

Open Library of Humanities: The Open Access Publisher for Humanities

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Post Url

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The [Open Library of Humanities \(OLH\)](#) is a non-profit open access publisher for humanities and social sciences and was developed initially in 2013 but officially launched in September 2015. The OLH was initially modeled after the Public Library of Science ([PLoS](#)) but is not affiliated with it. The mission of the OLH is to make scholarly publishing more fair, accessible, and meticulously preserved for the digital future. With that goal in mind, the OLH does not charge authors article processing charges (APCs), and this is possible because an international consortium of libraries funds it.

In addition to supporting academic journals from across the humanities disciplines, the OLH platform also hosts its own multidisciplinary journal. All of the academic articles submitted to the OLH undergo a rigorous peer review in order to highlight some of the most dynamic research taking place in the humanities disciplines today, including the classics, modern languages and cultures, philosophy, theology, history, political theory, sociology, anthropology, film and new media studies, and digital humanities. The publishing venue of the OLH boasts high-quality presentation, annotative functionality, robust digital preservation, strong discoverability and easy-to-share social media buttons. The main goal of the OLH is to provide open access in the humanities at not cost for everyone permanently.

A Year Later

The founders of the OLH [celebrated the first anniversary of the launch of OLH](#) this past September. They published a post with information on the journals published by the OLH, as well as statistics on the publications, subscriptions, and article views to demonstrate that the first year after launch was a success.

In the first year itself, the OLH hosted 909 articles across the journals that they either directly publish or support. This figure represents a significant level of growth for the first year. In addition, the number of journals published by the OLH is now 18, with the latest

migrations underway. These journals also encompass a wide range of disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. Also, the founders announced that just about 200 institutional subscriptions financially supported the platform in this first year, including Harvard, Cambridge, Princeton, Duke, Carnegie Mellon, UNC, KCL, UCL and Birkbeck. Ultimately, the founders envision that there will be more institutions joining the platform.

The founders also presented their readership statistics and commented that they are countering the criticism that is often faced by open access journals by proving that there is public interest in and a demand for access to humanities research. The OLH articles were uniquely viewed 118,686 times in the first year, an average of 131 views per article. With these numbers, the founders feel that this demonstrates a substantial demand/readership for humanities research material.

In addition to the promising publication statistics, the founders also state that a number of OLH articles also made press headlines. The fact that there is media interest in humanities research suggests that open access to humanities studies has a societal value.

Future of Open Access in the Humanities

The open access publishing model has changed the way [academic publishing](#) is carried out. For all of academia, including the humanities, some of the greatest challenges of academic publishing over the next several years will be the maintenance and establishment of alternative, non-commercial publication models that can function alongside the already existing, but decreasing number of big traditional publishers. There are some enterprises that are already functioning and are quite successful, including Scoap3 in the field of High-Energy Physics or Knowledge Unlatched for book publications. Both of these have already demonstrated great accomplishments. For the humanities, OLH is one of the most promising models. The concept behind OLH will provide long-term sustainability for all open access journals, ensuring that no author will ever have to pay for APCs out of their own pocket. By collaborating with a worldwide network of libraries that pay the costs of open access publications on behalf of the authors/researchers, OLH will continue to build its sustainability.

Members of the OLH team are also working hard on the software development front. They have a prototype PDF typesetter called CaSSius that is now being heavily tested. The OLH hope to migrate over to CaSSius for its day-to-day publishing activities. In addition, they are also working on a translation tool called annotran that is currently in a beta phase. Clearly, the OLH, in its first year, has established a model of open access publishing for the humanities that holds great potential in the future.

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