
Case Study

PeerJ fills open access publishing gap for Trinity University with low cost solution and open peer review



Who we helped

Trinity University

What they needed

The University wanted its researchers to publish their articles at a low cost per author.

How we helped

- PeerJ supplied an Institutional Publishing Plan for researchers allowing them to publish one PeerJ article every year
- Automated process – authors are validated by email so no additional authentication required
- Library easily monitors the usage of publishing plans so researchers can publish without concerns of economics
- Cost effective and low maintenance solution

If your Institution is interested in joining Trinity, Berkeley, Cambridge, Duke, Texas A&M and many other institutions, which provide PeerJ Publication Plans to their faculty, then please contact us at peerj.com/edu

PeerJ

What are your issues with the current system of publication?

Trinity, like other universities, subsidizes the cost of research by providing material support and funding to teacher-scholars. But when those researchers assign their copyrights to restrictive commercial publishers, Trinity, through its library, must purchase that research back. We are effectively paying twice for scholarship, an unacceptable waste of tuition dollars at a time when families are finding it harder than ever to send their children to college. Meanwhile, journal subscriptions contribute to towering publisher profits. In 2010 Elsevier posted an operating-profit margin of 36%, more than twice that of ExxonMobil, the biggest energy company in the world.

Now consider that in 2011 nearly 70% of research in the biological sciences was funded with taxpayer dollars. Much of the fruit of that research is locked behind publisher pay walls. Shouldn't the public have access to the research it purchased? We think so, and we're not alone.

Why is Open Access important to you?

Trinity's students, staff and faculty should have access to the information they need in order to learn, work, and teach, regardless of the library's ability to purchase it. Open Access provides us with the means to make available vastly more of the world's information than we could ever obtain on our own, through consortium arrangements or otherwise.

What is it about the PeerJ model that interests you?

As David W. Lewis has noted, "Subsidy exists in the established [scholarly communication] system, but we often do not see it because the channels the subsidy travels are long-standing and familiar." Lewis advocates using money already in

the system to support the publication of refereed scholarship, which is then made available to everyone as a public good. PeerJ's business model is just one in the emerging Open Access space, but it's one enabled by Lewis's basic premise: use institutional subsidies to make research more impactful.

What kind of agreement have you entered into with PeerJ?

Trinity purchased a bloc of lifetime publishing plans for any faculty members interested in publishing with PeerJ. Today the journal specializes in the biomedical and biological sciences, but we're hoping more of our faculties come to PeerJ as its publishing areas expand.

What problem does the PeerJ Arrangement solve for the Library?

Despite the prominent success of some Open Access publishers article-processing charges (APC) remain a point of confusion. Some Trinity authors want to publish in Open Access journals but aren't sure why they're being charged, or else they didn't write the cost into a grant application. While Trinity has an Open Access equity fund, a rarity for an institution of our size, the amount is small, politically difficult to maintain, and its first-come-first-serve nature shuts out latecomers. The wide variability in APC costs only aggravates this problem. Our PeerJ membership neatly obviates these obstacles by enabling authors to simply publish their research without consideration of the economics, whilst we manage the plan on their behalf.

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