

Publishing journal articles in times of dataism

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Making scientific articles openly accessible benefits both science and society – it allows the entire scientific community to effectively build on the most recent accumulation of knowledge and offers the general public the opportunity to make evidence-based decisions in their daily life and work. Indeed, it goes without saying that speech therapists should have direct access to new scientific insights on the neurocognition of stuttering, that university managers should experience no hurdles when wanting to openly read about the cognitive advantages of using a foreign language in the workplace, and that parents of a deaf child should be able to easily access scientific information about how communication works in the visual modality. In their viewpoint paper, Andringa et al. (2024) convincingly argue that open access publication of scientific journal articles should follow a diamond open access model. Opting for this publishing route leads to articles that are freely available to anyone interested at no direct publication cost for the authors of the work and their employers, which creates an open and equitable playing field in which articles are published based on their scholarly merit and independently of whether the author or their institution can cover an article's publication fee. So why would not all researchers for all their manuscripts (yet) select a diamond open access journal as the default outlet?

Clearly, in today's academic publishing landscape, journals differ in the degree of prestige they are associated with within the scientific community. In a broader academic system in which opportunities for both research funding and promotion are scarce, more articles are published than one can ever read, and time has become a commodity, it is perhaps not surprising that the quality of a scientific paper is increasingly considered in quantitative terms: the journal impact factor, the number of views and citations, the

metrics that indicate societal uptake. Indeed, we seem to have entered an era of dataism in which it is widely believed that virtually everything can or should be reduced to quantitative measures (Peeters, 2022). As a scientific community, through the development of a healthier, non-quantitative way of evaluating academic performance and research quality, we can take away the lure of the 'high-impact' publishing outlets that ask for money in exchange for status and prestige. After all, we know that numbers are often not a reliable indicator of quality, as articles with a female first author commonly receive fewer citations than comparable articles with a male first author (Larivière et al., 2013), a development reinforced by a substantially higher self-citation bias in male versus female academics (King et al., 2017). When journal articles become valued solely for their scientific contribution, rather than for the journal they appear in or who exactly wrote them, publishing in a diamond open access journal will become more attractive to a wider group of researchers – particularly since it is the right thing to do to begin with (Andringa et al., 2024). Though unfortunately behind a paywall, frameworks for evaluating research quality in a non-quantitative way are available, notably embedded in the field of applied linguistics (Plonsky, 2024).

Besides academic societies, funding agencies, and individual (senior) scholars (Andringa et al., 2024), also universities have the means to incentivize a smooth and quick transition towards making diamond open access publishing the default option. They may do so through both policy and communication. In terms of policy, it would be relatively straightforward to allocate internal funding to collaborative research teams that pre-register and publish their work with a diamond open access journal, while concomitantly compensating the time editors working at that university spend for a journal whenever it offers a diamond open access publishing route as the default option. In their internal and external communication, university management could prioritize a focus on highlighting ethical values (open science practices, slow science, collaboration) rather than numerical values (impact factors, rankings, competition). In this way, by valuing true value, the move towards default diamond open access publishing would take place within the broader context of a transition from an academic system that is increasingly experienced as an unhealthy rat race back to the collaborative and stimulating environment it can also be. Indeed, it might even contribute towards reducing the increasingly serious mental health issues young academics are experiencing while working in a system that seems to value output quantity over scientific quality (Levecque et al., 2017). As such, while senior researchers may be in the position and have the moral obligation to drive change (Andringa et al., 2024), actively involving a younger generation of scholars and scientists would also seem the right thing to do.

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