## Description

The concept of open access publishing is fairly new compared to how long researchers have been publishing in academic journals. At present, open access is now an accepted way of providing new ideas and findings not just to the academic community but also to the rest of society. The open access movement arose because of the predicament that journals faced due to the rising costs of print publication at the start of the 21st century and also because opportunities became available through digital publishing on the Web and the emergence of online journals. Open access (OA) has taken over the publishing world, and this is demonstrated by the fact that almost 50% of the articles published between 2004 and 2011 in EU member countries, the USA, Canada, Japan, and Brazil, were accessible as open access in April 2013.

Open access publications are established through various methods. For example, one open access model is the “Golden Road or Gold OA,” in which all the articles are published as open access after the author pays an article processing fee. Another avenue is hybrid open access journals, which publish only some of their articles in open access or follow the procedure known as the “Green Road or Green OA,“ which archives journal articles in institutional repositories or open archives after the articles have been published in the journals. Often, the term open access leads readers or authors to believe that there is no cost attached to this type of publication. However, this is not true. Even though there is a cost associated with open access it is presented as a more economical model than journals that are financed by subscriptions.

# Article Processing Charges

The publication fee associated with open access publishing is known as an article processing charge (APC). To cover these fees, authors typically use the funding that grant agencies or academic institutions provide. In order to understand how institutional spending relates to open access journal articles may require extensive research that has been limited for several reasons. For example, the payment of these charges is shared through the budgets of grant agencies, research institutions, and libraries or it is covered by personal budgets. Many of the “Gold OA” journals charge the authors or the institutions the article processing charges and the actual amount of these fees vary considerably between journals from different publishers, associations, or learned societies.



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Another obstacle involves the lack of transparency, wherein the authors, universities, funding agencies, and publishers do not disclose information about the costs of publishing, and this lack of transparency also exists with regard to journal subscriptions. Therefore, the factors that contribute to pricing in academic publishing remain unclear. For the most part, these factors might include article processing, impact, rejection rates, management, investment and profit margins, but again these are still under investigation. In addition, hybrid OA journals largely contribute to the complexity of open access funding, because these journals publish articles immediately as open access after a charge is paid and rely on both subscriptions and publication fees as revenue sources. To address the problems of how publication fees are shared and the lack of transparency about what is being paid, some European research funders and research institutions now disclose their expenditures for publication as open data as part of an open article processing charge initiative.

## Open Article Processing Charge Initiative

A recent study examined how much German universities and research organizations spent on open access publication fees using the self-reported cost data from the open article processing charge initiative. The analysis centered on how much was being spent on publication fees and it also compared these costs with data from related Austrian and UK initiatives, with respect to both size and the proportion of articles that were published in fully open and hybrid open access journals. In addition, the study investigated how comprehensively the self-reported articles were indexed in Crossref, a DOI minting agency for scholarly literature, and analyzed how the institutional spending was dispersed across different publishers and journal titles.

The study revealed that according to the self-reported data from 30 German universities and research organizations between 2005 and 2015, the amount spent on open access publication fees increased over time, while the expenditures varied significantly at the institutional level. In addition, how much the institutions spent per journal and publisher also varied. The indexing coverage was 99%, and thus, Crossref thoroughly indexed the open access journals articles included in the study. Compared with the related openly available cost data from Austria and the UK, the German universities and research organizations mostly funded articles in fully open access journals, whereas in Austria and the UK, articles in hybrid OA journal accounted for the largest portion of the expenditures. Moreover, the fees paid to the hybrid OA journals were, on average, higher than those paid for fully open access journals.

## Sustainability of Open Access

Open access publication fees, as a source of revenue, are of great interest to researchers, policy makers, and academic publishers. The opponents of open access do not believe that the model is economically sustainable and feel that if it is relied upon, it could hurt the publishing businesses and learned societies might experience difficulties due to reduced revenues. To overcome this, certain traditional publishers are working with their customers to test out new business models in order to improve open access publishing.

**Category**

1. Industry News
2. Publishing News



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