

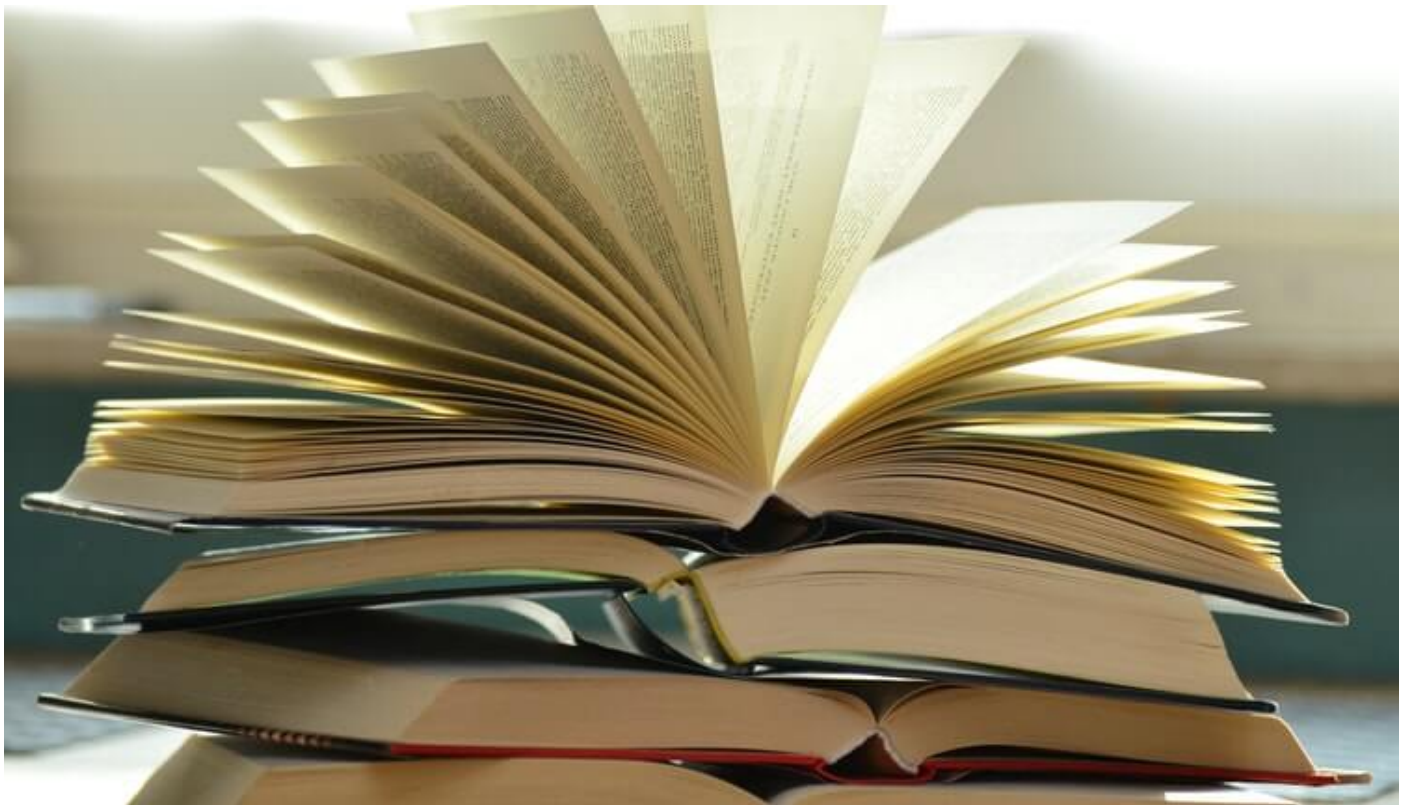
Why Do Open Access Publications Get Higher Citations

Author

Enago Academy

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<https://www.enago.com/academy/open-access-publications-get-cited-more-often/>



Open access (OA) is a publishing model gaining in popularity. In the last five years, there has been a strong push from many major institutions to shift partially or fully to open access. Plan S, an initiative by a group of 11 European funding agencies requires that all funding recipients publish in OA journals, is one such example. Proponents of open access publishing argue that it is a fairer model that promotes accessibility of science and research to the public. But are there any benefits for researchers who publish in OA journals? In this article, we examine studies that show open access articles and books enjoy a higher rate of citation than others.

Open Access Articles Cited and Read More

As open access becomes more widespread, more data is becoming available to explore the impacts. In 2014, the Research Information Network analyzed the web traffic on more than 700 articles published in hybrid science journal *Nature Communications*. They found that over a six month period, open access articles [were viewed twice as often](#) as those available only via subscription. Additional review of more than 2,000 papers published in *Nature Communications* between April 2010 and June 2013 found that OA articles had a median of 11 citations. This is compared to non-OA articles, which had a median of 7 citations.

Scholarly Books Get a Boost from Open Access

The positive impacts of open access go far beyond journal articles. PhD candidate Ronald Snijder of the University of Leiden studied the effects of [making academic books available](#) through open access. He found that open access books had 10% more citations than non-OA books. His research also found that making books available through OA had a negligible effect on the sales of hard copies. At the same time, there were more downloads of OA books in developing countries such as Indonesia, India, and China. Snijder also added that open access makes scientific research available on a global level. This corresponds to the results of the 2018 Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) Survey, which found open access is [growing in Indonesia and other developing countries](#).

Snijder is not the only one looking into this issue. Another reputed journal, *Springer Nature*, also examined how open access impacts the use of scholarly books. Their white paper found that OA books are downloaded seven times as often, mentioned online ten times as often, and cited 50% more than non-OA books. The study was conducted over a period of four years. Although the study has limitations, it offers a promising outlook for authors who have chosen to publish through open access.

The Outlook for Open Access

Nonetheless, open access still faces some significant barriers before it becomes the new norm. One major issue is the cost that authors must bear when publishing open access. Article processing charges [can run as high as \\$3500](#).

However, the attitude towards open access publishing among scholars is increasingly positive. In the survey conducted by *Springer Nature*, professors said that they preferred OA for many reasons. Increased dissemination and easy access to research were two of the top reasons. Ethical concerns also played a role. Helen Louise Ackers, Chair in Global Social Justice at the University of Salford, has a similar opinion. She considers it unethical to publish a book on international development that people in developing countries couldn't afford to read. Thus, these observations makes OA journals a better option when publishing research results.

Do you prefer to cite open access or subscription journals? What do you think of the future of open access? Let us know your thoughts in the comments below.

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