

>> What Is Open Access?

Definition

Open access (OA) is free-of-charge, online access to content that may have relatively few restrictions on reuse. OA refers to distribution and use, and does not indicate a particular business model, editorial process, or license.



Principle

OA advocates support information-sharing for the public good.

Debate

While most agree with the principle of OA, its implementation has become a subject of debate among researchers, scholars, librarians, universities, funding agencies, government officials, and publishers. Some issues under discussion include: funding OA publishing, implications for publishers, concerns about academic freedom, priority of claims, and copyright.

Vehicles

There are two primary vehicles for providing OA to research content: OA journals or books and OA archives or repositories.

For an example of the latter, see Columbia University's research repository, Academic Commons: <http://academiccommons.columbia.edu>

>> Open-Access Journals

Myths & Facts

Myth: *Open access (OA) journals don't practice peer review.*

Fact: OA scholarly journals practice peer review in exactly the same way as subscription journals. The OA model does not look to change the traditional peer-review process.

Myth: *OA journals can't have high impact factors.*

Fact: OA content is accepted by scholars and researchers. The OA journal *PLoS Biology*, for example, has one of the highest impact factors among life science journals. Studies have shown that OA articles are cited at a higher rate than those with restricted access.

Myth: *OA work isn't copyrightable.*

Fact: OA publications are protected by copyright. As the copyright holders, authors are simply making OA content available to a wider audience than content published in a subscription journal.

Myth: *To support OA, a journal has to offer free access to all content upon publication.*

Fact: There are different ways of going OA. "Gold OA" journals provide free access to articles upon publication. "Green OA" journals allow post-print archiving by authors, and "pale green OA" journals permit preprint archiving. In some hybrid models, a journal may make certain articles freely available online while charging for other content, or provide free access to online content and charge for print issues.

>> Why Go Open Access?

Impact

OA content reaches the broadest possible audience by eliminating the price and permission barriers of subscription journals.

Progress

OA speeds research progress, productivity, and knowledge translation. The quicker and more comprehensively research is made available, the faster other researchers and scholars can learn from, replicate, and otherwise use that work.

>> More Information

Scholarly Communication Program

Based at the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship at Columbia Libraries/Information Services, the



Program explores effective uses of digital technology for sharing new knowledge. We highlight innovative approaches to communicating scholarly work and examine related debates over policy and practice, particularly in the context of global research. SCP hosts an annual speaker series, *Research without Borders*, on related topics.

Link

<http://scholcomm.columbia.edu>

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