Description

Open access publishing accelerates the advancement of scientific knowledge by making it freely accessible to all the stakeholders. Furthermore, sharing of research facilitates greater communication across disciplines and assists in finding innovative solutions to traditional problems. The research community has indeed warmed up to open access publishing. Yet, several misconceptions still exist!

In the first part of the series, we unveiled four myths around open access. Let us debunk a few more in this post!

Myth 5

Open access journals do not publish good quality articles.

Dr. Ralf:

Bit of prejudice! In reality, good quality OA journals apply for a rigorous quality check via DOAJ. An OA journal listed on DOAJ is of the same high quality as classic subscription journals. Examples: New Journal of Physics or IEEE Access.

Fact Check:

The quality of a journal depends on its editorial process and peer review system. It does not depend on whether the article is being published in an ‘Open Access’ or ‘Subscription-based’ journal. Several open access journals effectively work as the gatekeepers and filter scientific work to maintain its quality. Most OA journals warrant their quality by registering themselves in the DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) and comply with their standards. Additionally, there are several reputed publishing houses including *IEEE*, *SPIE*, *RSC*, *APS*, *Wiley*, *PLoS*, *Springer*, *Nature,* and *Elsevier*, that publish good quality scientific work.

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Myth 6

Open access articles are not copyrighted.

Dr. Ralf:

On the contrary, it is a modern reply to scientific communication in a digital age. Generally, copyright is retained by the author, only the publishing rights are transferred to the publisher, and re-usability of content is reassured via Creative Commons Licences. Other licenses are available usually upon request during the submission process. An overview of available cc-licenses can be found here.

Fact Check:

As a prerequisite, traditional scholarly publishing involves the complete and exclusive transfer of copyright from authors to the publishers. Following this, the publishers acquire the right to disseminate and reproduce the article and monetize the process further.

With open access publishing, authors typically retain the rights over their articles. In addition, they also grant different licenses to the authors. This allows the authors to share their articles outside the subscription paywall. For instance, Elsevier provides a list of user license options empowering the authors to decide how readers can reuse open access articles. The most commonly used are the CC-BY licenses that allow the use of the content without authorization. In this case, however, the author and the source must be cited properly. Likewise, InTechOpen allows the publishing of OA books and various other formats including complete monographs, edited volumes/collections, proceedings.

Myth 7

Publishers charge exorbitantly for open access publishing.

Dr. Ralf:

Article Publication Charges (APCs) vary a lot depending on the subject area, journal, and publisher, this is correct. Pricing however is now often capped via transformation agreements between national funders, consortia, and publishers.

Fact Check:

The cost of APCs varies considerably depending on the journal and the publishing house. Article publication charges (APC) or author fees are the publication fees for open access. There are several open access journals that do not charge fees at all! As of October 2020, an analysis of peer reviewed open access journals listed in DOAJ suggests that more than two-thirds (approximately >70%) charge no fees. One can search for and retrieve the list of journals that do not charge fees using the DOAJ repository. Further, when authors choose to publish in a fee-based OA journal, many times funders or universities step in to pay them. Few publishers, such as IOP Publishing and The Royal Society also have an OA membership scheme wherein institutions pre-pay or pre-approve payment of APC. Many

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publishers may even consider waiving the fees for those with established financial adversities.

Myth 8

If I have deposited my work in a repository/ have preprints on my website, then I don't require to publish open access.

Dr. Ralf:

This is a topic which currently changes as preprint servers and green OA without embargo plus reuse licenses are part of a rights retention strategy. Your research output needs to be citable though, hence a Version of Record (VOR) is needed for reference which is the final published version of your research output.

Fact Check:

Depositing your work in disciplinary repositories (like PubMed Central) or in institutional repositories is, in fact, a form of green open access publishing.

Open access repositories may make distinctions between three major versions of an article pre-prints, post-prints, and the version of record (also known as publisher's version).

- A pre-print represents the version that is submitted to the journal, prior to its peer-review and publication. Examples of well-established pre-print servers are arXiv, Techrxiv, BioRxiv, Agrixiv , and PsyArXiv.
- A post-print is a peer reviewed version of the article. The article may either be peer reviewed, but not copyrighted, or both peer reviewed and copyrighted.
- The published version or VOR includes all the copyediting and formatting changes (journal's typeset).

For determining whether the journal you published permits you to self-archive your work in open access repositories one can check through the SHERPA/RoMEO database. It contains an extensive list of publishing policies, embargo periods, and the version that the authors can archive.

Authors may also explore the 'How Can I Share It?' initiative that aims to facilitate the sharing of scholarly work.

Myth 9

Publishing in open access may affect my prestige as a researcher.

Dr. Ralf:

This is a difficult aspect in open science, agreed. It however very much depends on a) the assessment procedure at an academic or research institution (DORA), whether or not open access is leveraged and part of the overall research policy, b) the funding situation and c) the journal selected to publish

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the research data and results in.

Beware of predatory journals and predatory conferences! These can be checked via ThinkCheckSubmit and ThinkCheckAttend.

Fact Check:

Opinions regarding quality standards of open science remain divided! Yet, open access is quickly garnering support owing to its attribute of enhancing work visibility. A researcher's prestige depends on the quality of work and the reputation of the journal. There are several prestigious and high-quality open access journals. For instance, PLoS, established in 2007, publishes a suite of high impact open access journals that follow a rigorous peer review system.

However, with the scientific community warming up to the OA platform, there are rising concerns over an increase in predatory publishers. Taking advantage of the author's ignorance, predatory journals lure them into publishing and consequently disseminating questionable scientific information. A researcher's prestige may be at stake if they fall into the trap of such predatory publishers!

How was your experience with open access publishing? Have you come across any such myths? Share your views in the comments below.

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Understanding Ethics

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