

2021 Open Access Survey

KEY FINDINGS

THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL MEASUREMENT OF SUPPORT FOR OPEN ACCESS AND OPEN SCIENCE IN THE CHEMISTRY COMMUNITY

The research community's open access publishing transformation continues, with a greater percentage of research papers being made freely available to read every year. To help support this change, ACS provides a range of innovative approaches that help authors publish their work in open access formats while ensuring the long-term quality and sustainability of publishing in the chemical sciences.

Every year, ACS seeks feedback from its community of authors and researchers to better understand their views of open access publishing, and the expectations of their funders and institutions around making the outputs of their work available in freely shareable formats.

"My main funding agencies [are moving] towards making publication in open access journals mandatory. I fully support this."

- RESEARCHER
AND ACS AUTHOR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The 2021 Open Access Publishing survey was fielded by ACS via an online survey platform between June 8–August 27, 2021 among authors and researchers that had published in ACS journals in recent years. A total of 1,416 ACS authors and researchers responded to the survey from the United States, Japan, South Korea, China, India, Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and other European countries.

The respondents were largely from academic institutions and a mix of corporations, government agencies, non-profit/not-for-profit organizations, and research institutes.

In addition to the survey research, ACS Publications conducted a series of in-person focus groups with researchers that had published in ACS journals previously and university librarians that support researchers in their publication process. A total of five in-person focus groups were held in March 2022 during the ACS National Meeting in San Diego. The focus groups were conducted by a staff member of ACS, and followed an established discussion guide on open access publishing topics.

AWARENESS AND UPTAKE OF OPEN ACCESS IS GROWING

As the open access landscape continues to evolve, it is becoming ever more important that researchers can confidently navigate the various concepts related to open access, including the expectations of their funders and institutions.

68% of respondents to the 2021 ACS survey indicated that they understood open access “extremely well” or “very well”, up from 62% in 2020. More than half advocate for open access publishing within their communities. Additionally, a growing number have published at least one open access article: 75% in 2021, compared to 67% in 2020. The belief among authors that open access will be either “extremely important” or “somewhat important” in the next five years holds steady, at 67% in 2021, compared to 66% in 2020.

ACS has invested heavily in resources to help authors publish their work in open access formats; our transformative agreements cover hundreds of institutions worldwide, and our publication workflows include clear notifications for authors who are eligible for open access support, further streamlining the process. More information can be found on the ACS Open Science website:

<https://www.acsopenscience.org>.

AUTHORS CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE AND SUPPORT OPEN ACCESS

Authors have a variety of options when choosing where to publish, from fully open access journals such as *JACS Au* and *ACS Central Science*, ‘hybrid’ journals that offer a mix of subscription-based and open access articles, and ‘traditional’ journals where most of the content requires a subscription to read.

In previous years, our research showed that authors have a clear preference for publishing in journals with an open access option and this continued in 2021, with 51% of respondents preferring to publish in hybrid journals, 16% preferring fully open access journals, and just 7% indicating a preference for traditional journals. However, 26% did not have a particular preference.

When choosing to publish open access, the primary objective for authors is to increase the visibility of their research (57%), with 46% also indicating that they personally support the principles of open access. 53% consider the costs of publishing open access as part of their decision-making process, showing that researchers continue to be mindful of budgets when selecting where and how to publish their research outputs.

ACSOpenScience.org

Asking the ACS Research Community:

*How well do you think you understand open access?
(Responses given on a 10-point scale; showing % rating 7-10)*

2021

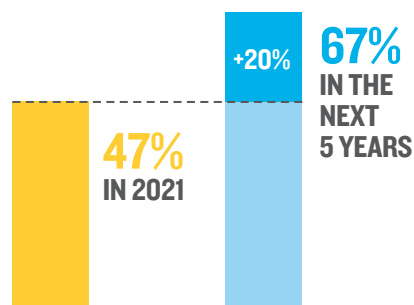


2020



Asking the ACS Research Community:

How important is it to you to publish your research articles as open access? (Showing % “extremely” or “moderately important”)



Asking the ACS Research Community:

Would you prefer to publish in a traditional journal (HYBRID open access) with open access options or a publication that only publishes open access articles (GOLD open access)?

Traditional journal with open access options



Fully open access publication



Traditional journal without open access options



No preference



ACS Publications
Most Trusted. Most Cited. Most Read.

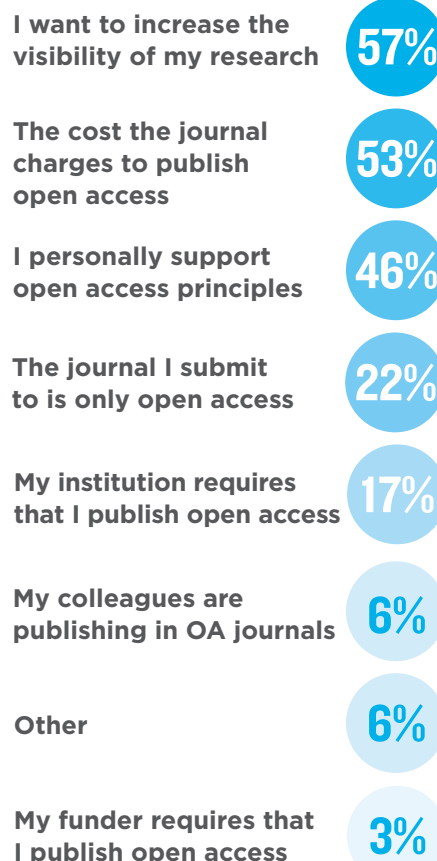
To respond to the diverse needs of its members and the growing interest in open access resources, authors choosing to publish with ACS have several open access choices: they can choose to publish in one of twelve ACS fully open access journals, or across our [full portfolio of 60+ transformative journals](#). In many cases, these options are supported by ACS Read + Publish Agreements with their institution, or through arrangements with their research funder, and researchers may also choose to pay publishing charges through other means.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT IS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN GROWING OA PUBLISHING

The costs associated with open access publication are a factor in authors' decisions. 60% of authors stated that their funder provides support for open access fees, and 22% have funding from their institution, with a far higher proportion of respondents in Europe having access to a dedicated fund at their institution. Notably, 83% of respondents indicated that they would be "extremely likely" or "somewhat likely" to publish open access if their institution covered the costs of article publishing charges. This demonstrates a clear demand for the kind of support offered by ACS Read + Publish Agreements and other approaches to institution- and funder-supported open access, which are currently available to researchers at over 400 institutions worldwide.

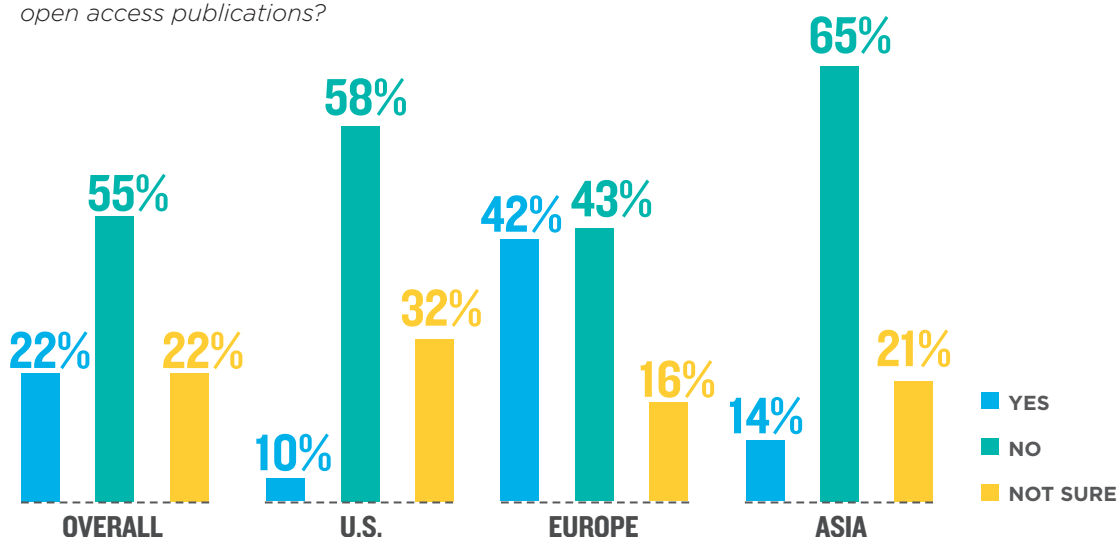
Asking the ACS Research Community:

Which of the following are your most important considerations when deciding to publish open access?



Asking the ACS Research Community:

Does your institution have a dedicated fund to sponsor open access publications?



PUBLISHERS ARE A PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT OPEN ACCESS

When seeking accurate information about open access requirements, policies, and funding, researchers are increasingly turning to publishers: 48% of respondents indicate they seek this kind of detail from publishers, compared to 35% from web searches and 25% from their research funder, and significantly more than from their peers (22%). This reliance has led to publishers developing resources such as ACS' [Journal Finder tool](#), which provides researchers with a straightforward way of identifying which ACS journals meet their institution's and research funder's open access policies.

ACS CONTINUES TO SUPPORT OPEN ACCESS

As reflected by the findings of this yearly survey, open access publishing continues to steadily grow in importance with researchers, institutions, and funders worldwide. In response, ACS continues to develop innovative tools and approaches to help authors make their research articles, data, and other outputs available without barriers to readers all over the world. For more information on how we're continuing to support open access—and open science more broadly—visit [ACSOpenScience.org](https://acsopenscience.org).

ABOUT THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY

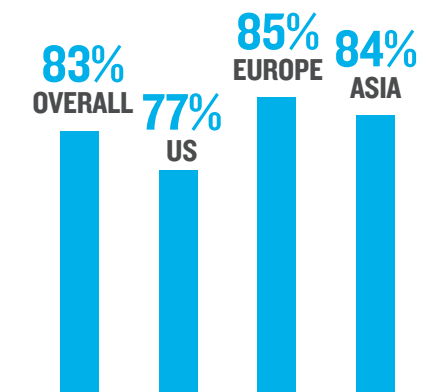
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CONTACT

For additional support, please visit the website <https://acsopenscience.org/contact/> or contact us at ACS_Pubs_Assist@acs.org.

Asking the ACS Research Community:

How likely would you be to submit your research to an ACS journal if you knew your APC would be covered by your institution? (% somewhat / extremely likely)



"I would highly appreciate if more publisher[s] would come to agreements to shift away the costs from the individual researcher (as I often have no funds for this in projects) to the institutional or even national level."

- RESEARCHER
AND ACS AUTHOR