

Trends in Open Access Book Publishing

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Many initiatives have been undertaken to make journal articles and other content available through open access. For many disciplines, books are equally important as a source of published information when conducting research especially in humanities and social sciences. Authors of academic book chapters could choose gold open access wherein they pay a fee and the publisher makes the chapter freely available. Another alternative is green open access, wherein an author would place a version of the chapter in an open access repository.

The results from De Gruyter Open Author survey reveal some interesting statistics. Of the 99 authors who wrote toll access book chapters, 55.5% self-archived their chapters. These authors were of the view that the public should have access to the research. Another 5% used green OA because they wanted to support those in the low-income countries. This shows that most authors support open access for ethical reasons too.

Almost 300 authors of toll access book chapters did not archive their work. Almost half of them informed that the publisher did not allow green OA. However, this number varied in case of journal articles. 27.4% of those surveyed said that the journal policies did not allow green OA. This highlights the fact that more journals offer green OA than book publishers.

The challenge of making academic books accessible through open access remains a challenge. Among journals, gold and green OA are frequent options. However, book publishers are less likely to offer these options. More initiatives need to be undertaken to promote open access for academic book chapters.

Differences in Perceptions

Almost 30% of authors who took the De Gruyter Open survey had published under gold open access. These authors have published at least one book in the past three years. Top 5% of the authors created 33.7% of gold open access books.

There is also an observable difference in who is paying for open access. The authors in the survey were divided into two groups. The division was based on the GDP per capita of the countries. One group had GDP per capita more than \$20,000 and the other had less than \$20,000. The core countries with GDP per capita greater than \$20,000 included the USA, some members of the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Interestingly, about 70% of the authors from the rest of the world published at least one OA article in the past three years, whereas only 43.1% did so from these core countries.

On an average, a researcher from a core country published about 22% of his or her work in the gold open access format. This contribution was higher in the rest of the world (50%). Authors in less wealthy countries are less likely to have publication grants. Despite this, 11.4% are willing to use their personal funds to cover article processing charges. Only 6.1% of the authors from core countries would use their personal resources for open access publishing. The median open access charge for authors from core countries is €1,100 whereas for the rest it is €300.

STEM vs the Humanities

Gold open access books are more common in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Authors in [Humanities](#) and Social Sciences publish more books than those in the STEM. However, STEM authors are more likely to make their book chapters open access. Article processing charges are common in science but rare in the humanities. High APCs are more common in the medical and life sciences fields than in the arts and humanities.

In the survey, authors in the Humanities were less confident that they would be able to cover APCs. About 32% of those in STEM revealed they had access to funds to cover article processing charges as compared to less than 25% of those in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences authors received smaller grants for open access publication than those in the STEM did.

The recent De Gruyter Open Author survey results reveal some interesting information. It was observed that green OA is less common among book authors. This is partly because fewer book publishers have an open access policy. Moreover, most authors agree with the ethics of open access.

What is your opinion on making academic books and chapters open access? How do you think it can benefit researchers? Do share your thoughts with us in the comments section below!

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