

What Is the Real Cost of Scientific Publishing?

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Post Url

<https://www.enago.com/academy/what-is-the-real-cost-of-scientific-publishing/>

After spending years researching, scientific researchers publish their findings to share them with the larger scientific community. It is standard procedure that peer-reviewed scientific journals charge a significant [publication fee for publishing a paper](#), especially traditional print journals. The cost of publishing can be very high, depending on the journal selected. Recently, these publication fees have come into question, with the scientific community wondering what the real cost to publishers is.

What Costs are Involved in Publishing?

Scientific publishing costs vary from journal to journal. Most journals are unwilling to disclose their publishing costs, so estimations are typically done based upon general industry statistics and revenues. There are costs involved in [publishing an article](#), including the staff, distribution costs, and printing fees. There is also a significant amount of work done behind the scenes that takes a paper from submission to publication. Publishers often have to edit, [proofread](#), check for plagiarism, and send the [papers for peer review](#), all which increase the cost of publishing.

How Much Does it Cost to Publish?

Publishing costs for journals can be high. According to one study that analyzed industry data from the consulting firm Outsell, the typical profit margins for the [academic publishing](#) industry are around 20 to 30 percent. Estimating the final cost of publication per paper based upon revenue generated and the total number of published articles, they estimate that the average cost to publish an article is around \$3500 to \$4000. This estimate is most likely very high, especially for open access journals that typically only publish digital copies. The cost per paper in these journals could be as low as a few hundred dollars per article.

Who Pays to Publish in Journals?

A large percentage of the cost of publishing a [research paper](#) falls upon the researchers. Most journals charge a significant fee to those submitting a paper, sometimes in the thousands of dollars. The paper's author might have to pay these fees, although sometimes his or her university or institution has a subscription fee or otherwise covers the cost of publishing. Some journals are able to provide a much lower fee for publication because the government, a university, or a society subsidizes them.

Journals with a higher publication fee defend their costs by saying they put more effort into reviewing and editing each article, and are more selective about the articles published. Researchers continue to publish in these journals because they provide a greater prestige to the author due to their long-standing, esteemed reputation.

The Future of Journal Costs

Until there is more clarity on exactly how much each publishing house spends on publishing each article, the research community will never know what the real cost of publication is. There is pressure to lower the amount charged to authors to have an article published, and some journals are making it easier for researchers to [publish their work](#). However, it will be years before the most well-respected and often most expensive journals begin to lower their fees, both for submitting and reading articles, making it easier for the scientific community to publish, read, and share information on the latest findings.

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