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Open Access (OA)

What Is Open Access?

Open Access (OA) refers to the free, immediate, online availability of research outputs such as journal articles or books, combined with the rights to use these outputs fully in the digital environment. Unlike traditional subscription-based journals, OA content is open to all readers with no access fees. Most open access publications are released under Creative Commons licenses, allowing for broader reuse and distribution while maintaining proper attribution.

Open access is not a fringe movement: it is the direction in which scholarly publishing is heading worldwide. Berlin itself is a birthplace of the modern OA movement — the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (2003) remains one of the foundational documents of the global open access movement and has been signed by hundreds of research institutions. As a holder of the Open Library Badge, the Klingemann Library is committed to advancing these principles at Whitecliffe.

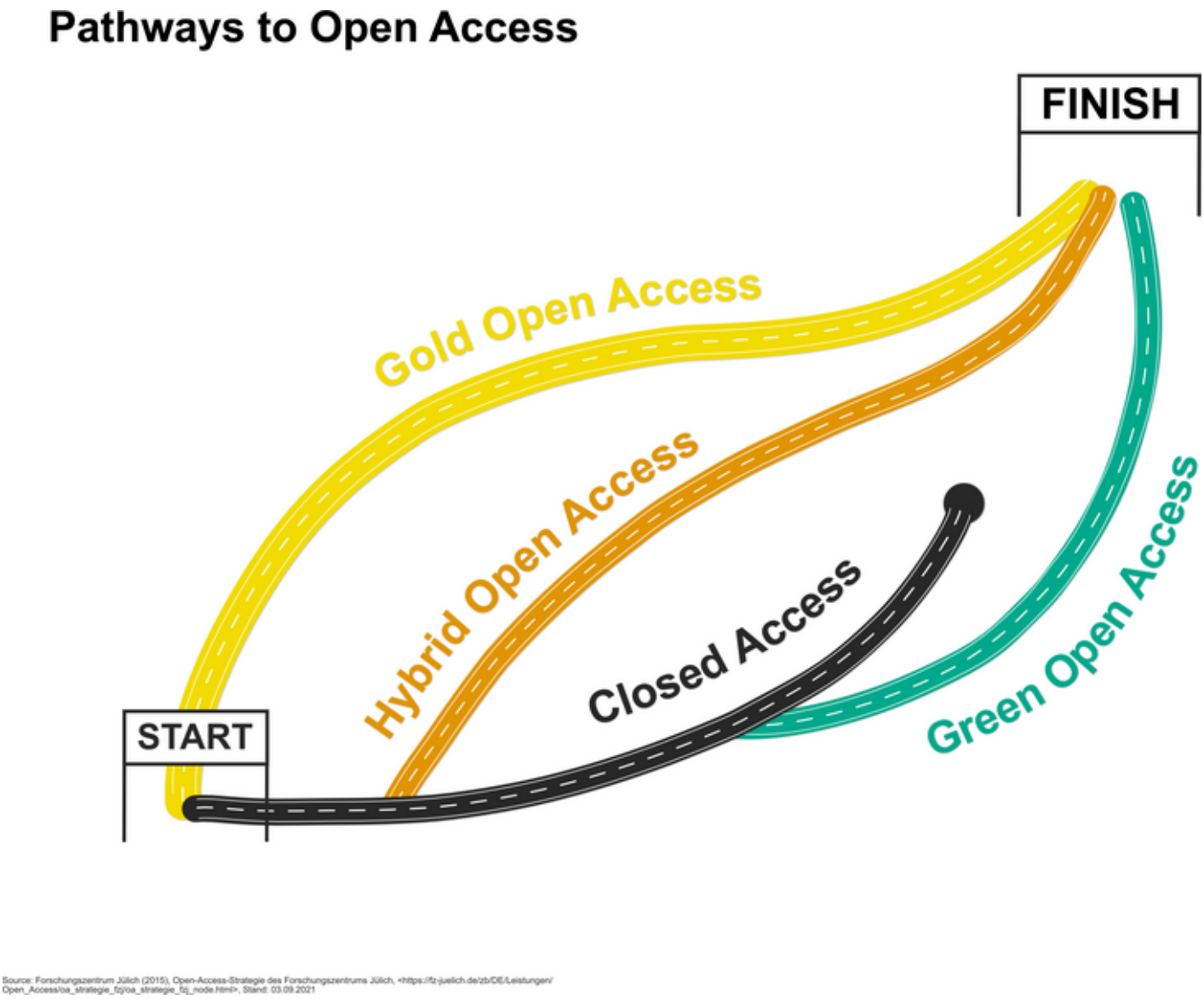
https://www.youtube.com/embed/L5rVH1KGBCY?feature=shared

Models of Open Access

Open access is commonly described using a colour system. The four models most relevant to researchers at Whitecliffe are summarised below.

Comparison of the four primary open access models

Model	How It Works	Who Pays?	When Is It Open?
Gold OA	Published in a fully open access journal. Peer-reviewed and freely available at the point of publication.	Often an Article Processing Charge (APC) paid by the author, institution, or funder. Many Gold OA journals, however, charge no fees at all (see Diamond OA).	Immediately upon publication.
Green OA	The author self-archives a version of the work (preprint or accepted manuscript) in an institutional or disciplinary repository.	Free for the author. The article may also be published in a subscription journal.	Immediately, or after an embargo period set by the publisher. Check policies via Sherpa/Romeo.
Diamond OA	A special form of Gold OA: the journal charges no fees to authors *or* readers. Typically community-driven and non-commercial.	Funded by institutions, scholarly societies, or volunteers — not by authors.	Immediately upon publication.
Hybrid OA	Individual articles are made open access within a subscription journal, usually by paying an APC. The rest of the journal remains behind a paywall.	An APC paid by the author or institution (often higher than in fully OA journals).	Immediately for the paid article; the journal itself remains subscription-based.



Source: open-access.network (2021), Pathways of Open Access (CC BY 4.0 International)

A note on Hybrid OA and “double dipping”

Hybrid journals collect subscription fees from libraries *and* APCs from individual authors who choose to publish open access. Critics call this “double dipping” because the publisher is paid twice for the same content. If you are considering a hybrid journal, check whether your institution or funder has a transformative agreement with the publisher that offsets the APC. In Germany, the DEAL agreements with Wiley and Springer Nature are examples of such arrangements, though Whitecliffe is not currently a DEAL participant.

Why Open Access Matters at Whitecliffe

Open access offers concrete advantages for researchers and students at a small, international institution:

- **Visibility for early-career researchers.** OA publications are indexed more broadly and cited more frequently, helping faculty and graduates at a smaller university build their academic profiles.
- **Thesis discoverability.** When students deposit their theses in the Whitecliffe Institutional Repository, the work becomes findable worldwide, strengthening both the student's portfolio and the university's research profile.
- **Equitable access.** Many of our students and partners are based in countries where institutional subscriptions are limited. OA ensures that everyone can read and build on Whitecliffe research.
- **Funder compliance.** An increasing number of research funders, including the European Commission (Horizon Europe) and the DFG, require that publicly funded research be published in open access.
- **Portfolio building for design faculty.** OA repositories and platforms allow designers and architects to share visual research, project documentation, and creative work alongside traditional text publications.

Finding Open Access Resources

Via the Library's Catalog

Many open access items in our catalog can be identified by the OA symbol . Thanks to enrichment data from the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), these resources link directly to the open access full text, ensuring immediate access without restrictions. This is part of our broader commitment to openness, as

recognised by the Open Library Badge.

Via the Research Database Index

The library's Research Database Index lists all research databases available to the Whitecliffe community. Many of these include open access content alongside subscription resources. When searching for journal articles, try combining subscription databases with the open access discovery tools below to ensure you find the broadest range of sources.

Open Access Discovery Tools

Recommended tools for finding OA content

- **Unpaywall** — A free browser extension (Firefox, Chrome) that automatically finds legal open access versions of articles as you browse. Install it once and it works in the background on publisher sites and databases.
- **CORE** — Aggregates millions of open access papers from repositories and journals worldwide. Useful for cross-disciplinary searching.
- **OpenAlex** — A free, open bibliometric tool that indexes scholarly works, authors, institutions, and venues. Useful for mapping the open access landscape in your field.
- **DOAJ** — The authoritative directory of quality-controlled open access journals. Search by subject to find suitable journals in design, business, and related fields.
- **DOAB** — The equivalent directory for peer-reviewed open access books and monographs.
- **BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine)** — A powerful search engine for scholarly open access resources, with advanced filtering by document type, language, and subject.
- **Open Access Button** — Helps locate free, legal versions of research articles. If no OA version exists, it can send an automated request to the author.

Open Access Resources by Discipline

The following resources are particularly relevant to the disciplines taught at Whitecliffe. For a full list of all databases available to the Whitecliffe community, consult the Research Database Index.

Design and Architecture

- **CumInCAD** — Cumulative Index of Computer Aided Architectural Design. An open access bibliographic database covering publications in the field of computer-aided design in architecture, including full-text links.
- **DOAJ: Architecture journals** — Search the DOAJ specifically for peer-reviewed open access journals in architecture and design.
- **DOAJ: Design journals** — Filtered search for design-related OA journals.
- **Figshare** — A general-purpose repository well suited for depositing design artefacts, images, portfolios, presentations, and datasets alongside traditional text outputs.
- **Are.na** — A collaborative research and bookmarking platform popular in the design community for sharing visual references and research collections.

Business and Management

- **SSRN (Social Science Research Network)** — A major preprint server for the social sciences and business research. Researchers can upload working papers and preprints for immediate open access.
- **EconBiz** — A search portal for economics and business studies maintained by the ZBW (German National Library of Economics). Includes open access content and links to full texts.
- **RePEc (Research Papers in Economics)** — A decentralised database of working papers, journal articles, and software in economics and related fields, with extensive open access content.

- **DOAJ: Business and management journals** — Filtered DOAJ search for quality-assessed OA journals in business, management, and organisational studies.

How to Publish Open Access

Publishing open access can seem complex, but the steps below provide a practical roadmap. Faculty members are encouraged to contact the library at any stage for personalised support.

1. Identify Suitable Journals or Publishers

Use **Sherpa/Romeo** to check publisher policies on open access. This platform provides detailed information about copyright and self-archiving policies for thousands of journals, helping you identify where and how you can publish your work openly. You can also search the DOAJ to find quality-assessed open access journals in your discipline, and consult the Research Database Index for an overview of all databases available to the Whitecliffe community.

2. Deposit Work in Repositories

Repositories are essential for Green OA. Whitecliffe's **Institutional Repository** is now live and accepting deposits. Faculty members can deposit accepted manuscripts, preprints, working papers, and other research outputs directly. Students should consult the thesis submission guide for instructions on depositing completed theses.

Additional repository options include:

- **Zenodo** — A general-purpose open repository hosted by CERN and funded by the European Commission. Accepts any research output (papers, datasets, presentations, posters, software) and assigns a DOI.
- **re3data.org** — A comprehensive registry of research data repositories across disciplines. Use it to find the right repository for your datasets.

What is the Zweitveröffentlichungsrecht (secondary publication right)?

Under German copyright law (§ 38(4) UrhG), authors of scholarly articles resulting from publicly funded research may make the accepted manuscript version publicly available twelve months after initial publication, regardless of any exclusive rights granted to the publisher. This right applies to articles in periodical publications that appear at least twice per year, and it cannot be waived by contract. It provides a straightforward legal basis for Green OA self-archiving in the Whitecliffe Institutional Repository. For further details, see the open-access.network guide on the Zweitveröffentlichungsrecht.

3. Disseminate Your Research

After publication, make sure your work reaches the widest possible audience:

- **Unpaywall** — Ensure your OA deposit is discoverable. Unpaywall harvests from repositories, so depositing in the Whitecliffe repository or Zenodo means your work will be found automatically.
- **ORCID** — Register for a free ORCID iD to link all your publications to a single, persistent author identifier. This helps avoid confusion with other researchers who share your name.
- **Academic social networks** — Platforms such as ResearchGate or Academia.edu can increase visibility, but uploading publisher PDFs to these platforms may violate copyright. Always check with Sherpa/Romeo first, and prefer depositing in a proper repository.

4. Create and Share Open Educational Resources (OERs)

Faculty members can contribute to open education by developing and sharing teaching materials. Platforms include:

- **OER Commons** — A resource library for finding and contributing openly licensed educational materials.
- **twillo** — A German OER portal for higher education, supported by the Stifterverband. Particularly relevant for sharing materials in the German academic context.

- **Whitecliffe LibGuide on OER** — Our own guide to open educational resources.

Understanding Licensing: Creative Commons

When publishing open access, selecting the right license is essential. Creative Commons (CC) licenses are the standard in scholarly publishing. They allow you to retain copyright while specifying how others may reuse your work. All CC licenses require attribution (credit to the original author); the differences lie in what additional restrictions apply.

Overview of the six Creative Commons licenses (version 4.0)

License	Commercial Use?	Adaptations?	Notes
CC BY	Yes	Yes	Most permissive. Recommended by the Berlin Declaration and most funders. Maximises reuse and citation potential.
CC BY-SA	Yes	Yes, under the same license	“Share Alike” ensures derivative works remain open. Used by Wikipedia.
CC BY-NC	No	Yes	Restricts commercial use. Note: the definition of “commercial” can be ambiguous (e.g., educational fee-charging institutions).
CC BY-NC-SA	No	Yes, under the same license	Combines non-commercial and share-alike conditions. Used by the Klingemann Library LibGuides.
CC BY-ND	Yes	No	“No Derivatives” prevents others from adapting the work. Rarely recommended for academic use.
CC BY-NC-ND	No	No	Most restrictive CC license. Limits both commercial reuse and adaptation.

Which license should I choose?

For maximum impact and compliance with the Berlin Declaration and most funder mandates, **CC BY** is recommended. It allows the broadest possible reuse while always requiring attribution. If you have specific concerns about commercial exploitation of your work, CC BY-NC is a common compromise, but be aware that it can restrict legitimate uses (e.g., a commercial educational platform redistributing your paper). The Creative Commons website provides an interactive License Chooser to help you decide. For further guidance, see the open-access.network page on licenses.

Recognising and Avoiding Predatory Publishers

Predatory publishers exploit the open access model by charging publication fees without providing genuine peer review, editorial oversight, or lasting archival. Their journals may look professional at first glance, but the work they publish lacks quality assurance and may damage your academic reputation. This is a particular risk for researchers at international institutions who may receive unsolicited publication invitations in English.

Warning Signs

- Unsolicited emails inviting you to submit, join an editorial board, or speak at a conference, especially if they are overly flattering or use a generic tone.
- Promises of extremely fast peer review (days, not weeks).
- Lack of clear information about the editorial board, peer review process, or publication fees on the journal's website.
- A journal title that closely imitates a well-known publication, often incorporating words like “International,” “European,” or “American.”
- No listing in established indexes such as the DOAJ, Scopus, or Web of Science.

How to Check a Journal

Tools and strategies for evaluating journals

- **Think. Check. Submit.** — An industry-endorsed checklist to help researchers evaluate whether a journal is trustworthy before submitting their work. Available in multiple languages.
- **DOAJ** — Inclusion in the DOAJ is a strong quality indicator. The DOAJ applies rigorous criteria covering peer review, editorial transparency, and licensing. If a journal is listed in the DOAJ, it has been vetted.
- **Compass to Publish** — A tool from the University of Liège that lets you assess a journal's legitimacy by answering a series of questions.
- **Ask a colleague.** If you have never heard of a journal and cannot find it in standard indexes, consult colleagues in your field or contact the library.

For a detailed German-language checklist, see the open-access.network's guidance on predatory publishing.

Open Access in Berlin and Germany

Whitecliffe operates within a rich regional and national OA ecosystem. The following resources provide context and support:

Key resources in the Berlin and German OA landscape

- **Berlin Declaration on Open Access** (2003) — The foundational statement of the global OA movement, signed by hundreds of research organisations worldwide. Originated in Berlin.
- **Open-Access-Strategie für Berlin** — The State of Berlin's strategy for promoting open access in the city's research institutions.

- **open-access.network** — Germany's central information platform on open access. Provides comprehensive guides, FAQs, a helpdesk, and training materials in German and English. Funded by the BMBF.
- **open-access.network FAQ** — Answers to common questions about licensing, self-archiving, predatory journals, and more.
- **Berlin Universities Publishing (BerlinUP)** — A non-commercial, scholar-owned OA publisher supported by the Berlin University Alliance (FU, HU, TU, Charité).
- **Zweitveröffentlichungsrecht** — Information on the German secondary publication right (§ 38(4) UrhG), which enables authors to self-archive accepted manuscripts after twelve months.

Support from the Library

The Klingemann Library is here to assist you at every step of the open access process. We provide:

- Guidance on selecting suitable OA journals, repositories, and licenses.
- Support with navigating funder mandates and institutional policies on open access.
- Instruction on using tools such as Sherpa/Romeo, Unpaywall, ORCID, and the Research Database Index.
- Help with depositing research outputs in the Whitecliffe Institutional Repository.
- Advice on recognising and avoiding predatory publishers.

For more information or personalised support, please email us or chat via Teams.

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