

Open Letter to The American Association for the Advancement of Science

Jonathan P. Tennant¹, Timothée Poisot¹, M Fabiana Kubke¹, François Michonneau¹, Michael P. Taylor¹, Graham Steel¹, Jérémy Anquetin¹, Emily Coyte¹, Benjamin Schwessinger¹, Erin C. McKiernan¹, Tom Pollard¹, Aimee Eckert¹, Liz Allen¹, Dalmeet Singh Chawla¹, Elizabeth Silva¹, Nicholas Gardner¹, Nathan Cantley¹, John Dupuis¹, Christina Pikas¹, Amy Buckland¹, Lenny Teytelman¹, Zen Faulkes¹, Robert J. Gay¹, Peter T.B. Brett¹, Anders Eklund¹, Johannes Björk¹, William Gunn¹, Philippe Desjardins-Proulx¹, Joseph R. Hancock¹, Joshua M. Nicholson¹, Scott Edmunds¹, Steven Ray Wilson¹, Stuart Buck¹, B. Arman Aksoy¹, Nazeefa Fatima¹, Ross Mounce¹, Heather Piwowar¹, Avinash Thirumalai¹, Jason Priem¹, Clayton Aldern¹, Marcus D. Hanwell¹, Kristen L. Marhaver¹, David Michael Roberts¹, Brian Hole¹, Alexander Grossmann¹, David L. Vaux¹, Alecia Carter¹, Alex O. Holcombe¹, Ignacio Torres Aleman¹, Sarah Molloy¹, John Lamp¹, Matthew Todd¹, Anusha Seneviratne¹, Guido Guidotti¹, Joseph McArthur¹, Carlos H. Grohmann¹, Jan de Leeuw¹, Jung H. Choi¹, Ernesto Priego¹, Brian Pasley¹, Stacy Konkiel¹, Elizabeth HB Hellen¹, Raphael Levy¹, Paul Coxon¹, Nitika Pant Pai¹, David Carroll¹, Jacinto Dávila¹, Marco Arieli Herrera-Valdez¹, Juan Pablo Alperin¹, Jan P. de Rooter¹, Xianwen Chen¹, Jeanette Hatherill¹, Katharine Mullen¹, Pedro Bekinschtein¹, Quentin Groom¹, Karen Meijer-Kline¹, Pietro Gatti-Lafranconi¹, Jeffrey Hollister¹, MooYoung Choi¹, Oscar Patterson-Lomba¹, Rowena Ball¹, Daniel Swan¹, Stephen Curry¹, Abigail Noyce¹, Jordan Ward¹, Ben Meghreblian¹, Ethan P. White¹, Sean R. Mulcahy¹, Sibebe Fausto¹, Lorena A. Barba¹, Ed Trollope¹, Stephen Beckett¹, Andrew D. Steen¹, Mari Sarv¹, Noam Ross¹, Erika Amir¹, Martin Paul Eve¹, Franco Cecchi¹, Jason B. Colditz¹, Philip Spear¹, Mythili Menon¹, Matthew Clapham¹, Karl W. Broman¹, Graham Triggs¹, Tom Crick¹, Diano F. Marrone¹, Joseph Kraus¹, Steven Buyske¹, Gavin Simpson¹, Colleen Morgan¹, Kara Woo¹, and Peter Murray-Rust¹

¹Affiliation not available

April 17, 2023



Open Letter to The American Association for the Advancement of Science

JONATHAN P. TENNANT, TIMOTHÉE POISOT, M FABIANA KUBKE, FRANÇOIS MICHONNEAU, MICHAEL P. TAYLOR, GRAHAM STEEL, JÉRÉMY ANQUETIN, EMILY COYTE, BENJAMIN SCHWESSINGER, ERIN C. MCKIERNAN, TOM POLLARD, AIMEE ECKERT, LIZ ALLEN, DALMEET SINGH CHAWLA, ELIZABETH SILVA, NICHOLAS GARDNER, NATHAN CANTLEY, JOHN DUPUIS, CHRISTINA PIKAS, AMY BUCKLAND, LENNY TEYELMAN, ZEN FAULKES, ROBERT J. GAY, PETER T.B. BRETT, ANDERS EKLUND, JOHANNES BJÖRK, WILLIAM GUNN, PHILIPPE DESJARDINS-PROULX, JOSEPH R. HANCOCK, JOSHUA M. NICHOLSON, SCOTT EDMUNDS, STEVEN RAY WILSON, STUART BUCK, B. ARMAN AKSOY, NAZEEFA FATIMA, ROSS MOUNCE, HEATHER PIWOWAR, AVINASH THIRUMALAI, JASON PRIEM, CLAYTON ALDERN, MARCUS D. HANWELL, KRISTEN L. MARHAVER, DAVID MICHAEL ROBERTS, BRIAN HOLE, ALEXANDER GROSSMANN, DAVID L. VAUX, JOHN MURTAGH, ALECIA CARTER, ALEX O. HOLCOMBE, IGNACIO TORRES ALEMAN, SARAH MOLLOY, JOHN LAMP, MATTHEW TODD, ANUSHA SENEVIRATNE, GUIDO GUIDOTTI, JOSEPH MCARTHUR, CARLOS H. GROHMANN, JAN DE LEEUW, JUNG H. CHOI, ERNESTO PRIEGO, BRIAN PASLEY, STACY KONKIEL, ELIZABETH HB HELLEN, RAPHAEL LEVY, PAUL COXON, NITIKA PANT PAI, DAVID CARROLL, JACINTO DÁVILA, MARCO ARIELI HERRERA-VALDEZ, JUAN PABLO ALPERIN, JAN P. DE RUITER, XIANWEN CHEN, JEANETTE HATHERILL, KATHARINE MULLEN, PEDRO BEKINSCHTEIN, QUENTIN GROOM, KAREN MEIJER-KLINE, PIETRO GATTI-LAFRANCONI, JEFFREY HOLLISTER, LACHLAN COIN, MOOYOUNG CHOI, OSCAR PATTERSON-LOMBA, ROWENA BALL, DANIEL SWAN, STEPHEN CURRY, ABIGAIL NOYCE, JORDAN WARD, BEN MEGHREBLIAN, ETHAN P. WHITE, SEAN R. MULCAHY, SIBELE FAUSTO, LORENA A. BARBA, ED TROLLOPE, STEPHEN BECKETT, ANDREW D. STEEN, MARI SARV, NOAM ROSS, ERIKA AMIR, MARTIN PAUL EVE, FRANCO CECCHI, JASON B. COLDITZ, PHILIP SPEAR, MYTHILI MENON, MATTHEW CLAPHAM, KARL W. BROMAN, GRAHAM TRIGGS, TOM CRICK, DIANO F. MARRONE, JOSEPH KRAUS, STEVEN BUYSKE, GAVIN SIMPSON, COLLEEN MORGAN, KARA WOO, PETER MURRAY-RUST

READ REVIEWS

WRITE A REVIEW

CORRESPONDENCE:

jonathan.tennant10@imperial.ac.uk

DATE RECEIVED:

June 11, 2015

DOI:

10.15200/winn.140813.35294

ARCHIVED:

August 15, 2014

KEYWORDS:

science advances, open-access, creative commons, aaaa

CITATION:

Jonathan P. Tennant, Timothée Poisot, M Fabiana Kubke, François Michonneau, Michael P. Taylor, Graham Steel, Jérémy Anquetin, Emily Coyte,

This is an open letter concerning the recent launch of the new open access journal, *Science Advances*. In addition to the welcome diversification in journal choices for authors looking for open access venues, there are many positive aspects of *Science Advances*: its broad STEM scope, its interest in cross-disciplinary research, and the offering of fee waivers. While we welcome the commitment of the Association to open access, we are also deeply concerned with the specific approach. Herein, we outline a number of suggestions that are in line with both the current direction that scholarly publishing is taking and the needs expressed by the open access community, which this journal aims to serve.

The first of these issues concerns the licensing terms of the journal articles. The default choice of a non-commercial licence (CC BY-NC) places unnecessary restrictions on reuse and does not meet the standards set out by the [Budapest Open Access Initiative](#). Many large funders, including [Research Councils UK](#) and the [Wellcome Trust](#), do not recognise this as an open license. The adoption of CC BY-NC as the default license means that many researchers will be unable to submit to *Science Advances* if they are to conform to their funder mandates unless they pay for the upgrade to CC BY. There is little evidence that non-commercial restrictions provide a benefit to the progress of scholarly research, yet they have significant negative impact, limiting the ability to reuse material for educational purposes and advocacy. For example, NC-encumbered materials cannot be used on Wikipedia. The non-commercial clause is known to generate ambiguities and uncertainties (see for example, [NC Licenses Considered Harmful](#)) to the detriment of scholarly communication. Additionally, there is little

Benjamin Schwessinger, Erin C. McKiernan, Tom Pollard, Aimee Eckert, Liz Allen, Dalmeet Singh Chawla, Elizabeth Silva, Nicholas Gardner, Nathan Cantley, John Dupuis, Christina Pikas, Amy Buckland, Lenny Teytelman, Zen Faulkes, Robert J. Gay, Peter T.B. Brett, Anders Eklund, Johannes Björk, William Gunn, Philippe Desjardins-Proulx, Joseph R. Hancock, Joshua M. Nicholson, Scott Edmunds, Steven Ray Wilson, Stuart Buck, B. Arman Aksoy, Nazeefa Fatima, Ross Mounce, Heather Piwowar, Avinash Thirumalai, Jason Priem, Clayton Aldern, Marcus D. Hanwell, Kristen L. Marhaver, David Michael Roberts, Brian Hole, Alexander Grossmann, David L. Vaux, John Murtagh, Alecia Carter, Alex O. Holcombe, Ignacio Torres Aleman, Sarah Molloy, John Lamp, Matthew Todd, Anusha Seneviratne, Guido Guidotti, Joseph McArthur, Carlos H. Grohmann, Jan de Leeuw, Jung H. Choi, Ernesto Priego, Brian Pasley, Stacy Konkiel, Elizabeth HB Hellen, Raphael Levy, Paul Coxon, Nitika Pant Pai, David Carroll, Jacinto Dávila, Marco Arieli Herrera-Valdez, Juan Pablo Alperin, Jan P. de Ruiter, Xianwen Chen, Jeanette Hatherill, Katharine Mullen, Pedro Bekinschtein, Quentin Groom, Karen Meijer-Kline, Pietro Gatti-Lafranconi, Jeffrey Hollister, Lachlan Coin, MooYoung Choi, Oscar Patterson-Lomba, Rowena Ball, Daniel Swan, Stephen Curry, Abigail Noyce, Jordan Ward, Ben Meghreblian, Ethan P. White, Sean R. Mulcahy, Sibebe Fausto, Lorena A. Barba, Ed Trollope, Stephen Beckett, Andrew D. Steen, Mari Sarv, Noam Ross, Erika Amir, Martin Paul Eve, Franco Cecchi, Jason B. Colditz, Philip Spear, Mythili Menon, Matthew Clapham, Karl W. Broman, Graham Triggs, Tom Crick, Diano F. Marrone, Joseph Kraus, Steven Buyske, Gavin Simpson, Colleen Morgan, Kara Woo, Peter Murray-Rust, Open Letter to The American Association for the Advancement of Science, *The Winnower* 2:e140813.35294, 2014, DOI: [10.15200/winn.140813.35294](https://doi.org/10.15200/winn.140813.35294)

robust evidence to suggest that adopting a CC-BY license will lead to income loss for your Association, and the \$1,000 surcharge is difficult to justify or defend. The value of the CC BY license is outlined in detail by the [Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association](#).

We raise an additional issue with the \$1,500 surcharge for articles more than 10 pages in length. In an online-only format, page length is an arbitrary unit that results from the article being read in PDF format. Can the AAAS explain what the additional costs associated with the increased length are that would warrant a 50% increase in APC for an unspecified number of additional digital pages? Other leading open access journals, such as PeerJ, the BMC series, and PLOS ONE, offer publication of articles with unlimited page lengths. The extra costs create constraints that may adversely incentivize authors to exclude important details of their study, preventing replication and hindering transparency, all of which are contrary to the aims of scholarly publication. Therefore it seems counterproductive to impose this additional charge; it discriminates against researchers' best effort to communicate their findings with as much detail as necessary.

We feel that the proposed APCs and licencing scheme are detrimental to the AAAS and the global academic community. As such, we recommend that *Science Advances*:

1. Offers CC BY as standard for no additional cost, in line with leading open access publishers, so authors are able to comply with respective funding mandates;
2. Provides a transparent calculation of its APCs based on the publishing practices of the AAAS and explains how additional value created by the journal will measure against the significantly high prices paid by the authors;
3. Removes the surcharges associated with increased page number;
4. Releases all data files under CC0 (with CC BY optional), which has emerged as the community standard for data and is used by leading databases such as [Figshare](#) and [DataDryad](#).

We hope that you will consider the points raised above, keeping in mind how best to serve the scientific community, and use *Science Advances* to add the AAAS to the group of progressive and innovative open access scholarly publishers. We hope AAAS will collaborate with the academic community to facilitate the dissemination of scientific knowledge through a journal committed to fully embracing the principles of Open Access.

We kindly request that you allow your response(s) to be made public along with this letter, and look forward to hearing your response soon.

(Please note that the views expressed here represent those of the individuals and not the institutions or organization with which they are affiliated)

the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License**, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and redistribution in any medium, provided that the original author and source are credited.

