

Open Access in 2016: Developments and Its Impact

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The [Open Access Week](#), a global event promoting open access publishing is now in its ninth year—and all the efforts made during this time to support this initiative seems to have paid off. A recent report shows that the [number of open access publications](#) is growing at twice the rate of all published research. During the past year, [over 2000 new titles](#) were added to the [Directory of Open Access Books](#)—a 60% growth. The [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) also grew by 11% and now has about half a million more articles than the previous year. Widespread public access to the internet and the wish to make science transparent and [accessible to the world](#) has fueled this movement.

Green or Gold?

Open access articles can be published in [two ways](#), either in open access or hybrid journals (“gold” open access) or in pre- or post-print archives and repositories, such as [arXiv](#), [bioRxiv](#), or [PubMed Central](#) (“green” open access). Many funding agencies and universities now request that the research they support is made freely available to the public in any of these ways. Publishing in open access journals facilitates the communication of scientific results to the community, allowing equality of learning and a better access to knowledge across countries’ also, it offers many advantages for the researchers themselves.

Increased Visibility of Research

Several studies indicate that open access articles are [viewed more often](#) than papers that are only available to subscribers of traditional journals. Moreover, the visibility of open access papers remains high for a long time, whereas articles published in traditional journals are usually not easily accessible for an extended period of time. This often translates into a [higher number of citations](#) and is also related to improved social media sharing and increased media attention for open access content. [The Wellcome Trust](#), a funding organization based in London (UK), reported that open access papers were downloaded [89% more](#) often as compared to papers published in traditional journals.

Increased Impact of Research

Open access also has the potential to [accelerate the dissemination](#) and uptake of research findings, according to a study published in *PLOS Biology*. This study included 1492 *PNAS* articles published in 2004 and showed that the open access papers were cited earlier than their traditional counterparts. It also suggested that it was more advantageous to publish an article in open access journals rather than on a [self-archiving platform](#).

Data Sharing

Open access ensures the preservation and accessibility of data, allowing researchers to carry out collaborative work and make valuable information available for future use. The best example of how this works is the [Human Genome Project](#), which reflects a practice within the genome community to ensure that data is made publicly available for all reuses via resources such as GenBank. Data sharing also allows scholars to verify and improve the reproducibility of published results.

Improved Quality in OA Publishing

Open access publications help academics from different countries and research areas to connect more easily by making their work visible to everyone. Although the explosive growth of [predatory journals](#) trying to benefit from the OA model has raised some questions on the overall quality of open access journals, open access is impacting researchers in many positive ways and has certainly changed [academic publishing](#) for the better. Publishers and academicians need to ensure that the open access model is strengthened further and continues to improve despite the challenges created by [predatory publishers](#).

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