of scholars and libraries and archives are parts of other networks.
Looks to the realities of the present: unbounded knowledge, open innovation, collaborative learning

Recalls pre-digital benefits of a commonwealth of learning

Founded on the driving force of academic life: giving away knowledge in return for reputational capital
Thank you