

Introduction

[INSERT universal-declaration-human-rights.jpg HERE]

Article 27 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Welcome to Module 6 of the Open Science MOOC and Open Access to Research Papers! Open Access (OA) describes the act of making research articles (aka ‘papers’) freely available online without cost or any other restrictions or barriers to its re-use. This is aligned with the UN Declaration on Human Rights above, and therefore could be considered to be a fundamental human right and a matter of social justice. OA also extends to other forms of research outputs too, including non-peer-reviewed work, books, book chapters, theses and monographs.

[INSERT OAlogo.jpg HERE]

However, in spite of this clear importance, most scholarly research that has ever been produced does not fulfil this basic criterion. In fact, the vast majority of scientific knowledge that we have all produced as a global society remains locked away behind expensive paywalls - something often called ‘toll access’ or ‘closed access’. This is not right.

*Side note:** If you’re into movies, do make sure to check out *Paywall: The Business of Scholarship* :wink:

A study in 2018 by Heather Piwowar and colleagues showed that while there is a growing trend towards more research being freely available, around 75% of all published scholarly research is **not** publicly available. Open Access was the counter-movement towards solving this global problem.

[INSERT oa_growth.jpg HERE]

Who is this module for?

Designed primarily for students and researchers at the graduate and undergraduate level, this module also serves as training material for postdocs and more senior researchers. We want to help make openness universal and for all, not just a select few. This aims to be a cross-disciplinary module covering all research branches, including Engineering, Medicine, Biosciences, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Arts. Basically, if you publish outputs from your research, this is for you.

We have tried to set a highly inclusive standard, and right from the very beginning have had people from across the whole spectrum of scholarly research, and related disciplines like tech, publishing, and librarianship, involved in developing and scoping the project. We have also tried to include a broad geographic perspective, as we believe OA is a global issue.

Specific learning objectives for this module

1. Understand the allowances for self-archiving in publishing contracts, including issues to do with copyright, licensing, article versions, availability, embargoes, and the types of outlets for self-archiving.
2. Gain an understanding of the history of scholarly publishing, and be able to articulate benefits of Open Access in terms of impact on society and our knowledge economy.
3. Develop a personal plan for self-archiving all of your research.