

# Executive Summary

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The state of global scholarly communications has evolved rapidly over the last two decades, as libraries, funders and some publishers have sought to hasten the spread of more open practices for the dissemination of results in scholarly research worldwide. These practices have become collectively known as Open Access (OA), defined as "the free, immediate, online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment." The aim of this report — the Open Access White Paper by the Senate Subcommittee on Open Access at the University of Oregon — is to review the factors that have precipitated these recent changes and to explain their relevance for members of the University of Oregon community.

## Open Access History and Trends

Recently, the OA movement has gained momentum as academic institutions around the globe have begun negotiating and signing creative, new agreements with for-profit commercial publishers, and as innovations to the business models for disseminating scholarly research have become more widely adopted. These innovations – made possible by the use of digital methods for accessing and acquiring content – have moved academic libraries far beyond the days when subscriptions to print journals were the norm. Beginning in the 1990s, individual subscriptions evolved into licenses for e-journals and e-books, large collections of aggregated electronic content, publisher journal bundles, thematic sub-collections and eventually “Big Deal” subscription packages. The Big Deal offered vastly expanded access at lower prices but also resulted in large portions of library budgets being locked away in inflating multi-year contracts. Libraries and the academic community more broadly have pushed back, giving rise to the OA movement. Dissatisfied with the lack of flexibility inherent in the Big Deal and with high profits going to an increasingly smaller number of commercial publishing giants, many institutions have begun exploring new ways to make the fruits of scholarly research more open.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the motivation for change is stronger than ever. The need for rapid and open access to scientific findings has increased awareness of the OA movement among both the general public – many of whom are being introduced to the concept of pre-prints for the first time – and academic researchers who are eager to accelerate the review and dissemination of their work much faster than is possible through the constrained channels of costly proprietary journals. Commercial publishing companies have, surprisingly, signaled tacit acknowledgement of the limitations of traditional publishing mechanisms by releasing a flood of “free trial offers” that allow access to previously restricted

content. The University of Oregon Libraries have posted a directory of these trial offers on the library website: <https://library.uoregon.edu/resources/trial-databases>

## **Research and Dissemination in the Open Access Era**

The central challenge of the Open Access movement lies in the development of mechanisms for publishing of open access articles, journals, collections of journals, books and data. Outlets for various types of OA publishing have begun to be labeled with a color-coded scheme (Gold, Green, Bronze, Diamond, or Platinum), each category indicating different publishing terms. The use of Creative Commons licenses, policies developed by institutions and governments, requirements by funders and best practices developed by various disciplines of scholars are all shaping the business models for research in the open access era. Just within the past year, several new publishing models have been negotiated between large research institutions and commercial publishing firms, including “Transformative Agreements,” “Pure Publish,” and “Subscribe to Open” agreements (see the White Paper for detailed description). These are complemented by membership models and other emergent arrangements, but no single approach has achieved dominance, nor has a vision for sustainability taken hold. The challenges of navigating through this state of flux has led to increased awareness of publishing concerns among scholars themselves and even the general public.

## **Advancing OA at the University of Oregon**

The consequences of these many developments in Open Access have been largely positive to date, both for the academy and for taxpayers, funders, and millions of people around the world who do not have access to potentially life-changing knowledge that has historically been locked behind expensive paywalls. The University of Oregon has benefitted as well and seeks to further the move towards open access on several fronts in the coming years. The questions facing UO currently are how and where to prioritize the institution’s efforts.

In this spirit, the Senate Sub-Committee on Open Access was convened in December 2019 by the Office of the Provost and the University Senate to undertake an investigation into the state of open access trends and practices and the role they play in the process of research and dissemination at UO. The SSOA has developed the following Whitepaper to lay the groundwork for building a mutual understanding of Open Access issues. Advantages and challenges to the implementation of Open Access approaches are summarized herein, along with a brief history of Open Access initiatives here at the University of Oregon. A summary of current OA practices used in the process of research and dissemination of scholarly works at UO, including Open Access publishing and consideration of the potential benefits of pursuing new agreements, is also discussed.

The report concludes with several ideas for advancing Open Access at the University of Oregon and beyond – these are summarized on the following page. The next step depends on engagement from stakeholders across the UO community. The SSOA has prepared this Whitepaper as a foundation from which our community can build consensus about our Open Access priorities. We look forward to hearing your feedback and suggestions as we move towards a more open landscape for scholarly research.

# Possibilities for Local Actions at UO

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The SSOA Working Group is seeking input about local actions that support Open Access in ways that are aligned with the interests of stakeholders at the University of Oregon. To that end, this section of the White Paper is an ongoing work-in-progress. We have included a list of open-ended suggestions that are intended to prompt discussion and we are eager to add further suggestions based on input from the community. If you have feedback, please visit the SSOA website ([openaccess.uoregon.edu](https://openaccess.uoregon.edu)) or reach out directly to a representative of the SSOA or the University Library Committee.

- ⑧ Renew/re-constitute the SSOA to carry forward OA work in 2020-2021 academic year
- ⑧ Develop an Open Access policy to be approved by the Senate, which includes consideration for the following:
  - ⑧ Establishing a workflow for faculty to submit a version of their scholarly articles to the institutional repository, Scholars' Bank, and/or discipline-specific green OA outlets. For reference, consider the policies recently adopted by the [University of California](#) and [Oregon State University](#).
  - ⑧ Developing a mechanism for adding and tracking publishing fees to grant submissions submitted via Sponsored Project Services
  - ⑧ Alignment of OA goals in departmental Tenure and Promotion policies
  - ⑧ Offering further Open Educational Resources and Open Access incentives for UO researchers
- ⑧ Consider endorsing [Open Access 2020](#) or similar roadmap to scholarly publishing transition to open access.
- ⑧ Identify a source of funds to subsidize OA publishing fees, monograph subventions, and/or article processing charges (APCs)
- ⑧ Explore a targeted approach to ORCID integration across the University