

Open Access—(FAQs) Common Questions and Misunderstandings

Open Access, while a movement that is growing rapidly in academia, is nonetheless complex and novel to many. For example, there are many types of open access and ways it gets reflected in the practices of individual authors as well as publishers and funding agencies. As a consequence, the open access landscape can be complex and confusing. This document attempts to address several common misconceptions.

- **Do I give my copyrights to the publisher always? Must I?**
 - In many cases publishers do require the transfer of all copyrights that the author has in a work but grants some limited rights back. Most publishers do NOT need all of the rights in your work. Journals that publish in an open access manner (scholarly, peer reviewed journals that do NOT charge the reader subscriptions), generally do NOT require the author to transfer copyright at all. Be aware of what rights you are retaining and what rights you want to retain in order to share your work more broadly after publication.
 - **If I want to try open access I can't publish in the best journals in my discipline.**
 - No, you can often still make a copy of your work open access and still publish wherever is the best venue for you. Open Access journals are still just getting started, and if they are a good fit for you, wonderful. If not, publish in the right journals and then READ YOUR PUBLICATION AGREEMENT carefully, and if you would like you can adjust the contract with the publisher to be sure it allows you to share a copy of the article in an open access manner if you want. We can help you with all of this. Contact Ada Emmett aemmett@ku.edu or Marianne Reed, mreed@ku.edu.
 - **Open Access journals are not Peer Reviewed and/or undermine peer review.**
 - No. Open Access are by definition scholarly peer reviewed journals, whose model of access is "open" as opposed to "closed" or "subscription-only" journals. Such journals only differ in their economic and funding models.
 - **Why should I have to pay for Open Access? (On hybrid-OA and paying OA fees)**
 - Not all open access requires payment. Be aware—if the journal is a subscription-only journal (Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Springer, Wiley, ACS, IEEE) they *most likely* are offering a "hybrid open access" option—for a large fee (often \$2-3000) for your one article to be "open" in an otherwise closed journal. There is NO reason to do this most of the time, since careful review of the publication agreement will reveal that they OFTEN allow the author to make an open copy of the published article (the accepted manuscript-post-peer review). Some fully open access journals (PLoS, BMC) do have a fee required, but in most cases it takes the place of the traditional "page charges" and the fees are lower, and they do not get subscription money as well.
- Some universities now have Open Access Author Funds, to help authors pay those open access charges in non-hybrid (fully open access) journals. KU has such a fund. Please visit, <http://library.kumc.edu/authors-fund.xml>, for more information or contact, Ada Emmett, aemmett@ku.edu if you or your department chair would like to learn more.
- **Will Open Access Mean the Demise of the Society Journals?**
 - Many society journals have been struggling economically and although many are not yet ready to sponsor fully "open access" journals (making their content free to readers and finding alternative funding sources), they and their authors are noting the advantages that Open Access brings: more readers to their sites, whether the author is simply given permission via the publication agreement to share a copy openly, or the publisher chooses to make back-files openly available. More readers mean more (and better?) submissions. More readers mean potentially better impact factors. Business models and funding will change in the next 10-15 years but the need for high quality scholarly journals that the world can access will continue. If you are an editor of a journal looking for alternative options for "access" to your journal please contact Marianne Reed, mreed@ku.edu.
 - **I Am Busy ... I Don't Have Time for This**
 - KU libraries staff will make this as easy as possible, suggesting that other than writing the paper and signing your publication agreement, they will confirm that you can share a copy of your work and they will deposit the work in e-Pubs. You will get monthly download stats via email. Consider this: rather than just signing the publication agreement, read it to see what sharing it will allow—just a few added minutes. Then, simply contact Ada Emmett (aemmett@ku.edu) or Marianne Reed (mreed@ku.edu) with a copy of your accepted manuscript (post-peer review) and if possible the publication agreement. They can help.