
SELF-HELP

10.1 How to Make Your Work Gold OA

Publishing in an OA journal is like publishing in a conventional journal. Find a suitable journal and submit your manuscript. If you're not familiar with the range of peer-reviewed OA journals, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) lets you browse by field. If you don't find an OA journal that meets your standards, check again when you've written your next paper. Things are changing quickly.¹

If you find an OA journal high in quality but too new to be high in prestige, consider submitting good work there anyway, to help it earn prestige in proportion to its quality. Without this kind of help, especially from senior scholars who have prestige to lend and don't need tenure, good new OA journals can be trapped in a vicious circle,

needing high-quality submissions to generate prestige and needing prestige to attract high-quality submissions. (This may be the chief obstacle facing new journals.)

Remember that about 30 percent of OA journals charge author-side fees and about half the articles published in OA journals appear in those fee-based journals. Hence, the best OA journal for your work may charge a publication fee. If so, don't be dismayed or give up on gold OA. Only 12 percent of authors at fee-based OA journals end up paying publication fees out of pocket. For most authors at fee-based journals, the fees are paid by a sponsor, such as a funder or employer, or the fees are waived or discounted by the journal. Moreover, the existence of a fee doesn't mean the journal is engaged in vanity publishing. Your work will be subject to peer review, the fee only kicks in if your work is accepted, and the editors and referees who review it will not know whether you requested a fee waiver. (See sections 5.1 on peer review and chapter 7 on economics.)

If your research was funded, see whether your funder will cover the fee, either by allowing you to pay it with grant funds or by offering auxiliary funds specifically for this purpose. If your research wasn't funded, or if your funder won't cover the fees, check the Open Access Directory or ask a librarian to see whether your institution has a fund to cover OA journal fees. If not, request a fee waiver from the journal.²

If you can't pay the fee or get it paid on your behalf, and you don't like the no-fee journals that may exist in your field, don't give up on OA. Just move on to green OA (section 10.2).

Finally, remember that most OA journals are new, and that a new journal can be first-rate without yet having a reputation for being first-rate. To start assessing the quality of a new journal, first see whether you or your colleagues recognize the names of any editors or members of the editorial board. Are they respected scholars? To make a start at assessing honesty and professionalism of a new journal, as opposed to its quality, see whether its publisher belongs to the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), which has a good code of conduct for members. Many excellent OA publishers don't yet belong to OASPA. But if you're in doubt, you can't go wrong by limiting yourself to OASPA members.³

10.2 How to Make Your Work Green OA

If you publish in a toll-access journal, the journal will usually allow you to deposit your peer-reviewed manuscript in an OA repository. To know for sure, read the journal's publication agreement. If your eyes glaze over, or if you want to scan many different publisher policies quickly, see the SHERPA database of publisher policies.⁴

When a journal's standard publishing contract doesn't give you what you need, such as permission to deposit in an OA repository, there are two reasons to ask for modifications. First, you may get what you want. Many publishers who don't give blanket permission for green OA will agree to case-by-case requests. Some publishers, even among the giants where you have the least bargaining power, will pull a "Plan B" agreement from a drawer when authors ask. Second, even when you don't get what you want, you will help educate publishers about shifting demand and rising expectations. This needn't be adversarial. Journals want to know what authors want. In any case, there's no harm in asking. A journal may decline your request, but it will not reject your already-accepted article just because you asked for a more favorable contract.

If you don't know which modifications to request, use an author addendum: a proposed contract revision, written by OA-friendly lawyers, for authors to sign and staple to their standard contract. If a publisher rejects your requested changes or addendum, then consider another publisher.⁵

Don't let all these details about contract modifications scare you off. Most toll-access journals and publishers allow green OA without any contract modifications. I include these details for the minority of cases. Moreover, well-drafted OA policies at funding agencies or universities can ensure permission for green OA without any ne-

gotiation between authors and publishers. That's another reason to work toward a good policy at your university. (See chapter 4 on policies.)

If you have permission to deposit your work in an OA repository, then you'll need an OA repository where you have deposit rights. First look for an OA repository in your institution or field.⁶ If there aren't any, check again when you've written your next paper. Things are changing fast. In the meantime, consider one of the universal repositories open to research articles of all kinds. I recommend OpenDepot, OpenAire, Academia, and Mendeley.⁷

Consider providing green OA to your preprints or unrefereed manuscripts, not just to your postprints or peer-reviewed articles. One advantage is that you won't need any permission but your own. Because preprints are unpublished, you haven't transferred any rights to a publisher. One disadvantage is that some journals—apparently a shrinking minority but still sizeable in some fields, such as medicine—follow the so-called Ingelfinger Rule and don't accept articles that have already circulated as preprints. If you're worried about this, check with the journals where you'd like to publish and see whether they follow this practice.

Provide OA to your datasets as soon as you can with the fewest restrictions you can. Most repositories accept arbitrary filetypes and could accept data files. But for datasets, repositories optimized for texts are not always as

useful as repositories optimized for data. Check out the dedicated data repositories in your field.⁸

Graduate students should provide green OA to their theses and dissertations. Some repositories specialize in theses and dissertations, but most “regular” repositories will also accept them even when the institution doesn’t mandate OA for them. (See section 5.2 on OA for theses and dissertations.)

Your top priority should be OA for new and future work. But, time permitting, try to provide green OA to your past publications as well. Sometimes this will mean requesting permissions you didn’t obtain at the time, or checking a publisher’s current policy on repository deposits. Sometimes it will mean digitizing print-only publications. It may mean putting your hands on the version you are allowed to deposit, for example, the version approved by peer review but prior to copyediting. Your university may be able to offer help with some of these tasks; check with your library.