

# Open Access Initiatives

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**Open access** (OA) is a publishing and distribution model that makes scholarly research literature—much of which is funded by taxpayers around the world—freely available to the public online, without restrictions (<http://opendefinition.org>). (See videos *Open Access Policies: An Introduction* from COAPI and *Sherpa Authors and Open Access*).

OA frequently refers to *journals*. Although their content is “free,” many are indeed peer-reviewed and achieve high-impact status. As OA content is not behind prohibitively expensive paywalls, readership consequently hails from all corners of the globe. (For legal access to full-text OA articles, see [Unpaywall.org](http://Unpaywall.org).)

OA is also associated with **Open Educational Resources (OER)** (i.e., resources used to educate and train students). **Open Data** is a third example of OA scholarship available to scientists and students. Open Data typically applies to a range of non-textual materials, including datasets, statistics, transcripts and survey results along with the metadata associated with these objects. The data is the information necessary to replicate and verify research results.

### Models of OA Journals

**Green** (self-archiving)—The author shares a version (usually post-print) to an OA website, often their institution’s **institutional repository**. Publishers may stipulate embargoes of 12-48 months, mandatory use of Digital Object Identifiers (DOI), and use of pre-print PDF (rather than the publisher’s PDF). (For more on the importance of institutional repositories, see “Perceived values and benefits of Institutional repositories: A perspective of digital curation,” by S.Y. Rieh, et al. *SI, U Michigan*, [2007].)

Yeshiva University’s institutional repository, YAIR (Yeshiva Academic Institutional Repository), was established in May 2018 and so far has 4,095 items posted by 4,050 authors, encompassing 2,734 subjects. YAIR accepts research and scholarship from YU faculty, staff, and students. Examples of material on YAIR include articles, monographs, theses and dissertations, working papers, technical reports, conference papers and presentations, datasets, software code, images, video and other multimedia creations.

**Gold** OA articles are those whose access is immediate on the publisher’s website.

**Hybrid** OA refers to a journal to which a publishing fee has been paid by the author or the author’s institution.

**Popular open-access websites** include arXiv, ResearchGate and Academia.edu. arXiv “is a repository of electronic preprints (known as e-prints) approved for posting after moderation, but not full peer review. It consists of scientific papers in the fields of mathematics, physics, astronomy, electrical engineering, computer science, quantitative biology, statistics, mathematical finance and economics, all of which can be accessed online. In many fields of mathematics and physics, almost all scientific papers are self-archived on the arXiv repository.”

ResearchGate is a social networking site for scientists and researchers to share papers, ask and answer questions and find collaborators. People who wish to become site members need to have an email address at a recognized institution or be manually confirmed as a published researcher to sign up for an account. The site has been criticized for generating profiles for non-users, and a study found that over 50% of the uploaded papers appear to infringe on copyright because the authors uploaded the publisher's version (Hamid R. Jamali, 16 February 2017, Copyright compliance and infringement in ResearchGate full-text journal articles, *Scientometrics*, 112(1): 241–254).

Popular among many YU faculty is **Academia.edu**, an American social networking website for academics. The platform can be used to share papers, monitor their impact and follow the research in a field.

Academia.edu is not an OA repository and is not recommended as a way to pursue green OA. Experts such as Peter Suber invite researchers to use field-specific repositories or general-purpose repositories, such as **Zenodo**, which “allows researchers to deposit data sets, research software, reports, and any other research related digital artifacts. For each submission, a persistent Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is minted, which makes the stored items easily citable.”

**Research guides on open access:**