

# Open Access and Prestige

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# Introduction

- Earliest Open Access (OA) journals and services are now over 35 years old
- Publishers and learned societies of all sizes and backgrounds have launched OA journals or converted journals to OA; many have launched entire series of OA titles
- New entrants - born-OA publishers
- OA journals can be niche and/or selective, or broad scope and/or sound science
- OA has bred innovation in publishing models – preprinting, Subscribe to Open, Publish-Review-Curate, etc.
- Major funders and institutions support it
- So why are there still question marks over the level of prestige of many OA titles?



# Why is OA Seen As Less Prestigious?

## Commercial elements

new publishers; new journals; journal growth; pay-to-publish models

## Predatory journals

A persistent problem

## Hard to challenge established brands

Takes a long time to build a community around a journal and get it indexed

## Wider range of alternatives

Too much to read; too little time – how to sift through?

## Research assessment

Criteria at universities set by the established players

# Research Assessment

- Research assessment of academics across the world largely remains very conservative
- Metrics (often inappropriately applied) are what counts, particularly:
  - Venue of publications - journal-level metrics that measure 'impact' and 'quality', but applied to individual researchers
  - Volume of publications – little or no weight given to other valuable activities
- Responsible research assessment campaigns like [DORA](#) and [CoARA](#) have only driven small pockets of real change
- This helps to create the world that all journals operate in, and has really helped drive growth in OA (both the good and the bad) – but researchers feel understandably uncomfortable with some of that, hence a lack of prestige



# Effects of Research Assessment on Scholarly Publishing

- A narrow approach to research assessment limits innovation in scholarly publishing – supply responds to demand
- Some of the great opportunities of OA have been held back or not received significant uptake – so they cannot easily build prestige beyond their initial community of supporters
- Leads to inertia:
  - the 'top' journals in every field remain the same
  - authors do not necessarily publish in journals with the closest Aims & Scope to their work
  - authors are not incentivised to try other publishing models or share more of their work

# What could be changed?

- If we want to change this, we must continue to collectively advocate for assessment approaches to assign prestige to:
  - All forms of openness in research, e.g. sharing of data, materials, software / code, methods, pre-registration, etc.
  - Peer review activity
  - Real-world impact from research – policy, practice, wider society, etc.
  - Publication venues that actually demonstrate quality workflows; thorough checking of research integrity, etc.

I think we would be better able to tackle the big challenges in scholarly publishing and drive higher quality research - and we wouldn't need to discuss why OA lacks prestige!

# Questions and Comments