



VSNU

vereniging van universiteiten
association of universities
THE NETHERLANDS

 **open access.nl**

The Netherlands: paving the way for open access



The negotiations:
'Big deals' as lever



15 important results:
The road to open access



4 factors of success:
'The Dutch Approach'



Open access:
How does open access publishing work?



The future:
Creating momentum

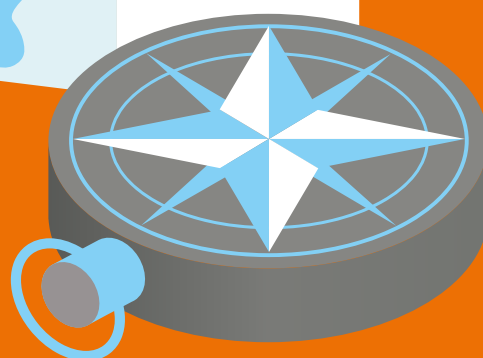


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Introduction

Dear reader,

The Netherlands is undergoing rapid growth in the field of open access, which is being recognised across the globe. This rapid growth is the result of a unique approach, inspired and supported by other national and international organisations.

In October 2014, I stated that although the Netherlands is not alone, I am confident our country is leading the way towards open access. It is up to you to be the judge of this, as you read through this magazine. Dutch universities have together taken great steps towards enabling open access to scientific articles for everyone. Contracts with large publishing houses have been concluded whereby the articles of our researchers can now be openly accessed online, at no extra cost. More and more publishers are willing to make the switch to open access publishing. Some publishers want to make the switch



right away, while others are willing to do so in smaller steps. Our neighbouring countries are benefiting from the road that we have taken in the Netherlands. It helps them to make progress in the field of open access and, conversely, it helps the Netherlands to continue to develop. This reciprocity is necessary, because not all publishers are convinced that the time has come for open access. The Dutch presidency of the EU can help to stimulate its development across Europe.

I read and hear many opinions about the path the VSNU has embarked on together with other stakeholders. There are critical questions about the cost and the differences between disciplines. However, the principle of open access is not in dispute. Its social importance is too great for this to be an issue. After all, we know that many citizens are already consulting open access medical journals, for example. It demonstrates how dynamic the field of open access is and shows that there are many possible applications in the future. There is still a way to go, but I am confident that open access will strengthen the link between science and society!

Karl Dittrich

President of the VSNU

Paving the way for open access

Publicly funded scientific research should be freely accessible. With this basic principle firmly in mind, negotiations were started in 2014 with eight large national and international scientific publishers, which have already borne fruit. The Netherlands is the fastest growing open access country in the world. Globally, the Netherlands is even considered a change agent, paving the way for other countries with open access ambitions.

Results of scientific research are published in scientific journals with high subscription fees. The Dutch universities united in the Association of Universities in the Netherlands ([VSNU](#)), and the Dutch university libraries and the National Library of the Netherlands (working together in the UKB consortium) believe that everyone should have open access to science. After all, most research is publicly funded. In addition, open access is good for Dutch researchers; the publications are easier to find on the internet and are therefore more frequently cited.



Gerard Meijer, Koen Becking, Jaap Winter

State Secretary Dekker of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) has fired the starting shot in connection with open access. Dekker's [aim](#)² is that in 2018, 60% of Dutch scientific publications will be open access, rising to as much as 100% by 2024. Open access is a key point on the agenda during the Dutch presidency of the EU.

On behalf of the UKB, VSNU and SURF (the collaborative organisation for ICT in Dutch education and research), Gerard Meijer (President of the Executive Board of Radboud University Nijmegen), Koen Becking (President of the Executive Board of Tilburg University) and Jaap Winter (President of the Executive Board of the VU University Amsterdam) launched talks with eight major publishers, which together account for 70 to 80 per cent of the turnover of all Dutch scientific publications. This has led to important agreements with publishers such as [Springer](#)³ (20 November 2014), [Wiley](#)⁴, [Sage](#)⁵ (2 July 2015), [Elsevier](#)⁶ (10 December 2015). Constructive talks are underway with the other publishers and new agreements are expected.

More Info? Scan these codes:



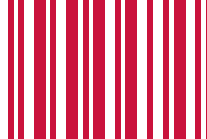
1. VSNU



2. [aim](#)
(in Dutch only)



3. Springer



The Dutch negotiations have not gone unnoticed. ‘Dutch lead European push to flip journals to open access’, [Nature](#)⁷ headlined on 6 January 2016. In this article, the author states that ‘the Netherlands is leading what it hopes will be a pan-European effort in 2016 to push scholarly publishers towards open-access (OA) business models’.

Efforts by major institutions such as the [Max Planck Society](#)⁸ and various bottom-up initiatives in the field, such as the [linguists at Lingua](#)⁹, are now helping to spread open access more quickly.

The train has left the station and we are on a clear course to achieving State Secretary Dekker’s goal. There is no going back now!

Key issues

Where does this enthusiasm come from? Moreover, what exactly is the Dutch approach? In this magazine, we will discuss all the key issues: the need for open access, the ways to achieve it, the views of the different actors and a timeline with key national and international developments in the field. Finally, we will unravel the successful Dutch lobby (what were the critical success factors?), and look ahead to the future: what are the next steps to be taken?

The VSNU is currently negotiating with the following eight major publishers:

1. Elsevier
2. Springer
3. Sage
4. Wiley
5. Oxford University Press (OUP)
6. Taylor & Francis
7. American Chemical Society (ACS)
8. Kluwer

“The Netherlands is leading what it hopes will be a pan-European effort in 2016 to push scholarly publishers towards open-access (OA) business models.”

Declan Butler



4. Wiley



5. Sage



6. Elsevier



7. Nature



8. Max Planck Society



9. linguists at Lingua

'Big deals' as lever

So what exactly is open access? Why is it so important? How are the negotiations going with the eight large national and international publishers, and with what result?

Why open access? The results of scientific research are published in scientific journals of large national and international publishers such as Elsevier, Springer, Wiley and Sage. Scientific journals have high subscription costs, leaving only financially strong institutions such as universities and hospitals able to afford access. Other interested parties, such as teachers, patients, policymakers or SMEs, often do not have unrestricted access.

Dutch universities [believe](#)¹ that everyone should have open access to science. After all, most research is publicly funded. Open access allows researchers to disseminate their results to a wider audience, which is something that can benefit society. For example, open access allows doctors, practitioners and patients to access the latest developments in treatment methods. Open access also helps companies develop and apply innovations, and allows teachers and students to more easily utilise scientific knowledge in their classes and assignments. Moreover, open access knows no geographical boundaries, meaning scientists and academics in developing countries can also have access to the latest scientific findings.

Routes to open access: gold or green

There are two key routes to open access: [the green and the gold route](#)². The green route assumes that the author will make their work public themselves, by depositing the manuscript in a repository (a freely accessible database) of



some kind. This is already possible at all Dutch universities. Publishers allow this, but often employ a waiting period, an embargo period, which varies per magazine. You have to pay for quick access to the documents. People who are patient get free access.

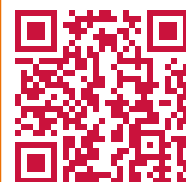
In the gold route publications are made available, on an open access basis, via the websites of the publishers. The subscription model is replaced by a model in which the researcher pays an article processing charge (APC) to get their article published in a magazine. After publication, it is then accessible to everyone online for free. Publishers such as BioMed Central, Public Library of Science (PLOS) and Frontiers are already working in this way. Many publishers also offer an intermediate form of open access: 'hybrid journals'. These journals have a hybrid form, in which some of the articles are available only to subscribers, while others can be accessed by everyone.

Multiple stakeholders, different preferences



The Dutch government is strongly in favour of open access. State Secretary Dekker wants to work towards 100% open access publications in the Netherlands by 2024, as he announced in his [letter](#)³ to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament of November 15, 2013. The Netherlands has

More Info? Scan these codes:



1. believe



2. the green and the gold route



3. letter
(in Dutch only)



4. 'big deal'



As an interim conclusion: The Netherlands is definitely on track

opted for the gold route. The UK has also chosen the gold route. On the other hand, countries such as Germany, Denmark and the US have actually chosen for the green route. The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, 'Horizon 2020', has also shown 'a slight preference' for the green route. The Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) supports this choice for the gold route². According to the VSNU, 'green' is a good addition to the options that are currently already available, and a good intermediate step, but not the sustainable solution that is needed, as the gold route is expected to replace the current publishing model in time.

'Big deals' as lever

In their struggle for open access, universities make use of the negotiations they are conducting with the big publishing houses regarding magazine subscriptions, which are also known as '[big deal](#)'⁴ negotiations. For around ten years, these subscriptions have been offered by the publishers in package deals. VSNU negotiators have indicated that universities will only extend expiring contracts under the condition that publishers are willing to take serious steps towards open access.

Publishers have [responded variably](#)⁵, because open access constitutes a dramatic change to the existing business model. Nevertheless, it has been possible to reach agreements with a number of publishers, such as [Springer](#)⁶, [Wiley](#)⁷ and [Sage](#)⁸. An [agreement](#)⁹ was also reached with Elsevier, even though it initially seemed that negotiations had stalled so badly that a boycott of Elsevier publications was being considered.

The result: the Netherlands is on track

The recent agreement with [Elsevier](#)¹⁰ constitutes a significant step towards open access. A framework agreement was reached on December 10th, 2015. It was agreed to increase the number of Dutch open access publications in Elsevier journals to 20% in three years. Prior to this, similar agreements were also reached with Springer and Sage. Promising talks are currently underway with a number of other publishers. The Dutch government wants 100% of scientific publications to be open access by 2024. Steps have already been taken with the big publishers (which together account for 70 to 80% of sales in the Dutch market) to achieve this goal. The UKB and SURF are conducting similar negotiations with the other publishers. As an interim conclusion, the Netherlands is definitely on track.



5. responded variably



6. Springer



7. Wiley



8. Sage



9. agreement



10. Elsevier (in Dutch only)

The road to open access

Open access publishing of scientific research has been a goal in academia for years. For politicians, funding organisations and publishers, too, it is a point of increasing interest. In 2013, a letter to parliament written by State Secretary Sander Dekker caused the issue to rapidly gain momentum. A timeline of fifteen key moments.

15 November 2013

Dekker chooses the gold route

State Secretary Sander Dekker (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) expresses his support for open access to scientific publications in a [letter](#)¹ to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament. He states that publicly funded research should be freely accessible. Dekker chooses the 'gold route'. The Association of Universities in the Netherlands ([VSNU](#)²) agrees that the gold route is the most future-proof solution, but warns of substantial additional costs for universities.



15 July 2014

The VSNU mobilises scientists and academics

In a [letter](#)³ to academia, the VSNU writes that researchers can play a vital role in the transition to open access. They can deposit their articles in the repository of their own university. And at least as important, they can use every available opportunity to make publishers aware of the need to switch to an open access model.

20 November 2014

Deal with publisher Springer

Springer Publishing and the Dutch universities reach an [agreement](#)⁴ on the transition to open access. 'We're confident that this agreement with Springer marks a key step in the right direction', says Koen Becking, president of Tilburg University and chief negotiator for the VSNU. [Springer](#)⁵ explains what this means for Dutch scientists and academics.

First quarter 2015

Financial backers make open access mandatory

Several financial backers make open access mandatory. [The Bill en Melinda Gates Foundation](#)⁶ explains: 'We have adopted an Open Access policy that enables the unrestricted access and reuse of all peer-reviewed published research funded, in whole or in part, by the foundation, including any underlying data sets.' On 3 March, [Canadian financial](#)⁷ backers make open access mandatory.



More Info? Scan these codes:



1. letter
(in Dutch only)



2. VSNU
(in Dutch only)



3. letter



4. agreement



5. Springer



6. The Bill en
Melinda Gates
Foundation



28 January 2015

Open access focal point during EU presidency

The Netherlands reveals its plans for the EU presidency in the first half of 2016, and open access is designated as a [focal point](#)⁸. The aim is to give open access a boost during that period, both nationally and internationally.



7. Canadian financial

3 March 2015

Open access in copyright



Due to a [motion](#)⁹ by member of the Lower House Joost Taverne (VVD), copyright law enshrines an author's right to publish an article in open access format. This is permitted after a reasonable period after initial publication to enable the publisher to recoup their investment.



8. focal point
(in Dutch only)

18 March 2015

LERU: 'Open access is an opportunity'

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) – in which 21 prominent research universities are united – [calls](#)¹⁰ for the publishing system to be transformed. 'Open Access is not a threat, but an opportunity – an opportunity to develop a sophisticated model for the delivery of European research. Universities and publishers should work together to maximise the dissemination of research outputs and devise financial models which support the move to a sustainable Open Access future'.



In October 2015, LERU underlined this plea by starting the petition, '[Christmas is over](#)¹¹'. The petition is directed at the Netherlands, which is serving as EU President in the first half of 2016, and calls on the European Commission to join with all stakeholders to transition to open access in order to avoid public funds being unnecessarily spent on publisher's fees and to make research results freely available to the public.



9. motion
(in Dutch only)



10. calls



11. Christmas is over

2 July 2015

Deal with Sage

Yet another publisher enters into an agreement with universities on open access. This time it is the publisher [Sage](#)¹², a world-leading independent publisher of scientific journals and books in the Social and Behavioural Sciences.

2 July 2015

VSNU considers boycott of Elsevier

After negotiations with Elsevier come to a standstill in June, Dutch universities consider [boycotting](#)¹³ one of the world's largest scientific publishers. The hundreds of scientists and academics working as chief editor at one of the 2,200 Elsevier journals are approached with the question of whether they would consider leaving their jobs.

12 October 2015

Linguists go their own way with LingOA

A group of leading international linguists aim to make accessibility to academic research results less dependent on expensive commercial publishers. They say goodbye to their current publisher and start publishing their articles in a form that is freely accessible to the entire community at very little cost. This unique initiative is launched in the name of [LingOA](#)¹⁴. Universities support this important step towards open access.

19 August 2015

EU launches pilot

The EU is also committed to open access.

The European Commission launches a [pilot](#)¹⁵ enabling researchers to apply in retrospect for funding to publish in an open access format.

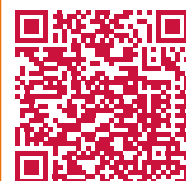
Two months later, State Secretary Dekker and member of the European Commission Moedas publish a [joint statement](#)¹⁶ on open access. Moedas: 'I believe that much efforts need to be done by the main publishers to adjust their business models to the realities of the 21st century.'



Meer lezen? Scan dan deze codes:



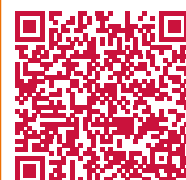
12. Sage



13. boycott
(in Dutch only)



14. LingOA



15. pilot

16 September and 22 October 2015

Austria and England follow the Netherlands' example

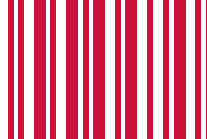
Universities abroad also start negotiating with publishers on open access. Austrian universities reach an agreement with [Springer](#)¹⁷. A month later, British universities reach an [agreement](#)¹⁸ with the same publisher.

1 December 2015

NWO makes open access mandatory



The NWO makes open access [mandatory](#)¹⁹ by changing grant conditions. Henceforth, all publications resulting from an NWO 'call for proposals' must be accessible to the public immediately at the time of publication.



‘ Continuing subscription-based access to our high-quality, peer-reviewed scientific articles is essential for the Netherlands to maintain its position as one of the most influential research countries. ’

Philippe Terheggen, Elsevier

10 December 2015

Deal with Elsevier

It took one and a half years, but an agreement is finally reached between the Dutch universities and [Elsevier²⁰](#), to the satisfaction of both parties. Philippe Terheggen, Managing Director of Journals at Elsevier: ‘Continuing subscription-based access to our high-quality, peer-reviewed scientific articles is essential for the Netherlands to maintain its position as one of the most influential research countries. In addition, Dutch scientists and academics have more open access publication opportunities to share their research findings with the rest of the world.’

3 Februari 2016

Agreement with the publisher Wiley

The Dutch universities have negotiated an agreement with [Wiley²¹](#) for the period 2016-2019. The agreement provides that academics and students associated with Dutch universities will have access to all articles published in Wiley’s scholarly journals and will be able to publish articles open access in all of Wiley’s approximately 1,400 hybrid journals. Researchers will no longer owe any additional fees (APCs) to publish open access. ‘In this new landscape, we support the ambitions of all community stakeholders, including researchers, funders and institutions – by facilitating greater openness and ultimately increased reproducibility.’ according to Philip Carpenter, EVP Research, Wiley.



16. joint statement



17. Springer



18. agreement



19. mandatory



20. Elsevier



21. Wiley

‘The Dutch Approach’

Despite its relatively small size, the Netherlands is one of the fastest growing open access countries in the world. What is the secret of ‘the Dutch approach’? An overview of a number of success factors and some criticism. ‘Looking back on recent months and how the entire process took shape, I would like to identify four success factors’, said Josephine Scholten, director of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU).

1 Unique bargaining model

‘The agreement is a great example of what can be achieved when all the universities work together and stand their ground.’

The above quote is from Gerard Meijer at [Voxweb](#)¹, shortly after the announcement of the significant agreement with Elsevier. Meijer, Becking and Winter had the privilege of being chosen to negotiate with the publishers on behalf of all research universities and universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands, all university libraries, and the National Library of the Netherlands (KB). That is, on behalf of the Netherlands as a whole.

Although there are also forms of collective negotiating by a consortium in other countries, it often takes a different form there. Sometimes consortiums negotiate by region, such as in Spain and America. In a country like France, for example, both the initial and the negotiations themselves take place at the government level. The United Kingdom and Austria, for instance, have chosen for collective bargaining by a representative organisation established for this purpose. The Dutch bargaining model made it possible to create momentum. This considerably strengthened the power and position of the negotiators at the negotiating table.

2 Clear political support

‘My goal is to complete the full transition to Open Access Gold Road in ten years, i.e., by 2024. To achieve this, in five years at least 60 per cent of scientific journal publications should be available through Open Access.’

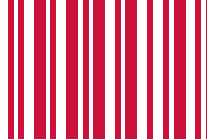
The above quote is from State Secretary Sander Dekker, in his [letter](#)² to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament on November 15, 2013. More than two months later, the Netherlands reveals plans for the EU presidency in the spring of 2016, and open access is made a [focal point](#)³. The aim is to give open access a boost during that period, both nationally and internationally. On March 23, 2015, the State Secretary also wrote a [non-paper](#)⁴ with his British counterpart Greg Clark to appeal to other European education ministers to also commit themselves to open access. The two ministers state that it will only be possible to force publishers to move to an open access publication model with cross-European coordination. This political support is a boost for the negotiators.

Political support for open access is also clear in a European context, as reflected in the [Joint Statement](#)⁵ of Commissioner Moedas and State Secretary Sander Dekker.

Meer lezen? Scan dan deze codes:



1. Voxweb
(in Dutch only)



3 A powerful delegation

Contrary to normal practice, the VSNU and UKB (a consortium of thirteen Dutch university libraries and the National Library of the Netherlands) took negotiations to the highest administrative level. Whereas normally, the boards of the libraries are expected to meet with the publishers, this is now done by a number of Executive Board Presidents of universities, who negotiate through the VSNU, with the mandate of all universities and university libraries, and with the support of SURF. This means that there is attention for the subject at the highest administrative level from the outset. This strong foundation has made it possible to negotiate at a different strategic level.



2. letter
(in Dutch only)

4 Fidelity to principles

‘We are willing to pay publishers for the work they do, but Elsevier’s profit margin is approaching 40 percent, and universities have to do the (editing) work and pay for it. We aren’t going to accept it any longer. I think from the fact that Elsevier is not willing to move much, they simply still don’t believe it. Well, they got us wrong.’

This quote from VSNU negotiator Gerard Meijer (President of the Executive Board of Radboud University) in an article by [Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#)⁶ illustrates the steadfastness of the Dutch efforts during the sometimes difficult negotiations with eight major scientific publishers. Or, as Times Higher Education put it: ‘Professor Meijer insisted that Dutch universities were determined not to bend’.

The principles of the Dutch negotiating team were as clear as glass from the outset, and these principles will not be compromised. For example, in the eyes of the Dutch Universities, the transition to open access should be budget neutral. ‘This means that we do not want to pay extra for open access publishing’, Robert van der Vooren, open access project coordinator at the VSNU, explains the Dutch standpoint.

Where Research Libraries UK came no further than a compromise during similar negotiations with Elsevier in 2011, the VSNU negotiators got what they set out to achieve as a result of their steadfastness. ‘The percentage of open access publications published in Elsevier journals is increasing annually by ten per cent. And this is at no additional cost to universities or the Netherlands for open access.’



3. focal point
(in Dutch only)



4. non-paper



5. Joint Statement



6. Times Higher Education (THE)

‘Publishers should work together with academia’

Liam Earney is director of Jisc Collections, the British not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions for higher education. How does he view ‘the Dutch approach’?

How do you see the role of the Netherlands in the fight for open access?

‘The Netherlands is certainly a pioneer on the path to gold open access. Not only because there is strong support from the government and other relevant authorities in the Netherlands, but also because it is clearly aiming to achieve open access within a certain period. In particular, the emphasis on obtaining open access as an essential part of a subscription to scientific journals, at little or no additional cost, means that the Netherlands is in the forefront of countries choosing this approach as one of the routes to open access.’

How would you define ‘the Dutch approach’?

‘I wouldn’t go so far as to say that it is a typical Dutch approach, as there are many similarities with the approach in countries like England and Austria. I do believe that this is the first time that all stakeholders (government, funders of scientific research and universities) are on the same page at the highest level when it comes to the specific approach of aiming for gold open access within existing subscription agreements with publishers.’



This commitment is warmly welcomed by anyone who believes that open access is part of the core mission of universities.’

What is the next step on the international level?

‘Although there is already considerable support for open access at the European level, I would still like to encourage all scientific publishers to work together with the European academic community and make agreements regarding open access as soon as possible. I encourage them to do so in such a way that the key features of research communication remain protected and where new technological opportunities are exploited. For example, text and data mining are very cost effective, transparent and provide a new landscape for scientific research in Europe.’

The following steering committee coordinates the process towards open access:

[Gerard Meijer](#)⁷

(Radboud University)

[Marcel Levi](#)⁸

(AMC Amsterdam) on behalf of the NFU

[Jaap Winter](#)⁹

(VU University Amsterdam)

[Koen Becking](#)¹⁰

(Tilburg University)

[Maria Heijne](#)¹¹

(University of Amsterdam) on behalf of the UKB

[Jan Bakker](#)¹²

(SURFmarket)

[Josephine Scholten](#)¹³

(VSNU)

More Info? Scan these codes:



7. Gerard Meijer
(in Dutch only)



8. Marcel Levi
(in Dutch only)



9. Jaap Winter
(in Dutch only)



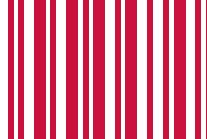
10. Koen Becking
(in Dutch only)



11. Maria Heijne
(in Dutch only)



12. Jan Bakker
(in Dutch only)



Critical voices

Besides all the praise for the Dutch approach, there are also critical voices. For example, on the question of why the Netherlands has opted for gold and not for green. [NRC Handelsblad](#)¹⁴ noted that apart from the Netherlands, no other country has expressly opted for the gold route. Countries like Germany, Denmark and the US, but also the large EU research programme 'Horizon 2020', have chosen for 'green'. Also, according to some people, the gold route is more expensive. Moreover, the prepayment model would result in 'a storm of ghost journals, luring researchers to publish (i.e. pay) but offer nothing in return'.

Other critics point to the need to increase the Dutch scale. 'I sincerely applaud the courageous leadership role played by the Netherlands in this discussion, but at the same time I urge the country to prioritise an international, preferably European, strategy wherever possible. With its Horizon 2020 budget of over 70 billion euros, the EU is capable of a much stronger stand than we can take alone. It is also important that not just governments, but the large research organisations as well, make as concerted an effort as possible, said Hans Clevers, in his [farewell address](#)¹⁵ at the KNAW.

All eyes on the Dutch

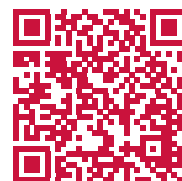
People abroad are following the Dutch with interest, and publications regularly appear in the international media about 'The Dutch approach'.

['Dutch lead European push to flip journals to open access'](#)¹⁶, Nature headlined on 6 January 2016. The article attaches great importance to the 'big deals' that negotiators have made with publishers. According to Paul Ayris, head of library services at University College London, the results of these deals can even be considered 'a great step forward to an OA world'.

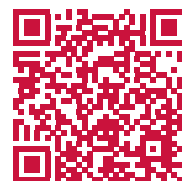
['Dutch universities dig in for long fight over open access'](#)¹⁷, according to an article by Times Higher Education (THE) of 8 January 2015. The article pays ample attention to the principled stance and steadfastness of the Dutch negotiators: 'Gerard Meijer, president of Radboud University and one of the lead negotiators for the Dutch universities, said that in addition to preserving access to their subscription journals, the universities wanted publishers to permit all future articles whose corresponding author has a Dutch affiliation to be published on an open access basis for no extra charge. He said universities were also unwilling to tolerate any more above-inflation price rises.'



13. Josephine Scholten
(in Dutch only)



14. NRC Handelsblad
(in Dutch only)



15. farewell address
(in Dutch only)



16. 'Dutch lead European push to flip journals to open access'



17. 'Dutch universities dig in for long fight over open access'

How does open access publishing work?

All Dutch universities support open access publishing. Since December 1, 2015, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) has even made it mandatory that research that was carried out with public money is published in an open access format. What do you have to keep in mind as a scientist or academic? And who pays?

In open access publishing, there are two routes: the 'green' and the 'gold' route. Green is already possible in many places: the article can be offered to the digital archive of scientific publications of the university library, the so-called 'repository'. All universities have such a repository. Publishers do often set conditions on when the article can be freely accessed in the repository.

In the gold route, the publisher of the open access journal itself publishes the article in an open access format. The [Directory](#)¹ of Open Access Journals lists more than 11,000 high-quality open access scientific publications.

Most universities have already offered support for open access publishing since 2005. For example, there are support centres that can advise on negotiations with publishers, criteria for open access, choosing open access journals, the use of social media in publications, and copyright issues.

'Open access can improve quality'

Is open access publishing difficult? Not according to Professor Huub Savenije of TU Delft.

Professor Savenije has been the chief editor of Hydrology and Earth System Sciences (HESS) for many years now. 'HESS was one of the first journals with a web-based peer review system', Savenije explains enthusiastically. 'A draft paper is put on the web and the invited peer reviewers comment on the paper. Actually, anyone can do so, and the author can respond. This dynamic discussion on the review of the paper is documented on the web.'

Innovative discoveries

Savenije is especially enthusiastic about the accessibility of [open access](#)². 'In the traditional model, it is often difficult to get the truly innovative papers published. This can often take years. It's quite normal to be rejected quite





‘As a result of open access, the impact factor increases. You reach a wider audience more quickly and your article is read more often.’

Huub Savenije, TU Delft

a few times before your article finally gets accepted in such journals. However, by then your innovative discovery has already passed through the hands of a dozen people. By then, someone else might actually already have started using your idea!’

Impact factor

A big advantage of open access publications in a journal is that the average time between submission and publication is short. In his own journal, HESS, this is half a year, says Savenije. ‘As a result, the impact factor increases. You reach a wider audience more quickly and your article is read more often.’

Higher quality

According to Savenije, open access is not detrimental to quality. The review process is organised in the same way as in a traditional journal. We have a committee of editors, and there is always an editor responsible for each paper. Each paper is reviewed. However, all publications are immediately public. I venture the assertion that open access improves quality. Draft papers are put online immediately, where they will remain accessible. Scientists and academics are well aware that publishing a weak paper may have very grave consequences.’



More Info? Scan these codes:



1. Directory



2. open access

Cost need not be a problem

Open access publishing often entails certain costs, because the publisher cannot derive revenue from subscriptions or pay-per-view requests. How does that work exactly?

The cost of open access publishing varies per magazine and/or publisher, ranging from \$ 500 to \$ 4,500 per article, TU Delft reports. The more prestigious the platform, the higher the cost. The author mainly pays for the peer review process, the preparation of the manuscript and the internet server.

So yes, open access can be expensive for the scientist or academic or their scientific department. There isn't always room in the scientific budget of the department for these costs. However, there are ways around this, as Professor Levi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Amsterdam Medical Centre and representative of the NFU (Netherlands federation of university medical centres) explains in this [video](#)³. 'Where medical scientific articles are



concerned, universities and university medical centres do their best to centralise these costs, so that – similar to journal subscriptions, which are paid by the university centrally – open access need not entail additional costs for researchers.'

‘Open access need not entail additional costs for researchers’

Marcel Levi, AMC

Find out more?

- According to the editors and authors of BioMed Central, [open access is the future of science](#)⁴
- [Scientist meets publisher](#)⁵
- Publisher Wiley explains [how open access works](#)⁶

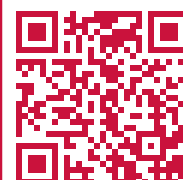
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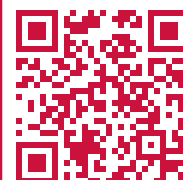
3. Video
(in Dutch only)



4. open access is the future of science



5. Scientist meets publisher



6. how open access works



Creating momentum

Open access is not just a Dutch affair. To make progress, it is essential that other countries and individual institutions make similar arrangements with publishers as in the Netherlands. 'There will then come a point where the current publishing system is no longer needed', predicts Robert van der Vooren, open access project coordinator at the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU).



DThe open-access agreements with Springer, Elsevier, Sage and Wiley are a milestone in the Dutch struggle for open access. But the battle is not over yet. More will be needed if we are to achieve the ambition of State Secretary Dekker (100% open access by 2024). Van der Vooren: 'This is why we are still actively negotiating with other publishers. It is necessary to continue to make progress in the agreements with both the major and smaller publishing houses. If we continue to achieve results, we will remain on track.'

Tipping point

It is important to note that around two per cent of all publications of research findings annually is from the Netherlands. More will be needed to provide a significant push forward towards open access on a global scale. Van der Vooren: 'We need to reach the tipping point, which is the moment that publishers will be forced to transform the old publishing models. This will only work if the rest of the world joins in.'

Strong lobby

According to Van der Vooren, it is essential that other countries and individual universities reach meaningful open-access agreements with scientific publishers,

similar to those that have been made in the Netherlands. 'The demand for open access publications will then increase globally, and at a certain point, the old publishing models will no longer be needed.' According to Van der Vooren, what will most certainly help is a very strong lobby in Europe. 'The Netherlands will hold the EU presidency for several months, as of January 2016. Open access will be high on the agenda during that period. This will be a unique opportunity to give the open access movement a huge boost.'

Inspiring others

In addition, it is important to continue to learn from each other. Van der Vooren: 'For example, the Max Planck Society has developed an open access roadmap, which every country and university can use to get started right away.'

It is up to the Netherlands to share its own success story across the globe. Van der Vooren: 'All eyes are on us. We can inspire others with what we have achieved and the story behind it. And we, in turn, can learn from what is happening in countries around us. We look forward to the many surprising developments that will occur across the globe, which will propel open access forward in leaps and bounds.'

Stay up-to-date on the latest developments?

Register for the VSNU's [newsletter](#)¹ about open access to stay informed of the latest developments.

For background information, visit the sites of these national and international stakeholder organisations:

Nationaal

Open Access [Newsletter](#)¹
of the VSNU
[VSNU](#)²
[Open Access](#)³
[UKB](#)⁴
[NWO](#)⁵
[KNAW](#)⁶
[STM](#)⁷
[SURF](#)⁸
[Dutch Ministry](#)⁹ of Education,
Culture and Science (OCW)

Internationaal

[Open Access Week](#)¹⁰
[Max Planck Society](#)¹¹
[LERU](#)¹²

Social media

Twitter hashtags:
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[#oa](#)
[#open_access](#)

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1. newsletter



2. VSNU



3. Open Access



4. UKB



5. NWO



6. KNAW



7. STM



8. SURF



9. Dutch Ministry



10. Open Access
Week



11. Max Planck
Society



12. LERU