

# Choices: our common ground

Posted on [15/01/2014](#) by [Wilma van Wezenbeek](#)

No matter who you are, or what role you play, what we all have in common is a choice. Being a mother, singer, librarian, colleague, former publisher, friend, sister, daughter ... I can make choices. These may of course be wrong, strange or just right, and sometimes the circumstances leave you no other option to do this or that, and your final decision does not feel like a choice at all. However, my point is that somehow down the line you always have a choice. For years now I perform in a band ([Guano](#)), and we make our own songs. I complain that we do not have gigs anymore, that I would like to be on stage again, but I can only blame myself. I have the choice to do something about it (and stop complaining).



During the seasonal holiday break we played a game where you can select who you are: the bomb, the general, or the spy and change it along the way ... could we enable that play in the real world 😊?

Choices are also current in our professional life. If I could add just one tiny bit to the open access discussion, it would be this thought or insight.

The author or researcher chooses a journal to publish his or her article in – sometimes in an emerging field or looking for a certain quality stamp there is not that much to choose from. He or she has done the homework, checked all references, worked with the co-authors, optimized (though not manipulated) one or two figures, has datasets available and submitted the paper. The reviewer (via a peer review selection process) is asked (within a certain timeframe) to review the paper, and to give a fair and sound review report, based on which the author can revise (which is most often the case) his or her paper.

The Publisher has a portfolio of journals that are either launched via an idea of the Publisher themselves, or via societies or (Chief) Editors who had a great idea or had seen an opportunity. The journals are processed, priced and promoted via set routines. In this chain of activities there is ample room to make a choice. Certainly when it comes down to choosing the way the articles can be accessed or the value that can be added. Should a traditional toll access journal be flipped to open access? Should a new journal be launched as an open access journal? What is the market attitude, the revenue stream, will any change affect journal submissions, and ultimately the journal's impact factor?

We librarians also have choices. Space and time limit me to name all choices for all stakeholders. We are not really selecting the (primarily subscription-based) content we provide to our university staff based on quality anymore, but far more based on our budgets. The big deals, selection profiles and PDA (patron driven acquisition) have contributed to diminishing our role as content “selector”. However, our choice has been and still is to try to encourage all players to make their publicly funded research available in open access. This still costs a substantial amount of money (to process the article in its open access form), and we librarians should take responsibility and arrange the money stream needed for this. The big advantage is that it releases us from the dilemma that we might not be able to offer the best available scientific resources to our own researchers. A global choice to free up the scientific content guarantees that our students and researchers have easy access to today’s knowledge. There is a choice we can make. And stop complaining.

To promote. To inspire. To deliver. To feel at ease.



Today's knowledge will impact all your tomorrows.  
Make it a 2014 to remember. **Happy New Year!**

**TU Delft Library**

So librarians, do not forget that as all players in the field, we can also make our own choices. We are representing an institute that cherishes the past, lives in the present, but with a firm vision on the future. Get up on that stage!

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