

The Royal Society of Biology

Research Communications Newsletter

A collection of online information and opinion pieces.

November 2023

Dear readers, the newsletter team will be taking a break before returning with the next edition in January 2024. In the meantime, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your readership.

This newsletter provides links to published news articles. Views or opinions presented are those of the original author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal Society of Biology.

Top stories

[Seeking input from the research community to establish a community-based scholarly communication system](#)

cOAlition S has released a draft proposal aimed at facilitating the transition to an open, scholar-led communication ecosystem. This proposal lays out a vision and a set of principles, along with a mission statement that would enable research funders – in collaboration with other key stakeholders – to deliver this. To understand how this proposal resonates with the community of researchers, cOAlition S has launched a consultation which will run until April 2024.

[Biochemical Society launches innovative Subscribe to Open model for its journals](#)

The Biochemical Society and its trading arm, Portland Press Ltd, is delighted to announce the launch of Subscribe to Open (S2O) for five of its world-leading research and review journals. This move marks another significant step in the Society's commitment to making research accessible while maintaining the highest standards of quality.

Spotlight on Open Access

[Transitioning to open access: Reflections from three US organizations](#)

The landscape of academic publishing is undergoing a transformation, driven by a commitment to open access (OA) within the global research community. There are also an increasing number of OA mandates, one of the latest being Plan S in Europe. Springer Nature reports that the US has now followed suit on a national level with the 2022 memorandum released by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) which calls for federally funded publications and their supporting data to be publicly accessible without embargo from 31st December 2025.

[Who should pay for Open Access publishing? APC alternatives emerge](#)

Nature News reports that article-processing charges levied by publishers on authors have become an integral, and sometimes unpopular, part of the Open Access revolution. But now, there are many other options being explored.

Publication policy and debate

[Opinion: Redefining “Normal” in Academia](#)

The need to redefine “normal” in academia is not only a moral obligation but also holds significance in terms of practicality and advancement, writes Roohi Ghosh for The Scholarly Kitchen. What was normal centuries ago may not be considered normal today, and what is normal for one person may not be normal for another. Why adhere to a one-size-fits-all approach?

[Opinion: Should the UK research system aspire to hyperlocal impact?](#)

Wonkhe discusses new research into the REF2021 impact case studies, which show that impact is often “exported” within the UK, levelling up the benefits of research between regions. However, only a handful of universities have a “hyperlocal” impact within 25km of their institution.

[The impact of university research in Scotland](#)

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has supported the publication of three new evidence reports, each touching on a different aspect of how research investment brings benefits to Scotland’s public. Writing in Wonkhe, Chair of the Scottish Funding Council’s Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee Lesley Yellowlees explains what these reports show.

International publishing

[Opinion: Horizon Europe’s missions need a rethink](#)

The much-hyped programme has fallen short on all fronts, says MEP Christian Ehler writing in Research Professional News. According to Ehler, it is time for bold political action, and some tough choices need to be made.

[Research Publishing: Switzerland’s Frontiers Announces a Flat-Fee Partnership](#)

Potentially dwarfing its University of California deal, Switzerland’s Frontiers opens a 223-journal flat-fee program with the University of Kansas, reports Publishing Perspectives.

[UAE leads advancement of Open Science in Arab States](#)

The 22nd to 25th of October saw the UAE host the hugely successful and high-impact 2nd Annual Forum for Open Research, reports ALPSP. With the theme of Democratising Knowledge: The Evolution of Open Science Ecosystems and Communities in the Arab World, the conference was organised to support the Arab world’s transition towards more accessible, sustainable and inclusive research and education models.

[Opinion: Mind the Gap – Understanding China’s Perspective on Research Integrity and Open Access](#)

Interactions and collaborations between the Chinese research community and international scholarly publishers are as numerous and wide-ranging as at any point in past twenty years, writes Nicko Goncharoff in a guest post for The Scholarly Kitchen. Yet in some ways the perception gap between these two groups is widening, and, Goncharoff argues, there is an increasing need to come to a more shared understanding of scholarly research and communication.

Publishing ethics

[How to navigate the challenges of corporate-academia research partnerships](#)

Many research projects draw on sources of funding from the corporate world. The LSE Impact Blog discusses the challenges inherent in this kind of research, and outlines three key considerations for researchers engaging with corporate partners.

[Go with the flowcharts: new tools to help data publishers navigate ethical concerns](#)

The FORCE11-COPE Research Data Publishing Ethics Working Group has released 8 new practical flowcharts, reports The Publication Plan. These tools guide data publishers through 4

areas in which ethical concerns can arise: authorship and contributorship, legal and regulatory, rigour, and risk.

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