

Stephen Hawking's PhD Thesis Crashes Internet

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Post Url

<https://www.enago.com/academy/stephen-hawkings-phd-thesis-crashes-internet/>



Image credits: Felix Clay via [The Guardian](#)

On the 23rd October 2017, the University of Cambridge offered [public access](#) to the doctoral thesis of the young Stephen Hawking. This resulted in overwhelming public attention and immediately became a '[viral tweet](#)' that crashed the internet. Moreover, the huge number of downloads of the thesis further temporarily crashed the [University's Apollo repository](#) that currently archives it. Over the years, public interest on the 1966 doctoral thesis of the world's most recognizable scientist has remained consistent. The Open Access week celebration in 2017 provided the ideal platform for its release, with Professor Hawking's permission.

Although [most may not understand](#) the 134-page document on the implications and consequences of the [expanding universe](#), the response for the work of a 24-year old postgraduate is incredible. The 75-year old physicist is on board with the change, hoping it would inspire the next generation of physicists-to-be as he got inspired by Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and James Clerk Maxwell.

Professor Hawking hopes that those who accessed his thesis may not be disappointed and further believes that everyone, anywhere in the world should have access to the

research of great and enquiring minds. Currently, the most downloaded content on the University's system, the thesis was previously [accessible for £65 per digital copy](#). The University, therefore, hopes that former academics would also be encouraged to follow the suit.

The PhD thesis, written by Hawking while at Trinity College Hall has core scientific influence. Subsequently, he went on to write 'A Brief History of Time', which became an international bestseller. Additional [written works](#) of the cosmologist diversely span from his early years in science to understanding origins of the Universe.

Riding on the wave of Open Access, the University now invites graduating PhD students to deposit their thesis. From October 2017, the archive will allow free distribution of PhD work online, while inviting alumni to join the initiative. The Cambridge University Library will digitize alumni theses for Open Access archival, on request. Those interested can direct to thesis@repository.cam.ac.uk. The University of Cambridge with its 600-year-history is home to papers of great scientists, including Isaac Newton, freely available [online](#).

From humanities to biomedical research, the drive towards open access has made a significant impact on the dissemination of information. Apollo, the digital repository at Cambridge for instance, is home to more than [20,000 digital objects](#). In this context, crashing the internet in pursuit of academic writing is a strong determinant of the power of open access dissemination.

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