Understanding Open Access

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CHAPTER 5: WHERE DO YOU WANT TO MAKE YOUR WORK AVAILABLE?
IN ADDITION TO DECIDING HOW “OPEN” YOU want to make your work, you will also need to decide where you will make your work openly accessible. This involves first deciding which open access model (or models) you will use to disseminate your work. Then, you need to decide what publication venue (or venues) within that model best suits your needs.

Open access models are generally divided into two categories: “Gold Open Access” and “Green Open Access.” Gold Open Access describes the model by which an open access publisher makes your work openly accessible. If you opt to use the Gold Open Access model, you will then need to decide what open access publisher provides the best venue for your work. In contrast, Green Open Access (also called “self-archiving”) describes the model by which you as an author make your work openly
accessible. If you opt to use the *Green Open Access* model, you will then need to select the best online venue for your work. Some options include your own website, your departmental website, or an open access repository.

*Gold* and *Green Open Access* are not mutually exclusive. An author can publish a work with an open access publisher and upload the same work to an open access repository or personal website, and vice versa (depending on the terms of their publishing agreement).

**THIS CHAPTER:**
- Describes the key features of *Gold Open Access*
- Presents factors to consider when selecting an open access publisher
- Describes the key features of *Green Open Access*
- Presents factors to consider when deciding where to self-archive a work

**GOLD OPEN ACCESS**

**Advantages and Limitations of Gold Open Access**
Under the *Gold Open Access* model, an author contracts with an open access publisher, who then typically
performs peer review and editing functions before making the work openly accessible. Authors who want to make their works openly accessible should consider the advantages and limitations of working with an open access publisher and decide whether this open access model is right for them. Key advantages and limitations of Gold Open Access include:

**Gold Open Access demonstrates to readers that the work has passed the publisher’s editorial selection process.** Acceptance by an open access publisher signals to readers that the publisher’s editors have carefully reviewed the work and determined that it is a worthwhile addition to scholarly discourse that meets the publisher’s standards of quality and accuracy. *Green open access* works do not necessarily have this imprimatur (although they can, as explained below).

**Authors who publish in an open access journal benefit from the journal’s existing readership and presence in a particular field.** It is important for authors to not only make a work available but also make sure the work actually reaches its intended reader base. Articles published in an open access journal derive visibility from the
journal’s pre-existing, regular audience. Further, because journals generally attract readers by curating a selective number of articles about a specific topic, an author can reach readers specifically interested in his work by including it in an open access journal tailored to his field.

Some open access publishers may require a fee to publish an author’s work. Some, but not all, open access publishers charge authors “publication fees,” or “article-processing charges” (sometimes popularly referred to as “APCs”), to publish their works. Publishers use these fees to cover the costs of preparing manuscripts for publication and administering their publications. Typically, the two biggest costs are:

(1) the salaries of professional editors, who find and coordinate with qualified peer reviewers and edit articles and

(2) licensing fees for publishing, submissions, and peer review distribution software.

These costs are not unique to open access. Conventional publishers may charge APCs as well, though they also generate revenue by charging readers and
institutions, such as universities and private research entities, for copies and subscriptions.

Although open access publishing may cost authors a fee they might not directly incur with restricted-access publishing, authors should remember that in exchange for paying open access publishers an article processing fee, they receive the special benefits of open access, especially the promising potential for wide readership and the related advantages described in Chapter 2.

Even if a publisher charges publication fees, you may not need to pay the fees yourself. For more information on how to cover publication fees, please see How Do You Choose an Open Access Publisher? below.

*There are many open access publishers available for some fields or types of works, but few or none for others.* There are many well-established open access journal options for scholarly articles, particularly for scientific articles. However, there are currently fewer options in the humanities and social science fields and for authors of book-length works.
Although open access publishing options are increasing, if an open access publisher is not yet available in your field or for your type of work, Green Open Access may be a better option for you. You might also consider working with a conventional publisher to make a work openly accessible in conjunction with print publishing, as described in Chapter 6.

Open access publishers are generally newer and not yet as established as conventional publishers. Many open access publishers have not been around as long as the most prominent conventional publishers and, as such, do not necessarily command the same recognition as these well-established publishers. However, authors should not assume that just because a publisher is open access, it is not prestigious. The landscape for open access publishing is evolving, and many authors concerned about prestige will find that open access publishing options are increasingly available to them.

**HOW DO YOU CHOOSE AN OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHER?**

In order to select an open access publisher, you will first need to know the range of open access publish-
ers available to you. For authors of articles, a good place to start is the Directory of Open Access Journals (“DOAJ”), an online directory that screens and indexes over 10,000 peer-reviewed open access journals. You may also consult the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, whose membership includes both article and monograph open access publishers. From there, you should consider a number of factors to determine which publisher, if any, best suits your needs, including:

The Impact (Factor) of the Journal
Regardless of whether a journal is restricted or open access, authors may find it important to consider the journal’s “impact factor.” Generally, the impact factor measures the frequency with which the average article in a journal is cited over a particular period of time. Many academics, including tenure committees, use this metric as a proxy for the prestige, quality of scholarship, and competitiveness of a given journal.

While impact factor comparisons currently favor well-established, conventional publishers, alternative metrics (sometimes referred to as “altmetrics”) have recently emerged as a way to incorporate new data
sources—such as the number of downloads and page views, media coverage, or even social media dissemination—to measure the impact of a journal or of a work in light of recent technological developments. Authors can use these alternative metrics to complement citation-based metrics as a signal of the wide and diverse impact of their works.

Authors may also be able to find an open access journal associated with a prominent conventional publisher in their field, allowing them to enjoy the benefits of both a well-respected brand and open access.

**Well-Established Publisher Creating Open Access Options**

The *American Sociological Association* (“ASA”) is the leading institution in the world of sociological scholarship and currently publishes thirteen extensively peer-reviewed and highly regarded restricted-access journals. As the “standard-bearer” for sociological scholarship, the ASA is launching a high-quality, peer-reviewed open access sociology journal, set to begin publication in 2015. The ASA views this journal as giving the organization and authors room to
experiment with subject matter, embedded media, and article length—reaping the benefits of both open access and the prestigious ASA name.

Although the development of alternative metrics is promising, some authors may not want to put important employment decisions at risk if their institutions heavily rely on journals’ impact factors. Authors with a particular concern about impact factors may alternatively consider publishing with a high-impact-factor, conventional journal and negotiating to retain the right to self-archive, as discussed in Chapter 6. Some conventional publishers also offer “hybrid” options whereby articles published in a subscription journal are also made openly accessible, typically in exchange for a fee.

The Journal’s Reputation for Responsible Business Practices

Some journals are better than others at editing manuscripts, getting issues to press in a timely manner, and other aspects of providing service to authors and readers. Before you commit your work to a journal, you should be familiar with its recent publishing record. If
you know other authors who have published there, you might ask them about their experience.

**The Open Access Licensing Terms Available Through the Publisher**

A given open access publisher may have only one type of license that it automatically applies to all the works it publishes. Thus, authors wishing to fine-tune the “openness” of their works (see Chapter 4) should research the licensing policies of the open access journals in which they are interested. The Directory of Open Access Journals (“DOAJ”) allows authors to search by licensing terms for easy comparison.45

**The Technical Openness of the Publication**

Authors interested in making sure that their works are more technically open should consider the technical capabilities of different publishers. (See Chapter 4.)

**Whether The Publisher Charges Author-Side Fees and its Policy Regarding Exemptions**

As discussed above, some, but not all, open access publishers charge publication fees. The DOAJ allows users
to filter search results for journals that do not charge publication fees.

Even if your desired journal charges a fee, you may not need to pay out-of-pocket. Consider the following alternate strategies to cover the fee:

- Ask your institution or funding entity if it has earmarked funds available to pay for open access publication fees.\(^{46}\)
- Apply for grant funding specifically designated for open access publishing (for example, from a government agency, private foundation, or institutional library).\(^{47}\)
- Partake in the journal’s fee assistance program\(^ {48}\) or institutional discount.\(^ {49}\)
- Apply for a publication fee waiver if the journal offers one.

**Alternative Publication Fee Arrangements**

The *Public Library of Science* ("PLOS") is a successful open access publisher of science and medical literature. Although author-side fees are necessary to PLOS’s survival, PLOS works with authors to ensure that the financial hardship that paying fees might place on them does not discourage them from
sharing their scientific works. For example, PLOS is sensitive to the varying levels of funding across different countries, so it reduced its publication fees for authors from low- and middle-income countries. PLOS also helps authors identify and secure funding from outside sources to cover their publication fees. Finally, PLOS also offers a fee waiver to authors who demonstrate financial need.

**GREEN OPEN ACCESS**

“Green Open Access” refers to an author directly making her own work openly accessible—a process also known as “self-archiving.” If you want to make your work openly accessible, you should consider the advantages and limitations of *Green Open Access* and decide whether this open access model is right for you.

**Advantages and Limitations of Green Open Access**

Key advantages and limitations of *Green Open Access* include:

*Green Open Access can supplement Gold Open Access or conventional publishing.* Whether you plan to publish your work with an open access or conventional
publisher, you may still be able to self-archive your work. (For more information about working with conventional publishers, please see Chapter 6.) Doing so can increase access to the work even if it is already published by an open access or conventional publisher. Because Green Open Access typically has no associated fees, you can take advantage of these additional benefits without any added cost.

Green Open Access can fill gaps in Gold Open Access. Green Open Access is an excellent option if you would like to make your work openly available, but a suitable open access publisher does not yet exist in your field or for your type of work. Many repositories place only minimal requirements on inclusion, and even if you cannot find a suitable repository, you can make works available on a personal website. These low barriers also make Green Open Access an excellent option for authors who are self-published.

Green Open Access is not incompatible with—and may encourage additional—peer review. While peer review is not required to self-archive a work, many authors self-archive works that have already been peer-re-
viewed prior to publication with an open access or conventional publisher. (For more information on working with conventional publishers, please see Chapter 6.) In fact, institutional repositories providing Green Open Access focus on peer-reviewed works. Making a work available through Green Open Access may also attract feedback that, while not equivalent to traditional peer review, enables you to further develop and improve your initial work.

Green Open Access may require extra steps to demonstrate the quality of a work. Because there are low barriers to putting something online, the digital online existence of a work is not alone evidence of its quality. Therefore, you may want to take steps to signal to readers the quality of your work. For example, if your work has been peer-reviewed, published, or accepted for publication, you should indicate that information on the self-archived copy of your work.

**Crowd-sourced Feedback**

Dr. Jennifer Guiliano is an assistant professor in the History Department of Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis who deposited her dissertation
in Scholarly Commons, an online repository. Because her dissertation was openly available, readers could access her work and directly provide her with feedback. Readers suggested revisions she could make, new content she could add, and ways that she could tie her work into existing literature. Dr. Guiliano later incorporated this invaluable feedback into a new version of her work, adding a whole new chapter at the suggestion of those who read her openly accessible dissertation.

Green Open Access may violate rights you have transferred to your publisher. If you have already signed a publishing contract, be sure to check the terms of your agreement before self-archiving your work. If you transferred all of your rights to your publisher, for example, your publisher can object to you distributing your work to the public. (For more information on working with conventional publishers, please see Chapter 6.)
WHERE WILL YOU SELF-ARCHIVE?

There are two primary places where authors self-archive their works:

• a personal or group website, or

• an open access repository.

Unless bound by terms of a publishing contract, authors are not limited to selecting only one option. In many cases, authors may opt to make a work openly accessible both on a personal or group website and in an open access repository.

Personal or group websites vary widely, and include such options as a personal blog, a project-based website, or a university departmental website.

Tip: Regardless of whether you choose to self-archive using a personal or group website, through an open access repository, or both, make sure to apply an open access license if you want to allow others to reuse your work. (See Chapter 4.)
Key advantages and limitations of self-archiving on a personal or group website include:

- An author who already has her own website or blog may have an existing reader base that has a demonstrated interest in the author’s works.
- An author can make works available even if there is not a suitable repository for the author’s type of work.
- Self-archiving on a personal or group website may not satisfy some open access policies. (See Chapter 3.)
- A work that is self-archived on a personal or group website may not appear as prominently in search results as a work placed in an open access repository.

An open access repository is a digital collection of open access works. Open access repositories may be institutionally based (i.e. accept many kinds of works from employees of a particular institution), discipline based (i.e. accept works from particular subject areas), or general purpose (i.e. accept many kinds of works from any author).
Key advantages of self-archiving in an open access repository include:

- Repositories often have features that help readers find and use works, potentially increasing the author’s audience. These features include a standardized metadata format (including the author’s name, institutional affiliation, date, title, and abstract), full-text search capabilities, and the aggregation of works in one large collection.
- The lifespan of a repository is typically longer than that of a personal website because repositories are institutionally, rather than individually, maintained. As such, repositories can help ensure a work’s archival longevity.
- Repositories typically have sophisticated technological tools that can inform authors how their works are being accessed.

If you are required by an institutional or funding policy to make your work openly accessible, that mandate may specify where your work must be placed, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Otherwise, if you decide to self-archive in an open access repository, you will need to evaluate
which repository (or repositories) to use. If you are not familiar with repositories that might fit your work, a good place to begin your search is a directory of repositories, for example the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition’s Comprehensive List of Repositories, the Directory of Open Access Repositories, or the Registry of Open Access Repositories. From there, you should consider a number of factors, including:

**Exposure to Readers Interested in Your Field**

Many repositories are organized by genre or discipline, but general repositories also exist. When determining where to self-archive, you should consider whether a reader looking for your particular type of work would likely search in a general repository or a field-specific repository. For example, a more interdisciplinary work, such as an article discussing international politics and law, might be best placed in a general repository where readers from various fields would access it. However, depositing a work in a more specific repository might be helpful if the writing is technical and aimed at specialists—especially if there are well-established, sizable repositories in that field.
The Repository’s History and Reputation
Well-established repositories are likely to be well known to readers and, thus, to attract readers and search traffic. They are also likely to have staying power, which ensures the continued availability of uploaded works. Authors can determine how well established a repository is by looking at the size, age, and reputation of the repository itself, the institution that established and manages it, and the works it houses.

Depending on the author’s field, it may be difficult to optimize for both how well established the repository is and how well tuned the repository is to the author’s subject area. Thus, authors should determine how to balance the respective importance of these two factors based on their particular circumstances, or consider placing their works in more than one repository to accommodate both considerations.

The Open Access Licensing Terms Available Through the Repository
Some repositories will allow authors to select their own open access licenses and may even ask authors to mark their own works. Other repositories have a default
open access license that attaches to all works in the repository. Thus, authors should check the open access license policy of a given repository to ensure that it provides for the author’s desired degree of “openness,” as discussed in Chapter 4.

The Technical Openness of the Repository
Authors interested in making sure that their works are more technically open should consider the technical capabilities of different repositories, as described in Chapter 4.