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Research Library Partnership, Works in Progress Webinar

Bridging the gap between availability and discoverability - How academic libraries are supporting open access discovery

Ixchel M. Faniel, Ph.D.

Senior Research Scientist

OCLC Research

fanieli@oclc.org

Research objective

Investigated how academic libraries can improve the discoverability of scholarly, peer-reviewed open access (OA) publications for their user communities.

Report available at

[oclc.org/oa-discovery](https://oclc.org/oclc/oa-discovery)

“Free access to information and unrestricted use of electronic resources for everyone. Any kind of digital content can be OA, from texts and data to software, audio, video, and multi-media.”

Participating institutions

Four universities, three universities of applied sciences (UASs)

Library efforts to improve discoverability of OA publications

- Library survey (n=7)
 - 2-hour group interviews with 4-6 people at each institution (n=37)
-

User experiences with scholarly, peer-reviewed publications and open access

- User survey (n=461)

Duration library engaged in improving OA discoverability

More than 5 years (n=4)

1-5 years (n=2)

Making plans to begin this work (n=1)

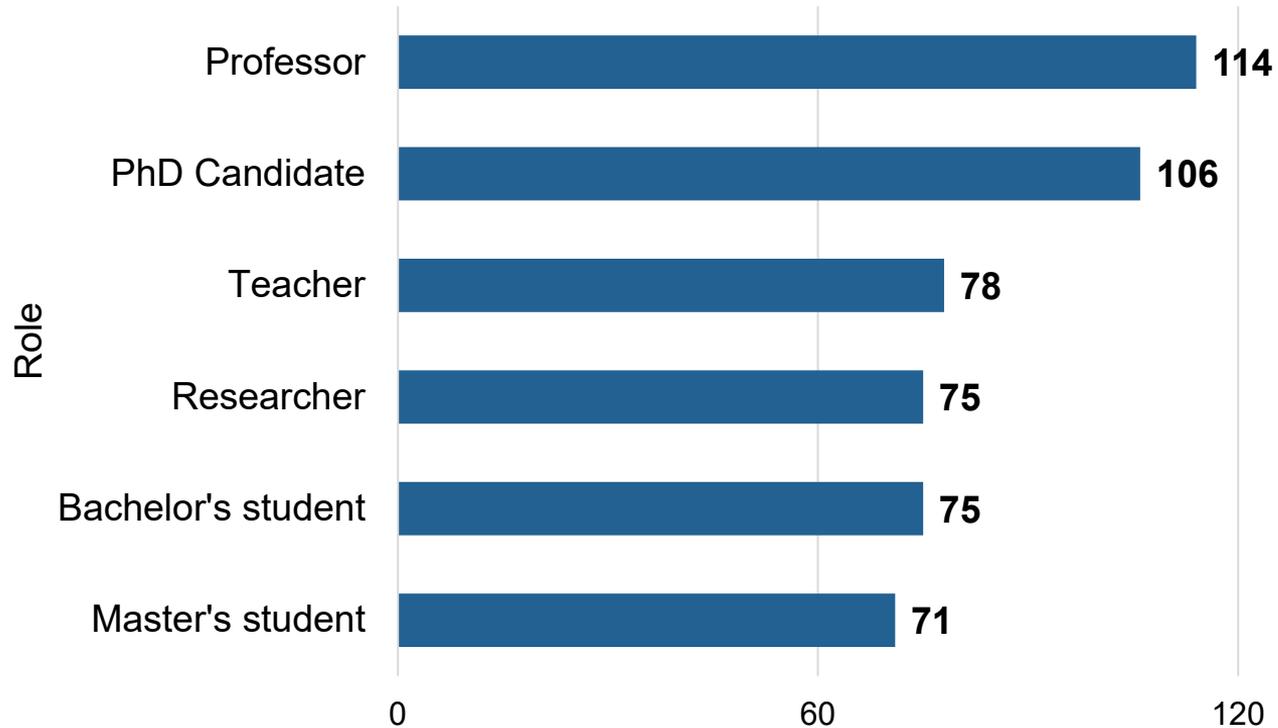
Type of policy guiding library's OA activities

Formal policy (n=3)

Informal understanding (n=3)

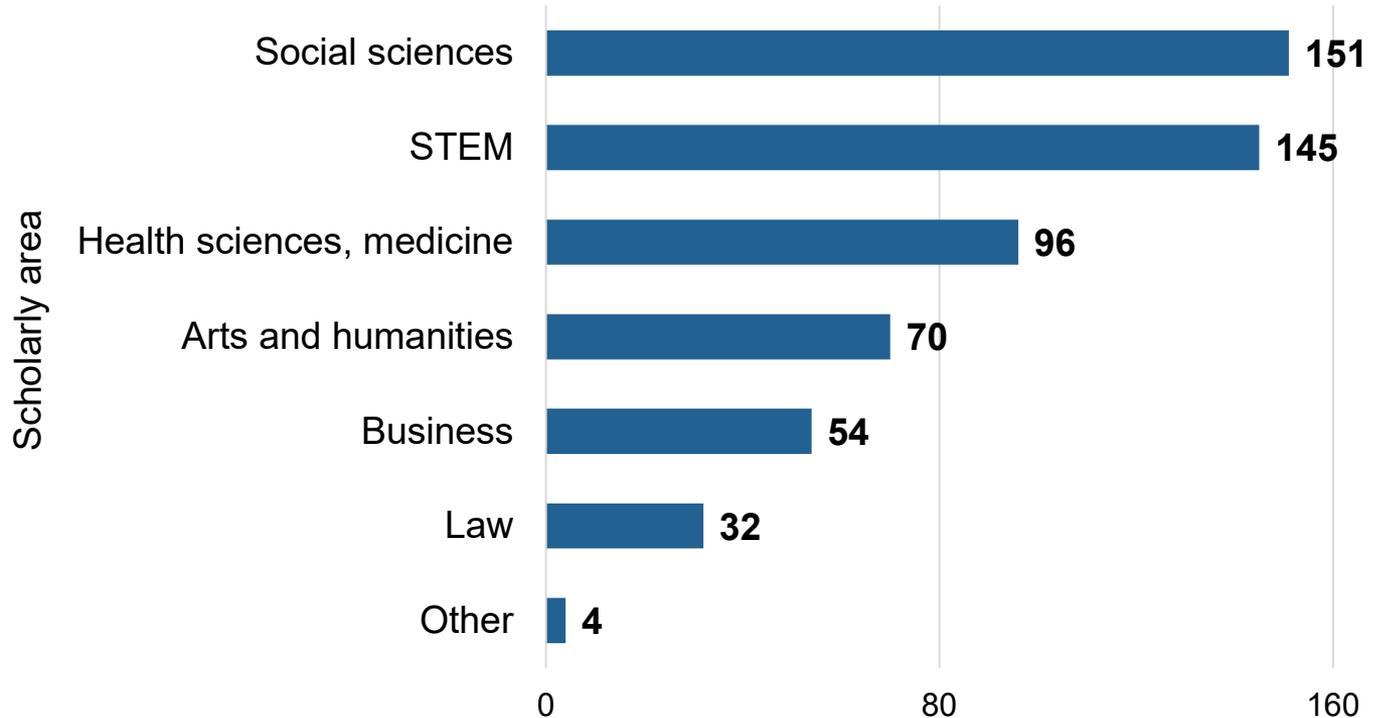
No formal policy or informal understanding (n=1)

User role



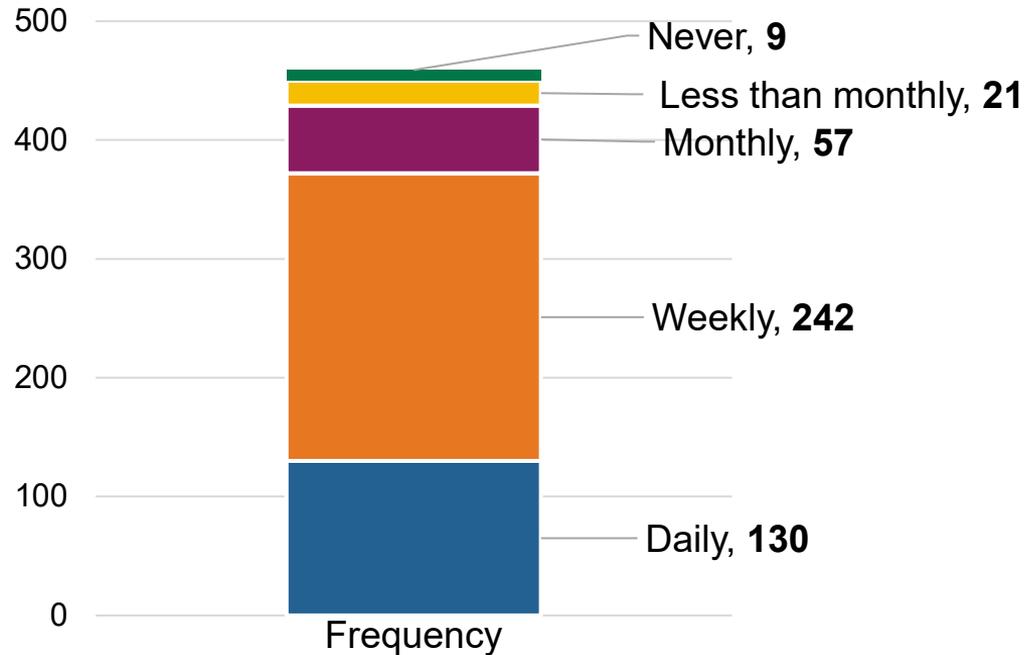
The total number of respondents was 461. Users could select more than one role.

User scholarly area



The total number of respondents was 461. Users could select more than one scholarly area.

Search or use frequency of scholarly, peer-reviewed publications



The total number of respondents was 459.

Improving discoverability of OA publications

Selecting and adding OA publications to library collections

Increasing OA awareness, knowledge, and engagement

Improving metadata to support OA discovery

Measuring the effects of library efforts

Selecting and adding OA publications to library collections

Expansive collection

“But for me, it's about making sure...to have the most expansive collection of qualified knowledge that we want to make available to researchers. And it doesn't matter if it's open access or not.”

Metadata specialist, U2

Selection criteria: Trustworthy

“You don't want all open access results....You want the ones you have selected as materials, you well trust... That quality label that you want to give, this is something that is important.”

Library systems and tools manager, U4

Selection criteria: Dutch-based

“The current discovery tools, they have a central index in which there's mostly international content but not enough Dutch content...so users will get a skewed view of what is available, and the decision was made...to direct the users mainly to...individual databases.”

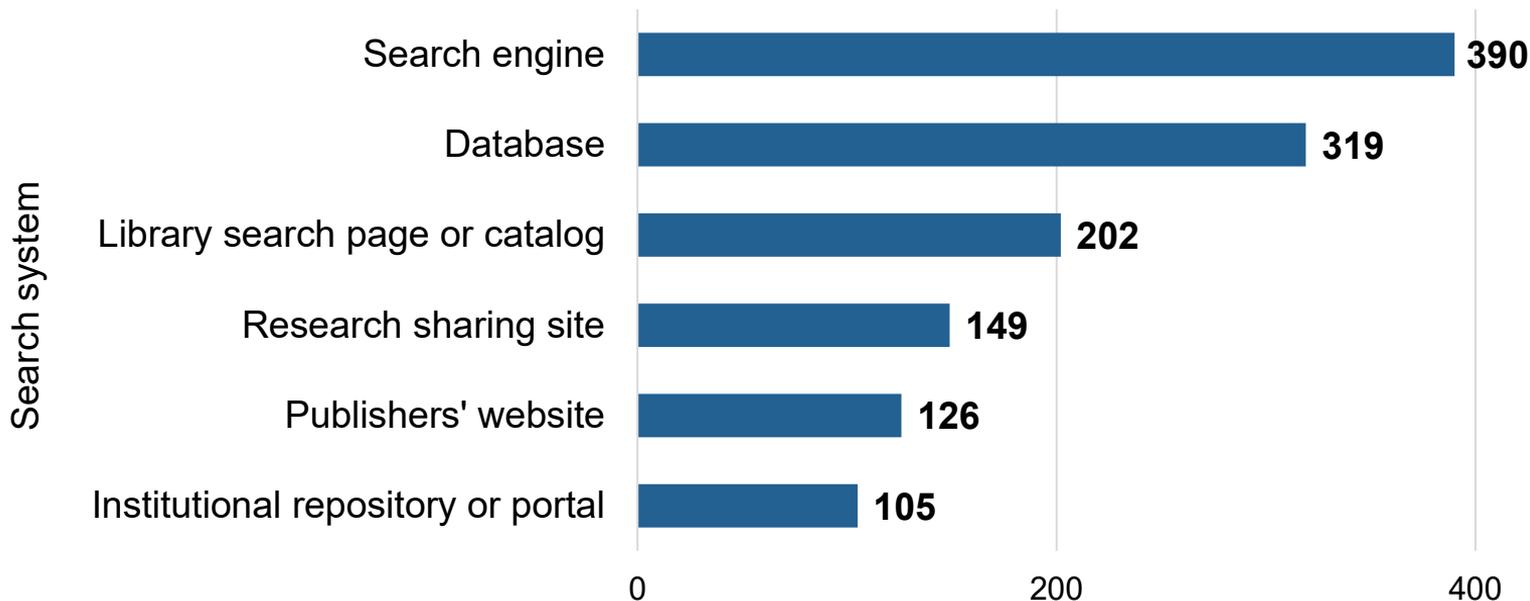
Library systems and tools specialist, UAS2

Other more important players

“So, I don't think we are the most important player in improving the discoverability of this open access content. Of course, we should contribute whatever we can, but I think we have to be realistic and realize that there are more important players in the field.”

Disciplinary information specialist, U3

Where users normally search for scholarly peer-review publications



The total number of respondents was 450. Users could select all categories that applied. Categories with fewer 50 responses were not reported in the figure.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:

Library staff

Incorporating OA publications into library collections, particularly those from national aggregators of Dutch institutional repositories or portals and other OA platforms, is likely to enhance their discoverability because users don't normally go to these sources independently.

Important factors when searching for scholarly publications

Rank 1: Subject is relevant (n=248)

Rank 2: Full text is available (n=104)

Rank 3: I can understand the content (n=77)

Rank 3: It has been peer reviewed (n=73)

~~**Rank 4**~~

Rank 5: It was recently published (n=73)

Rank 6 and Rank 7: Journal or Publisher's reputation (n=77)

Rank 8: Author's reputation (n=88)

Rank 8: Publication is OA (n=75)

Rank 9: Physical or print item is available (n=283)

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:

Library staff

Provide users more guidance about how to evaluate whether a scholarly publication is trustworthy, including reasons why it's important to consider the journal, publisher, and author's reputation in addition to whether the publication has been peer-reviewed.

Put OA where users are: Learning management systems (LMS)

“We have a button in [the LMS]....And people know that by clicking on [the] button, you see the page with...all the content, but also the library catalog. But most of the time students find links to e-books to open access journal articles to databases in [the LMS].”

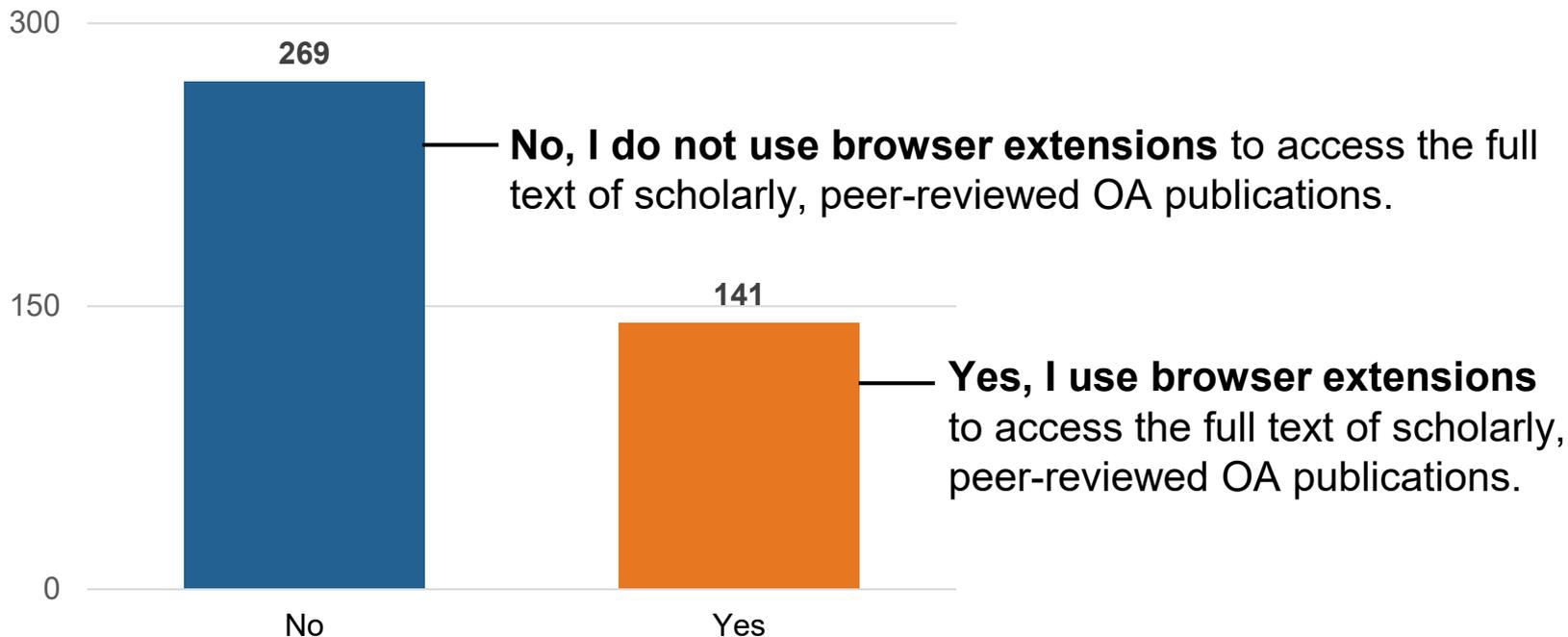
Disciplinary information specialist, UAS4

Put OA where users are: Browser extensions

“So, basically the OA browser extension knows our subscriptions but then...it also throws that DOI towards all the different repositories that there are around the world....And then if it hits an open access article, it refers directly to the PDF.”

Metadata specialist, U2

Use of browser extensions to access OA publications



The total number of respondents was 410. Users could select all browser extensions that applied.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:

What this means for library staff and technology providers

Browser extensions, both those that integrate with library collections and those that only search for OA versions, can be valuable options for improving users' discovery experiences. Library staff and technology providers need to promote these tools to help users adopt them into their discovery workflows.

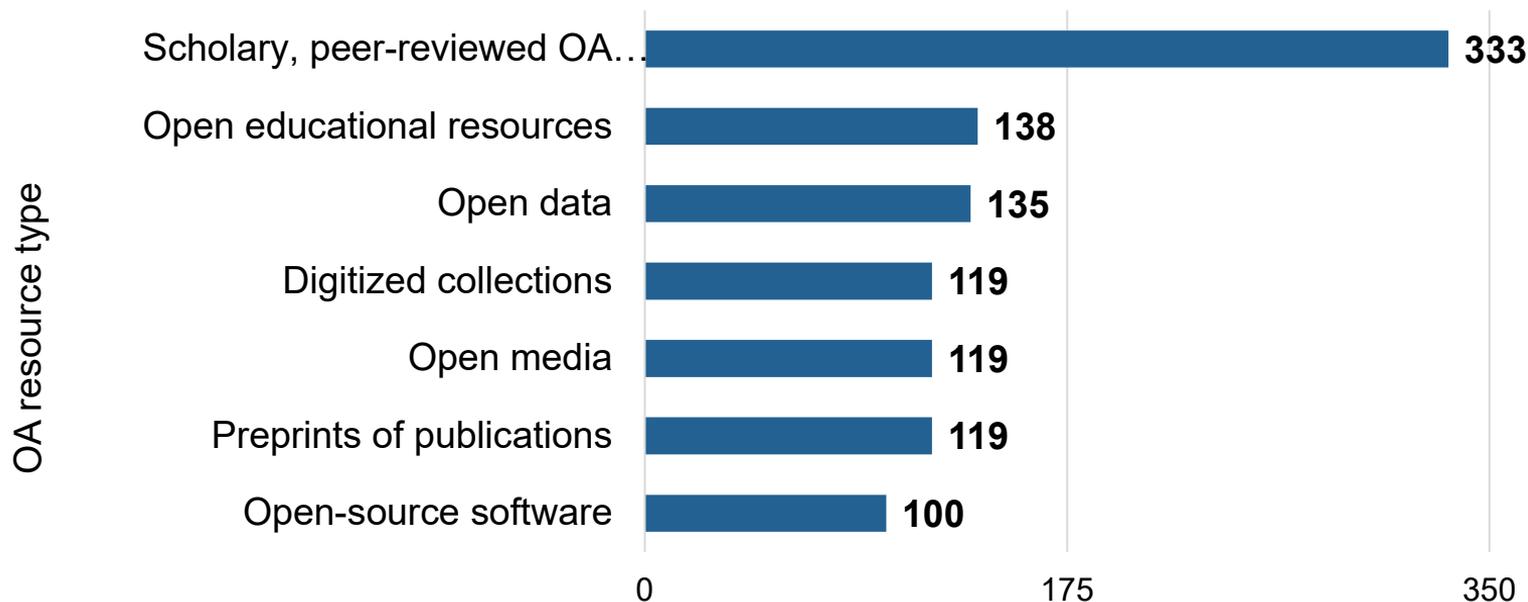
**Increasing OA
awareness,
knowledge, and
engagement**

Services to help users publish OA

“We have a lot of open access deals that people can publish open access, and we communicated about that, and you never know what the impact is, but we now find after years and years, we find that most researchers find the options and use those options.”

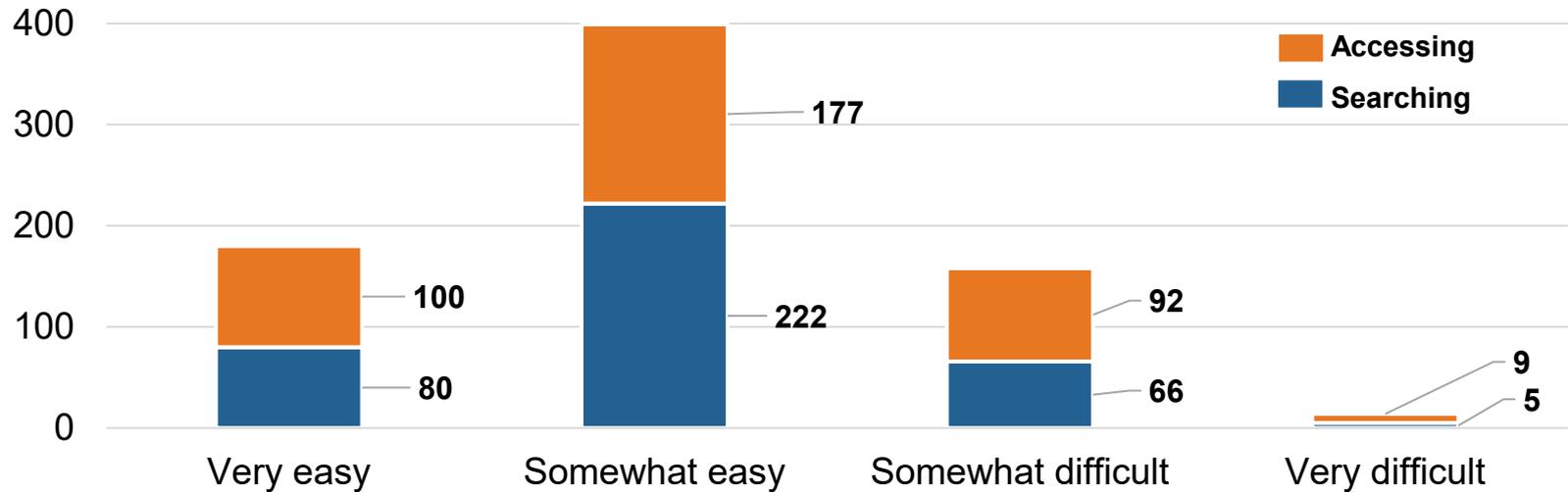
Disciplinary information specialist, U4

Types of OA resources users searched for



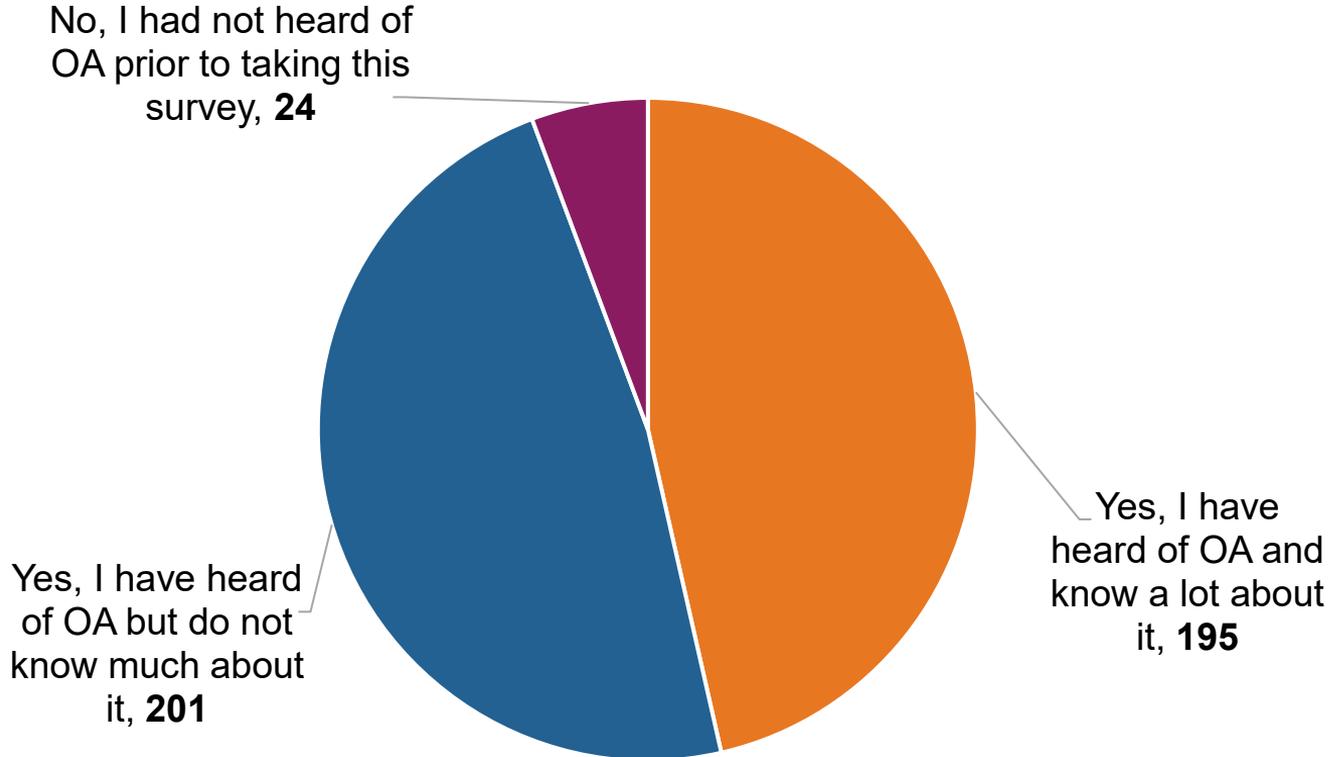
The total number of respondents was 420. Users could select all categories that applied. Categories with fewer 50 responses were not reported in the figure.

User experiences searching for and accessing OA publications



The total number of respondents for **accessing** was 411.
The total number of respondents for **searching** was 411.

User awareness of OA



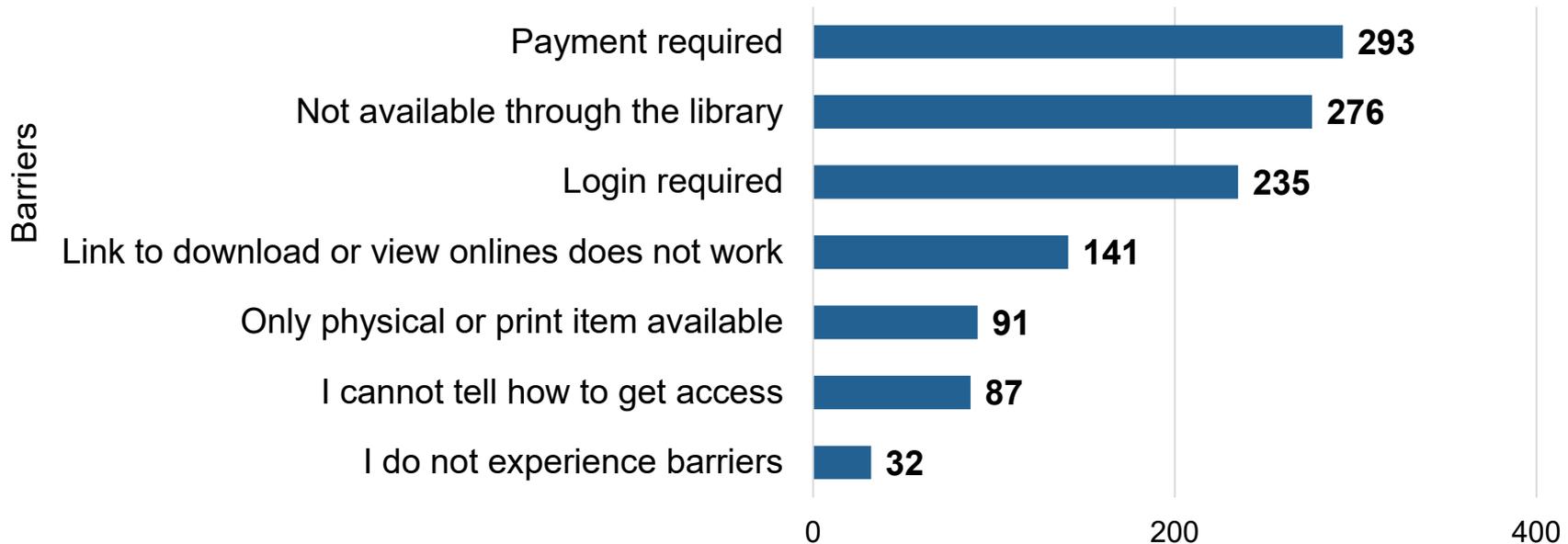
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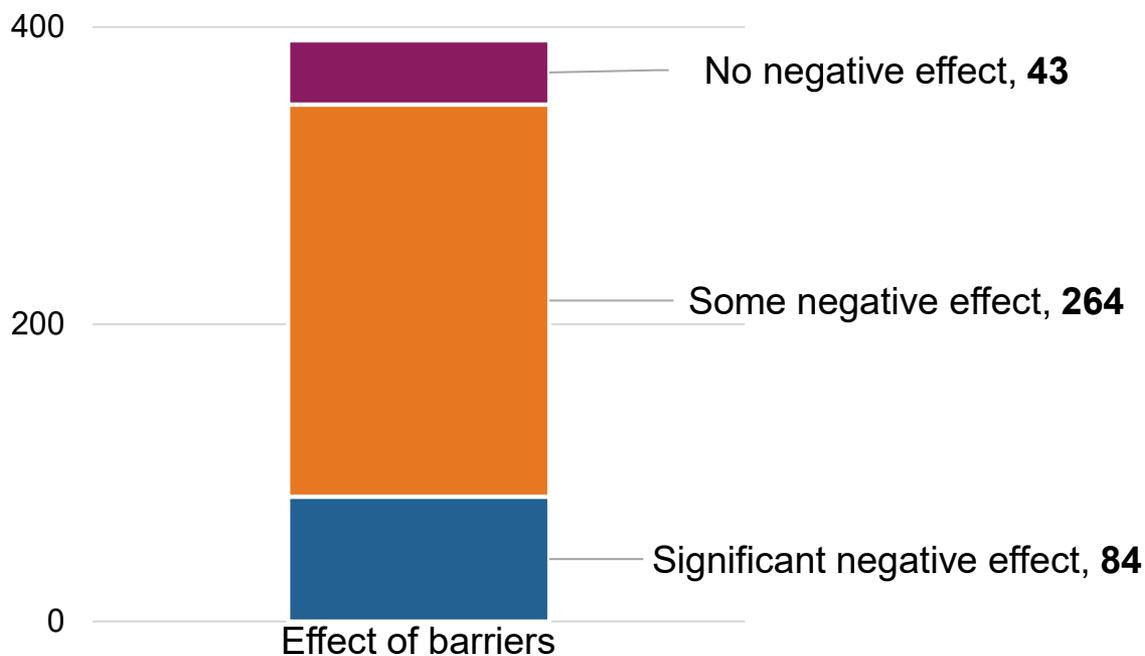
These different areas of OA—publishing, discovery, and access—have and will continue to evolve. It will be critical for library staff to learn more about what users know about each of these areas to continue adapting outreach and instruction to improve users' experiences.

Barriers experienced when unable to access full text



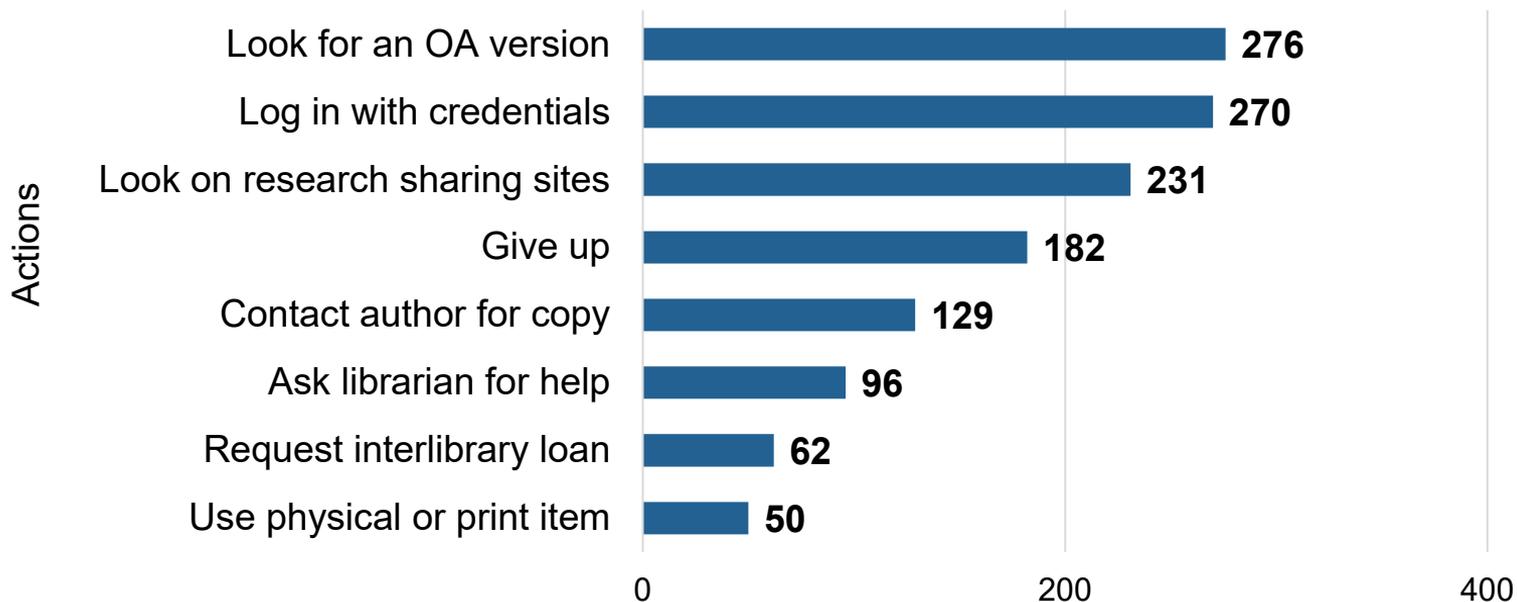
The total number of respondents was 426. Users could select all categories that applied.

Effect of barriers experienced when accessing full text



The total number of respondents was 391.

Actions most likely taken when unable to access full text



The total number of respondents was 423. Users could select all categories that applied. Categories with fewer 50 responses were not reported in the figure.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:

Library staff

Library services for finding full-text access after users hit a barrier need to be easier and faster to use and can be promoted as saving users both time and effort.

Improving metadata to support OA discovery

Metadata elements for OA discovery

Basic elements (Title, author, date, subject, abstract, etc.)

OA status

OA license

Peer-review status/information

Versioning information

Identifiers

Metadata for discovery: Identifiers

“Maybe make more, even more linkages so not only the publication and the data set but also media appearances... That would make the information more open because these media appearances or professional articles they are readable for a larger audience.”

Repositories and CRIS manager, U3

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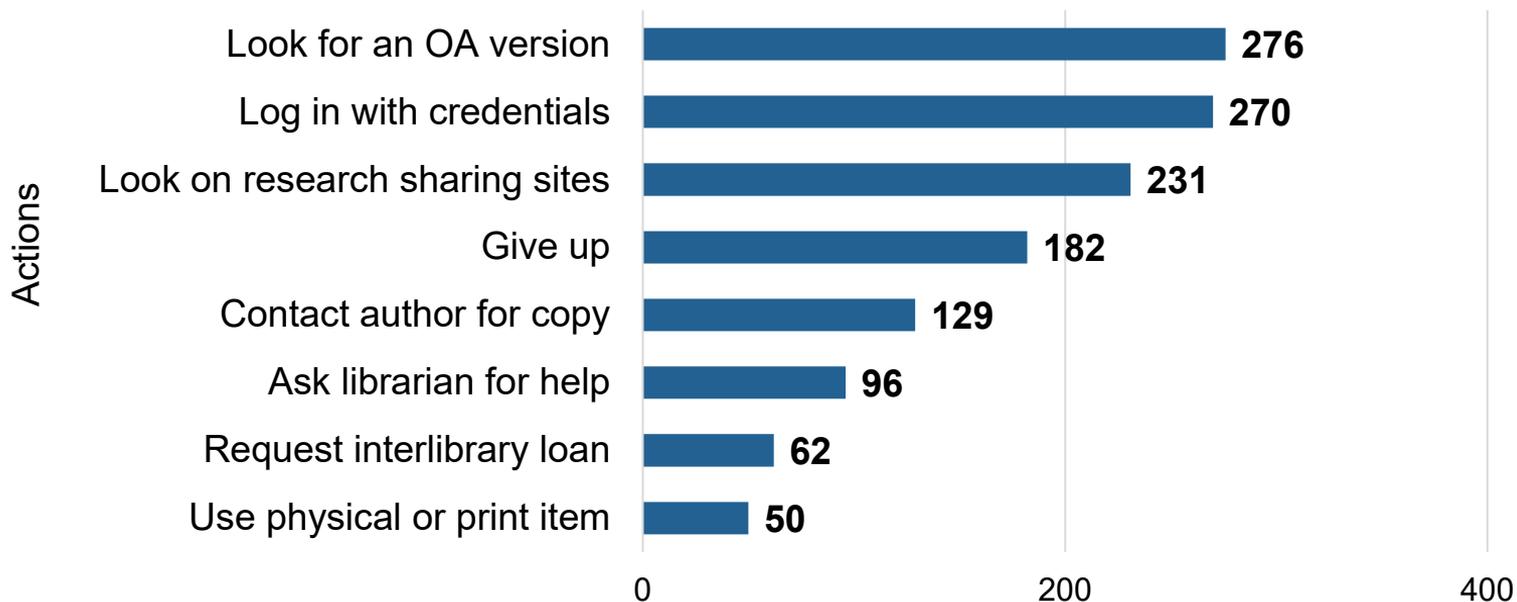
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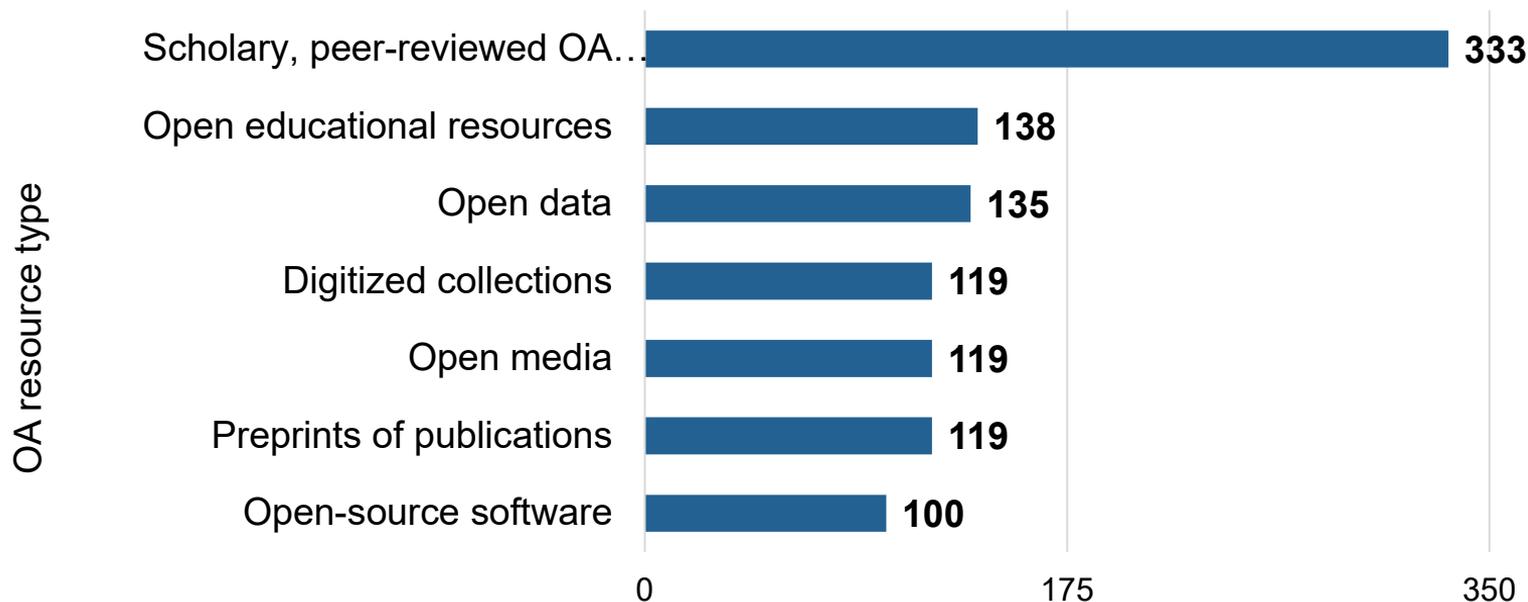
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Types of OA resources users searched for



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WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:

Library staff

Improving user discovery experiences during the transition to open science requires high-quality, authoritative metadata that supports emerging resource types, aggregation approaches, and user behaviors.

Metadata created by authors

“We would like them to give us as much information as possible when they register. And there's a lot of information missing most of the time.”

E-resources information specialist, UAS2

Metadata created by authors

“When the start is not good, then the output won’t be good as well. So that’s something that’s really challenging, actually to educate them...and to make sure that they will fill in the right stuff, so the end will be better.”

Metadata specialist, U1

Opportunity to import metadata

“Finding resources that we can connect our systems to also harvest their data to enrich our own data and also share our data with others.”

Library systems manager, U3

Harvesting metadata

“Not all of the metadata from [our shared repository] are taken by [the search engine]. So I once had this complaint...from one of our researchers about metadata of her publications in [the search engine]. But yeah, there's nothing I could do about this because it happens automatically.”

Open access information specialist, UAS2

Displaying metadata

“So, we already have that open access button in our discovery, but that's only for the repository. So, it's also confusing for our researchers, because it's just a small set of open access.”

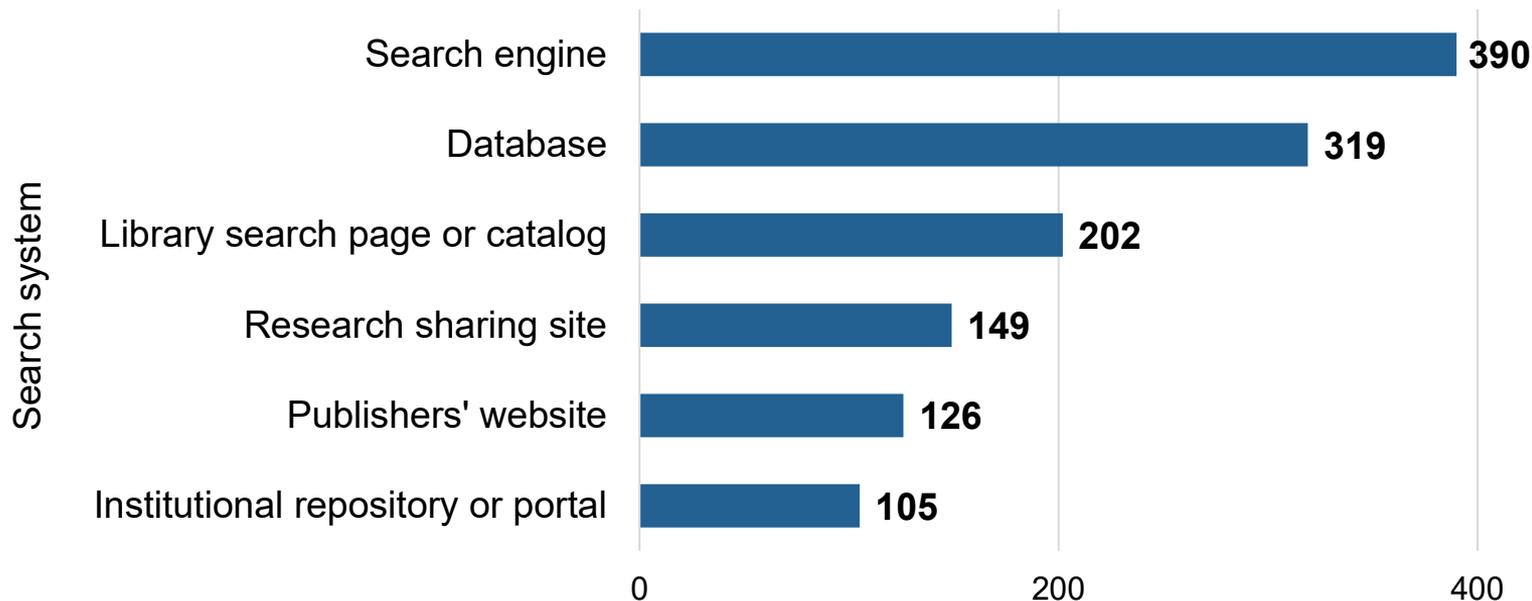
Metadata Specialist, U2

Collaboration to improve aggregation

“Our input they use to develop the templates, the services, the repository. So, the input of the users, the institutions...so we tell them what we need to publish our open access research outputs ideally. So there is a collaboration [that] is working very well. It's very equal.”

Repositories and CRIS specialist, UAS1

Where users normally search for scholarly peer-review publications



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WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:

Library staff

Creating and exposing institutional metadata for search engines and databases to harvest and aggregate improves the discoverability of OA publications by placing them within users' discovery workflows.

Measuring the effects of library efforts

Measuring user discovery behavior

“It's difficult to say [laughter] what the impact is.... I can't look into the minds of our students and our PhDs who are trying to discover content, whether they found it accidentally or on purpose through whatever ways. We try to educate them. I'm not sure whether it can be measured.”

Open Access Librarian, U4

Difficulty tracking users

“Most of our scholars also work a lot from home nowadays, you're not going to see it [usage] because it's open access. There's no barrier, you don't have to log in through the proxy, you don't have to use our VPN.”

Repositories and CRIS manager, U1

Questioning need for metrics

“Yeah. Why do we want it? That's also a question. Why do we want to use the statistics for open access?”

E-resources information specialist, UAS4

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR:

Library staff

Consider what metrics are needed to assess library efforts to make OA publications more discoverable and to provide meaningful comparisons across the variety of publication types, access models, and systems where they can be discovered, accessed, and used.

Q&A

**Because
what is
known must
be shared.[®]**

Thank you

Ixchel M. Faniel, Ph.D.
Senior Research Scientist
fanieli@oclc.org