

Open access developments in the Netherlands

2017 open access deals

The VSNU has reached an [agreement](#) with the publisher Brill regarding open access. Academics from 10 different Dutch universities will have online access to all journals published by Brill. This amounts to 240 titles in the fields of the Humanities, Social & Behavioural Sciences, Biology and Law. Thanks to this agreement, academics who are affiliated with a Dutch institute not only have access to articles but also can publish open access in Brill's journals in the fields of International Law and International Relations without being subject to additional fees. Some 40 titles are involved. The agreement encompasses this year and 2018.

The publisher Walter de Gruyter likewise reached an [agreement](#) with the Dutch universities regarding online access publications. Authors may publish open access at a 90% discount in the journals to which the various university libraries subscribe. In total, this covers 64 journals.

FOI request

In September 2016, a Freedom of Information (FOI) request was submitted by all Dutch universities relating to open access. The goal of the request was to determine how much universities pay publishers to publish open access articles by academics affiliated with the university. VSNU, the Association of Universities in the Netherlands, compiled a [table](#) of the most relevant elements in the requested contracts. The table includes only those contracts entered into before the FOI request was submitted (September 2016). In addition to a table, the full text of the contracts is also available on the VSNU website.

The details for Springer and Elsevier are not included in this table. These publishers lodged an objection to making the contracts public and consequently the details are not publicly available yet. The [hearing](#) for this objection was held on 23 March. The publishers based their objection on their market position and the agreements made regarding confidentiality. The appeals committee will issue a judgement at a future date.

University of Twente striving for complete open access by 2020

The Executive Board of the [University of Twente](#) is following European Union policy in order to achieve complete open access to all academic publications by 2020. The university recently set down policy in order to achieve this goal. As from now, academics affiliated with the University of Twente are required to make their publications available to UTpublications, the university's archives. UTpublications is part of a global network of academic information. At present, there are 6700 hybrid journals in which the academics can publish for free. According to university librarian Marjolein Drent, the new policy focuses primarily on articles published via the green route. Nevertheless, there are still several problems with the policy: 'For example, if an academic doesn't publish open access, we are not allowed to make the resulting PDF freely accessible via UTpublications', said Drent.

Monitoring open science worldwide

The European Commission has launched a [website](#) to monitor open science worldwide. This website is part of the European Committee's dedication to open science. The website provides various stakeholders including researchers, policymakers, financiers, librarians and publishers access to data and trends in the field of open science.

Investigation into fraudulent journals

Polish scholars conducted research on fraud committed in the world of academic journals. In an experiment, the fictitious Anna O. Szust, expert in cognitive and social sciences, sent an unsolicited application to 360 journals in various scientific fields asking to join the editorial board of the journal in question. Forty-eight journals were willing to include the fictitious Szust. A large number of the 48 journals involved 'predatory' publishers with an open access component. This article shows that a continuous focus on ensuring the quality of open access publications must be maintained.

The journal [Nature](#) gave extensive coverage to this study. The article also paid attention to the pressure on researchers to publish. This pressure may contribute to the dramatic increase in predatory journals given the tremendous importance of publications to researchers' career paths.

International developments

Germany

In Germany, 60 German educational institutions are negotiating with publishers about open access via Projekt Deal. As from 1 January 2017, these educational institutions have cancelled their Elsevier subscriptions in order to compel the publisher to make better open access agreements. Last month, German academics regained [access](#) to Elsevier journals. It seems like an attempt on Elsevier's part to demonstrate a willingness to reach an agreement in the new round of negotiations. This round got underway on 23 March.

United States

[Harvard University](#) has launched Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard. This is a free online platform with peer reviewed articles that are accessible to everyone. In order to emphasise the importance and impact of open access, the website features an interactive map on which users can post messages. This gives an idea of the countries in which there is a need for open access published articles. Kyle K. Courtney, programme manager at Harvard Library, says that by removing financial barriers of peer reviewed articles, knowledge is no longer a privilege for the elite but something that is available to everyone.

In addition to Harvard, [University of California, Berkeley](#), is also taking crucial steps in the field of open access. Berkeley has joined the movement to engage in fully open access publishing by 2020. Currently, Berkeley Library is working with stakeholders on a campus roadmap to shape policy. In this process, it was indicated that providing open access options to researchers and authors' associations will be given a prominent position in this policy.

Open access in the media

The [Huffington Post](#) features a blog by Richard Price, founder of the knowledge share network Quora, in which the author outlines his future vision for open access. He writes that complete open access goes beyond simply publishing via an open access route. He argues that other barriers that block access to articles must also be examined, such as language. He advocates making articles available in every language. He also wants articles published in different versions: one for a specialised scientific reader; one for a more general academic reader; and one for the public that would be a more journalistic description of the findings.

According to Price, academics must be rewarded for open access to research and datasets. He believes that a new peer review system needs to be invented. The existing system does not take the publication of accompanying datasets into consideration, which is something that needs to be encouraged more.

OPEN ACCESS AGENDA

Presentation available on open access

The European Union (EU) aims to have all academic publications be 100% open access by 2020. This is one of the reasons VSNU is giving presentations across the EU on Dutch open access policy, since this is internationally considered to be at the forefront of developments. To this end, VSNU has also made a [presentation available online](#).

Relevant events

3 April 2017: [Research Excellence & Academic Publishing – open access, open data & copyright impact](#) – UK, London

5–7 April 2017: [9th RDA Plenary Meeting. Data infrastructures for open science](#) – Spain, Barcelona

6 April 2017: [An Update on Access to Research](#) – Webinar online

7 April 2017: [A transition to fair open access](#) – the Netherlands, Leiden

7–8 April 2017: [SIS Conference on Open Access: The Road to Freedom](#) – India, Calcutta

20 April 2017: [On the road towards a sustainable open access publishing market](#) – the Netherlands, The Hague

26 April 2017: [April OpenCon Community Call](#) – Webinar online

27–28 April 2017: [Open data for cultural heritage](#) – Italy, Milan

MORE INFORMATION

- [Frequently asked open access questions](#)
- [Open access factsheet](#)
- www.vsnu.nl/openaccess
- www.openaccess.nl

Upgraded E-zine on open access

The upgraded E-zine describes the impact that open access publishing has and Dutch accomplishments in this area. The E-zine is also available in [English](#).



Publication details

The open access newsletter is a VSNU publication, in collaboration with the Dutch university libraries and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands (KB). This newsletter is intended for anyone interested in open access, including academics, university administrators, library staff, knowledge partners, politicians and media representatives.

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