



## Demand Open Access to Research

The open access movement is a long-standing campaign in the world of research to make scholarly works freely available and reusable. One of its fundamental premises is that the progress of knowledge and culture happens when scholarly works of all kinds are widely shared, not hidden in ivory towers built with paywalls and buttressed by harsh legal regimes.



### That is why open access has two primary goals:

1. **Making research available online to the public, free of cost**, whether through an online repository hosted by a university, agency, or private entity; or through open access journals.
2. **Making research reusable under an open licensing scheme**. This allows for works to be read, analyzed, and built upon for downstream innovation and the pursuit of knowledge.

Scholarly journal publishers currently compile research done by professors (for free), send articles out to be peer reviewed (for free), and distribute the edited journals back to universities around the world (for costs anywhere up to \$35,000 each). Subscription prices have outpaced inflation by over 250 percent in the past 30 years, and these fees go straight to the publisher. Neither the authors nor their institutions are paid a cent, and the research itself—which is largely funded by taxpayers—remains difficult to attain. Skyrocketing costs have forced university libraries—even Harvard's, the richest university in the world—to pick and choose between journal subscriptions.

**The result:** students and citizens face barriers accessing information they need; professors have a harder time reviewing and teaching the state of the art; and cutting-edge research remains hidden behind paywalls, depriving it of the visibility it deserves.

The good news is that **the open access movement is changing all this, and you can help**. As scholars, researchers, and tuition-payers, students hold a powerful voice in setting the course for the future of knowledge.

### Legislation and Government Action

Two bipartisan coalitions in both the House and the Senate have introduced the **Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR)** that requires government agencies to ensure that the research it funds is placed in a public repository within six months of publication. Similar bills have been introduced on the state level—notably in **California (AB 609)** and in **New York (S4050/A180)**. Student support is crucial to the passage of these bills.

Additionally, the **White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy** released a memorandum making government funding agencies detail and implement robust open access plans.

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Learn more about open access: [eff.org/issues/open-access](http://eff.org/issues/open-access)

These are all strong steps towards a world of open access to publicly funded research.

## **Here's what you can do**

### ***If you have 30 minutes...***

#### *Reach out to your professors and librarians*

More often than not, university professors are both teachers and researchers. As authors, they control whether their articles will be openly available, and as faculty, they have the power to establish a campus open access policy.

Likewise, librarians are the custodians of knowledge at universities. Their job rests on spreading information, and they are often the ones making decisions about journal subscriptions, best practices, and institutional repositories. (And librarians are often the most aware of the boons of open access.)

Reach out to them and let them know you care about open access. Send an email, grab them after class, or set up a meeting. Professors and librarians (and even administrators) are often willing to talk about the state of academic publishing since it defines such a big part of their lives.

### ***If you have an hour...***

#### *Write an op-ed for your school newspaper*

Taking your voice to a public forum can be an extremely effective form of advocacy. School newspapers are around for just this purpose—and they're often itching for content. Open access affects everybody at your school, and an opinion piece or letter to the editor calling for change is sure to garner interested comments or emails.

Explaining open access and calling for action in a way that appeals to members of your school's community—all within 700 words—is a task that requires some give and take. Before writing your op-ed, ask yourself, "What is the key point I want my audience to remember?" Narrowing the scope of your piece can help make your opinion more readable, approachable, and relevant. It may help to reach out to librarians for attention-grabbing facts, such as how much your university spends on subscriptions or the cost of your most expensive journal.

### ***If you are interested in doing more...***

- Organize a **tabling effort**, talking to students and handing out fliers
- If your institute doesn't have an **open access repository**, advocate for one where researchers and students can deposit scholarly works. An up-to-date list of current open access repositories can be found at the OpenDOAR project ([opendoar.org](http://opendoar.org))
- Push for an **institutional open access mandate**, whereby professors grant your university the right to make their works publicly available via your campus repository. A list of institutions with open access mandates can be found on the ROARMAP project ([roarmap.eprints.org](http://roarmap.eprints.org))
- Join **EFF's student activism list**. We're putting together a list of students interested in participating in digital rights activism. If you're interested, send an introductory email to [students@eff.org](mailto:students@eff.org)

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