

## Press release archive

**Nature Communications data shows open access articles have more views and downloads**

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An independent statistical analysis of the articles published in *Nature Communications*, carried out by the Research Information Network (RIN) has found that open access (OA) articles are viewed three times more often than articles that are only available to subscribers. RIN also found that OA articles are cited more than subscription articles.

Sam Burrige, MD Open Research, Nature Publishing Group/Palgrave Macmillan said: "In the ongoing discussion over whether open research contributes to increased article usage and citations, we have a good test case in *Nature Communications* - a born-hybrid journal providing a large sample size, where all articles are high-quality, original research and receive similar standards of service, regardless of whether or not they're open access.

"It's clear to see that the effect of open research on citations impacts all levels of research positively. We realise that this doesn't definitively answer the question of whether open access articles are viewed and cited more than subscription articles, but we think this contribution adds to the debate."

RIN analysed the web traffic to 722 articles published in the first 6 months of 2013 and found that open-access articles were viewed three times as often as subscription articles in html format<sup>1</sup>, and twice as often in PDF format<sup>2</sup>.

Over the first 180 days after publication, subscription articles were viewed in HTML format an average (median) of 804 times, and the PDFs were downloaded an average of 399 times. In contrast, open-access articles were viewed 2051 times on average, and downloaded an average of 904 times.

The statistician analysed a larger dataset of 2008 papers that were published between April 2010 and June 2013 in order to assess the effect of open access on citations. Articles that were published open access had been cited a median of 11 times and articles published using the subscription model were cited a median of 7 times, a difference that was statistically significant. The only discipline not to show any citation benefit from open access publication was chemistry.

Research Information Network Executive Director, Michael Jubb said:

"This study adds to the growing body of literature showing that open access is good for article citations and, especially, online visibility. We weren't able to control for all the factors that might affect views and citations, such as whether articles had been posted in one or more repositories, or the numbers and locations of authors; but we're confident that the analysis shows that open access has positive effects for both authors and readers."

Launched in 2010, *Nature Communications* is a relatively new journal, and its institutional subscriber base is still growing. These results should be considered as a snapshot in the journal's development rather than definitive.

The full dataset, reproduced with permission from Web of Science copyright Thomson Reuters 2014, is available in [Figshare](#). The report from RIN can be found [here](#).

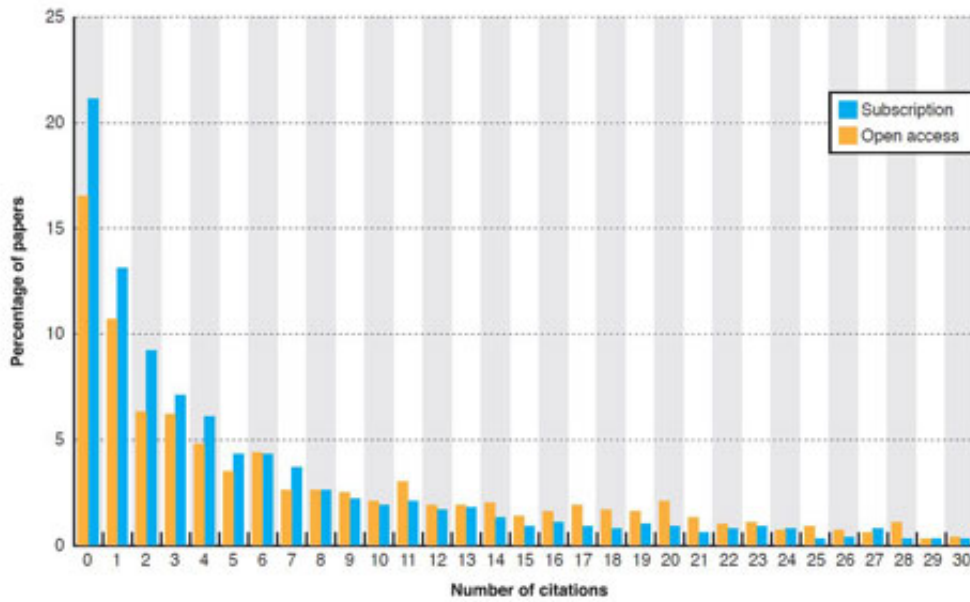
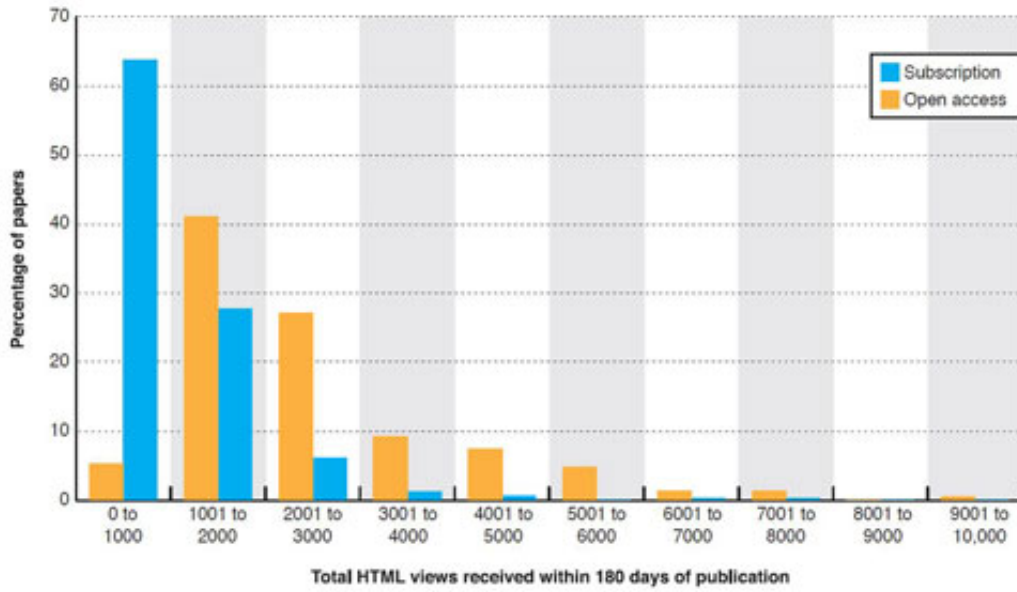
1. 2.9 times
2. 2.2 times

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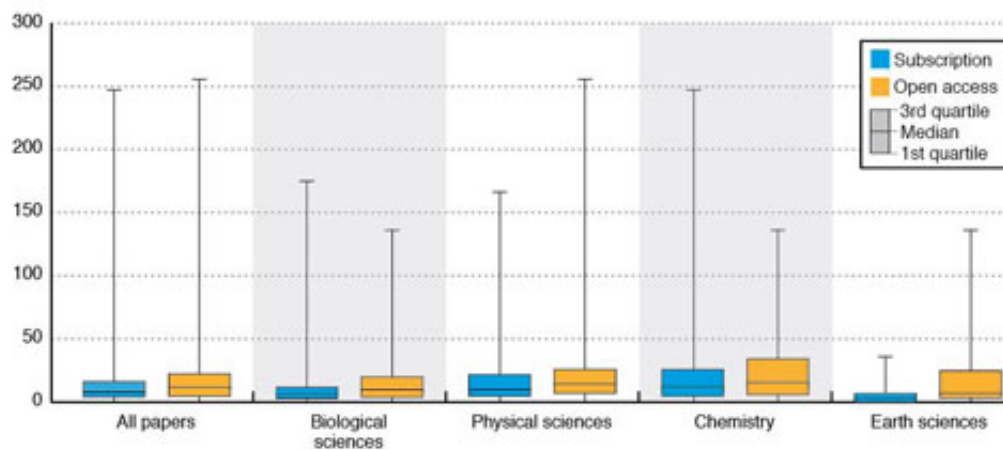
**Notes to Editors**

The report is intended to be an exploratory white paper, analysing machine-generated data on a bounded set of articles. The report seeks only to present the raw normalized data, and does not investigate the reasons for the observed differences. The reasons may be complex and due to a number of factors, and more research is needed to understand them fully, but none of these factors were part of the original scope of the RIN report.

The full report from RIN can be found [here](#), which includes a discussion of some of the possible confounders of these data. The full dataset, reproduced with permission from Web of Science copyright Thomson Reuters 2014, is available in Figshare.



**Citation frequency by discipline**



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