



This is a short, simple tutorial that introduces Open Access Journals and how this relates to the responsibilities of academic librarians in advising academic staff on how to publish.

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Why consider Open Access?

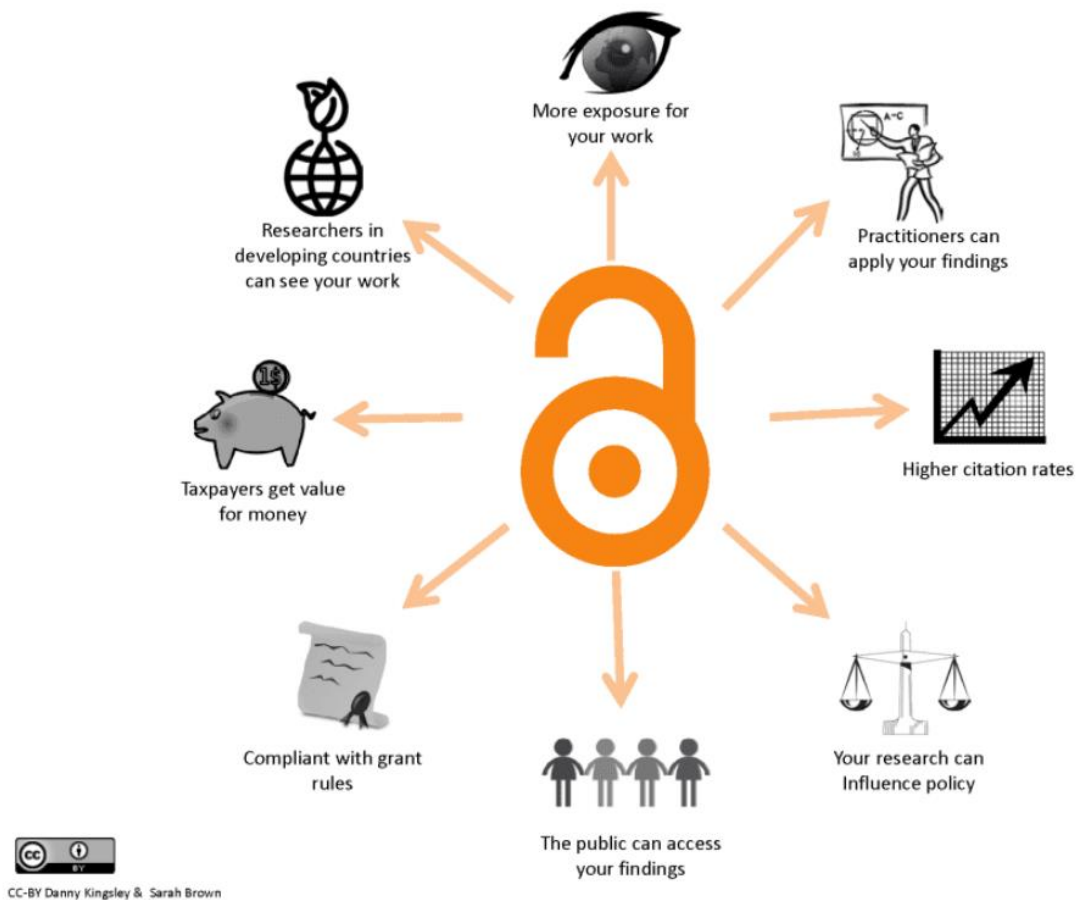


This lesson covers some of what we introduced in the Zoom session on Open Access Publishing (week 4)



Image: Marlenedd via Flickr (CC BY)

Why might you want to publish your research in an Open Access journal? Look at the image below for some of the possible benefits of OA publishing.



CC-BY Danny Kingsley & Sarah Brown

Benefits of Open Access publishing

Activity

In the table below, specify whether the benefit description relates to either a benefit to the researchers, public or both the researchers and the public.

Benefit description	Benefits who? Researchers, public or both?
Higher citation rates	
More exposure for the research	
Your research can influence policy	
The public can access your findings	
OA might comply with grant funding rules	
Taxpayers get value for money	
Practitioners can apply your findings	
People in all countries can see your work	

Reflection

When you advise your library patrons about whether to publish open access, what do you tell them?



Image: Justin Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA)

Reflection feedback

It is not expected that all academics should stop publishing in traditional journals and move to OA. After all, many universities encourage academics to publish in journals with high impact factors (although this is coming under scrutiny).

Academics should consider that there might be parts of their research that they would like to make more easily accessible to all.

For example, if they are teaching a course online, and they want students to download and read an article they have published, it would be easier for the students to do so if the article is readily available on the Internet, and is not behind a paywall. They could choose an open access journal or a traditional journal with the option to pay a fee for making the article open access (see next section). So each academic would need to think through their own research, and decide for themselves.

In the next section we will compare the different publishing options: traditional vs OA.

Publishing Options



Image: Having doubts via [Pikrepe](#) (CC-Zero)

Traditional Publishing vs Open Access options

In order to understand the world of OA publishing, let's see how traditional models compare with open options.

Traditional publishing

In **traditional publishing**, researchers write up the results of their work and submit papers to journals. These are assessed by editors and sent out for peer review before being revised by the author(s) and finally published. Researchers do not receive payment for their published articles. Once the work is published, institutional libraries (which are publicly funded) pay large amounts for **subscriptions** to journals.



Gold OA publishing

Alternatively, researchers can publish in an OA journal, where the publisher of a scholarly journal provides free online access to the full content of the journal. As in the traditional model, articles are assessed by editors, sent out for peer review, revised and published. The business model usually involves the publisher charging the author's institution or funding body an article processing charge (APC) to cover publication costs. This is usually called '**gold**' OA publishing.



Green OA publishing

In 'green' OA publishing, researchers can deposit a version of their published work into a subject-based (domain) repository or an institutional repository.



There are other types of open access, classified according to what versions of a manuscript can be shared, for instance, pre-print, post-print, and the publisher's final version. You can find further details by searching the Internet, for example [at this blog](#). Here, we just consider one more type: Hybrid.

Hybrid OA publishing

A third model is referred to as hybrid open access. A hybrid open-access journal is a subscription journal in which *some* of the articles are open access. To publish an open access article requires the payment of an APC to the publishers, *in addition to* the continued payment of subscriptions to access all other content. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Activity

Do you understand the difference between traditional and OA publishing?
In the table below, indicate whether the statements are either true or false. The answers to this activity can be found on the last page of these course notes.

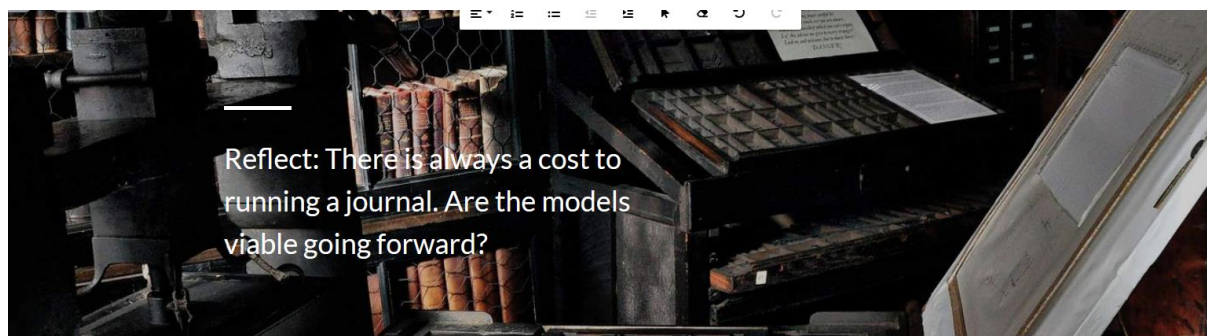
Statement	True or False?
In traditional publishing, authors retain copyright of the work.	
In open access publishing, authors may be required to pay a fee up front.	
In open access publishing, there is editor scrutiny but no peer review.	
Traditionally published articles are usually only accessible with a journal subscription.	
Both forms of publishing allow reuse under an open licence	

Deciding which option to use

If an author wants to put their research articles on-line (pre- or post-publication), it is not always clear how they can do this. Some publishers prohibit authors from using their own articles in this way. Others allow it, but only under certain conditions, while others are quite happy for authors to show their work in this way. Authors can be left confused: RoMEO helps to clarify the situation.

[SHERPA-RoMEO](http://sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/index.php) contains publishers' general policies on self-archiving of journal articles and certain conference series. Each entry provides a summary of the publisher's policy, including what version of an article can be deposited, where it can be deposited, and any conditions that are attached to that deposit.

(Adapted from <http://sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/index.php>)



Reflection feedback

Traditional publishers rely on advertising and subscriptions from institutions or individuals to enable them to flourish, while the business model of an OA journal is to require an APC when an article is accepted for publication.

As costs increase, institutions will need to access further resources in order to continue subscribing to traditional journals. However, it is also incumbent on researchers to find their own resources if they wish to publish in OA journals or a hybrid journal, although the APC may be paid by donors, governments or institutions.

All three models are likely to continue. Although institutions in resource-poor countries may have free access to journal databases by agreement with publishers, they are likely to find it hard to pay high subscriptions for traditional journals if such agreements end.

Read the article below titled 'Making the right choice: Open Access vs Traditional Journals. Click [here](#) to access.

In the next section, we will look at how to choose a reputable OA journal in which to publish.

Choosing a reputable Open Access journal

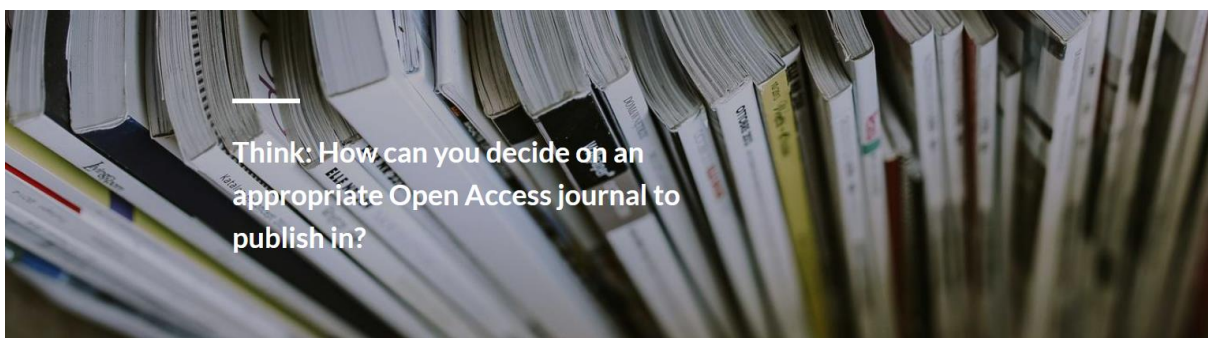


Image via [Piqsels](#) (CC-Zero)

Think. Check Submit

As a librarian, you need to be able to advise your academic colleagues (and postgraduate students) where to publish their research. Although there is obviously a range of journals that are appropriate, choosing a trusted journal and publisher is important. The following video gives you advice about how to do this – click [here](#).

Activity: Check a journal

Choose one of the journals below, go to its website and then read through the questions below (they also appear on the [think-check-submit](#) website).

- International Journal of Education: Click [here](#) to access the website
- International Journal of Engineering and Technology: Click [here](#) to access the website

Check (tick) each of the boxes below if you are satisfied that they meet the requirement for the journal you have chosen.

Questions	Check = Yes, Blank = No
Do you or your colleagues know the journal?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you read any articles in the journal before?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy to discover the latest papers in the journal?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you easily identify and contact the publisher?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the publisher's name clearly displayed on the website journal?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you contact the publisher via telephone, email or online enquiry form?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it clear what fees will be charged?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the journal site explain what these fees are for and when they will be charged?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you recognise the editorial board?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you heard of the editorial board members?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the editorial board members mention the journal on their own websites?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do they belong to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the journal listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the journal a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers' Association (OASPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evaluation

Do you think that the journal you have chosen is an appropriate one to subscribe to? Read on to learn more about open access journals.

Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

[DOAJ](#) is an online directory that indexes and provides access to high-quality OA, peer-reviewed journals. You can use it to search for journals in any discipline. When you search, the website will provide you with a list of journals in that discipline, together with information such as the open licence under which the journal articles are released, when it was first published, and what review system it uses.

Click on the video link below to see how the directory website can be used. Since the video was made, the DOAJ website has changed its appearance, and it now gives access to over 16,000 journals, over 11,000 of which do not require an APC. (*This video does not have a Creative Commons licence*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndvLm9MIfKA>

Activity: Visit and Use the Directory of Open Access Journals

1. Use the link that follows to access the DOAJ and investigate the site: [Directory of Open Access Journals](#)
2. Use the diagram below to see how the DOAJ search facility is organised. Click on the green pluses for information
3. Do a search for journals in your subject
4. From the results, which journal might you be interested in publishing in?
5. How much are you prepared to pay for an article processing charge (APC)?

View the indexed diagram below:

46 indexed journals **1**

Refine search results **2**

SEE JOURNALS...

- With a DOAJ Seal
- Without article processing charges (APCs)

SUBJECTS

Search 510 subjects

- Agriculture
- Auxiliary sciences of history
- Bibliography. Library science. Information resources
- Education
- Fine Arts
- General Works
- Geography. Anthropology.

LANGUAGES

LICENSES

PUBLISHERS

PUBLISHERS' COUNTRIES

PEER REVIEW TYPES

DATE ADDED

Sort by

Relevance

Results per page

10

<< First

< Prev

Page 1 of 5

Next >

The screenshot shows a search results page for journals. Three journal entries are displayed, each with a numbered callout:

- 1**: Points to the total number of indexed journals (46).
- 2**: Points to the 'Refine search results' section.
- 3**: Points to the 'DOAJ Seal' icon for 'Archives of Public Health'.
- 4**: Points to the 'No charges' text for 'Public Health Research'.
- 5**: Points to the 'APCs: 1790 (GBP)' text for 'Archives of Public Health'.
- 6**: Points to the 'DOAJ Seal' icon for 'Archives of Public Health'.

The three journal entries shown are:

- Archives of Public Health**: Published by BMC in United Kingdom. Accepts manuscripts in English. Medicine: Public aspects of medicine. Last updated on 14 Feb 2021. Website. APCs: 1790 (GBP). CC BY, CC0.
- Frontiers in Public Health**: Published by Frontiers Media S.A. in Switzerland. Accepts manuscripts in English. Medicine: Public aspects of medicine. Last updated on 12 May 2021. Website. APCs: 2490 (USD). CC BY.
- Public Health Research**: Published by NIHR Journals Library in United Kingdom. Accepts manuscripts in English. Medicine: Public aspects of medicine. Last updated on 9 May 2019. Website. No charges. Publisher's own license.

- 1. Search:** The search was for Public Health journals in the title and DOAJ found 46. Three of them are shown in the diagram above
- 2. Filter:** Here you can filter the results further. In this example, a journal was chosen without an APC
- 3. Open Licence:** This indicates the open licence under which the articles are shared. Most of these will be Creative Commons (CC) licences.
- 4. APC:** This indicates the amount of the Article Processing Charge (APC) that the journal will charge. This one has zero charge
- 5. APC:** This indicates the amount of the Article Processing Charge (APC) that the journal will charge. This one is expensive: UK £1,790
- 6. DOAJ Seal:** This refers to a set of seven DOAJ criteria that the journal meets. Only 10% of journals are awarded the DOAJ seal.

Predatory Publishing

Have you heard about 'deceptive' or 'predatory' publishing? Look at the following e-mail:

Dear ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~!

We came across your article titled "~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~" that was published in "~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~" it was impressive and caught our interest in gaining your contribution in ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Journal. If you have unpublished papers in hand, please feel free to submit your manuscripts on-line or send them in email. **We intend to remind you that the Deadline for Submission is ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~. Please submit till this date to include your article in April Publication.**

Important Deadlines

Manuscript Submission:

20 April 2020

Author Notifications:

25 April 2020

Publication of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

30 April 2020

Image: Lelliott (CC-BY)

Many academics, including students, receive numerous emails from people purporting to represent an international journal, and asking if they can publish your work. The reality is that most of these emails are not from real publishers, but are from companies trying to make money. The name we use for this type of activity is *deceptive or predatory publishing*.

Read the video transcript below which explains how such companies operate and gives suggestions regarding how to avoid them.

Video Transcript: Office of Scholarly Communication. (2018). Research in 3 Minutes: Predatory Publishers (CC BY)

What do we mean by the term predatory publisher?

These publishers **exploit the open access model** by charging a fee for publication but without providing any of the publication services usually covered by this fee.

There is often little, or no, peer review, editing or fact checking and the submitted work is published 'as is'.

Missing out these important steps can result in poor quality research entering the scholarly landscape.

These publishers tend to target early career researchers via unsolicited emails although they will reach out those at any stage of academia.

Are these publishers a problem?

Typically, publishing with one of the one of these firms means that a researcher has **signed away the rights** to their work so they won't be able to publish it elsewhere. This can have a **negative impact** on an academic career.

These publishers can also **perpetuate bad research** by publishing inaccurate or even falsified results. But there is an argument that these publishers **fulfill a need**.

Different countries have **different academic reward systems**. If the research just needs to have their work in print and are prepared to pay, then is this a **viable business model**?

Warning signs

- These publishers use **overly flattering language** in their emails to encourage publication
- They often publish on a **huge range of topics** rather than concentrating on one or two areas in depth
- And they offer **very fast turnaround times** for publication

So how do you spot a predatory publisher? Here is a **checklist** of things to consider when evaluating a publisher:

- **Association membership** – if the publisher is a member of an association or connected to a recognized institution this is a positive sign – but make sure that this connection is legitimate
- **Transparency** – a good publisher will share details such as location, contact information and a mission statement prominently on their website
- **Indexing** – being listed in the typical indexes and databases for their disciplines is a good sign – but remember that there may be perfectly **valid reasons** why a particular title does not appear, e.g. it may be very new or niche
- **Quality of previous publications** – look at previous work by this publisher to assess its quality
- **Fees** – any author fees should be clearly accessible and explained prior to publication
- **Copyright** – if the publisher claims to be making the work available open access, then check whether a suitable open licence is applied
- **Peer review** – guidelines should be easy to find and anticipated time periods should not be too good to be true

- **Editorial board** – members should be listed on the website, with a named person acting as Editor in Chief
- **Website quality** – check that the website looks professional and is free of basic errors in spelling and grammar – be aware of cultural differences here, what is considered high quality in one country may be out of reach of another
- Above all, **trust your judgement**. Think of the publication process as you would online shopping – if a shop looks unreliable you are unlikely to give them your credit card details, so exercise similar caution. If something doesn't feel right then you need to investigate further.

How can librarians support their researchers?

- **Raise awareness** about predatory publishers
- Offer them **tools** to help them choose the right publisher for their work

Activity: Quiz

How might you spot a deceptive publisher? Answer the following questions (the answers will be on the last page of these course notes).

What is usually missing when deceptive publishers offer to publish your article?

- Checking the correctness of the content of the article
- Work normally carried out by an editor
- Peer review of the article
- All of the above

What are some of the warning signs to look out for when receiving an invitation from a deceptive publisher?

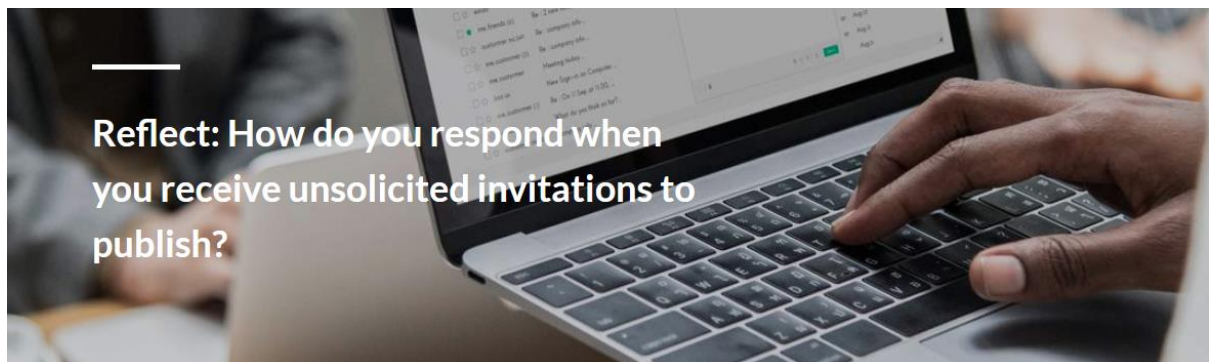
- The turnaround time for publication is roughly the same as traditional journals
- Their email often try to flatter the recipient
- They offer to publish the article very rapidly
- They publish across a very wide range of subjects

How to spot a deceptive publisher:

- **Association membership**
 - A reputable publisher should be a member of an association or linked to a recognized institution. The connection should be legitimate
- **Transparency**

- A good publisher will show their contact details and location on their website. Be suspicious if there is only an email address. The website should look professional and be free from typographical errors
- **Indexing**
 - A reputable publisher can be found in discipline indices and databases
- **Peer review**
 - Guidelines for peer review should be easy to find, and timelines for publication should not be overly fast
- **Editorial board**
 - Details of the editorial board should clearly stated, and the main editor should be easily contactable

Reflection



Reflection Feedback

The best response is to delete the unsolicited invitations you receive. Responding to them confirms that you have received their email, and they may continue to target you. you should also delete unsolicited requests to review or join editorial boards, unless you are sure of the quality of the journal.

The following webinar is quite long (over 23 minutes) but it is worth going through to understand in some detail how deceptive publishers work, and what academics, librarians and students should do to avoid using them.

Click on the link below to access this webinar:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2yZ-pD8poc>

Optional reading

As an optional extra activity, we ask you to read a short (3-page) open access article on publishing by African researchers. It is titled *The bane of publishing a research*

article in international journals by African researchers, the peer-review process and the contentious issue of predatory journals: a commentary.

Click [here](#) to access this article or type the following URL in your web browser:

<https://www.panafrican-med-journal.com/content/article/32/119/pdf/119.pdf>

Attribution, references and licences

The following Open Content was adapted to create this course:

- Alsagoff, Z. (2016). **What is the difference between OER and Open Access (OA)?** Available online at Commonwealth of Learning at <http://discourse.col.org/t/what-is-the-difference-between-oer-and-open-access-oa/41>. (CC BY-SA)
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Open images and graphics

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- ResearchAcademy. (nd). **How to get Published: What distinguishes a good manuscript from a bad one?** Elsevier, available online at https://www.elsevier.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/91038/Get_Published_A4_brochure_2018_web.pdf. ©

Quiz Answers

What is usually missing when deceptive publishers offer to publish your article?

- Checking the correctness of the content of the article
- Work normally carried out by an editor
- Peer review of the article
- All of the above

What are some of the warning signs to look out for when receiving an invitation from a deceptive publisher?

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Their email often try to flatter the recipient

They offer to publish the article very rapidly

They publish across a very wide range of subjects