Communication

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Publishing Embargoes and Versions of Preprints: Impact on the Dissemination of Information

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Abstract: This commentary abridges three closely related aspects of scholarly publishing, copyright transfer to publishers in the subscription-based model, posting of author-accepted versions to preprint servers, and publishing embargoes, to appreciate how each might impact the dissemination of information. We found no direct evidence showing that either copyright transfer or the posting of early (i.e., author-submitted or journal-accepted) versions of works to preprint servers stifle academics' ability to share their papers openly. However, some key structural issues and incompatibilities in policies may dampen the wider adoption of preprints despite their widely promoted advantages for scientists. We found a 6- to 36-month embargo period in place by 10 of the world's top largest publishers, depending on the version of the record. These embargoes may constrain the dissemination of knowledge.

Keywords: copyright, open access, preprints, preprint servers, publishing embargoes

1 Copyright Transfer and the Freedom to Disseminate Information

When a creative or literary work (mainly academic papers in the form of an article, letter, editorial, etc. that is submitted to a journal or preprint server) is born, the creator automatically holds copyright, although it can change hands. For instance, for US authors, the applicable law is 17 USC 201 (a) (U.S. Copyright Office, 2024). A common form of copyright in publishing that academics are likely to encounter is the transfer of copyright to a publisher (Oppenheim, 2020; Teixeira da Silva & Al-Khatib, 2021). Mostly, 10 of the world's largest (by journal volume) academic publishers (Nishikawa-Pacher, 2022) request copyright transfer rather than a license to publish (Table A1). If authors transfer copyright to a publisher, does this stifle the dissemination of information? By assigning exclusive rights to a publisher, which seeks those rights to recoup its costs and investments, authors purportedly receive benefits such as scientific verification through peer review, indexing, the dissemination of information (Tennant et al., 2016; Ware & Mabe, 2015), and branding, via the journal's imprimatur and prestige (Centivany, 2011), aspects that they would not achieve if they attempted to disseminate the same work or information on their own, i.e., via self-publishing. However, copyright transfer agreements can impose certain restrictions on how authors and their institutions may share their published works and what

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versions of it may be shared (Kohn & Lange, 2018; Tennant et al., 2019), and whether there are restrictions on the dissemination of knowledge (Lawson, 2017).

Legitimate publishers secure intellectual rights, as copyright, through their legal and voluntary transfer, as literary works, from authors. Subscription-based access is the "cost" of the transfer of copyright, limiting knowledge users or readers to those in institutions whose budgets can pay for such access, suggesting that the protection of intellectual property, in the form of copyright transfer, limits the dissemination of knowledge through limited access. The subscription model of access to scholarly content led to the "serials crisis" in the 1990s, caused by the rapid growth of subscription costs that exceeded the budgets and subscription capacity of libraries and the decreasing value of return of these "big deals" (McKenzie, 2018). Criticism arose of the value of "big deals," which were designed to combat the same "serials crisis," but instead allowed publishers to sell access to journal sets to library consortia (Rodríguez-Bravo, Fernández-Ramos, De-la-Mano, & Vianello-Osti, 2021). Dissatisfaction with this model expressed itself as boycotts of large commercial publishers because of their aggressive pricing policies (Larivière, Haustein, & Mongeon, 2015).

In this article, departing from the now somewhat antiquated copyright transfer-based subscription publishing model, we reflect on whether open access (OA) models, including preprints, offer authors a wider capacity to disseminate their work and information.

To identify relevant literature for this study, databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were used, employing search terms including "copyright," "publishing embargoes," and "preprint servers." This non-systematic search methodology prioritized recent publications and incorporated snowball sampling by reviewing reference lists of key articles to uncover additional relevant sources. The selection of articles was based on their relevance to the research objectives and their theoretical and empirical contributions. This approach ensured a diverse and robust collection of interdisciplinary literature, with our expertise playing a pivotal role in this process.

2 Information Ownership and Dissemination: How do Different Publishing Models Stack Up?

In our opinion, a fundamental academic power struggle of our time is taking place that involves the ownership and dissemination of ideas, intellect, and information, i.e., knowledge, as well as academics' freedom to engage in and control aspects of the latter process. There are debates on the hindrance of academic freedom through institutional OA policies and mandates, i.e., restrictions to the choice of publication venues (Anderson, 2021). Yet, there are also strong arguments for supporting OA in relation to the collective good of the public and broadening an understanding of positive forms of academic freedom (Moore, 2021). This may give the impression that there is a tug-of-war between the world of copyright and information restriction caused by the paid-to-access publishing model on the one hand, and the free dissemination of information (and to some extent open science) on the other hand, via the OA publishing model. In the rest of this article, focusing on OA and preprints, we examine a few topics that may bring more clarity to this issue. As our point of departure, we note that even though copyright and OA are not diametrically opposed concepts, there are fundamental aspects (e.g., subscription-based publishing models require that authors transfer complete and exclusive copyright to the publisher prior to publication) that do not always make them compatible in scholarly publishing practices (Dawson & Yang, 2016).

Gold open access (GOA), which emerged as a publishing model to liberalize information relative to the subscription model of access, represents a form of disruptive knowledge dissemination (Herman, Akeroyd, Bequet, Nicholas, & Watkinson, 2020). In GOA, authors retain their copyright through a creative commons license (Pollock & Michael, 2021). However, to achieve this, they must pay an article processing charge (APC) to flip from the subscription-based version to an OA version, i.e., unlike diamond OA, GOA involves a "tax" on the dissemination of information. Either authors pay the APC from their own pocket (least likely option due to personal financial restrictions) or their institute or funder pays it (Zhang, Wei, Huang, & Sivertsen, 2022).

The issue of dissemination can be often gauged indirectly via the number of citations a paper attracts. The OA "advantage" is thus often argued via its citation "advantage," with the claim that OA papers are more highly cited than papers published in subscription journals (Dorta-González & Dorta-González, 2023; Mikki, 2017), although not all literature has reached the same conclusion (Langham-Putrow, Bakker, & Riegelman, 2021). That metrics-based citation advantage is then used as a marketing strategy to get academics (or their research institutes and/or funders) to pay APCs that might be proportional to the journal's metrics (Zhang & Watson, 2017), which are also marketed. This switch might exacerbate inequalities and epistemic injustice in the dissemination of opinions and output for certain groups of researchers, such as early-career or independent researchers, those in specific disciplines, researchers from low-budget institutions, and/or low-income countries, among others (Hadad & Aharony, 2023; Klebel & Ross-Hellauer, 2023; Ma, Buggle, & O'Neill, 2023). This flips the inequality or injustice from readers (pay to read) to authors (pay to publish). In the diamond OA model, authors, their institutes, or their funders are not burdened with the cost of publication, but this is not an attractive business model for for-profit publishers (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013), and is accompanied by other challenges such as long-term sustainability and selection bias (Normand, 2018).

From our perspective, three great forces in the ongoing struggle for the access, dissemination, and ownership of information are as follows: (1) black or pirate OA (i.e., illegally downloaded or pirated versions of an article), the most prominent portals being Sci-Hub (Himmelstein et al., 2018) and LibGen; (2) the rise of preprints in recent years; (3) the concomitant rise in the struggle for OA dominance, and the natural evolution of predatory OA publishing, as a competitive force within the APC-based OA journal market, but a model whose dynamics are not always easy to distinguish from exploitative publishing practices (Teixeira da Silva, Dobránszki, Tsigaris, & Al-Khatib, 2019).

3 Preprints as a Simple but Efficient Information Dissemination Model

Several preprint servers are vying for a greater share of the preprint market (Teixeira da Silva, 2017), seeking market dominance via the early "capture" of intellectual ideas, suggesting that an information power struggle may be taking place in the academic community and publishing industry. As evidence of this concept in practice, we point towards the acquisition, in December of 2022, of the preprint server Research Square (and associated editing services, American Journal Editors), by the publishing giant Springer Nature (Springer Nature Group, 2022), possibly as one way to consolidate and fortify its publishing market portfolio, thereby rekindling its desire to publicly trade the company (Teixeira da Silva & Fassin, 2022). The submission of any paper to a *Springer Nature* journal currently involves the mandatory sharing of metadata with Research Square, and in the process of submission as well as in the case of rejection, the possibility of posting that work as a preprint to Research Square.

There are ample articles debating the positive role of preprints in the dissemination of information, and offering an explanation of why preprints are gaining popularity (Moshontz, Binion, Walton, Brown, & Syed, 2021), although academics are cautioned about their risks and known inconsistencies in policies (Malički et al., 2020). As one example, variation in preprint policies would make some versions acceptable to some journals but not others (Penfold & Polka, 2020). Posting preprints is a priority practice in certain communities (e.g., higher energy physics) (Neylon, Pattinson, Bilder, & Lin, 2017; Smart, 2022), thus serving to amplify that information. There is evidence that this approach may have positive effects on the volume of citations (Fraser, Momeni, Mayr, & Peters, 2020; Wang, Glänzel, & Chen, 2020) and the diversity of citations (Huang et al., 2024), as signals of impact. Ni and Waltman (2024) recently explored geographical disparities in the adoption and perception of preprinting, revealing that familiarity with and utilization of preprints are considerably higher in the United States and Europe compared to China, where there are concerns about recognition and the risk of intellectual property theft.

4 Publishing Embargoes: A Thorn in Academics' Sides, or Much Ado About Nothing?

4.1 If Copyright Restricts Information Sharing, do Preprints Liberalize it?

The transfer of copyright by several publishers may be associated with restrictive policies, allowing authors to post different versions of their accepted or published papers to institutional repositories or preprint servers. A publisher under the subscription model would typically be more tolerant towards posting the author-submitted version (ASV) than the accepted or final versions, under a creative commons license, as the latter embody the publisher's work. One way to expand the use of preprint servers is by allowing submitted or accepted versions of papers that were accepted or published in peer-reviewed journals to be posted, although different preprint servers and different peer-reviewed journals have their own policies, the former generally rely on the rules or limitations of the latter (Penfold & Polka, 2020).

Is this "exceptional" status assigned to preprint servers a pragmatic alliance? A peer-reviewed journal that "advertises" a preprint server as being acceptable and compatible with its own policies may do so as a strategic move to "capture" intellect in its stages of infancy, i.e., preprint servers may become a fishing ground for intellect (Berlin, 2018). Readers are referred to the example noted earlier provided for the acquisition of Research Square by *Springer Nature*, i.e., publisher-owned preprint servers, allowing it to be competitive with other publishers who have their own preprint servers, such as Elsevier's SSRN, Wiley's Authorea, Taylor & Francis' F1000Research, SAGE's Advance, or MDPI's preprint.org. Post-acceptance, and also as a strategic "arrangement," publishers allow either the ASV, a version of the article *before* it is peer reviewed or edited, or the journal-accepted version (JAV), a version of the article *after* it is peer reviewed or edited, to be posted to those preprint servers with which they have a "collaborative agreement." In essence, it becomes a win-win situation for all parties: (1) preprint servers gain popularity and power (including policy prowess) through increased usage, even though their financial gains are null (albeit often being heavily funded by external financial support: grants, membership programs, philanthropic, and government funding (ASAPbio, 2024); (2) publishers (and their journals) gain an opportunity to "capture" early intellectual work (if they own the preprint server as in the cases noted above), which then either becomes their copyrighted property or a source of APCs following peer review-based validation, thereby amplifying a paper's use and visibility (i.e., metrics) (Xu, Ou, Ma, & Wang, 2021); (3) authors get to showcase their work (even if in a crude state or format) early on preprint servers, have an opportunity to get their work published in a peer-reviewed journal that is associated with those preprint servers, and in the case where they transfer copyright to the publisher, have some way to display their intellect freely, in the form of green OA (ASV, JAV), or post-prints (Harnad, 2003). Post-prints are author-formatted versions of accepted manuscripts that have been revised and edited following peer review.

4.2 The Publishing Embargo: Placing the Brakes on Limitless Sharing

There is a not-so-evident subtlety to this win–win outcome: the publishing embargo. As we see it, in order to squeeze the proverbial "intellectual juice" out of academics' work until it has reduced immediacy value (i.e., in order to recoup publishing costs and make profit), it is not uncommon for publishers to impose a publishing embargo on the dissemination of the JAV of that work (with rare exceptions in ASV) of between 6 and 36 months (Table A1). An examination of 51 special education journals found that 33 journals had no embargo period, while the average embargo period of *Elsevier*, *Springer Nature*, *Taylor & Francis*, and *Wiley* journals was 24, 24, 16, and 18 months, respectively (Fleming & Cook, 2022). Some large publishers allow authors to post their manuscript 12 months after publication if they report NIH funding (e.g., Elsevier, 2024a), although embargo periods may vary from journal to journal across a publisher's journal fleets (Table A1). Even though stringent regulations are in place for authors, we find it unfair that select embargoed research is allowed to be

"leaked" to the media, in contravention of the same embargoes, thereby amplifying its value through greater readership and citations (Lemke, Brede, Rotgeri, & Peters, 2022).

An additional infrequently debated positive that may emerge from allowing a post-publication preprint (post-print) or green OA copy (ASV, JAV) of work is the ability to undermine the relevance of black OA, such as Sci-Hub. Tennant et al. (2019) listed studies showing that zero-embargo does not harm the subscription journal in any way, and that preprints of articles posted in repositories serve as free marketing for the journal and the publisher, although they may carry a citation/metrics advantage (Teixeira da Silva, 2023). Publishers might counter this argument with the following question: If 100% of information in subscription journals is OA, in the form of preprints, then what is the value of their product, the journal? In other words, if all information can be posted as preprints or as green OA, this might make peer-reviewed journals redundant. Publishers, in defence of their capitalist model, could also argue that they lose subscription fees and usage traffic if all articles carry no embargo. Conversely, even though it is acceptable to *a priori* post one's work on a preprint server (i.e., the ASV), post-acceptance, it is not always possible to post the JAV or post-print to a preprint server, and a range of limitations apply, depending on the journal. Given that the ASV may carry errors that might be detected and eliminated during peer review, following peer review and acceptance, it makes no sense to us for publishers to both limit posting of the ASV *and* place an embargo on the JAV. The JAV may compete more directly with the journal itself and carries the journal's brand, whereas the ASV does not. There exist both journals that do not accept manuscripts already posted as a preprint under the so-called Ingelfinger rule (Chiarelli, Johnson, Pinfield, & Richens, 2019) and those that restrict where a preprint may be located, even though preprints have become increasingly acceptable by most journals and publishers that we are aware of (Klebel et al., 2020).

In the GOA or hybrid publishing model, in which an accepted article in a peer-reviewed journal becomes OA following the payment of an APC, we believe that the "value" of the preprint is reduced relative to a subscription paper because ultimately both versions are OA. In this case, the benefits of one or the other range from cosmetic (formatting, copy-editing, and style established by the journal in the peer-reviewed version versus self-determined style in the preprint version, or ASV/JAV) to potentially substantial differences in benefits (e.g., a wider range of dissemination platforms and indexes in the journal version relative to the preprint version, although the preprint version can be replaced by the published version in the GOA model). These subtleties are in themselves worthy of debate and are often the subject of policy battles, for example, attempting to reconcile green OA and GOA (Baldwin & Pinfield, 2018).

Ultimately, the restrictive embargo period is counter to the desire of academics to disseminate their intellect as widely as possible, and until embargoes are completely eliminated, this struggle and debate will continue.

5 Is Information Sharing in Academic Publishing in a State of Stagnation or at an Impasse?

While acknowledging that academic publishing has created unique niches with ancillary services (see our examples above with *Springer Nature*, and its consolidation of journal publishing, preprints, and English editing and science revision services as one set of integrated services), some of which also manage trivial requirements, such as formatting, we feel that academic publishing has reached some sort of a state of stagnation related to the novelty of information dissemination. A broad impression is created that much has changed over the years in academic publishing, but when viewed simplistically, there are really still only two broad choices for authors wishing to work with a publisher: subscription or OA (including its various forms) (Björk, 2017). Within these two main modalities, intricate intermediate models, concepts, terminologies, and platforms have been born, each in itself a potential market, either to capture intellect or with its financial derivatives (e.g., APCs).

Further emphasising our perception of the potential stagnation in scholarly communication is the issue of layered "guilt" and conformity. We offer two possible explanations. First, if an academic does not publish in an

OA journal, or if their work is not OA, then a negative stigma may be attached to them and/or their work, or they may feel pressure to publish OA to match the patterns shown by their peers. Already, paying a low APC is labelled by some as one way of supporting "predatory" OA publishing (McCann & Polacsek, 2018; Mills & Inouye, 2021; Siler, 2020). Yet, paying a high APC may be a significant barrier for many authors, including a hindrance to the choices for disseminating their information. Yet, somehow, this aspect is not considered by the same academics as supporting an exploitative publishing model. This creates contradictory dynamics that contemporary authors need to navigate through. The second factor may be related to a social function and amplified by the surge in the open science philosophy, in which if one does not publish as OA, then one might not be supportive of the public "good." To support the latter, as aptly stated by Lachapelle (2022) in the abstract of their thesis, "preprint servers participate in a profound reversal of epistemic evaluators and the logic of scientific capital," and also "the early dissemination of preprint manuscripts propels scientific readers and other social actors (journalists, governmental officials, civil society) into the role of primary evaluators of scientific knowledge." However, preprints may also contribute to the spread of misinformation (Heimstädt, 2020). Therefore, framing the conflict by labelling the user as what they are or what they are not, a characterization that is based on what they do/do not do or use/do not use is – as we see it – a novel (and potentially disturbing) aspect of the OA branding business model.

An outcome of this culture of "guilt" and conformity is the set of implications associated with terminology such as the "Global South" and its battle against the "Global North," geographically irrelevant terms that introduce a cultural rift in the academic and financial status of academics (Teixeira da Silva, 2021). Another consideration is that the ability to publish OA does not necessarily reflect the desire of an author to publish OA, but is instead based on the institutional support infrastructure that covers OA costs (in the case of institutes that mandate that their researchers' papers must all be published as OA). In other words, the ability to publish OA depends on the ability of the researcher's institution to pay APCs if they are not from a low-income (or "Global South") country that is eligible for an APC waiver (Hadad & Aharony, 2023). In essence, GOA is shifting the balance from "we can't afford to read" to "we can't afford to publish." It is not uncommon to find, in the online submission systems of journals of some of the publishers listed in Table A1, a clause that asks authors whether they want to publish their papers as OA. That question is of course, not well phrased because the ability to publish as OA is not dependent exclusively on desire, but rather on means. In other words, the question should more realistically ask, "Can you (i.e., are you able to) publish your paper as OA?" This instead implies whether authors or their institutes and funders have the means to publish as OA, by paying the APC.

Finally, we caution readers to be vigilant of loosely used terms like "democratization" or "equity," which might not necessarily represent a fair form of knowledge sharing, but rather a neoliberal marketing strategy to further commodify OA through the prism of "rights retention" (Moore, 2023). Such strategies might not fully align with the original intent of inclusivity and openness, potentially generating an entire class of marginalized academics who then seek alternative ways to express, publish and showcase their intellect, and sensing that such catch-phrases may liberalize their work's information sharing. The scholarly publishing industry will equally adapt to new forms of needs and find their way to profit from new business models. There will always be two sides of the coin.

6 Conclusion

In this commentary, we acknowledge that there is value in a publisher's imprimatur, recognizing that for-profit publishers would like to recoup their investments in, among other aspects, content branding, discoverability, quality assurance, typesetting, and proofreading, that they claim is imparted to papers whose copyright has been transferred to them in the subscription model, or in papers for which they have received an APC to publish as GOA. The ability of such publishers to showcase authors' literature, primarily through database and indexing prowess, offers authors maximum visibility of their work relative to self-publishing, or who publish with competitors who do not promote their work as well. Visibility then equates to and translates into dissemination. Academics who might be tempted to use preprints, or who might heed the calls by preprint

proponents to use preprints, would do well to appreciate some of the subtleties in the background of the OA economic models we debate in this article, reflecting on the availability of publishing options to advance and showcase their intellectual ideas. Even though we have no evidence to indicate that copyright transfer in any way is limiting the dissemination of scientific information, we recognize that this comes at a steep premium for academia and society. We do take aim at some restrictive measures in place by several of the largest or most prominent publishers (see 10 examples in Table A1) that request the transfer of copyright, or to a lesser extent, request an exclusive license, but at the same time place embargoes on self-archived versions, which we feel might restrict dissemination, although this claim is not yet based on evidence. Finally, our perception that the subscription model as a negative force (in terms of information dissemination) is in some sort of a battle against its positive OA counterpart was blunted by the flip-to-GOA-model, in which the "bad actor" was no longer perceived to be the publisher, who was providing a choice to revert to OA, but the authors (or their institute or funder) who are unwilling or unable to make knowledge open through paying the required APCs.

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Appendix

Table A1: Self-archiving policies for authors who publish articles under subscription with the 10 largest academic publishers in the world (Nishikawa-Pacher, 2022)[1]

Publisher[2]	Submitted version[3]	Journal-accepted version (JAV)[4]	Version of record	Licence to publish and/or copyright transfer
Springer	Allowed, no restrictions (Springer Nature, 2024a)	Embargo – 6 months (*Nature Portfolio* journals and hybrid/transformative journals on nature.com platform) and 12 months (Springer hybrid/transformative and subscription journals and Palgrave Macmillan hybrid/transformative and subscription journals) (Springer Nature, 2024b)	Allowed to free share a view-only version using SharedIt (Springer Nature, 2024b)	Authors grant the licensee an *exclusive licence to publish*; a small number of society-owned journals continue to *transfer copyright* (Springer Nature, 2024c)
Taylor & Francis	Allowed, no restrictions (Taylor & Francis Author Services, 2024a)	No embargo for personal website (includes Facebook, LinkedIn, linking from Twitter, etc.); embargoes for institutional or subject repository, or to a scholarly collaboration network such as ResearchGate – for different journals there are 0, 12, and 18 months (Taylor & Francis Author Services, 2024a)	Allowed to share 50 free eprints and a read-only version using eReader (Taylor & Francis Author Services, 2024a)	The author *transfer copyright* to publisher (or to the learned society); in some circumstances, the author may grant publisher (or the learned society) an *exclusive license to publish* the paper (Taylor & Francis Author Services, 2024b)
Elsevier	Allowed, no restrictions (Elsevier, 2024b)	no embargo for personal website; institutional repository for internal uses; embargoes for institutional or subject repository – for different journals there are 6, 12, 18, 24 and 36 months with some exceptions without an embargo (Elsevier, 2024b,c)	allowed private sharing by the author (Elsevier, 2024b)	the authors typically *transfer copyright* to publisher; in some circumstances, authors may instead grant publisher (or the learned society) an *exclusive license to publish* and disseminate their work (Elsevier, 2024d)
Wiley	Allowed, no restrictions (Wiley Author Services, 2024a)	The standard embargo period is 12 months for scientific, technical, medical, and psychology journals and 24 months for social science and humanities (Wiley Author Services, 2024b)	No specific information indicated	The author provide publisher with either a signed *Copyright Transfer Agreement* or an *Exclusive License Agreement* (Wiley Author Services, 2024b)
Sage	Mostly allowed, except for some journals (Sage, 2024a)	No embargo (Sage, 2024a)	Allowed to be shared on an individual basis with fellow researchers, limited	The author retains copyright in the work but grant publisher the sole and exclusive

(Continued)

Table A1: *Continued*

Publisher[2]	Submitted version[3]	Journal-accepted version (JAV)[4]	Version of record	Licence to publish and/or copyright transfer
			sharing for teaching and for use in dissertations and books (Sage, 2024a)	right and *licence to publish* for the full legal term of copyright; exceptions may exist where *assignment of copyright* is required or preferred by a proprietor other than publisher (Sage, 2024b)
De Gruyter	Embargo – no publicly available until 12 months after official publication for the funder's request repository (De Gruyter, 2024a)	No specific information indicated	Embargo for personal website and institutional repository – no publicly available until 12 months after official publication, allowed private sharing by the author 30 copies of the article (De Gruyter, 2024b)	*Copyright Transfer Agreement* (De Gruyter, 2024a)
Oxford University Press (OUP)	Allowed, no restrictions (Oxford Academic, 2024b,d)	Personal website – no embargo; institutional or non-commercial subject based repository – embargo – 0, 12, 18, and 24 months; commercial platforms and social media – after signing an agreement with OUP permitting re-use (Oxford Academic, 2024a,b)	After website or the repository signing an agreement with OUP permitting re-use (Oxford Academic, 2024b)	A sole and *exclusive license for all published content*, rather than asking authors to transfer ownership of their copyright (Oxford Academic, 2024c)
Inderscience Publishers	Allowed, no restrictions (Inderscience Publishers, 2024)	Internally sharing – no restrictions; embargo 12 months for institutional repositories and/or subject repositories; embargo 24 months for academic social networks or social media (Inderscience Publishers, 2024)	Allowed only in case of a request by a funding agency after 6 months (Inderscience Publishers, 2024)	Author Copyright Agreement *assigning copyright* to publisher (Inderscience Publishers, 2024)
Brill Academic Publishers	Allowed, does not allow sharing to Academia.edu or ResearchGate (Brill, 2024b)	Allowed, no embargo, does not allow sharing to Academia.edu or ResearchGate (Brill, 2024b)	Personal sharing allowed between up to 8 colleagues or peers (Brill, 2024b)	Author *transfer copyright* to the publisher (Brill, 2024a)
Cambridge University Press	Allowed, no restrictions (Cambridge Core, 2024a)	Embargo for science, technical and medical journals – 6 months, no embargo for humanities and social science journals; for commercial repository (incl. ResearchGate, Academia.edu, SSRN) – full text not allowed (Cambridge Core, 2024a)	Sharing abstract only (Cambridge Core, 2024a)	For most of journals – a *licence to publish* agreement, but for some – a *transfer of copyright* agreement (Cambridge Core, 2024b)

[1]While some journals or publishers do offer options for OA without the transfer of copyright, many large publishers still require authors to sign copyright transfer agreements. In addition, hybrid options usually come with additional costs that authors may not be able to pay.
[2]All links to publisher's policies were archived at the Internet Archive (29 April 2024).
[3]Different labels are used by different publishers: *Submitted Version/Author's Original Manuscript/Author's Original Version/First Draft/Original Submission/ Manuscript Under Review/Primary Research Manuscript/ Author-created Version*.
[4]Brill Academic Publishers uses the label – *Author Manuscript*.