

# European Commission Moving into Academic Publishing

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In a [2017 article in Science](#), Martin Enserink reported on a new venture by the European Commission that would include [academic publishing](#). The Commission is a major annual funder of research and uses the models set by the Wellcome Trust and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to consider furthering open access publishing. Open access allows pre-publication of scientific and academic papers without peer review. It avoids the bottleneck often experienced by authors who submit papers to publishers for consideration. It also allows free access to read the latest scientific information without having to pay a fee.

## A Move Towards Open Access

Although not a new concept, open access has been slow to take a hold in the publishing industry. The big publishers have fought the change for monetary reasons. Some researchers still continue to publish in a respected and well-known journal to get the recognition they deserve, even if it takes as many as 2 years to see a published paper. Other academicians have responded to the publishers' tactics by boycotting them, canceling subscriptions, or making their work available without permission.

## Current Programs

The Gates Foundation plans to launch its [Gates Open Research](#) later this year. All academic and scientific research funded by the Foundation will be made openly accessible. Papers will be published immediately and peer review will be invited. F1000 will oversee the platform. Another forum, [Wellcome Open Research](#), was launched in November 2016. As with the Gates program, it provides a forum in which to publish research results from articles by an author who has received a Wellcome grant. These results are open and shared.

Both of these are open access publishing platforms. As with any published articles, authors provide detailed accounts of methods used so that they can be duplicated. Peer review is transparent.

This is a huge step for these funders and it demonstrates their disappointment in the current methods of publishing and the length of time taken from submission to final print. Open access has been a topic within the industry for more than 20 years, yet it is still not a popular option, despite Internet capabilities certainly supporting it. By setting up their own platforms, these major funding sources are providing a huge help to the research community.

## Benefits for Researchers

The goals of these charities are to make it faster and more efficient for researchers to get their discoveries out in the open. After all, they are funding the research; therefore, it is reasonable to expect them to want to see the results from their funding published and easily accessible. By publishing in an open access forum, the review process is faster and more transparent. After the necessary approvals, the papers and their reviews are made public and then indexed into databases such as PubMed.

Researchers also have the advantage of being able to revise their papers post-publication. Wellcome Open Research has published approximately 54 papers on its platform. Some of these include subjects that are not easily accepted in traditional journals, such as software studies. This also opens the door for those researchers not involved in the traditional scientific disciplines.

With the European Commission jumping into open access publishing as well, the three top funders of scientific research will have a powerful influence on the traditional publishing industry and their push for open access will gain even more support.

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