

Recommendations on quality standards for the open access provision of books

So far, the humanities and social sciences with a strong affinity to books have only benefited marginally from open access transformation through research sponsors and scientific institutions. The National Contact Point Open Access OA2020-DE and Knowledge Unlatched would like to change this by strengthening the transformation process for books in cooperation with publishers and libraries and creating planning security for all actors involved in the publication process through transparent framework conditions.

In this sense, Knowledge Unlatched and the National Contact Point Open Access present "Recommendations on quality standards for the open access provision of books". The aim is to provide authors, publishers and libraries with a practical guideline describing criteria for the production, distribution and financial participation in the open access provision of books. It is important to know which services can be offered or expected, both for publishers who provide open access services for books and for libraries who want to enable an open access position for books through financial participation.

Open access enables authors, publishers and libraries to make equal use of the opportunities offered by digitisation. In a digital world, the medialization and utilization potentials of books only unfold without the existing legal and technical hurdles. Open access therefore also means overcoming traditional practices of the actors involved in the publication process. With the help of sustainable and transparent offers from publishers and the financial participation of libraries, new opportunities for positioning in the academic publishing system arise for all players. This change is a challenge for all actors involved. In order to facilitate the entry into this process, especially for smaller publishers, we propose implementing the recommendations in two phases.

Quality standards for getting started with open access provision of books

Formats

- The title will be published at least as a PDF file, ePUB and other formats are desirable
- The title can also be produced and sold as a print edition
- The PDF file contains the complete work (cover, frontmatter, backmatter)
- The PDF is bookmarked and searchable
- The PDF contains a reference to the Creative Commons license and the copyright holder (usually the authors), and if available to the sponsor
- The complete work receives a DOI and an ISBN, it is desirable to assign DOIs at chapter level
- DOIs for figures and tables are desirable

Metadata

- Metadata includes at least: title, subtitle, author/editor names, ORCID (if possible), university affiliation at the time of publication, publication date, publisher, series title, volume number, ISBN, DOI, Creative Commons attribution
- Metadata is provided at least as a CSV file, ideally as an ONIX feed, if possible in the current version
- Provision of MARC Records

Platforms/Accessibility

- Open access books appear in all online formats as free publications (including ePUB and other formats)
- The title must be clearly marked as an open access publication
- There must be a Creative Commons license notice
- The publication is available on the website of the publisher or partner publisher and, if applicable, on appropriate social media channels
- The publication is available on OAPEN
- Archiving in personal and institutional repositories is permitted
- A long-term archiving of the titles in a dark archive takes place

Rights / Licenses

- The title is published under a Creative Commons license
- The rights to illustrations and other third-party material in the books have been clarified and do not hinder the provision of the complete work under a Creative Commons licence.



- The copyright remains with the authors

Costs for gold open access

- In order to avoid prohibitive prices for open access books, we recommend a transparent presentation of costs by the publisher for co-financing libraries based on the requirements of the title

PR/Communication/Media

- The publisher names a contact person for its open access programme
- Inclusion of open access editions in all publishing media, synchronized with the publication of the print edition
- The publisher advises and motivates authors on gold open access publications

Distribution of open access titles

- Registering DOIs with Crossref by reporting all metadata
- Delivery of data to DOAB (covered by OAPEN)
- As part of the compulsory levy, data are supplied to the German National Library and the respective state libraries, if necessary to regional library networks, discovery services, google books and bookstore platforms (e.g. Nielsen BookData)

Usage statistics

- Quarterly provision of usage data according to the COUNTER standard
- Quarterly provision of additional usage data (outside IP usage) desirable

Strengthening the quality standards for the open access provision of books

The quality standards recommended for the first phase also apply to the next phase of their expansion. The following points are added:

Quality inspection

- All titles have been scientifically tested or selected by a panel
- The peer review can be provided by the publisher if required
- Only after a positive evaluation is the title considered for publication; in addition, all titles undergo a plagiarism check

Machine readability/ text and data mining

- If possible, publications should be machine-readable (XML) for research purposes and should be prepared and made available by the publisher or an appropriate service provider
- The publisher permits authorized users to operate text and data mining (TDM) via suitable formats and interfaces. This includes automatic downloading, extraction and indexing of full texts by researchers

About Knowledge Unlatched

Knowledge Unlatched (KU) is committed to free access to academic content for readers around the world. The KU online platform is a central contact point for libraries worldwide to support open access models, publication collections of leading publishing houses and new open access initiatives.

About the National Contact Point Open Access OA2020-DE

The Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany supports the National Contact Point Open Access with the aim of creating the conditions for large-scale open access transformation in Germany. In addition to the DEAL project, which is also sponsored by the Alliance, the contact point is developing new open access business models in cooperation with actors in the scientific publishing system.