

1. OPEN EXCESS PUBLISHING

Peer-reviewed open access publishing gives end users free access to online peer-reviewed journals. Authors are responsible for the cost of publishing articles in open access journals, in contrast to the traditional model of scholarly publishing, where the cost of publishing is borne by the publisher. The traditional publisher offsets the cost of publishing through charges (such as subscriptions) to end users and libraries, and from advertising revenue.

Proponents claim open access publishing offers several advantages over traditional publishing:

- Publications reach a significantly wider audience more expeditiously than articles published in traditional print journals;
- Articles are cited more frequently, allowing researchers to establish their professional reputations more quickly;
- Researchers and the public have timelier access to scientific advances;
- Open access limits the control of publishing houses and editors, who sometimes wield their power to suppress unconventional ideas, or delay publication to allow another researcher to claim first use; and
- Open access allows equitable access to knowledge, which serves the greater good.

Opponents point out that open access publishing has disadvantages:

- Publication of an article may cost the author thousands of dollars;
- Departmental support or grant funding may favor senior scientists and scholars, whereas early career researchers and independent scholars may have to use personal resources; and
- The burden that falls on scholars who lack institutional financial support can impede their careers, which depend on peer-reviewed publication.

The number of open access journals has mushroomed since the first one went online in 1991. By mid 2013 the Directory of Open Access Journals listed over 9000. The academic community has expressed concern that some open access publishers engage in predatory practices: spamming email lists with calls for articles, charging authors hefty fees, and providing “peer reviews” of dubious quality, rigour, and substance. Beall’s List (<http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>), created by Jeffrey Beall, evaluates publications against an extensive list of criteria. Beall’s List names hundreds of questionable journals, but leaves final judgment to the author.