



Oct 2025

Lib4RI-
UPDATE
#42

Join us in the international Open Access Week 2025!

Keynote by David Rosenthal - AI & copyright: friends or foes?

On **22 October 2025, 14:00-15:00**, lawyer David Rosenthal will share his insights as one of the leading Swiss experts on digital & technology law. Join onsite at Eawag, Dübendorf, FC-C20, or online via Zoom.

Read more [here](#).

Information booths

Meet our experts in your institute! On each day, our booth is staffed from 11:30-14:00.

WSL: Thursday, 16.10.25

PSI: Friday, 17.10.25

Empa: Monday, 20.10.25

Eawag: Tuesday, 21.10.25

Open Access Agreements: the good, the bad, the ugly

With Open Access (OA) increasingly becoming the standard in academic publishing, OA agreements provide an easy and convenient way for authors to publish their work OA. However, there are also downsides to these agreements: they concentrate market power among large publishers and some agreements impose restrictive conditions on authors for OA publishing.

What is an OA agreement?

Since 2021, an increasing share of agreements with journal publishers have shifted to Read & Publish deals. These bundle two elements into a single fee: access to the publisher's paywalled journals and the ability for affiliated authors to publish OA in those journals without paying individual Article Processing Charges (APCs).

There are also agreements with fully OA publishers (e.g. Copernicus, Frontiers, MDPI). These cover publishing costs but have no reading component because all articles are published OA.

From 2021–2024, over 90% of articles by researchers at the four Research Institutes appeared in journals covered by our OA agreements, meaning that the most important journals are already covered by OA agreements (Figure 1).

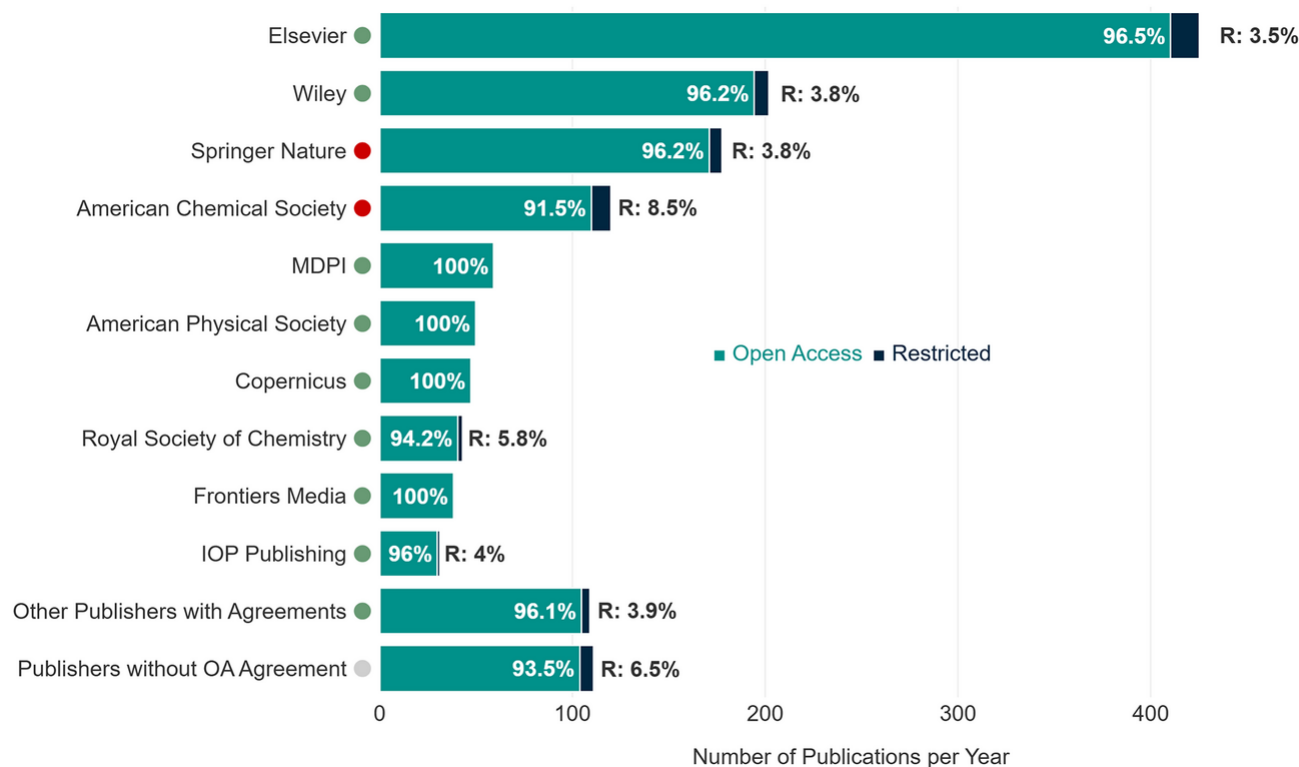


Figure 1. Yearly average number of articles (2021-2024) with a corresponding author affiliated with an RI, across the most frequently used publishers. Publishers with comparatively restrictive Open Access agreement conditions are indicated with a red dot next to their name, green dots indicate publishers with comparatively unrestrictive agreements. Please note that not all Open Access publications in DORA are the result of an OA agreement.

The benefits of OA Agreements

- OA agreements offer a convenient way for researchers to publish OA in well-known journals without paying additional APCs.
- OA agreements avoid the problem of double dipping: publishers get paid twice for the same content, i.e. charging subscription fees for a hybrid journal and collecting APCs for articles in that journal.

The downsides of OA Agreements

- Transformation failed: Read & Publish agreements were originally developed to encourage subscription journals to transition to full OA (and are therefore also called transformative agreements). This transformation has not happened. Instead, academia seems to be stuck in the hybrid system with the risk that these arrangements will become permanent and perpetuate hybrid OA journals (i.e. some articles remain behind a paywall and thus reading access may also need to be paid for).
- OA agreements strengthen the market power of larger publishers. They raise entry barriers for new publishers, lower competition, and, in the end, possibly increase costs for libraries and research institutions.
- Restrictions for authors under OA agreements: Each agreement comes with limitations for authors on OA publishing. Specific limitations vary across individual agreements, creating a complex landscape for researchers.

OA Agreements with problematic restrictions

Each OA agreement has its own set of terms that limit the number of articles eligible for free OA under the agreement. Common restrictions include eligibility only for the corresponding authors at participating institutions and coverage limited to specific article types. Some agreements add stricter terms on OA publishing which can make publishing under these agreements a frustrating experience. Notable examples of agreements with problematic restrictions on OA publishing are the agreements with Springer Nature (SN) and the American Chemical Society (ACS):

- Annual article quotas (SN, ACS): Both agreements significantly limit the number of articles that can be published OA for free. These quotas are shared across all Swiss institutions and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Eligibility is determined by the article's acceptance date, making it difficult to know at submission whether coverage will apply.
- Exclusion of Full/Gold OA journals (SN): Coverage does not include full OA journals published by Springer Nature, e.g. Nature Communications, Scientific Reports and all BMC journals.
- Funding exclusions (ACS): SNSF-funded publications are excluded, despite SNSF's OA mandate. Green OA is also difficult because [ACS actively contests the Rights Retention Strategy](#).

These restrictions reduce the share of articles published OA through these agreements compared with publishers without such limits (see Figure 2).

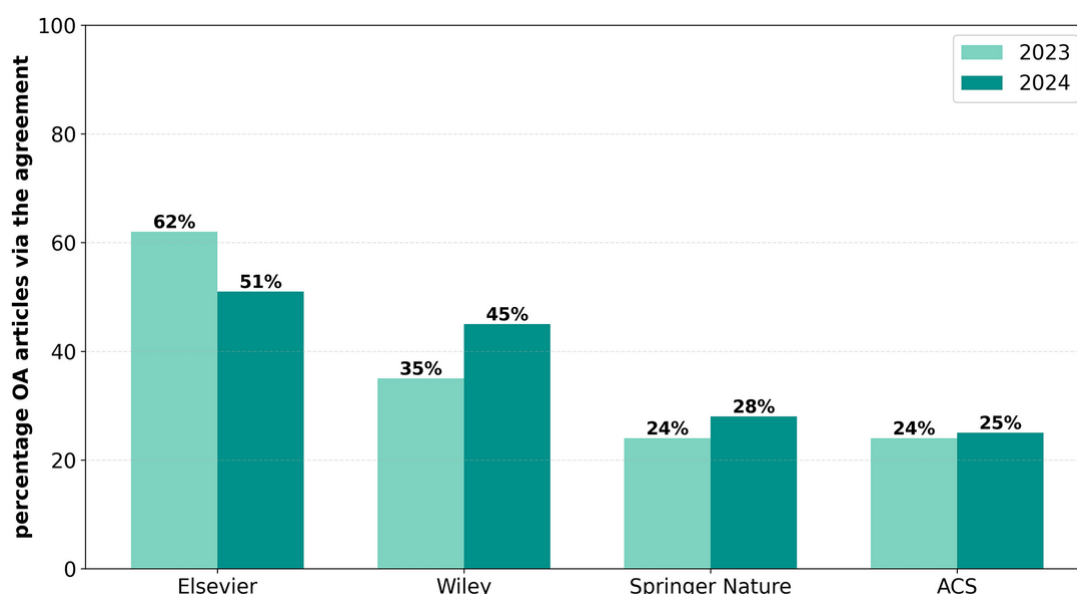


Figure 2. Share of articles that were published Open Access (OA) via the OA agreements in journals of the four most popular publishers for 2023 and 2024. The percentages reflect only articles published via the institutional OA agreements with the 4RIs; they do not include articles made OA through other pathways.

Looking ahead

Over the past decade, OA agreements have driven a substantial rise in OA publishing at the four research institutes and across Switzerland. They offer a convenient route to OA for authors, but they also reinforce the market power of large commercial publishers. In practice, annual quotas, the exclusion of certain journals, and other restrictions can make publishing under these agreements frustrating for researchers.

The two agreements with the most relevant restrictions – those with Springer Nature and ACS – are set to expire at the end of 2025. Negotiations for their renewal are led by swissuniversities and are already underway. Our position: These problematic restrictions should be removed, and we support the negotiation team in pursuing that outcome. Given the complex nature of these existing agreements, we expect that securing favourable terms will require an intensive and lengthy process. We will continue to provide updates as negotiations progress.

[Send us your feedback!](#)

Library news

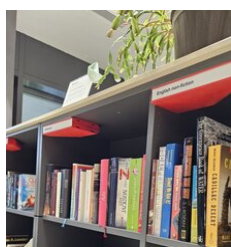
New coffee lecture series: Behind the bookshelves

Ever asked yourself who really decides on article processing charges (APCs)? How you can harness your open research data in the age of AI training? And how your work can be valued beyond just citation counts? There is a lot going on behind the bookshelves of the library! Grab a coffee and join us for quick sessions where we'll unpack the latest debates in publishing and science policy - and show why they matter to your research. Read more [here](#).

Data Management Campus MOOCathon

Collaboration meets creativity! The ETH Domain Data Management Campus held its first MOOCathon, in which participants co-created modules on research data management. Curious about what they produced? Check out our Zenodo community. Read more [here](#).

Did you know ...?



Source: Lib4RI

...there are swap libraries?

Finished your last book and looking for something new to dive into? Visit our bring-and-take libraries! You'll find a wide variety of books waiting for you: fiction in English and other languages, non-fiction across many topics, as well as travel guides to inspire your next vacation. Got books at home that you've already enjoyed? Make room on your shelves by donating them - your colleagues will appreciate the fresh additions!

Beyond the library

AI / Apertus released

EPFL, ETH Zurich and the Swiss National Supercomputing Centre (CSCS) released Apertus 2. September 2025, Switzerland's first large-scale, open, multilingual language model. Read more [here](#) and try the public interface [here](#).

RDM / OME-NGFF: a next-generation file format for expanding bioimaging

This new open metadata format for bioimaging is described in an article in [Nature Methods](#). See also the [2025 International OME-NGFF](#)

Licences / GenAI Licensing Agreement Tracker

The tracker, released by Ithaka S+R allows a quick overview on current deals regarding the use of scholarly publications for LLM training. Among other parameters, it lists parties involved, strategy and financial agreements. The latter also gives information on potential compensation of authors. Read more [here](#).

Impact / From publications to policy

Springer Nature and Overton have collaborated on a joint analysis on the relationship between

[workshop](#), hosted at the the University of Zurich, with a symposium and a hackaton.

Opinion / Guidelines to prevent research bias when using chatbots

GenAI can be a powerful tool for researchers at many stages of their work, but is prone to bias. To prevent corruption of metrics and citations, governing is required now. Read more [here](#).

research and policy. The full report is to be published by the end of the year, but a summary of the major insights is published in the Scholarly Kitchen blog. Read the blog entry [here](#).



Lib4RI - Library for the Research Institutes within the ETH Domain: Eawag, Empa, PSI & WSL

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