



# OPEN ACCESS MYTHS: WHAT'S THE TRUTH?



There are a number of myths surrounding Open Access publishing. This overview highlights the most widespread ones.

## 1. Myth: Open Access publications are rarely of high quality.

This is not true. Studies show: There is no difference in quality between open and closed access publications. Reputable Open Access journals conduct quality assurance in exactly the same way. The same applies to Peer Review, especially since this is often transparent in Open Access, which tends to increase its quality. In general, the quality and Peer Review of a journal always depend on the researchers involved and the practice followed – regardless of the journal's business model. You can prevent the danger of low-quality predatory journals, that is nonetheless existing, by taking the measures described in the Open Economics Guide.

## 2. Myth: Open Access leads to less impact, visibility and prestige.

This is not true. In fact, the opposite is true: Open Access leads to more visibility and higher impact and can have a positive effect on citation rates. Several studies show that Open Access publications are used more widely and by a more diverse audience than closed access literature. There are significantly higher download rates and page views for Open Access publications. As for the (controversial) impact factor: there are also Open Access journals with a high impact factor.

## 3. Myth: Publishing in Open Access is too expensive.

This is not true. Publishing in Open Access can be very inexpensive or even free. For example, there are no costs for self-archiving. Many Open Access journals do not charge publication fees because they finance themselves in other ways. If fees are nevertheless incurred, they are usually covered by the journal's own organization or by a funding agency. One problem, however, is that the term Open Access is sometimes used to describe products and business models that are not open. This can lead to misunderstandings and make the search for a publication location confusing.

## 4. Myth: Open Access restricts freedom of publication.

This is not true. The decision about where to publish is still entirely up to you, the author. In addition to many high-quality, reputable full Open Access journals, a large proportion of paid subscription journals offer „hybrid“ Open Access, which allows you to make your articles freely available to readers. In many countries, such as Germany, there are also framework agreements between academic institutions and major publishers that no longer require individual fees for publishing in the respective journals in Open Access. If your journal of choice does not offer Open Access, it is important to make sure that you have the option of a second publication, or otherwise choose another journal, also to comply with funding requirements if applicable.

**5. Myth: If my journal of choice is not Open Access, Open Access is not possible.**

This is not true. If your journal of choice does not offer Open Access, you can establish it through a secondary publication. Many publishers allow you to share a version (preprint or postprint) of your own work with third parties via a repository or your personal website. To do this, you can add an „Author Addendum“ to the standard publishing contract if needed. With this contract addendum, you can change contract terms and protect your own important rights, such as being allowed to publish your own articles and works in a digital repository, at least after an embargo period.

**6. Myth: Open Access has a negative impact on career or funding opportunities.**

This is not true. On the one hand, Open Access is now often a prerequisite for accessing funding opportunities that are important for a research career. On the other hand, a shift in career opportunities in research is emerging: according to the 2013 Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), signed by more than 500 organizations and 12,000 researchers, journal-based metrics should not be considered in career or funding decisions. Rather, the content of a paper should play a greater role than the journal in which it was published, and the value and impact of all research outputs should be considered.

**7. Myth: Open Access leads to loss of control and copyright.**

This is not true. Because copyrights also apply when publishing in Open Access. Moreover, you can use open content licenses, such as the Creative Commons licence, according to your own wishes when you publish texts or data. In addition, there is no evidence that open sharing of publications leads to others stealing your intellectual property of your research ideas. In fact, because you don't cede your rights to a publisher, Open Access gives you more control over how and where your work is published.

**8. Myth: Open Access offers no benefits to me personally.**

This is not true. Because the fact that Open Access content is freely accessible and not hidden behind paywalls means that it can be found more quickly, read by more people, and used, shared, and cited more easily. So you get more visibility and impact! Open Access also leads to more media attention, collaboration opportunities, career opportunities, funding opportunities, and knowledge transfer. Your work can thus be better applied in practice and develop greater societal benefits. Open Access makes it easier to get timely constructive feedback on your research and improve its quality. With Open Access, you also perform good research practice and comply with funding guidelines that increasingly require the results of funded research projects to be published in Open Access.



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In the [Open Economics Guide](#) you will find further background articles and practical tips as well as helpful tools, for example to identify predictive journals.