

Progress of open access in the Netherlands

Total overview of costs for journals and magazines paid by Dutch universities

Compensating publishers for their publications is an enormous expenditure for universities. The exact costs, however, are not made public due to restrictive clauses in the publishers' contracts. In the last year, the Dutch universities have received two requests under the Government Information (Public Access) Act in connection with the costs of publications.

Following a careful procedure, the universities in the Netherlands have now provided insight into the scope of the market for academic publications for the very first time. A graph on the VSNU (association of universities in the Netherlands) [website](#) renders the information released by the thirteen largest universities in the Netherlands visible.

Dutch chair for LERU

Bert van der Zwaan, Rector Magnificus of Utrecht University, is the [new chair](#) of the League of European Research Universities. 'LERU has a strong voice in Europe and the rest of the world,' Van der Zwaan said at the time of his appointment. LERU maintains a focus on open science as well. Van der Zwaan has indicated he plans to devote great energy to putting open science on the map following the Netherlands' successful term as EU president. To his mind, open access is 'the proof of the pudding' for open science. *'In the end, it will all come down to firm implementation. I'll tip my hat to that. If it gets tabled, the government really deserves every bit of the praise we're already hearing from throughout Europe. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) has done really good work in this regard.'*

Growing number of open access articles in Elsevier

The number of Elsevier open access titles has nearly [doubled](#), increasing from 140 to 276. All articles by authors from Dutch universities that are accepted on or after 8 December 2016 may be published in the Elsevier journals, at no additional cost to the author. This is part of the agreement with Elsevier for the years 2016 – 2018.

Marcel Levi declared person of the year by Elsevier journal

[Elsevier journal](#) has declared Marcel Levi, chair of the AMC Executive Board and internist at the hospital, its 'Dutch Person of the Year'. Levi has been running the AMC in such exceptional fashion that it has attracted notice from abroad. As of 1 January, Levi will become chair of the Board of a hospital collective in London. Levi holds strong opinions about the added value of open access and has worked emphatically to promote it. In this [video](#), Levi explains the value of open access and discredits the preconceived notion that open access is 'too expensive'.

UvA has signed open access agreements for nearly 5,000 journals

In addition to those journals included in the VSNU Big Deal negotiations, the library of the University of Amsterdam has also signed open access agreements with many other journals. The UvA has put the Dutch focus on open access into action by signing open access agreements with nearly 5,000 of the approximately 30,000 magazine subscriptions. In these journals, UvA researchers can publish largely free of charge, and in such a way that access is available to all. If you would like to find out whether the UvA has an agreement in place with the publisher of a particular journal, the UvA has a [website](#) on which all this information can be found.

Open access in the media

'Making moves towards the large-scale transition to open access'

Ralf Schimmer, affiliated with the Max Planck Digital Library, has written an [editorial](#) about the path to open access. He states that, since the [Berlin Declaration](#) in 2003, significant steps have been made in the direction of open access. However, he also points out that open access has yet to gain sufficient momentum to really 'break through' as the most commonly-used publication strategy. Nowadays, the principle of open access has been completely accepted; yet its implementation remains wanting. Researchers are still eager to publish in well-known journals that are held in high regard. According to Schimmer, however, it is not the researchers who are responsible for the shift that must occur – it is the publishers. Publishers must ensure that these prestigious, established journals start publishing open access, so that academics can continue to enjoy the same enhanced career prospects when their articles are published open access.

Twitter discussion

On 29 November, Ionica Smeets, professor of science communication, posed a question on [Twitter](#): 'Who pays the open access fee – institution A, where you conducted your research, or institution B, where you are working at the time of publication?' The tweet elicited an extremely wide range of responses.

International developments

Finland

Negotiations with various large publishers are currently under way in Finland. It seems likely that reaching an agreement with all publishers will not be possible. In order to exert pressure on the publishers, a [petition](#) is being circulated among academics at the moment. Publishers are charging ever-higher fees for the open access publication of articles. The initiators of the petition contend that research is being publicly funded; the articles are then voluntarily posted on publishers' websites; and then finally, the scientific community has to buy the articles back. Those signing the petition support the urgent call to drastically reduce the publication costs borne by scientists.

Germany

On 23 November, the German chancellor Angela Merkel spoke about unfettered access to information at the Leibniz-Gemeinschaft's [annual meeting](#). Germany's Ministry of Education and Research has adopted an open access strategy. Merkel emphasised that the goal of open access is not only to promote access to scientific information for scientists, but to promote access for other stakeholders as well.

After months of negotiations, the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany has [rejected](#) an offer from Elsevier. According to the Alliance, the offer did not comply with the principles of open access and fair pricing. These negotiations were part of the DEAL project involving national coverage of licences from major scientific publishers.

Latin America

Over the last twenty years, the number of open access databases around the world has continually increased. The infrastructure of these databases is vitally important in maintaining access to the articles they contain and to allow cooperation between databases. Europe and Latin America are currently [working together](#) to put this in order and to optimise the findability of articles in the open access databases.

OPEN ACCESS AGENDA

Presentation about open access available

The EU has formulated the ambition that all scientific publications should be 100% open access by 2020. Partly in view of this, the VSNU is giving presentations in the EU about Dutch open access policy, which is internationally seen as being ahead of that of other countries. The VSNU has therefore also made a presentation about this [available online](#).

Relevant upcoming events

16 – 18 January 2017: [APE 2017: Publishing ethics: doing the right thing, doing things right](#) – Berlin, Germany

19 January 2017: [Opportunities in open science](#) – Stockholm, Sweden

20 January 2017: [Open access publishing event](#) – Oxford, U.K.

23 January 2017: [Think, check, submit: making informed decisions in open access publishing](#) – Zurich, Switzerland

22 February 2017: [How to build a successful open access books programme](#) – London, U.K.

MORE INFORMATION

- [FAQs about open access](#)
- [Open access fact sheet](#)
- www.vsnu.nl/openaccess
- www.openaccess.nl

E-zine about open access

The e-zine describes how the Netherlands has consolidated its position as a model country in the field of open access and sets out the unique aspects of the Dutch approach to the issue. The e-zine is also available in [English](#).



Colophon

The open access newsletter is a publication of the VSNU in collaboration with the Dutch university libraries and the National Library of the Netherlands. This newsletter is intended for all people interested in open access, including researchers, university administrators, library staff, knowledge partners, politicians and media representatives.

Tips or suggestions?

Email openaccess@vsnu.nl.

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