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Why Should I Care About Open Access

Hailey Zanth



WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT OPEN ACCESS?

Answering Commonly Asked Questions About OA Publishing in Academic Spaces

Hailey Zanth LIS 9704

WHAT IS OPEN ACCESS ANYWAY?

"Open Access" refers to a publishing model whereby research is published through freely-accessible methods that have no cost or use barriers.

Due to this, information and knowledge can be accessed and shared in an unrestricted manner by all members of academic spheres and the public alike.

IS THERE ONLY ONE TYPE OF OA?

As you begin to explore OA publishing opportunities, be aware that there are two different "levels" of OA publishing available:

1

GOLD OA

With GOLD Open Access, journals are designed to be openly accessible from the initial publication of the work (Bautista-Puig et al., 2020; Rathe et al., 2010). These works are immediately available online and are cost-free to access (May, 2020).

This is considered to be the highest standard of OA publication.

One such example is the *Public Library of Science* (Mitchell, 2017).

2

GREEN OA

With GREEN Open Access, researchers may initially publish their research in whichever subscription-based journal they prefer.

However, they must subsequently provide open access to the same work by publishing it in a repository for the public to freely access (May, 2020; Rathe et al., 2010).

BUT WAIT...

Won't OA limit my opportunities for promotion or tenure?


Doesn't OA cause me to lose all rights to my Intellectual Property?

How can OA possibly benefit society more than non-OA publications can?

NO: Evidence has shown that these are simply myths surrounding OA publishing in academic spheres.

OA PUBLISHING WILL INCREASE YOUR RECOGNITION AS A RESEARCHER.

CONSIDER:



OA PUBLICATIONS HAVE COMPETITIVE PRESTIGE AND PEER REVIEW PRACTICES.

OA PUBLICATIONS SUSTAIN CITATION TRAFFIC OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME.

OA PUBLICATIONS INCREASE REPLICABILITY OF STUDY FINDINGS.

OA PUBLICATIONS GENERATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION.

OA PUBLICATIONS HAVE COMPETITIVE PRESTIGE AND PEER REVIEW PRACTICES.

Researchers may be expected to publish their work in journals with reputedly high Impact Factors (IFs). Fortunately, you may still publish in an open access journal as many indexed OAJs have high metrics when compared to their subscription-based counterparts (Mckiernan et al., 2016). Similarly, OAJs have high peer review standards, particularly those that follow open review policies. Since these peer reviews are transparently viewable by the public, OAJs ensure that the reviews are conducted with a high degree of rigor and accuracy, include ample constructive criticism, and are supported with strong claims (Mckiernan et al., 2016).

For example, journals indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals must meet quality standards before they are included in the index. These standards include proper peer review processes and high IF metrics (Bautista-Puig et al., 2020; Beaubien & Eckard, 2014).

Alternatively, there is the Green OA alternative: if you must publish your work in a specific subscription-based, non-OA journal due to metrics like Impact Factor, you can still make your research openly accessible by depositing it in a scholarly repository after publication (Mckiernan et al., 2016).

OA PUBLICATIONS SUSTAIN CITATION TRAFFIC OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME.

Numerous studies have shown that over time, both articles published in Gold and Green OAJs accumulate more citations than their non-OA published counterparts do (Bautista-Puig et al., 2020; Mckiernan et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2015).

Articles published in Gold OAJs or deposited in Green OA repositories after publication elsewhere both accumulated a higher number of citations, as well as continued attracting traffic over an extended period of time, when compared to articles published in subscription-based journals (Mckiernan et al., 2016, Wang et al., 2015).

Similar results have been found for books that have been published using Open Access. OA books have been cited more often than their non-OA counterparts, and have attracted greater persistent usage over time (Neylon et al., 2021).

OA PUBLICATIONS INCREASE REPLICABILITY OF STUDY FINDINGS.

Part of increasing the validity of scientific findings relies on the ability for studies to be replicated in the future. By sharing and publishing data through openly accessible avenues, the chances of replicating a study's findings are increased (Mckiernan et al., 2016).

By submitting research designs, study protocols, and raw data to open access repositories, researchers are preserving their data so it may be accessed in the future (by themselves or other scientists) (Mckiernan et al., 2016; Strand & Brown, 2019).

Sharing this information openly allows other researchers to recreate or advance previous studies by re-testing hypotheses, reproducing successful trials, and ensuring that research is continually and rigorously advanced (Banks et al., 2018). Additionally, another intrinsic advantage for the researcher comes from the fact that data must still be attributed to the creator, allowing the researcher to gain citations and recognition for their work.

OA PUBLICATIONS GENERATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION.

Researchers who publish their works in OA formats can increase recognition and dissemination of their works as these studies are freely accessible to any member of the public.

Since articles that are published in OAJs are not blocked by paywalls, they are more easily found and shared between members of the disciplinary community. This allows researchers with similar interests and specialties to share data and connect with one another in the interest of creating new projects (Banks et al., 2019; Mckiernan et al., 2016). In turn, each researcher benefits from increased recognition and citations.

Similarly, openly-accessible research will attract more media coverage and social media attention since it is openly accessible to the public (Mckiernan et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2015).

Members of the public are able to access valuable information with greater ease. Additionally, scholars can share their findings on social media, using it as a tool to foster further recognition and collaboration opportunities (Strand & Brown, 2014).

YOU WILL NOT LOSE YOUR IP RIGHTS BY PUBLISHING OA.

CONSIDER:



BY USING
CREATIVE
COMMONS
LICENSING, YOU
RETAIN YOUR IP.

USERS ARE
REQUIRED TO
ATTRIBUTE YOUR
WORK UNDER CC
LICENSING.

BY USING CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSING, YOU RETAIN YOUR IP.

At its root, Creative Commons (CC) Licensing allows users to distribute, share, and use scholarly works for their own purposes, while ensuring the original author receives proper credit for their work (Mitchell, 2017).

Unlike publishing in traditional, non-OA journals where authors must sign away the rights to their intellectual property to the publisher, publishing in OA journals using CC licenses ensures that the researcher retains full control over their IP (Mckiernan et al., 2016; Mitchell, 2017).

Another advantage for the researcher is that CC licensing is protected under Copyright Law (Mckiernan et al., 2016). Therefore, if an end user does not adequately attribute their sources, or if the provisions of a selected CC license are not being followed, there are avenues for legal retribution and protection.

**THERE ARE 4 CATEGORIES THAT MAY BE COMBINED
UNDER A CC LICENSE AND ATTACHED TO A WORK
(MITCHELL, 2017):**

ATTRIBUTION: USERS MAY USE, EXPAND ON, AND DISTRIBUTE THE WORK IN ANY MANNER AS LONG AS THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR RECEIVES CREDIT.

SHARE-ALIKE: USERS MUST PUBLISH ANY WORK THAT EXPANDS ON THE ORIGINAL WORK USING THE SAME CC LICENSE TYPE AS THE ORIGINAL.

NON-COMMERCIAL: USERS CAN USE, SHARE, AND EXPAND ON THE WORKS FOR ANY NON-COMMERCIAL PURPOSE.

NO DERIVATIVE WORKS: USERS MAY NOT EXPAND ON THE ORIGINAL WORK TO CREATE A NEW DERIVATIVE WORK UNDER IT.


USERS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTRIBUTE YOUR WORK UNDER CC LICENSING.

While CC licensing does give the end user the freedom to use, re-use, and disseminate the contents of a study published with a CC license, there is also the requirement that the end user must cite back to the original author and creator of the work each time it is used or shared (Mckiernan et al., 2016; Mitchell, 2017). This ensures that the researcher receives proper attribution and recognition for their work, allows the information to be shared with the broader community, and still allows the researcher to retain ownership of the intellectual property

"Attribution Only" is considered to be the highest standard in OA publishing, as it allows the end user to freely use, share, and re-use the information as long as the researcher receives proper credit. For example, all studies published in the Public Library of Science use Attribution Only CC licenses (Mitchell, 2017).

PUBLISHING OA BENEFITS SOCIETY.

CONSIDER:



OA
PUBLICATIONS
ARE MORE
AFFORDABLE
FOR
RESEARCHERS
TO PUBLISH IN.

OA
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OA PUBLICATIONS ARE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR RESEARCHERS TO PUBLISH IN.

Gold OAJs typically require the author to pay a fee (an Article Processing Charge) to publish their work within the journal. By "flipping" the model, the cost of publishing and accessing work is placed on the author. This benefits the end user, who does not have to pay to access the information as they do with traditional subscription-based journals.

Fortunately, there are a wide range of reputable Gold OAJs that charge reasonably-priced fees to publish works (Mckiernan et al., 2016). Additionally, many institutions offer funding to cover the cost of APCs in order to incentivize researchers to publish through OA avenues (Mckiernan et al., 2016).

Alternatively, as previously mentioned, authors can choose to publish their work in Green OA repositories free of charge. This in turn benefits the public as there are a range of affordable options for authors to choose from that allow their information to be freely accessed beyond what would be possible through subscription-based materials.

**OA PUBLICATIONS
ENSURE
INFORMATION IS
FREELY AND
WIDELY
AVAILABLE.**

When research is published in traditional subscription-based journals, cost and access barriers restrict members of the general public from easily accessing the information contained in these studies. Contrarily, OA publishing is fundamentally based on the premise that information is freely, widely, and easily accessed and shared among members of the public.

Open access works have increased the ability for those in low-income countries, underserved populations, and socioeconomically disadvantaged families to have equitable access to scientific information (Neylon et al., 2021).

Ultimately, publishing through OA avenues ensures that a greater portion of the population has unrestricted access to reputable scientific information.

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