

# A Transformative Model for Open Access



Association for  
Computing Machinery



# Introducing ACM OPEN

The ACM OPEN model allows an institution's corresponding authors to publish an unlimited number of Open Access research articles in the ACM Digital Library (dl.acm.org) while also providing complete access to the contents found in the traditional "read only" subscription model. ACM OPEN allows for OA publishing across ACM's complete catalog of journals, conference proceedings and magazines. Key benefits include:



Unlimited access for all authorized users to the full-text subscription contents of the ACM Digital Library.



Unlimited OA publishing for all corresponding authors across ACM's entire catalog of magazines, conference proceedings and journals.



Fixed pricing for the length of the multi-year license term.



Automatic deposit at publication of all accepted research articles into an institutional repository.



Default CC-BY author rights on all accepted research articles.



Avoids administrative burden and cost fluctuation associated with other "Pay per article"-based models.

# Our Vision Toward Total Open Access Publishing

The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) is the world's oldest and largest scientific society dedicated to computer science. As a member-driven not-for-profit organization, ACM is governed by its diverse membership of more than 100,000 students, faculty, and practitioners around the world. At the direction of its members and volunteer boards, ACM announced its intention to sustainably transition to full Open Access (OA) research publishing within a multi-year period.

The goal of transitioning to full OA research publishing is central to ACM's mission as a scientific society to further innovation in computing. ACM's own internal research has looked at articles made open in its "Hybrid OA" publications. "Hybrid" refers to publications that allow for authors to make their articles OA by payment of an Article Processing Charge (APC) at the time of the article's acceptance for publication, meaning that Hybrid OA publications have some articles that are open and some that are behind subscription paywall. ACM has found that the articles made OA in these Hybrid publications are downloaded and cited at increased amounts compared to their paywalled counterparts.

*The ACM Executive Committee is a directorial board comprised of volunteers elected by ACM membership and represents the organization's highest governing authority. Under its guidance, ACM OPEN was created to accelerate ACM's OA research publishing output.*

## Usage & Citation Benefit of Paid OA in DL

ACM compared the average number of downloads and citations for research articles published behind ACM DL paywall to the average number of downloads and citations for research articles published on an Open Access basis in the ACM DL.

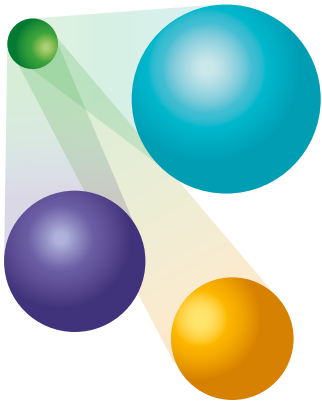
### Open Access Downloads

**Current DL**  
Subscription  
Access **1x**

**Conference**  
Open Access **3.7x**

**Journal**  
Open Access **2.78x**

**Magazine**  
Open Access **2.35x**



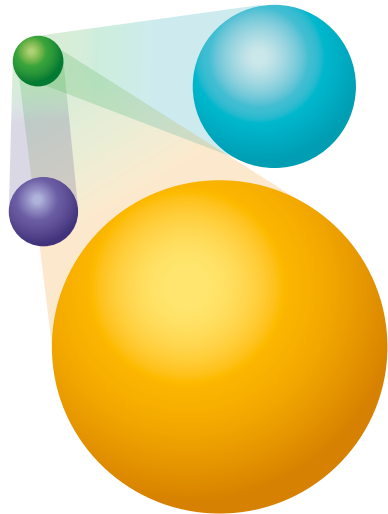
### Open Access Citations

**Current DL**  
Subscription  
Access **1x**

**Conference**  
Open Access **3.14x**

**Journal**  
Open Access **1.36x**

**Magazine**  
Open Access **6.45x**



\* Based on thousands of OA articles published in the ACM DL from 2013-2019

# Towards a More Equitable and Sustainable Future

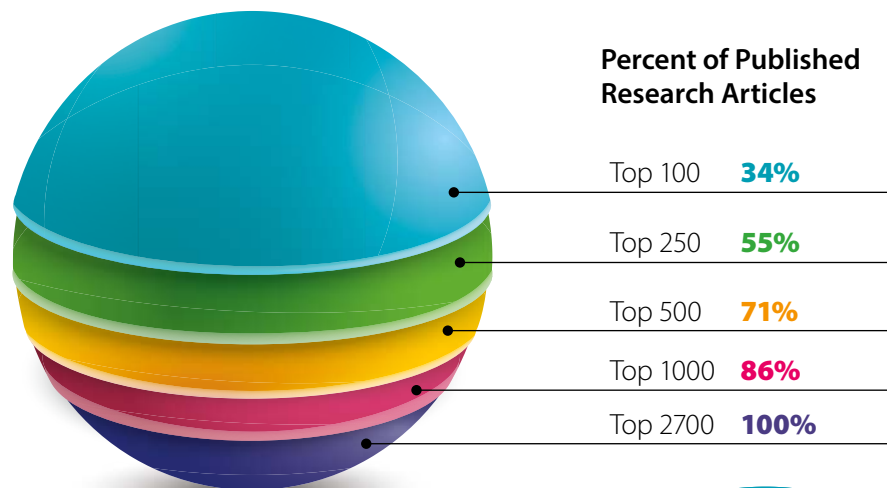
For two years ACM worked with a group of research-intensive universities to build a “read and publish” licensing model that would allow institutions to continue to access the subscription contents of the ACM Digital Library (DL) while also allowing their authors to publish OA in the DL. The result of this work is the licensing model **ACM OPEN**: a new approach that provides both unlimited “reading” and unlimited OA “publishing” for an institution’s corresponding authors.

It is clear that OA publishing furthers ACM’s goal to increase collaboration and innovation in computing; the question is how to accelerate ACM’s OA publishing in a sustainable way?

The ACM OPEN license is designed to sustainably transition ACM from its traditional “Read Only” license model based on accessing paywalled content, to a new model based on OA publishing. **The relationship of publishing output to subscription revenue under the “Read Only” model may be found in the graphics on the left-hand side below.** Both graphics on the left-hand side depict the roughly 2,700 institutions worldwide that subscribe to the ACM DL, ranked cumulatively according to publication output. The top graphic

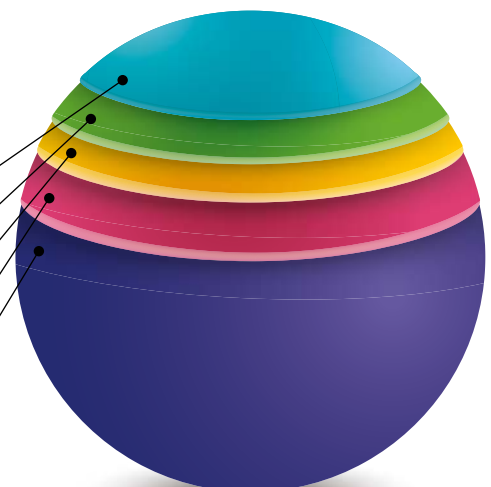
## Distribution of Publishing vs. Revenue Under “Read Only” License Model

*(Cumulative, Institutions Ranked By Publication Output)*



### Current Percent of DL License Revenue

Top 100	5%
Top 250	11%
Top 500	18%
Top 1000	32%
Top 2700	100%



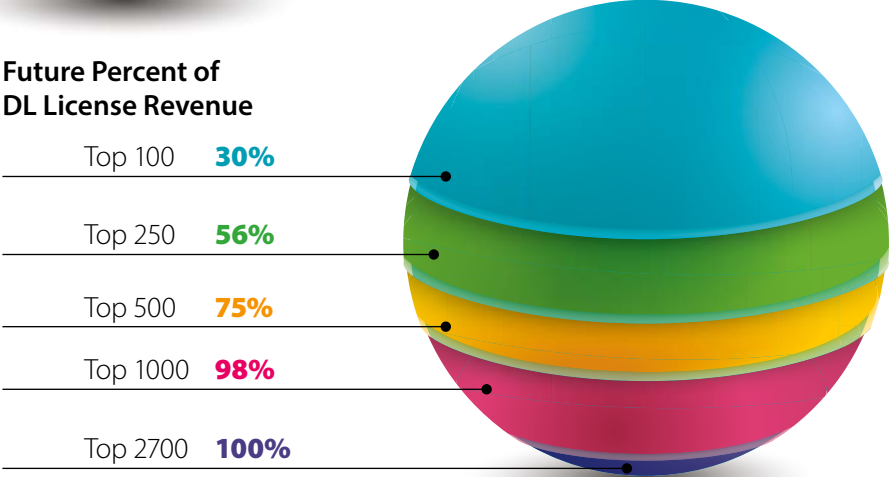
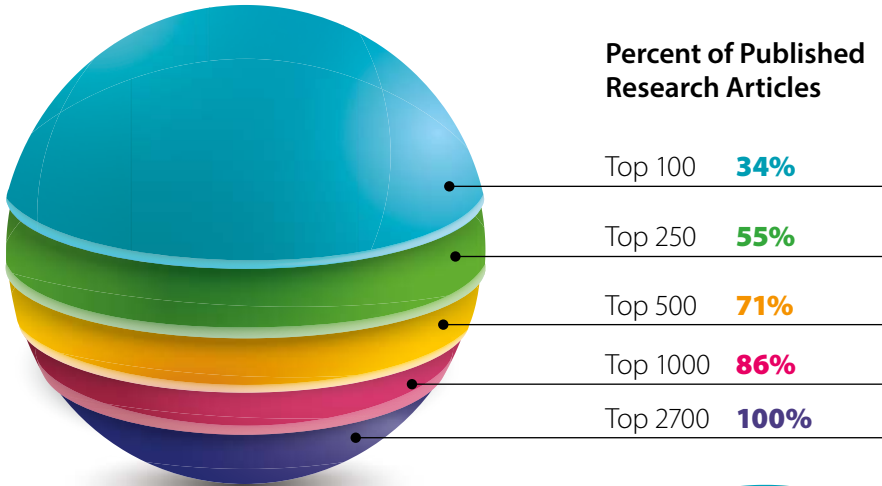
shows the distribution of published articles by cumulative segment, whereas the bottom shows the distribution of subscription revenues according to the same segments. It is evident from this comparison that the revenue distribution from ACM's "Read Only" model will not cover its associated publication costs, since for example the Top 100 publishing institutions account for 34% of publication output, but only 5% of "Read Only" subscription revenue. Similarly, under this distribution the bottom 1,700 institutions are contributing 68% of revenues but only 14% of article output. As ACM publishes more OA content going forward, it is not sustainable for 68% of revenues to rest with the segment of institutions publishing relatively few articles.

Under the ACM OPEN model, tier pricing is designed to redistribute revenues so that they are better aligned with publication output. **The two graphics on the right-hand side show the same relationship between percentage of publication output vs. licensed revenue, except now under ACM OPEN.** The percentages are now much more similar, reflecting a more equitable and sustainable distribution moving forward.

*As a scientific society and publisher ACM publishes approximately 30,000 journal, magazine and proceeding articles every year. Of this total, approximately 70% are considered peer-reviewed research articles. It is the operating cost of maintaining this subset of annually published research articles that ACM OPEN is designed to maintain.*

### Distribution of Publishing vs. Revenue Under "ACM OPEN" License Model

*(Cumulative, Institutions Ranked By Publication Output)*



# A Transparent and Equitable Pricing Model

*ACM Publications support ACM's mission to further the field of computer science and maintain "good works" programs such as providing no cost ACM Digital Library access to developing nations, diversity and inclusion programs, and other initiatives.*

The ACM OPEN model classifies institutions into one of ten tiers based on publication output. (see section below on ACM OPEN Tier Pricing). The ten-tier price model is designed so that each tier will effectively cover its publication costs and lessen the cost burden on institutions who publish fewer articles per year. The end goal is a more proportionate distribution of costs to ensure a sustainable OA publishing future.

As the migration to full OA publishing progresses, ACM will reach percentage thresholds of the current year's OA research content. As these thresholds are reached, the pricing for the Tier 10 institutions will decrease, thereby redistributing cost more equitably according to publication output.

## ACM OPEN Tier Pricing

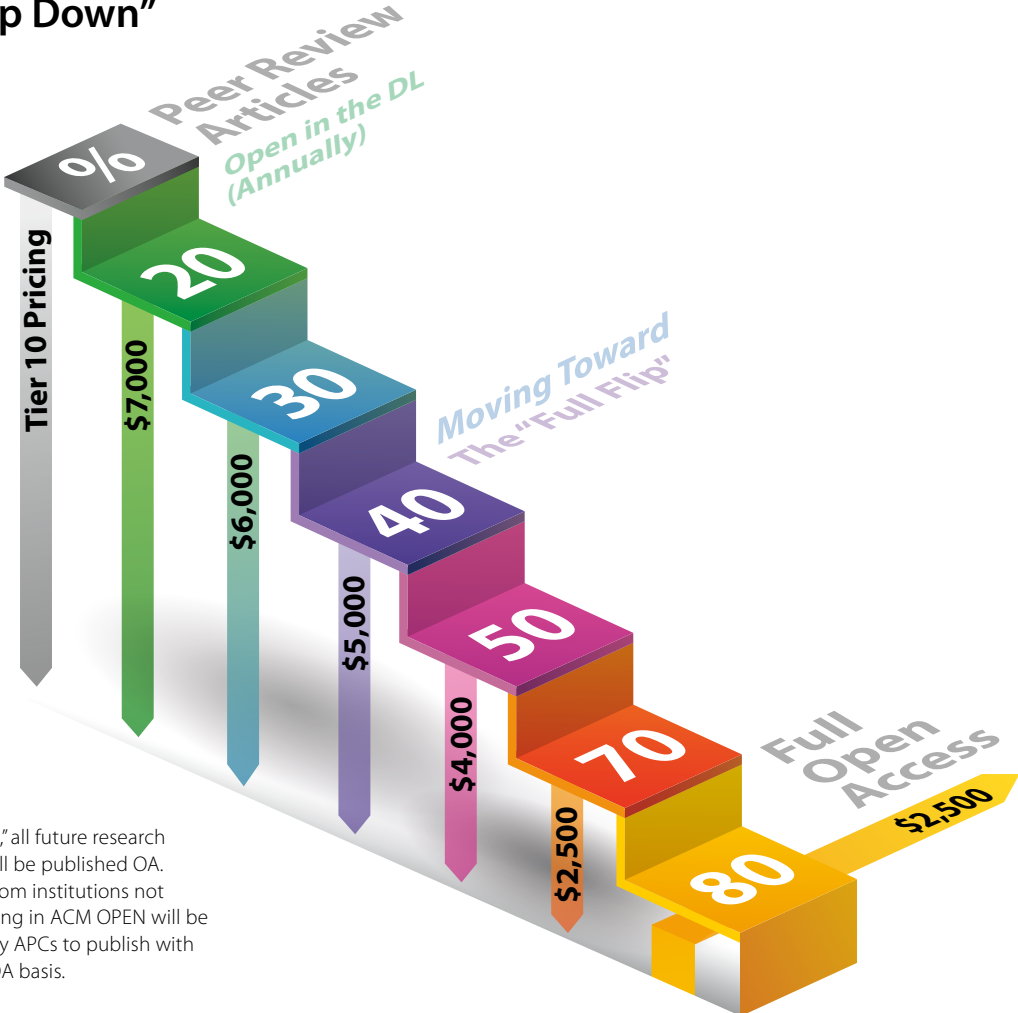
Tier Level	Article Output	Tier Pricing	Cumulative % of Revenue
1	75+	\$100,000	12%
2	60-74	\$75,000	16%
3	40-59	\$60,000	30%
4	30-39	\$45,000	39%
5	20-29	\$35,000	52%
6	16-19	\$25,000	59%
7	12-15	\$17,500	66%
8	8-11	\$12,500	76%
9	4-7	\$10,000	94%
10	0-3	\$2,500*	100%

\* All Tier 10 institutions will gradually be reduced to ~\$2,500 level as certain OA thresholds are met, starting at 20% of total newly published "APC eligible" articles are published OA in the DL. Experience with "ramp down" will likely impact pricing for Tiers 1-5 over long term.

The scheduled “ramp down” in pricing for Tier 10 institutions may be seen in the graphic below. Any Tier 10 institution with a current “read only” subscription price lower than the then current ACM OPEN Tier 10 price would keep their lower “read only” price until that price decreases as per the below “ramp down” schedule. Tier 10 institutions that continue to participate under ACM OPEN will enjoy access to the full-text archive of ACM publications and additional non-peer reviewed published content. It is hoped that reducing the Tier 10 price over time will help mitigate against widescale Tier 10 cancellations, and in turn will lessen the cost burden for high-publishing institutions under the ACM OPEN model.

Once ACM achieves a mark of about 80% OA current year research content, it will have achieved a sustainable level to enable the “full flip” to complete OA research publishing. At this point all ACM published research will be published OA on an ongoing basis. To ensure this, APCs will still be an option for corresponding authors not affiliated with an ACM OPEN institution.

### Tier 10 Pricing “Ramp Down”



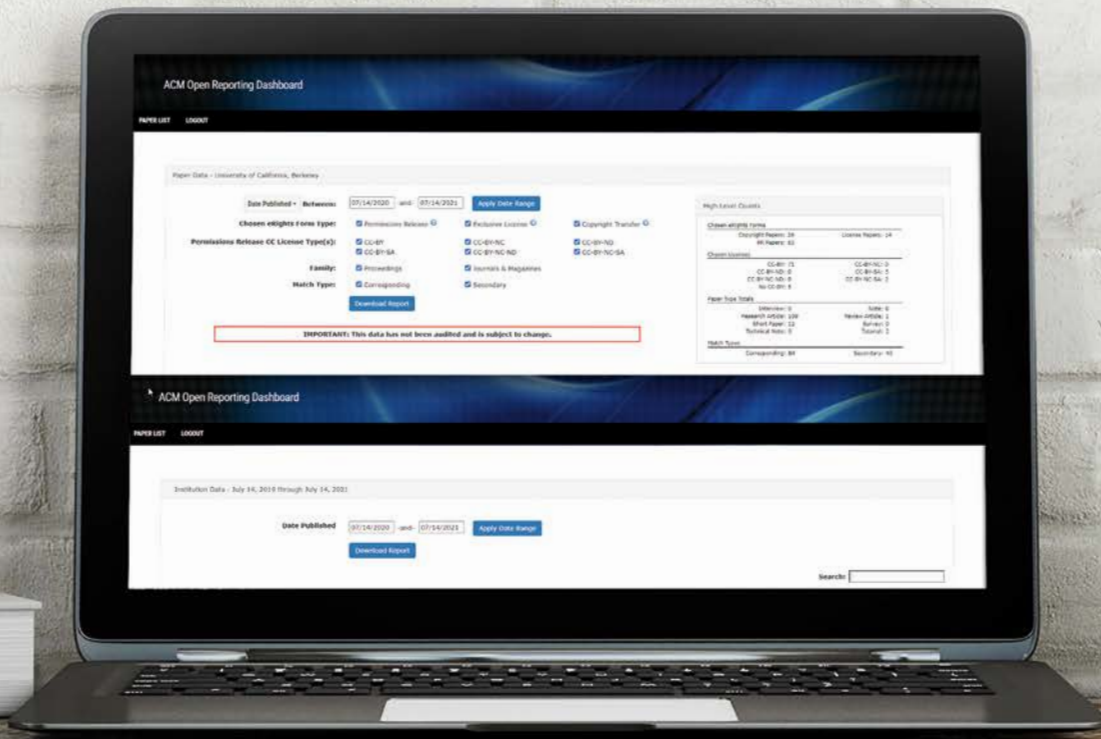
\* At “full flip,” all future research articles will be published OA. Authors from institutions not participating in ACM OPEN will be able to pay APCs to publish with ACM on OA basis.

# A Commitment to Financial Transparency

Financial data transparency has been essential to the ACM OPEN model since its inception. The model itself was built over a period of two years by ACM and leading academic institutions in a collaborative and transparent spirit, and ACM is committed to the ongoing reporting of financial and publication data to its global community of institutional stakeholders.

The ACM Publications department first reported its calendar year financials in the May 2020 issue of its flagship publication: Communications of the ACM. This article is published OA and is available to download from the ACM Digital Library (<https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3389687>).

Insight into ACM Publications' financial picture is important so that stakeholder institutions understand the logic behind ACM OPEN's price model. It is important to state here that ACM's goal with the ACM OPEN migration is not to generate a large surplus in revenue, but rather to sustainably transition its revenues from readership-based to authorship-based. Transparency around publication data is equally important because it provides the global community with insight into ACM's overall OA migration process, and because it allows institutions to stay abreast of their own publication output.





# Author Rights and Process

In accordance with major funder mandates, the ACM OPEN model provides a default Creative Commons CC-BY license for each eligible research article. Although CC-BY is the default author license under ACM OPEN, the participating author does have the choice to choose any of the Creative Commons license options, or to transfer copyright or exclusive publishing rights to ACM if they so wish.

To be sure that their article is accepted for ACM OPEN, authors at ACM OPEN participating institutions should be sure to use their institutional email domain when submitting the article for review and for author rights choice after acceptance. Institutional email domain is the primary means by which ACM is recognizing author affiliation for ACM OPEN, so **we request that authors do not use a generic private domain such as gmail.com or yahoo.com, etc.**

Also provided in the ACM OPEN license is the automatic deposit of all research articles published by the ACM OPEN-licensed institution into its non-commercial institutional repository. This provision includes all such articles published OA in their final published Version of Record ("VOR") form, and all other articles not yet published OA in their "Accepted Manuscript" form. It is envisioned that eventually all future research articles will be deposited in their VOR form once ACM has reached 100% OA research publishing sustainability.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Who is eligible for Open Access publishing under the ACM OPEN license model?**

All corresponding authors from an institution participating in ACM OPEN will have their research articles published Open Access in ACM journals, conference proceedings and magazines in perpetuity at the time of publication at no cost to the authors.

## **What article types are eligible for OA publication in the ACM OPEN license model?**

All fully peer-reviewed research articles newly published in ACM's magazines, conference proceedings and journals are eligible.

## **Does the same level of content access exist under ACM OPEN?**

Under the ACM OPEN agreement, faculty and students will continue to receive unlimited and unrestricted access to all articles in the ACM Digital Library, as according to ACM's regular terms of use found at the following URL: [https://www.acm.org/publications/policies/dl\\_use\\_policies](https://www.acm.org/publications/policies/dl_use_policies).

## **How is my institution's ACM OPEN Tier classification determined?**

Your institution's ACM OPEN Tier is determined by the average annual number of affiliated corresponding authored peer-reviewed research articles published over the most recent full 3 year period. Current ACM OPEN-participating institutions will have their ACM OPEN Tier for the next license period determined by using the annual average from the final 3 years of their current ACM OPEN license period.

Newly participating institutions will have their tier fixed on April 1 of each year based on the publication data from the last 3 full calendar years. For example on April 1, 2030 all new ACM OPEN-participating institutions would be tiered according to their average publication output from the January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2029 period.

### **Why should an institution encourage its researchers to publish their work Open Access?**

If you publish your paper Open Access, you can retain your rights as an author and your work becomes immediately accessible to the world for free. As a result, your research will be more widely disseminated and will have greater impact. Authors are able to choose a Creative Commons CC-BY license.


### **How will my article be Open Access?**

Corresponding Authors will have the option to select the rights assignment option of their choice, including the option for all individual co-authors of the published article to retain the copyright to their article, provide ACM with an exclusive license to publish their article, provide ACM with a non-exclusive license to publish their article, and in the case of the authors' copyright retention, to make their published article shareable via the use of a Creative Commons license, with CC-BY as the default option.

### **Once fully executed, may the ACM OPEN license agreement, including financial information be published?**

Yes, however we ask for the actual signatures in the license to be redacted for purposes of identity protection.

**To learn more about the ACM OPEN model, please visit us at <https://libraries.acm.org/subscriptions-access/acmopen> or contact us directly at [acmopen@hq.acm.org](mailto:acmopen@hq.acm.org)**



*ACM is committed to an Open Access future.  
ACM OPEN is how we will get there.*

TU/e library is excited about ACM's transformative model for Open Access publication. ACM made a clear commitment to transition to a fully sustainable and Plan S compliant OA scholarly publisher and we support that. This deal therefore is an important step in supporting our researchers in the transition towards Open Access publishing for all peer reviewed scholarly articles and proceedings.

*— Merle Rodenburg,  
Director Data  
Management and Library,  
TU/e (Eindhoven  
University of Technology)*



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