

Open Access

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[Open Science \(A.Y. 2024/2025\)](#)

[Second Cycle Degree in Digital Humanities and Digital Knowledge](#)

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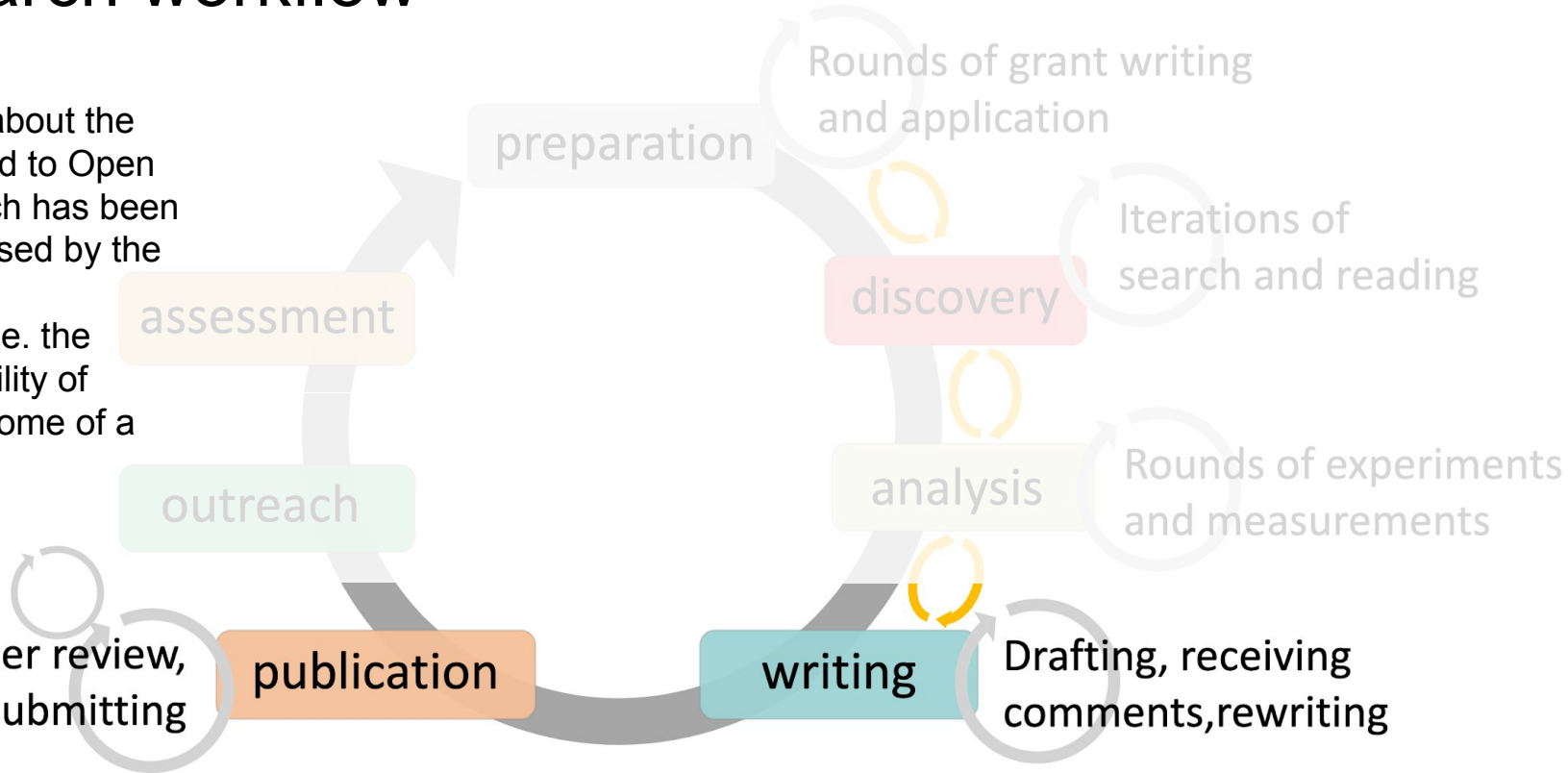
Discussion

Hyde, A. (2025). PRC vs The Cathedral: How PRC Might Change Publishing (Version 1).

https://www.robotscooking.com/content/files/2025/01/PRC-vs-The-Cathedral_V1.pdf

Research workflow

We discuss about the aspect related to Open Science which has been firstly addressed by the scholarly community, i.e. the open availability of the final outcome of a research, i.e. the article



Moving towards commercialisation of knowledge

1895: Royal Society explained to the UK government that the publication of scientific research journals **could not be undertaken on an ordinary commercial basis**, and that should be handled by learned societies within their mission for supporting scholarship

1950: learned society journals **under such severe financial strains** that it seemed impossible to continue circulating scientific research on the old terms – wide circulation and uneconomic pricing

2002: the investment bank Morgan Stanley describe journal publishing as **an industry worth US\$7 billion**, offering good returns to investors

This transformation had two components:

1. an increased involvement of commercial firms in journal publishing after 1945 (speedy production)
2. changing attitudes toward the economics of journal publishing among the learned societies

The dominance of modern research journal publishing by international media conglomerates has motivated many of the current campaigns for the reform of academic publishing

What happens in the publishing system

Goal of academia
to **share knowledge**

in direct competition with

Goal of publisher
to **make a profit**

When a paper is accepted at a journal, it will be put behind a paywall (i.e. require a journal subscription to read)

University libraries pay **an average \$5000 per article** on researchers' behalf through subscription fees – only individuals at institutions that can afford journal subscriptions can read the research, making the whole process as a form of indirect discrimination

Most of the time, publishers pay nothing for the product (the journal article written by the authors and their research often supported by public funds) or the services involved in the peer review of the product (e.g. volunteer editor and peer reviewer time), and then they sell such research back to academia at a profit

2008 estimation: the global academic community contributes £1.9 billion per year **in kind** so their researchers can serve as peer reviewers

A new restaurant

“For researchers, it’s like going to a restaurant, bringing all of your own ingredients, cooking the meal yourself, and then being charged \$40 for a waiter to bring it out on a plate for you”

Open Access arises

Open Access (OA) refers to the **removal of major obstacles** to accessing, sharing and re-using the outputs of scholarly research

Rationale: the research process is facilitated by ensuring rapid and widespread access to research findings such that **all communities have the opportunity** to build upon them and participate in scholarly conversations

Short history since 1990 (after the advent of the Web):

- With Internet, print articles have become virtually redundant and sharing of information cheaper
- The costs per research article should have potentially decreased
- Widespread dissatisfaction with the expensive traditional publishing model has increased
- The Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) was released
- Rise of (for-profit and non-profit) OA-only publishers, who publish exclusively digital content and have demonstrated that such a business model is financially feasible

Levels of open access

Gold: all articles are open directly on the OA journal website in exchange for an article processing charge (APC) paid by authors

Diamond: like Gold, but with no APC

Green: articles published in a toll-access journal, but self-archived in an OA archive

Hybrid: articles published in a subscription journal that are immediately free to read under an open license in exchange for an article processing charge (APC) paid by authors

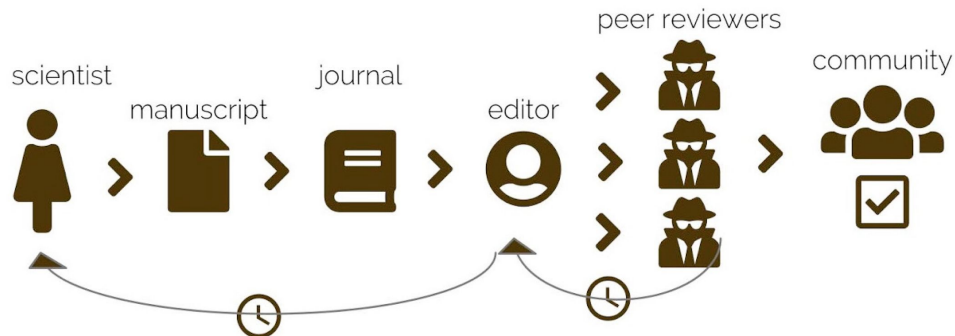
Delayed: articles published in a subscription journal, but are made free to read after an embargo period

Preprints and Green OA

Traditional editorial process

Pros: copy-editing, fonts and layout, interlinking with data collections related to the study, formal peer review process

Cons: slow discovery

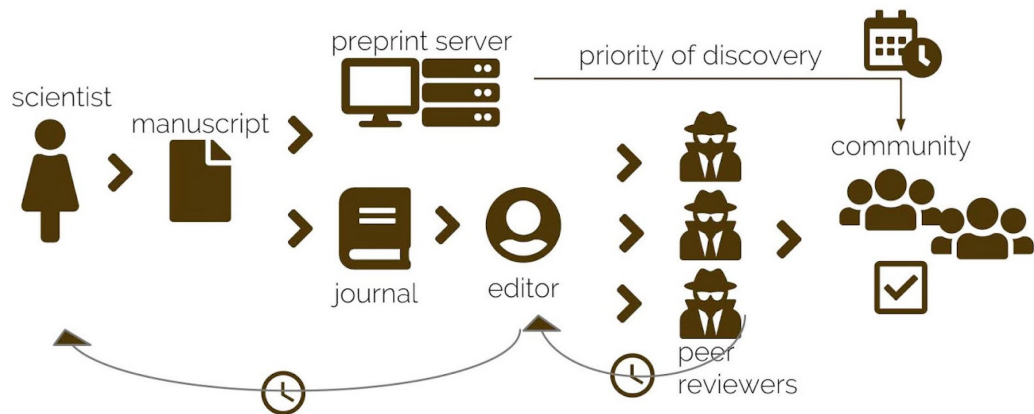


Traditional editorial process

accompanied with preprint deposit

Pros: all those above + involving the community in peer review (open peer review), fast and efficient sharing of the outcomes of the study fostering discovery

Cons: learning new tools (e.g. preprint servers)



Perceived risks of Gold OA

Typically, the median APC is about \$ 2,600 per article for publishing in Gold OA; a complete shift to open access could lead publishers to boost publishing fees even further, to try to make up for lost subscription revenues – in 2019, subscriptions accounted for **> 90% of publishers' revenues**

In multiple surveys, authors have ranked open access publishing below their need to publish in prestigious, high-impact journals **to gain tenure and promotion**

Making most articles gold open access could strike the library budgets of research-intensive universities whose scientists publish the most papers – in these cases, redirecting funds from journal subscriptions **does not cover** the open access fees of all the published articles

If paying for open-access publication becomes the default route for scientists, and publishers increase prices, publishing will become a luxury that only better funded researchers can afford – creating a self-reinforcing cycle in which well-funded researchers publish more, potentially attracting more attention and more funding

Current availability of Diamond OA

Landscape: a wide archipelago (29,000) of relatively small journals (25 articles a year each) serving diverse multilingual and usually national communities (in all disciplines), but disseminating their output to a largely international audience

Compliance with Plan S: OA diamond journals are on the road to [full compliance with Plan S](#) – 37% use a CC-BY license, 49% embed machine-readable licenses in their metadata, 55% use DOIs for their articles, 68% have no preservation policies, 75% provide only PDF

Dynamics: a mix of scientific strengths and operational challenges, e.g. half of the journals have no legal document to establish the ownership to research institutions and societies, 46% do not provide download statistics and 54% provide no statistics related to production management, 67% use double-blind peer review but half of them manage the process through e-mail and struggle with finding reviewers, 55% use an anti-plagiarism software, 60% use [Open Journal System \(OJS\)](#)

Sustainability: an economy that largely depends on volunteers, universities and government – 65% reported either a breaking even or a loss, 60% depend on volunteers to carry out their work, 70% declared less than € 10,000 annual costs (around the same amount [Nature asks](#) for publishing one article in Gold OA...)

Mandatory text to read for the next lecture

Ma, L. (2022). Metrics and epistemic injustice. *Journal of Documentation*, 78(7), 392–404. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-12-2021-0240>

End

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