

Navigating open access publishing: opportunities, challenges, and quality checks

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Section 1

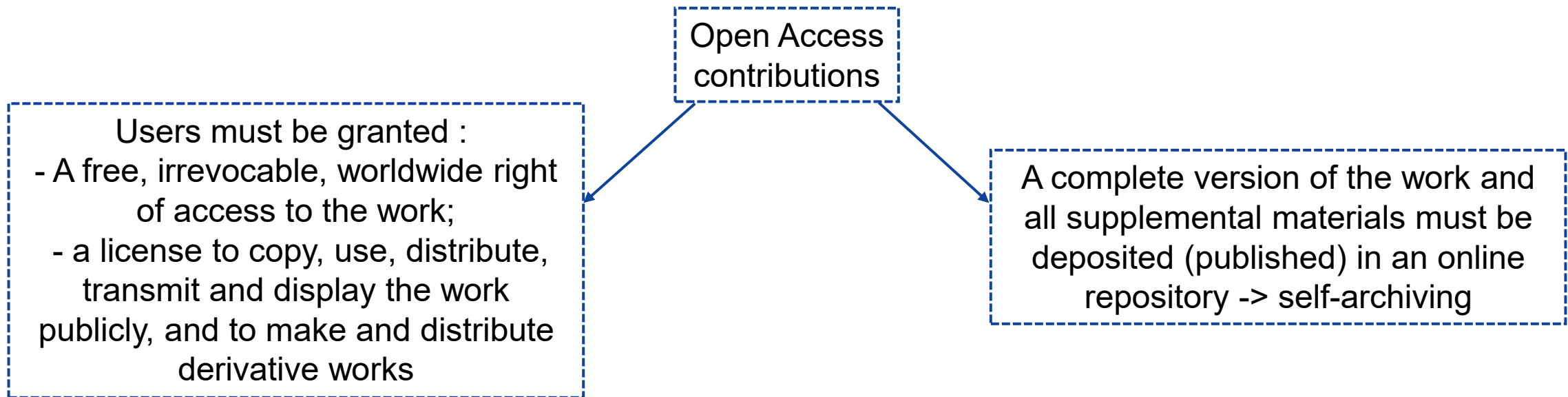
Open access publishing: an overview



Open access : a definition

2000s: Can the Internet be used to disseminate knowledge for free ?

-> *Budapest (2002), Bethesda and Berlin (2003) declarations on Open access publishing*



Different routes to open access

Route	Main features	Who Picks Up the Bill?
<i>Gold OA journal</i>	All articles are permanently and freely available on the publisher's website	The authors (or institutions or funders) pay <i>articles processing charges (APC)</i> for the article to be in OA
<i>Hybrid access journal</i>	Some articles are behind paywall, others are in OA	Authors (APCs) and readers (subscriptions) -> double-dipping
<i>Diamond (or platinum) OA journal</i>	Articles are free to publish, free to read, free to share	Universities, research institutions, public funds.
<i>Bronze OA journal</i>	Articles are temporarily free to read on the publisher's website -> this does not meet institutional OA requirements !	Readers (subscription fees apply)
<i>Green (self-archiving) OA</i>	The author deposits an earlier version of the article (pre-print or accepted manuscript) in an institutional or subject repository	No one, or the author if repository fees apply

Section 2

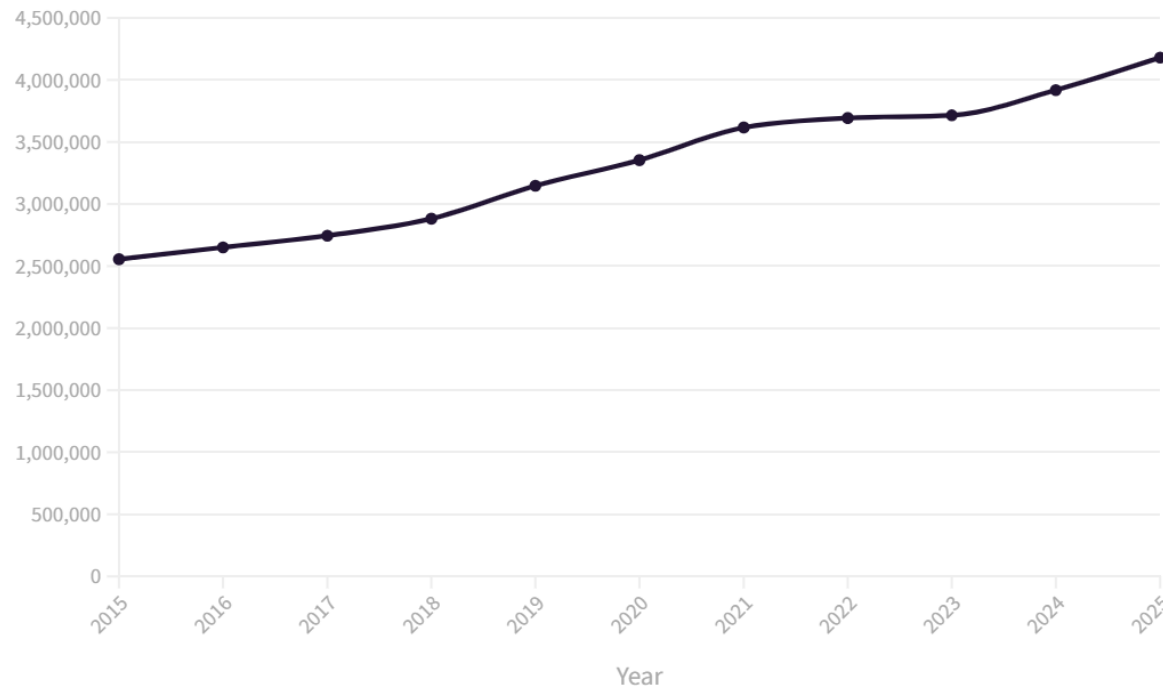
OA impact on the publishing ecosystem



Total global number of articles, reviews and conference papers, 2015 to 2025

All access types, including subscription-only

Number of articles, reviews and conference papers

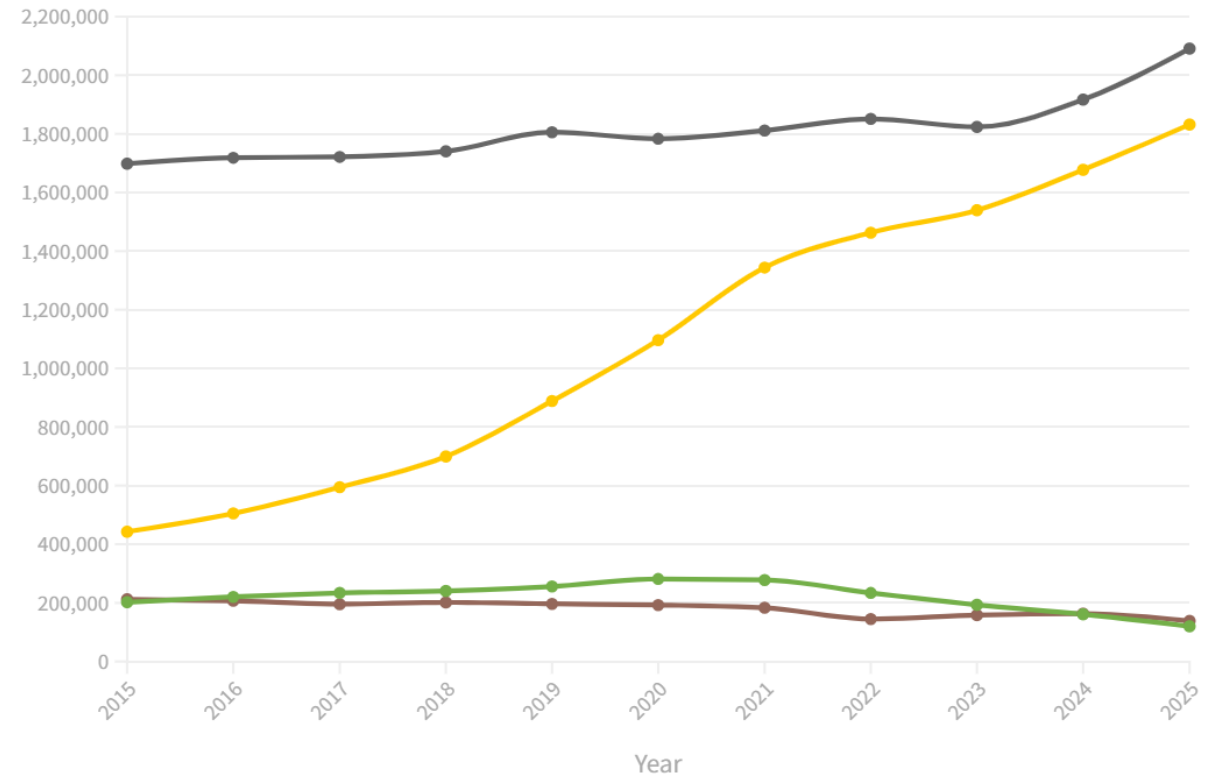


Source: [Scopus, 2026](#)

Global scholarly publishing by access type, number of publications

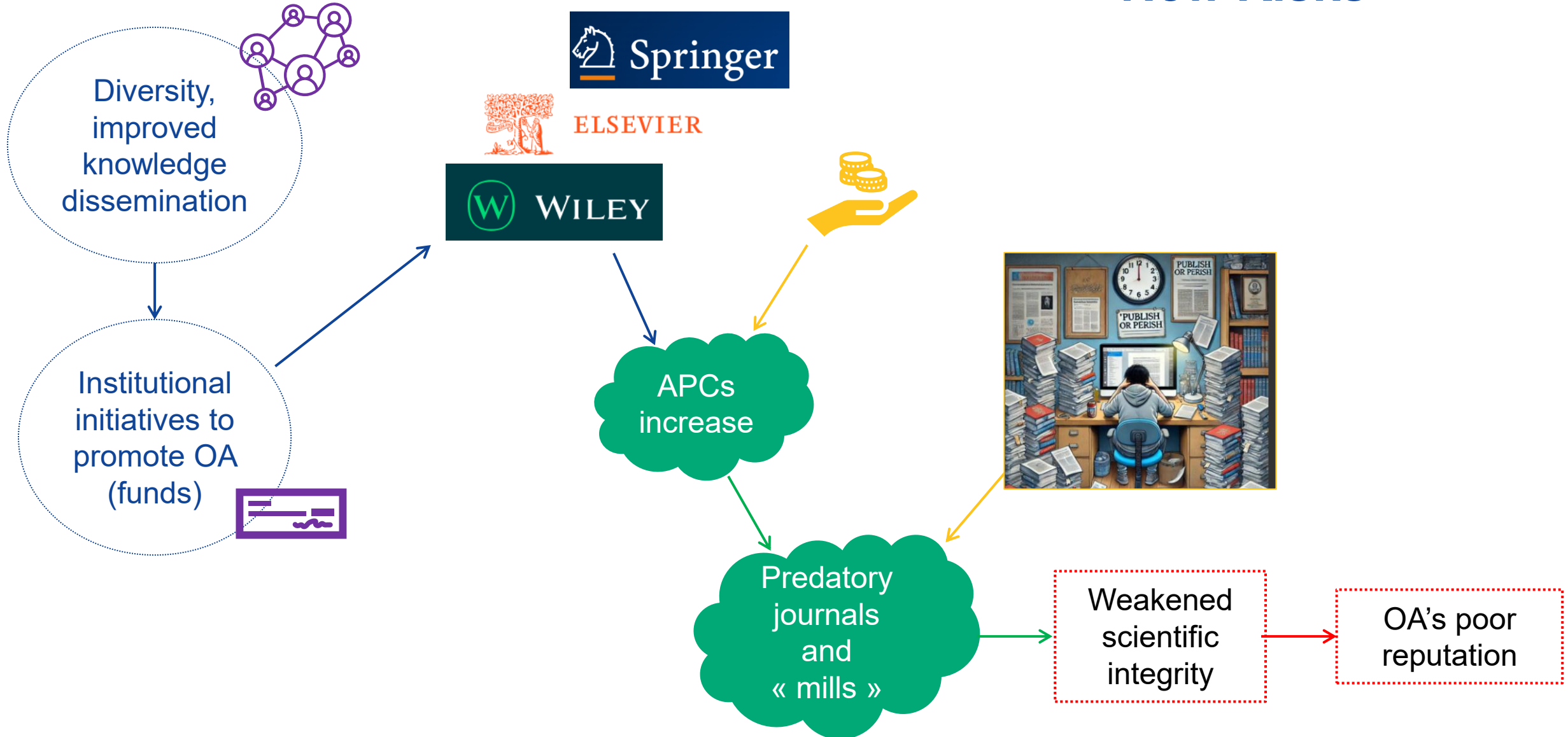
Gold Green Bronze Subscription-only

Articles, reviews and conference papers



Source: [Scopus, 2026](#)

Greater Reach, New Risks



The APCs' increase in numbers

- Gold OA :
 - APCs increased by **6.8% in 2026** (vs. 6.4% in 2025)
 - Average APC : \$2,091
 - Maximum APC: \$8,900
- Hybrid journals
 - APCs increased by **5.3% in 2026** (vs. 3.0% in 2025)
 - Average APC : \$3,278
 - Maximum APC: \$12,850

Sources :

- D. Pollock, H. Staines (2026), *News & Views: Open Access Charges – When “On Trend” Still Means Higher Spend*, Delta Think

- Alperin, J. P., Butler, L.-A., Camargo, F., Chavarro, D., Frost, M., Haustein, S., Höfting, J., Matthias, L., Rose, M. A., Schares, E., & Schönfelder, N. (2026). *An open dataset of article processing charges from 14 scholarly publishers, 2019–2025 [Data set]*. Harvard Dataverse. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/AZ985C>

A focus on scientific fraud (1/2)

Predatory publishers/journals

Companies that prioritize profits over quality. Their unethical practices might include:

- Hidden APCs;
- No or fast peer-review (hours or days). Publication might be guaranteed;
- Fake editorial boards, misleading metrics, claimed indexation in reputable database;
- Aggressive spam campaigns, often from personal email addresses.

Hijacked journals

- Existing journals (usually niche ones) are cloned to create fake websites with a near-identical URL. The website might have some correct information (name, ISSN, editorial board list).
- Fraudsters pocket APCs.

A focus on scientific fraud (2/2)

Paper mills

Companies specialised in selling massive quantities of fraudulent articles (poor quality, fake data or information, written by AI, plagiarism, etc.) to researchers.

Practices evolved over the time, from selling to predatory journals to editors' corruption for faster acceptance or the inclusion of « trusted » members in editorial boards.

Review mills

Poor quality review reports, often written by false reviewers who encourage to cite a specific list of articles.

Citation mills

Citation purchasing services that manipulate and sell citations, usually through review and paper mills.

Section 3

Separating science from scams



Some quality checks on sources...

Black list

- [Beall's list](#) : list of OA journals performing poor peer reviews. Introduced in 2010, then archived following pressure from editors. Recently republished by an unknown group of researchers, who resumed updates;
- [Predatory Journals](#) : list of unreliable journals and editors, compiled by volunteer researchers

White list

- Directory of Open Access Journals ([DOAJ](#)) : list of about 23.330 journals meeting open access and quality criteria -> selection based on applications (26% acceptance rate in 2025) / filter available in OpenAlex
- Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association ([OASPA](#)) and [COPE](#) regroup editors who promote ethical publishing practices with high-quality standards.

DISCLAIMER : Some publishers are considered in a 'grey area' -> predatory journal practices (including an excessive number of special issues and mega-journals) BUT they are members of OASPA and COPE.

... and articles

Problematic Paper Screener

- Developed by G. Cabanac, C. Labbé et A. Magazinov ;
- More than one million references that include potential issues : methodological errors, plagiarism, data manipulations, conflict of interest ;
- Automatic detection coupled with human verification.

Retraction watch

- Launched in 2010 by medical reporters Dr Adam Marcus and Dr Ivan Oransky ;
- A blog trying to retrace retractions, mainly in life sciences.

DISCLAIMER : retractions might be justified by scientific reasons, but the number of those due to scientific frauds is on the rise. The problem is that some articles continue to be cited even after retraction

Think, check, submit

- A checklist to help researchers identify trusted journals and publishers :
 - available in several languages;
 - It exists in a static and an interactive version
 - Publication is recommended if the answer to most of the questions is 'yes';
 - The list of questions covers, but is not limited to:
 - ISSN's verification on the official portal;
 - Peer-review policies;
 - The existence of guidelines for authors (licences, copyright, conflicts of interest).
- > Most of the questions may apply to non-OA publications as well.
- > A separate checklist exists for books and chapters.

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Closing remarks



To sum up

- OA allows for better knowledge dissemination, with increasing institutional support ;
- Some obstacles remain to full OA integration in the publishing environment :
 - Costs (from « pay-to-read » to « pay-to-publish ») ;
 - Impact (metrics) ;
 - Quality (predatory practices) ;
 - Diamond open access remains limited compared to Gold (and hybrid) OA, which are becoming more popular ;

Maximizing impact while maintaining trust

- Some initiatives to ameliorate the quality of pre-print articles and promote the diamond route :
 - [Peer Community In \(PCI\)](#): thematic platforms for preprint revisions
 - Recommended manuscripts can be published in the Peer Community Journal (diamond access), or in other journals;
 - [Open Research Europe](#), an open access publishing venue for European Commission-funded researchers across all disciplines :
 - no author fees ;
 - Open peer-review ;
 - From autumn 2026 : eligibility will be extended to researchers coming from a funders' group (CERN host organization)
- ArXiv (independent non-profit since 2026) has tightened its submission and endorsement policies to ameliorate quality.

Submissions rate limited as of 1 October 2026 -> from 9.000 submissions in September 2016 to 40.400 in September 2026

Thank you for your attention