

Description

Open access publishing is increasingly gaining popularity as funders, research institutions, scholars, and publishers are now seeking newer avenues to make science accessible to all. This has led to important advances in the implementation of novel open access models—[with many benefits for researchers and the community](#)—but there are still several challenges ahead.

Research Quality

The most significant challenge is improving the [quality of research](#) in open access articles. With the increasing number of open access publications—some of them having dubious backgrounds—it is getting more difficult for researchers to identify appropriate content and determine whether these articles have gone through a [rigorous and reliable review process](#). If you are publishing in predatory journals, paying the APC fee is all it takes to get a paper published—and the ease with which they accept manuscripts makes them popular amongst early-stage researchers who are not aware of the lack of [authenticity of the journal or publisher](#).

Predatory Publishers

In 2010, Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado, Denver, released a list of [questionable, scholarly open access publishers](#), and it now contains over 920 publishers. Most of the publishers are clearly unreliable companies, and Beall has named them “[predatory publishers](#),” however, the list also includes some well-known publishing houses whose practices are less obvious. In fact, the addition of journals published by [Frontiers](#) to Beall’s list in 2015 was [criticized by many scientists](#); nevertheless, Beall continues to stand by his decision, saying that he has received many complaints outlining bad practices at that company.

Identifying Good Open Access Journals

Beall’s list is a good start to understand the journals that you should not be approaching—and researchers can also use the [Directory of Open Access Journals](#), which follows a stringent selection process for the publications indexed in it—but it is still [necessary to look further](#) because some journals are not indexed or may be incorrectly classified. To make the search easier, Ingenta recently launched a new platform called [Ingenta Open](#) whose aim is to gather open access content from different sources and clearly indicate the [peer review process](#) behind each one of them.

The safest method is either selecting well-renowned open access publishers such as PLoS or BioMed Central or publishing in open access or hybrid journals of respected traditional publishing companies. Many of them have [self-archiving policies](#) that even allow authors to upload the post-acceptance (peer-reviewed) versions of their papers to open access repositories or websites after an embargo period (without having to pay an author fee).

Article Processing Charges

Article processing charge (APC) covers the entire publishing cost, and it can be a hefty fee, so introducing fair and sustainable APC models is one of the biggest challenges of open access publishing. In some cases, [universities or societies subsidize small publishers](#), allowing their journals to be free and open access. An example is the journal [eLife](#), which (until now) has been completely supported by the [Howard Hughes Medical Institute](#), [Max Planck Society](#), and [Wellcome Trust](#). However, in September, [eLife](#) announced that it will introduce APCs of \$2500 per article, starting in January 2017. The journal will continue to be supported by the three institutions, but the publishing costs are so high that authors will now have to help out by paying an author fee.

Funding

Most grants these days allow funds to be utilized for APCs in both open access and hybrid journals. This is one of the most significant sources of [APC funding](#), but some publishers also reduce (or completely waive) the costs for researchers from developing countries or members of particular societies. Moreover, publishing companies are now [exploring new partnerships](#) with funding organizations and making agreements with the library community to create pricing policies that are sustainable, transparent, and long-term. Some institutional libraries have already joined publisher membership schemes in which they can buy free or discounted open access articles for their researchers.

Self-Archiving

An alternative open access model involves the use of pre- or post-print archives and repositories. Some universities publish their own scholarly journals and run open access institutional repositories, which can significantly reduce costs for their faculty members. This year, the Wellcome Trust launched a new platform called [Wellcome Open Research](#), where authors can “rapidly publish any research outputs they wish to share.” The content is published within days of submission and is then evaluated through post-publication [peer review](#). This new online system could help many scholars accelerate the dissemination of their research.

Thus, although many advances have taken place in the models followed for open access publishing, there are still several challenges ahead. Clear quality standards and a sustainable business model are required to strengthen this movement further.

Category

1. Industry News
2. Publishing News

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