

Defining Open Access For Journals

Open Access is a means of disseminating scholarly research that breaks from the traditional subscription model of academic publishing. It has the potential to accelerate greatly the pace of scientific discovery, encourage innovation and enrich education by reducing barriers to access. Open Access shifts the costs of publishing so that readers, practitioners and researchers obtain content at no cost. However, Open Access is not as simple as “articles are free to all readers.” Open Access encompasses a range of components such as readership, reuse, copyright, posting, and machine readability. Within these areas, publishers and funding agencies have adopted many different policies, some of which are more open and some less open. In general, the more a journal’s policies codify immediate availability and reuse with as few restrictions as possible, the more open it is.

Journals can be more open or less open, but their degree of openness is intrinsically independent from their:

- Impact • Prestige • Quality of Peer Review
- Peer Review Methodology • Sustainability
- Effect on Tenure & Promotion • Article Quality

How To Use This Guide

In 2002, the Budapest Open Access Initiative articulated the basic tenets of Open Access for the first time. Since then, thousands of journals have adopted policies that embrace some or all of the Open Access core components related to: readership, reuse, copyright, posting, and machine readability. However, not all Open Access is created equal. For example, a policy that allows anyone to read an article for free six months after its publication is more open than a policy that creates a twelve month embargo; it is also less open than a policy that allows for free reading immediately upon publication.

This guide will help you move beyond the seemingly simple question, “Is this journal Open Access?” and toward a more productive alternative, “HowOpenIsIt?”

Use it to:

- Understand the components that define Open Access journals
- Learn what makes a journal more open vs. less open
- Make informed decisions about where to publish

This Guide Is A Collaboration Among:

SPARC*
sparcopen.org

PLOS
plos.org

CASPA
oaspa.org

OPEN  ACCESS

HowOpenIsIt?®

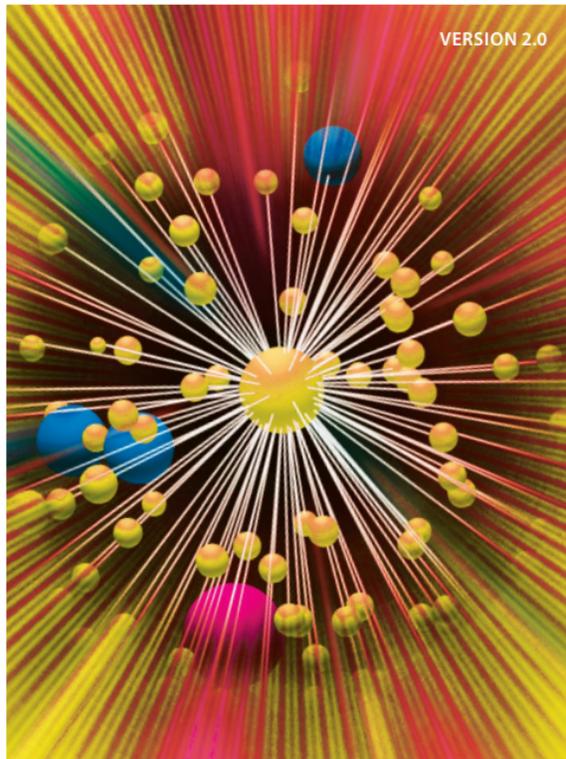
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HowOpenIsIt?

OPEN ACCESS SPECTRUM

VERSION 2.0



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