The White House Open Access Mandate: Implications for Astronomy

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Background

- On 22 February 2013 the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued a memo to federal agencies which aims to "increase access to the results of federally funded scientific research:" http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf
- Memo covers literature AND data products
- Mandate requires "open access" after approx. 12 months
- Mandate applies to all agencies spending over $100M in research and development: NASA, NSF, DOE, many more. So everybody doing astronomy research in US is affected

Other Initiatives

- On 14 February 2013, the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR) was introduced in Congress
- While this is still pending legislation, the OSTP mandate requires immediate action from agencies in devising a plan
- OSTP directive asks agencies to devise "a strategy for leveraging existing archives, where appropriate"
- Legislation and mandate largely in sync, favor green open access, build upon NIH experience
- Legislation and mandate complementary: OSTP is faster, FASTR goes slower and deeper (content re-use, embargo)

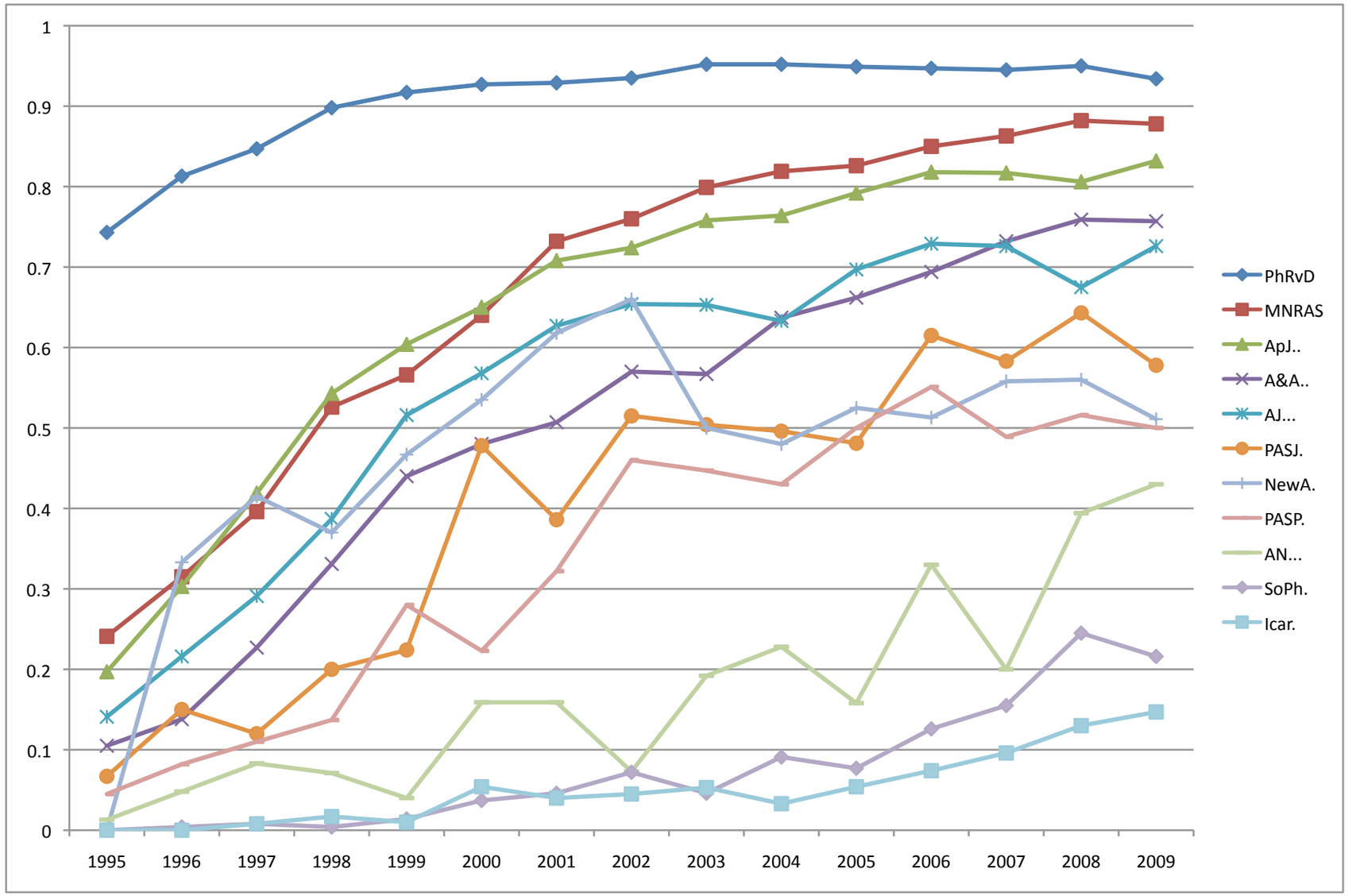
How might this work

- Burden is on agencies to come up with policies supporting the goals of the mandate
- Agencies may very well shift the burden to researchers: "if you want any grant money to us, you shall deposit papers and data in OA repositories"
- However, agencies are tasked with providing workable solutions and guidelines to science community
- Public comment meetings are being held today and tomorrow at the NAS to provide feedback from community, publishers, projects

How will this affect us?

- Many Astronomy journals already support delayed open access:
  AAS (ApJ, AJ): 12 months
  A&A: 3 years (but likely to change soon)
  MNRAS: 3 years
  PASP: 2 years
- Most literature already in arXiv (betwen 80-95% of current articles)
- ADS tracking OA status of individual articles, cross-links arXiv and published versions
- Fairly easy to figure out what articles don't have an OA version today via ADS

Fraction of e-printed papers



fraction of e-prints matched to ADS articles. Credit: E. Henneken

Meanwhile, Elsewhere...

- In the UK, Research Council endorsed a "Gold OA" approach in September 2012, but it looks like this is being reconsidered now in favor of "Green OA"
- OA winds have also been blowing through the EU's programs, with funding of COAR, OpenAIRE, SOAP
- At RDA launch, Neelie Kroes (VP of EC on Digital Agenda) said: "we will require open access to all publications stemming from EU-funded research"

What about data?

- OSTP mandate includes open access to digital research data "to the extent feasible"
- Big Astronomy archives already in good shape, but not clear how this applies to data taken by small facilities
- Builds on existing NSF language about data management plans
- Encourages deposits in publicly accessible databases "where appropriate and available"
- May force agencies to strengthen preservation and archiving programs, which is a Good Thing

So what does it all mean?

- US Agencies and OSTP will soon work out plans and policies for supporting OA
- Similar initiatives in the EU will likely result in similar requirements and policies
- New research funded by grants will come with "strings attached" mandating data deposit or publication in a journal supporting delayed OA
- Biggest impact may be for researchers and facilities currently not archiving and publicly disseminating research data. More business for the VO?