

Perpetual archiving in Polish open access journals in light of data from the Directory of Open Access Journals

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Abstract

Purpose: Long-term, or perpetual, archiving of content is essential for preserving access to scientific knowledge and cultural heritage. In light of studies on so-called vanished journals, this issue has become particularly important, especially in the context of Open Access journals.

Method: A multiple-case study was used. The study tracked declarations made by Polish Open Access journals indexed in the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ) regarding perpetual archiving. Using database filters, Polish journals were identified, and data were then personally collected on their declared perpetual archiving policies, including the services and repositories used. The analysis covered data from the last five years and included more than 250 titles out of over 858 Polish journals indexed in DOAJ.

Results: A large proportion of Polish journals indexed in DOAJ did not declare any long-term content archiving policy in the services recommended by DOAJ in 2020–2024, in accordance with the services listed by *The Keepers Registry*. Among the journals whose editorial offices or publishers declared such a policy, the most frequently indicated services were PKP PN, CLOCKSS, LOCKSS, Portico, and the Internet Archive. No significant relationship was found between a journal's business model, including the use of Article Processing Charges (APCs), and its content archiving policy. It is concerning that some editorial offices of journals registered in DOAJ have not declared any policy on the long-term archiving of content.

Originality/Cognitive value: To date, the state of perpetual archiving in Polish Open Access journals has not been the subject of broader research. This study contributes to expanding research on disappearing journals in Polish science.

Keywords:

Open Access; perpetual archiving; scientific journals.

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1. Introduction

As noted by Eugenia Beh and Jane Smith (2012), the proper preservation of library collections is considered one of the core functions of libraries. It entails not only ensuring continuous access to resources—whether purchased or subscribed—but also archiving them and maintaining perpetual access. This also applies to titles that, for various reasons, have ceased publication.

While archiving refers to the storage of information, perpetual access is associated with the library's right to access licensed electronic journals—previously subscribed to—after the end of the subscription period (or when the journals are no longer available). Both authors point out that access to electronic journals in today's digital environment poses a significant challenge for librarians and the wider academic community. While in previous decades the content of subscribed journals could be archived in physical form—such as bound volumes or microfilm copies—today's electronic journals require a much higher level of engagement in terms of perpetual archiving, particularly in relation to titles that, for various reasons, are no longer subscribed to by libraries or have disappeared from the publishing market (Beh & Smith, 2012).

According to the definition proposed by the Electronic Resource Management Initiative of the Digital Library Federation, perpetual archiving is “the right to ongoing access to licensed materials paid for during the term of the license agreement” (Carr, 2010). Grzegorz Gmiterek defines it as “a set of processes designed to ensure continuous access to materials that form part of the digital heritage, for as long as such continuity is required” (Gmiterek, 2013). This raises the question of how access to content can be ensured and how the preservation of journal content can be addressed in a way that is convenient not only for libraries but, above all, for researchers and scholars, who are not only creators but also users of the content published in digital journals.

Gmiterek (2013) draws attention to the issue of the accessibility of long-term archived copies of documents, in particular to the preservation of mechanisms to ensure future users can access the “authentic content of a digital document” and use it in accordance with its original purpose, regardless of changes in formats, technologies, and modes of access.

According to Aneta Januszko-Szakiel (2009), key parameters from the perspective of access to archival materials are integrity and authenticity. As the author explains, this is related to their completeness and resistance to unauthorized or inappropriate modifications. These may include intentional actions by unauthorized users, errors or negligence on the part of authorized users, interference caused by computer viruses or other malicious software, as well as damage resulting from failures of hardware, communication channels, power supply, or software errors.

Another factor relating to the usability of archived digital resources is also worth noting. Januszko-Szakiel (2009) emphasizes that, alongside accessibility, usability also entails the possibility for authorized users to make use of collections within the scope of their access rights. As Gmiterek (2013) notes, in the face of rapid technological change—which also affects the field of digital archiving—such accessibility can be maintained through migration to new, currently used formats, simulation of the original access environment (emulation), or by separating data from their original storage media and preserving them in a digital archival repository.

According to Ellen Finnie Duranceau (1998), libraries must become aware of the scale of the responsibility they share with journal publishers. It is necessary to develop an appropriate strategy, particularly for low-budget projects whose content has not been secured in any way, for example, by inclusion in an e-journal aggregator. Publishers are generally willing to declare support for archiving. The problem, however, is that libraries have no guarantee whether such cooperation will continue or how long it will last.

The author questions the reliability of publishers' commitments, as they may eventually withdraw from participation in the process of perpetual archiving and effectively leave libraries to manage on their own. Developing an ideal model for preserving journal content is not easy, but it is achievable through the combined expertise of librarians and the technical capabilities of entities responsible for publishing periodicals.

A separate issue is persuading publishers to archive content independently, especially for titles that cease publication or disappear from the market for reasons beyond their control.

2. Literature review

Discussions on the long-term archiving of electronic publications began in the library sector in 1993–1995. The first institution to take action in this area was the National Library of Australia, whose staff developed procedures for preserving materials stored in electronic form. At that time, the Preserving Access to Digital Information group (hereafter: PADI) was formed, with the primary goal of developing a national strategy that would include guidelines for the long-term preservation of the accessibility and usability of digital resources in Australia.

A website was also created, which served not only as a platform providing information about the activities of the newly established body, but also as a forum for the exchange of information and cooperation among representatives of institutions involved in the creation, preservation, and dissemination of collections.

Parallel work was carried out in the United States, initially through the National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter: NARA). The development of

the Electronic Records Archives program (hereafter: ERA) was initiated, with the Library of Congress becoming involved, particularly in the archiving of its American Memory collections. Between 1996 and 2000, the National Digital Library Program was implemented, and in 2000, the United States Congress approved the national digital preservation initiative—the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (hereafter: NDIIPP).

In Europe, the first discussions on the perpetual archiving of journal content emerged in the Netherlands and Germany in the mid-1990s. More advanced work in this area began between 1998 and 2000. It is also worth noting efforts in the United Kingdom, where in 2001 the Digital Preservation Coalition (hereafter: DPC) was established as a body responsible for safeguarding the national digital heritage.

In Poland, the issue of long-term archiving also requires greater attention and commitment from both libraries and journal publishers. While projects aimed at digitization of collections have long been implemented with considerable success, initiatives focused on archiving digital materials are introduced reluctantly or only on an occasional basis. This is primarily due to a lack of sufficient expertise in this area and the absence of established standards that could be applied across institutions (Januszko-Szakiel, 2010).

Among researchers dealing with long-term or perpetual archiving, many focus on the regulation of rights related to licenses for accessing electronic resources. For example, Michelle Polchow (2021) notes that changes in subscription service models have drawn library users' attention to the issue of content archiving. Moreover, few institutions are aware of users' expectations and of the role they must play in ensuring sustained access to information. Libraries may encourage copyright holders to participate in archiving initiatives; however, in practice, this happens very rarely. This also applies to publishing in Open Access.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that many libraries still approach journal subscriptions and perpetual archiving with considerable caution (Meddings, 2011). Eileen Gifford Fenton (2006) emphasizes that most institutions are unwilling to allocate substantial financial resources to these purposes and continue to prioritize the acquisition of print journals. As she observes, demand for print resources remains high, limiting scholarly publishers' ability to reduce investment in the production and distribution of printed materials.

To enable both libraries and publishers to change this situation, it is necessary to develop reliable solutions for electronic archiving. According to Patrick J. Carr (2010), formats, tools, and workflows may change, but the goal remains the same—ensuring continuous access to information for present and future generations. He also points out that libraries should respond to the expectations of future users. As access to electronic resources continues to expand, it becomes essential to establish principles of cooperation, particularly with consortia responsible for managing archiving platforms.

Martin Paul Eve (2024) notes that despite advanced technological solutions implemented across many areas, the digital preservation of serial publications remains a low priority. A significant proportion (approximately 28%) of scholarly journal articles with DOIs appears to be entirely unpreserved in archives. The problem is not limited to academic journals. Among the many factors contributing to this situation, the author highlights concerns regarding the formats in which materials are preserved. It should be noted that digital preservation is a multi-stage process carried out over time. Moreover, it requires continuous reinvestment and an appropriate level of effort to ensure sustained protection and access to information.

It is also worth noting that in recent years several initiatives have emerged to support the perpetual archiving of journal content. One example is the LOCKSS Program (“Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe”). It offers decentralized and distributed preservation, seamless perpetual access, and archiving of authentic, original versions of content and works within an open-source model (LOCKSS Program, n.d.).

LOCKSS was launched by the Stanford University Libraries in 1999, and its development was closely aligned with the needs of the library community, following the traditional paper-based preservation model, in which multiple copies of individual content elements are distributed worldwide to ensure availability in the event of loss or destruction of one copy (LOCKSS Program, n.d.). Similarly, LOCKSS provides continuous, real-time access to digital materials through a distributed peer-to-peer network.

In practice, following permission from the publisher, individual libraries or their partners create local archives of their Open Access and subscription-based collections. At the same time, each library operates within the system as one of many nodes and remains connected to other participating institutions in the network. In the event of damage or loss of a copy, it can be immediately repaired or replaced with a copy from another library. When preserved content becomes unavailable from the publisher, LOCKSS lifts access restrictions and provides access to all users.

Since its launch over two decades ago, LOCKSS has become one of the most widely used preservation programs among academic institutions.

Another tool—CLOCKSS—was established in 2006 on the initiative of the Private LOCKSS Networks. Like its predecessor, it provides continuous preservation of content, ensuring that materials remain accessible even when they are no longer available directly from the publisher.

LOCKSS technology is also used by the PKP Preservation Network (hereafter: PKP PN). This is a long-term digital preservation program implemented by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP), which manages the open-source journal publishing system known as Open Journal System (OJS). Preservation activities had been planned by PKP since 2014 and were offered to publishers using OJS at the turn of 2015–2016.

PKP PN distinguishes two types of trigger events, which result in the ingestion of archived content into one or more OJS instances maintained by PKP member institutions. The first such event may be a notification from an OJS journal manager that the publisher has ceased publishing and maintaining the journal. The second is the discontinuation of payments to PKP PN following a period of inactivity in publishing (PKP Preservation Network, n.d.).

PKP PN uses automated techniques to detect potential trigger events and then follows up with journals to confirm their publication status. The network offers archiving for journals that use an appropriate version of OJS (v. 3.1.2 or later), have a registered ISSN, and have published at least one article. Archiving is carried out automatically via an OJS plugin and is free of charge for institutions using the system.

Another solution increasingly adopted by libraries worldwide is Portico, managed by an advisory board composed of librarians and publishers. The platform was launched by the organization Ithaka in 2005. Like the tools described above, Portico provides access to triggered content. The difference is that materials behind a paywall are made available exclusively to libraries participating in Portico, regardless of whether they previously subscribed to the triggered title.

Portico includes nearly 34,000 journals. Unlike LOCKSS-based systems, it operates as a centralized archive and does not require libraries to maintain their own servers. However, this comes with higher financial costs, which not all libraries can afford (Laakso et al., 2021).

In addition to the services discussed above, providing long-term preservation of content, the Keepers Registry should also be noted, as an initiative that serves as a global registry tracking archiving status of digital content assigned ISSNs—including e-journals and other continuing resources—and operates within the ISSN Portal.

It enables librarians and decision-makers to identify which organizations are responsible for preserving specific e-resources, how preservation is carried out, and under what access conditions. It also supports cooperation among archiving agencies that act as long-term custodians of digital content and seeks to promote awareness of the importance of digital preservation in safeguarding cultural and scientific heritage (About Keepers Registry, n.d.).

In addition to the preservation services mentioned earlier, the Keepers Registry aggregates data from initiatives and institutions such as the British Library, the Internet Archive, the Library of Congress, the Chinese National Digital Preservation Program, as well as the national libraries of France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Spain (Information about archiving agencies..., n.d.).

3. Long-term digital archiving and Open Access journals: introductory remarks

This paper presents the results of a study on perpetual archiving as declared by Polish scholarly journals indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. Before discussing the results, however, it is necessary to consider how Open Access is understood and how it relates to the issues of long-term digital archiving addressed in this article.

In the scholarly literature, numerous definitions of Open Access address different aspects of making content openly available. These definitions consider both primary and secondary openness (the so-called gold and green routes), as well as legal conditions for openness, particularly transparency regarding copyright ownership and licensing.

From a legal perspective, a distinction is made between *gratis* Open Access, in which content made available online may be used under the personal use provisions of copyright law, and *libre* Open Access, which allows users broader use of content beyond such limitations. In practice, *libre* Open Access typically involves applying an open license (e.g. Creative Commons or a publisher's own open license) and clearly specifying the terms governing copyright ownership (Suber, 2014; Pamuła-Cieślak, 2017b).

Peter Suber (2014) notes that Open Access was defined in three key declarations at an early stage of the debate on this form of making scholarly content available: the Budapest Open Access Initiative (February 2002), the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing (June 2003), and the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (October 2003). The definitions contained in these declarations emphasize that Open Access should be broad, easy, free of charge, and publicly available online, allowing users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, link to full texts, index, transmit as data to software, and use the content for any lawful purpose—without financial, legal, or technical barriers.

The only limitation permitted within this framework is the requirement to ensure authors' control over the integrity of their works and the right to proper attribution and citation (Suber, 2014).

Drawing on the declarations mentioned above, a widely cited definition of Open Access was proposed by Rachel Hardy, Charles Oppenheim, Tim Brody, and Steve Hitchcock (2005). They define Open Access as permanent online access to full texts of articles, free of charge for all users.

The adjectives "full" and "permanent" used in the definitions cited above clearly point to the importance of ensuring continuous, uninterrupted, and unimpeded access to content published in Open Access. Such access can only be ensured by long-term archiving.

This issue has been addressed in relatively few scholarly publications. A study commissioned by cOAlition found that many Open Access journals, regardless of their business model, report having no policy ensuring the perpetual archiving of content or, when describing their digital preservation policies, refer to services that do not provide such archiving (Bosman et al., 2021).

At the same time, research shows that Open Access content is disappearing permanently and irreversibly. Between 2000 and 2019, content published in 174 Open Access journals disappeared from the internet without trace (Laakso et al., 2021).

The findings of these studies have also served as a catalyst for expanding the availability of long-term digital archiving, particularly for Open Access journal publishers who cannot afford other forms of preservation. As a result, the JASPER project to archive Open Access journals was launched at the initiative of the team behind the Directory of Open Access Journals (Pamuła, 2024).

4. Study objectives and methodology

The aim of the study was to examine data on perpetual archiving in Polish Open Access journals to determine how many Polish Open Access journals indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) declare a policy of perpetual archiving, and to identify the business models under which they operate. It was assumed that the use of Article Processing Charges (APCs) may influence a journal's archiving policy, as such policies can be financed from these revenues.

The study also explored whether archiving policies depend on publishers. The hypothesis was that publishers influence the choice of archiving services for long-term preservation, as they are typically responsible for establishing agreements with archiving providers.

Data were selected using filters available in the DOAJ database, without a search query. In the section on indexed journals, the country-of-publication filter (Poland) was applied, and the indexing years were selected sequentially: 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 (up to 15 May). It should be noted that not all journals published in Poland are necessarily associated with Polish academic institutions or, more broadly, with Polish scholarship. This is due to the fact that two major publishers specializing in Open Access journals are based in Poland – De Gruyter and Sciendo (Pamuła-Cieślak, 2017a).

No attempt was made to distinguish between such affiliations; therefore, the study included all journals indexed in the database between 1 January 2020 and 15 May 2024 that declared Poland as the country of publication.

The following data were extracted from the records: year of indexing in DOAJ, journal title, DOAJ record URL and ISSN, information on declared perpetual archiving services or the absence of such a policy, business model (including

whether authors are charged fees and the amount of such charges, if any), and the journal's publisher.

The data were collected between 15 and 20 May 2024, which is important given the ongoing curation of records that no longer meet DOAJ requirements and the potential discrepancies resulting from this process. At that time, the Directory of Open Access Journals included 861 journals published in Poland. The analysed sample comprised 391 journals indexed in the database between 1 January 2020 and 15 May 2024, representing 45% of all Polish journals indexed in DOAJ.

5. Results

The results indicate that 303 titles (77.5%) out of 391 Polish Open Access journals indexed in DOAJ during the study period did not declare a policy of perpetual archiving in any service.

Among all 391 journals, 41 titles (10.5%) reported a business model based on author-paid fees. Journals charging APCs performed slightly better in terms of declared perpetual archiving than the overall sample: 16 of them (39%) have such a policy, while 25 (61%) do not.

Detailed numerical data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of fee-based and no-fee Open Access journals published in Poland, by the presence or absence of a perpetual archiving policy

Polish journals in DOAJ	Total number of journals	Number of fee-based journals	Number of no-fee journals
	391	41	350
Journals with a perpetual archiving policy	88	16	62
Journals without a perpetual archiving policy	303	25	278

Source: own elaboration.

The most frequently indicated perpetual archiving service among the journals analysed is Portico, with 40 instances. It is followed by the service offered by PKP PN, with 29 instances. The remaining archiving services selected by journals were reported much less frequently; details are presented in Table 2 and Figure 1.¹

¹ It should be noted that the total number of instances reported in Table 2 (103) exceeds the number of journals that declare a policy of perpetual archiving (88). This is because some journal records indicate that content is archived in more than one such service.

Table 2. Number of Polish Open Access journals indexed in DOAJ across long-term archiving services.

Archiving service	Number of journals
Portico	40
PKP PN	29
National Library of Poland (BN)	8
Internet Archive (IA)	6
Library / digital library (DL)	3
CLOCKSS	3
Scholars Portal	3
LOCKSS	2
Index Copernicus	2
Journal's own website	2
Polona	2
Digital Repository of Scientific Institutes (RCIN)	1
PubMed Central (PMC)	1
Other	1

Source: own elaboration.

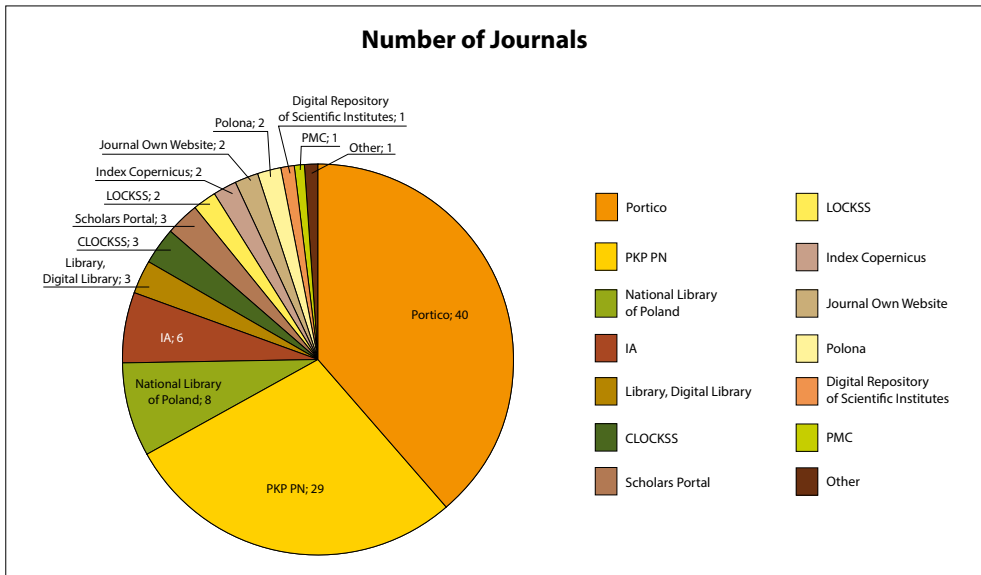
Most journals declaring long-term archiving in Portico are published by publishers specializing in Open Access, namely Sciendo (28 journals) and De Gruyter (9 journals). Among these, 16 journals charge APCs.

As noted above, 29 journals have archived their content in PKP PN. This group is dominated by journals published by universities, particularly by the University of Łódź Press (10 journals) and Adam Mickiewicz University Press (7 journals). The remaining journals indexed in this service are also university publications, including those from Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (3 titles), as well as individual titles from the University of Warsaw, Jagiellonian University, the University of Silesia, the Gdynia Maritime University, and the Pedagogical University of Kraków.

This may be related to the use of the Open Journal Systems (OJS) software developed by the Public Knowledge Project, which is also responsible for archiving within PKP PN. The use of OJS facilitates the preparation and transfer of content for archiving. To be archived in PKP PN, a journal must use an appropriate version of OJS (v. 3.1.2 or later), have an ISSN, and have published at least one article. Archiving is carried out automatically via an OJS plugin and is free of charge for institutions using the system, provided that the journal does not use any paid archiving services, such as CLOCKSS (PKP Preservation Network, n.d.).

Additionally, 44 of the 391 journals included in the study declared, in their DOAJ records, archiving in at least one fee-based service. The majority of these journals (32 titles) do not charge Article Processing Charges.

Figure 1. Declarations of content archiving by Polish Open Access journals indexed in DOAJ, by archiving service.



Source: own elaboration.

6. Conclusions

Polish Open Access journals indexed in DOAJ during the study period did not declare a policy of long-term content archiving. No significant relationship was found between a journal's business model or its publisher and the declaration of long-term archiving. However, a pattern can be observed: the fee-based service Portico is primarily selected by publishers specializing in Open Access journals, whereas services that offer free perpetual archiving (under certain conditions) are more commonly used by publishers affiliated with Polish higher education institutions.

Only five journals indicated the Internet Archive as their sole or one of several archiving services. Several editorial offices selected the "Other" option when applying to DOAJ, indicating services not intended for long-term digital preservation or for responding to trigger events (e.g. journal websites, CEJSH, digital library platforms), which confirms findings from studies on diamond Open Access journals (Bosman et al., 2021).

In light of the analyses conducted and the results obtained, there appears to be a clear need for education and support for publishers and editorial teams of Open Access journals regarding perpetual archiving policies, funding mechanisms, and available free preservation options. Otherwise, the permanent loss of access to Open Access journal content may become even more widespread, posing a risk to Polish scholarly journals published under this model.

7. Concluding remarks

Attention to the long-term archiving of Open Access content appears essential to ensuring access to the results of scientific research. In light of existing partial studies, it can be concluded that the problem exists, although it remains insufficiently explored, both globally and locally.

Addressing this issue requires the joint efforts of all relevant stakeholders, including government agencies responsible for science, custodians of digital content, research institutions, organizations promoting Open Access publishing, publishers, libraries (particularly academic ones), as well as authors and users interested in continuous, reliable, and open access to scholarly content.

Such efforts, however, first and foremost require awareness of the problem, an assessment of its scale, and financial resources, which are crucial to preserving this type of content.

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Wieczysta archiwizacja w polskich czasopismach otwartego dostępu w świetle danych z Directory of Open Access Journals

Abstrakt:

Teza/cel: Długoterminowa (wieczysta) archiwizacja treści jest niezwykle ważna, aby zachować dostęp do wiedzy naukowej i dziedzictwa kulturowego. W świetle badań dotyczących tzw. znikających czasopism (ang. *vanished journals*) tematyka ta stała się jeszcze ważniejsza, zwłaszcza dla czasopism otwartych.

Metoda: Zastosowano metodę wielokrotnego studium przypadku. Postanowiono prześledzić deklaracje polskich czasopism otwartego dostępu zarejestrowanych w Directory of Open Access Journals w zakresie wieczystej archiwizacji. Za pomocą filtrów dostępnych w bazie wyselekcjonowano polskie czasopisma, a następnie z autopsji zebrano dane na temat ich deklaracji w zakresie polityki wieczystej archiwizacji (informacja o serwisach, repozytoriach). Wykorzystano dane z ostatnich 5 lat (ponad 250 tytułów na ponad 858 zaindeksowanych w bazie).

Wnioski: Duża część polskich czasopism zaindeksowanych w DOAJ nie zadeklarowała polityki długotrwałej archiwizacji treści w żadnym z serwisów rekomendowanych przez DOAJ w latach 2020–2024 (zgodnie z serwisami rekomendowanymi przez „Keepers Registry”). Serwisami wskazywanymi przez te redakcje/wydawców, które taką politykę zadeklarowały, są najczęściej PKP PN, CLOCSS, LOCKSS, Portico oraz Internet Archive. Nie odnotowano znaczącego powiązania pomiędzy modelem biznesowym czasopisma (np. „Article Processing Charges”) a polityką archiwizacji treści. Niepokoi fakt, że część redakcji czasopism zarejestrowanych w DOAJ nie zadeklarowała żadnej polityki długotrwałej archiwizacji własnych treści.

Oryginalność/Wartość poznawcza: Stan archiwizacji wieczystej polskich czasopism otwartego dostępu nie był do tej pory przedmiotem szerszych badań. Jest to przyczynek do poszerzenia badań nad znikającymi czasopismami na polskim gruncie naukowym.

Słowa kluczowe

Czasopisma naukowe. Open Access. Otwarty dostęp. Wieczysta archiwizacja.

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