

Make publicly funded research freely accessible

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Most research is publicly funded and therefore needs to be freely accessible to the public. The Internet makes 'open access' publishing possible. Universities in the Netherlands are major proponents of open access and are negotiating with publishers on it.

Free access to research results

The results of scientific research are published in scientific journals. These journals charge high subscription fees, which means only institutions such as universities and hospitals have the budget to access them. Other interested parties – teachers, patients, policymakers or SMEs – do not have free access. The Internet has made it possible to share research results with everyone.

Universities in the Netherlands argue that scientific knowledge is not a luxury item, and should be freely available (through open access) to everyone. Most research is, after all, publicly funded. Furthermore, open access is also good for Dutch researchers, as open access publications are easier to find online and are therefore cited more often.ⁱ

Open access publishing benefits researchers and society as a whole

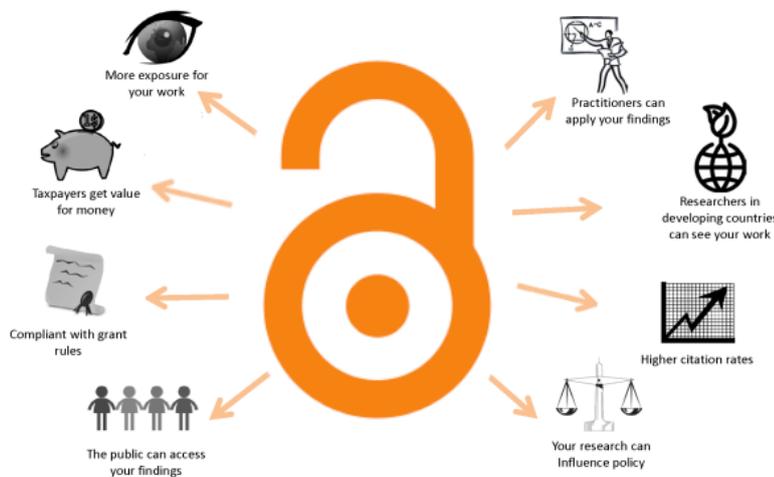


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Open access helps...

- ... **researchers** disseminate their research more widely.
- ... **doctors, practitioners and patients** become aware of the latest insights into treatment options.
- ... **companies** develop and apply innovations.
- ... **scientists** in developing countries gain access to scientific knowledge.
- ... **teachers and pupils** with their lessons and assignments.



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Green or gold?

There are two routes to open access: the green and the gold route. The green route is based on the idea of authors making their work publicly accessible themselves by depositing the manuscript in a repository, or freely accessible database. That is already possible at all universities in the Netherlands. Under the golden route, publications are made open access through publishers' websites. Many publishers already offer that option and ask the researchers (or their employers) to make a payment upon publication (the Article Processing Charge, or APC). Many publishers also offer another hybrid form of open access, where articles in traditional subscription-based journals are made open access for an additional payment.

Parties involved

The Dutch government strongly supports open access. State Secretary Dekker would like 100% of Dutch publications to be open access by 2024, and 60% by 2019.ⁱⁱ These are ambitious goals, which universities are keen to try and achieve. They are working towards this through the negotiations currently underway with the large publishers about journal subscriptions. The universities are only prepared to renew the subscription contracts if the publishers are prepared to take serious steps towards open access. Publishers have shown mixed reactions because open access implies a profound change to the existing revenue model. But open access is the future.

Research funders support open access and are encouraging it. For instance, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) expects scientists to make research accessible through open access, and has made resources available for the payment of APCs. The same goes for the European Commission (Horizon2020) or funds such as the Dutch Cancer Society.

Researchers

There is plenty that researchers can do to help achieve open access to publications. For instance, they can deposit their articles in the university repository. They can also ask publishers to switch to open access.

Sources:

- ⁱ [Swan, Alma \(2010\) The Open Access citation advantage: Studies and results to date](#)
- ⁱⁱ <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/11/15/kamerbrief-over-open-access-van-publicaties.html>
- <http://www.vsnu.nl/openaccess>
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