Academic Open Access Publishing
since 1996

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Outline

• Introduction to MDPI
• Open Access
• Peer review: Opening the black box
• Academic writing: An English editors’ view
20 Years of Open Access

- Launched by Dr. Shu-Kun Lin, who received his Ph.D. from ETH Zürich in organic chemistry.
- Dr. Lin worked for Ciba Geigy (now Novartis) in early 90’s.
- MDPI started in 1996 to preserve rare chemical samples from universities.
- *Molecules* launched to support the samples project, edited *Molecular Diversity* for Springer.
- MDPI is one of the OA pioneers, publishing with the OA model for 20 years.
Our mission:
Increase the openness of science through scholarly open access journals and by enabling scientific exchanges
Vision and Values

Sustainability Service Efficiency

Excellent Service
99% of our authors would publish in an MDPI journal again

Fast Publication
• First decisions within 24 days
• Papers published 7 days after acceptance
Vision and Values

MDPI is proud member of:

Crossref, CASPA, STM, COPE, DOAJ, ORCID
MDPI Employees

- 900+ employees
- 6 offices: Basel, Beijing (×2), Wuhan, Barcelona, Belgrade
Facts and Figures

170 open access journals
91 journals indexed in Web of Science
29 journals in SCIE with IF

268,301 unique academic authors

102,790 articles published since foundation of MDPI in 1996
15,700 academic editors
94,791 unique academic authors in 2016

5,870,600 monthly page views and article downloads
23,568 articles published in 2016
125,616 peer-review reports received in 2016
MDPI in the OA market

Distribution of OA papers in 2016:

- Springer Nature: 26%
- MDPI: 16%
- PLoS: 17%
- Hindawi: 12%
- AIP: 1%
- Frontiers: 13%
- Copernicus: 5%
- OUP: 1%
- Karger: 1%
- CSIC: 1%
- SAGE: 1%
- eLife: 1%
- AOSIS: 1%

Source: Sciforum statistics
sciforum.net/statistics

MDPI – Basel, Beijing, Wuhan, Barcelona, Belgrade
Editorial Process

• Simple, quick, efficient process.
• Supported by in-house editorial staff.
• First decisions in 24 days.
• 7 days from acceptance to publication.
• >12,000 academic editors and scientists.
• Reviewers receive discount vouchers up to 250 CHF.
• In-house IT development and production.
MDPI Conferences
Institutional Open Access Program

• More than 250 participants, 26 in Spain (http://www.mdpi.com/about/ioap).

• 10% discount on Article Processing Charges

• Library notified of submissions and publications
MDPI in the OA market

- MDPI
- Public Library of Science (PLoS)
- Frontiers
- Hindawi

Graph showing trends from Jul-16 to May-17.
Questions?
Open Access

What is open access?
Open Access

Open access to scholarly work:
- Free to read
- Free to share
- Free to reuse
- Free to build on

First formulated in three public statements:
- **Budapest Open Access Initiative** (February 2002)
- **Bethesda Statement** (June 2003)
- **Berlin Declaration** (October 2003)
# CC Licenses

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# Open Access vs. Subscription

## Open Access
- Articles freely available online.
- Published under an open license (e.g. CC BY).
- Peer-review.
- Income from Article Processing Charges (APCs), paid by authors/funders.

## Subscription
- Articles available to those with a subscription, or one-off charges.
- Copyright transferred to the publisher, restrictive licenses.
- Peer-review.
- Income from subscriptions/access charges, and color/page charges.
How big is Open Access?

https://oaspa.org/steady-growth-fully-oa-journals-ccby-license/
How big is Open Access?

Data from Delta Think:
• 467m USD in 2016
• 4-9% of STM publishing market
• 20-22% of articles are fully OA or hybrid
• 17% growth expected in 2017
What do publishers do?
Reviewers read the paper, make comments and recommend:
- accept
- minor revision
- major revision
- reject
Submission → Pre-check → Peer-review → Editor decision → Accept

- Submission
- Pre-check
- Peer-review
- Editor decision
- Accept
- Revise

- MDPI editors
- authors
- reviewers
- external editor
## Types of peer review

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<th>Author doesn’t know reviewers</th>
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<td>Reviewers know authors</td>
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<td>Reviewers don’t know authors</td>
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<td>Single blind</td>
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History of peer review

• Initially done by editors alone (1665)
• Gradually more specialists involved
• Eventually became normal for reviewers to be involved (e.g. Nature in 1967)
• Now expected that work is peer reviewed before publication
Problems?

Are we training pit bulls to review our manuscripts?

Virginia Walbot

Published: 09 March 2009

Abstract

Good early training of graduate students and postdocs is needed to prevent them turning into future generations of manuscript-savaging reviewers. How can we intercalate typical papers into our training?
Problems?

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Abstract

Good early training of graduate students and postdocs is needed; generations of manuscript-savaging reviewers. How can we inter-

Classical peer review: an empty gun

Richard Smith

Published: 20 December 2010

If peer review was a drug it would never be allowed onto the market,’ says Drummond Rennie, deputy editor of the *Journal Of the American Medical Association* and intellectual father of the international congresses of peer review that have been held every four years since 1989. Peer review would not get onto the market because we have no convincing evidence of its benefits but a lot of evidence of its flaws.

Yet, to my continuing surprise, almost no scientists know anything about the evidence on peer review. It is a process that is central to science - deciding which grant proposals will be funded, which papers will be published, who will be promoted, and who will receive a Nobel prize. We might thus expect that scientists, people who are trained to believe nothing until presented with evidence, would want to know all the evidence available on this important process. Yet not only do scientists know little about the evidence on peer review but most continue to believe in peer review, thinking it essential for the progress of science. Ironically, a faith based rather than an evidence based process lies at the heart of science.
Problems?

Potentially coercive self-citation by peer reviewers: A cross-sectional study


January 2015 Volume 78, Issue 1, Pages 1–6

Highlights

- Coercive citations in peer reviews are citations primarily intended to highlight the reviewer’s work.
- Of 428 total citations in the reviews, 122 (29%) were self-citations to the reviewer’s own work.
- Self-citations were more common in reviews recommending revision or acceptance (33%) versus rejection (15%).
- 21% of reviewer self-citations had no rationale compared to 5% in citations to others’ work.
- Self-citation in peer review is common and is likely coercive in some cases.
Different options?
Different options?

publons
Discussion Questions

• What would make you publish more in open access?
• Have you considered posting preprints? Why?
• Does peer review work? Do you have anecdotes of good/bad practice?
• How much does your library spend on subscriptions/APCs?