

OXFORD JOURNALS UPDATE

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Oxford Open prices adjusted for open access uptake

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OPEN ACCESS

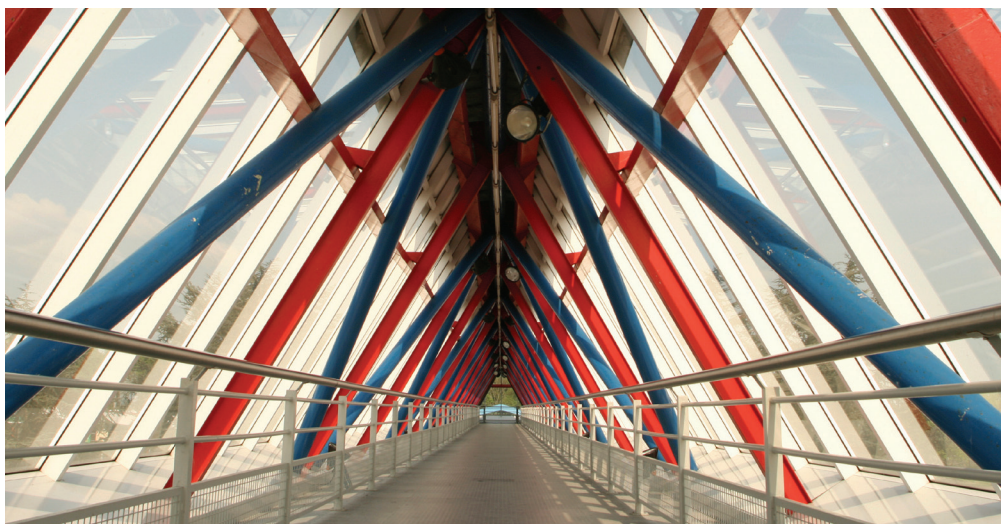


OXFORD OPEN

Oxford Journals' experiments with open access under the Oxford Open initiative have now

been running for over four years. We always strive to price our journals fairly, and so some of our Oxford Open journals have seen modifications to their 2008 prices based on the volume of open access content within those journals. However, as this is often one of several factors that impact on price setting, each title in the initiative has experienced different effects on its pricing. This article explores these issues in more detail.

Under the Oxford Open model, authors of accepted papers in participating journals have the option of paying an open access publication charge to make their paper freely available online immediately upon publication. Oxford Open journals therefore comprise a mixture of non-open access and open access content, and a current subscription is required to view the non-open access content. 54 journals were



published under the Oxford Open model in 2006, and more have joined the initiative since.

Oxford Journals is keen to ensure that the open access content in these journals has an effect on the price. In 2008, the average increase across all Oxford Journals titles is 6.9%. For the 28 Oxford Open titles with open access uptake in 2006 (the last full calendar year on which we could calculate), the average 2008 online-only price increase is just 1.7%. This is due to adjustments to the online-only prices of these journals which reflect increases in the percentage of open access content published between 2005 and 2006.

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Subscribers will not pay for free content

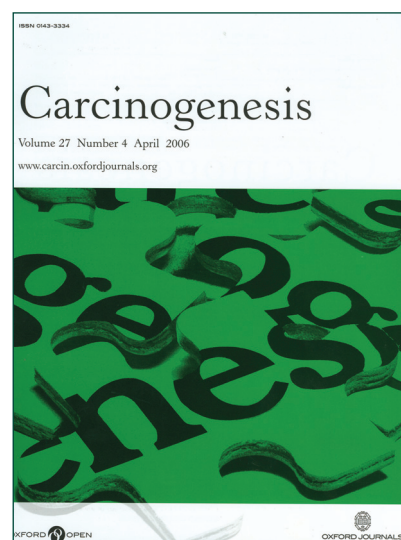
At Oxford Journals we strive to make our pricing policy fair and transparent. Subscribers should pay only for non-open access content, which is why we closely monitor the amount of open access content in each journal in Oxford Open, and adjust online-only subscription prices accordingly. As a result, eight out of 54 Oxford Open titles saw an absolute reduction in price from 2007 to 2008, and a further 20 titles benefited from a lower price increase.

As Table 1 below shows, the level of open access uptake is still quite low across all Oxford Open journals: in 2006, open access papers constituted only 6.6% of all papers published. In fact, Table 2 demonstrates that 26 Oxford Open journals saw 0% take-up – so for these journals, no adjustment has been made to the online-only price. 28 journals saw differing levels of uptake, with high uptake journals like *Bioinformatics* (19%) and *Human Molecular Genetics* (15%) seeing the greatest price adjustment.

Pricing is dependent on many factors

Our standard policy for 2008 was to price the online-only (and print-only) subscriptions to our journals at 95% of the combined (print and online) price. In the case of Oxford Open journals, we applied a further discount to the 2008 online-only price based on the amount of open access content published in 2006 (journal prices for a subsequent year are set at least six months ahead of each new calendar year, so for Oxford Open journals, we therefore look at the last full year of open access content).

As the *Carcinogenesis* case study in Table 3 shows, however, pricing is dependent on many factors, including variations in page extent, issue frequency, and exchange rate adjustments, as well as open access uptake. This means that open access adjustments will not always result in actual price decreases from one year to the next. They may in fact have the effect of simply limiting the price increase to a lesser amount, as the discount applies to what the standard 2008 online-only price would have been, and not to the 2007 online-only price.



For more information, including a list of journals participating in Oxford Open and the percentage of open access uptake for each journal in 2006 please visit www.oxfordjournals.org/oxfordopen.

Table 1: Open access uptake of Oxford Open journals 2006

Subject Area	No. of Journals	Papers Published	OA Papers	% Uptake
Medicine	22	3,945	180	5.3
Life Sciences	17	3,050	321	7.6
Social Sciences & Humanities	12	405	6	1.1
Mathematics	3	304	5	1.8
Total	54	7,704	512	6.6

Table 2: Open Access uptake and the effect on 2008 online-only price

OA Uptake 2006 (% pages)	No. of Journals	Actual online price change 2008 cf. 2007 (%)	Effective online price reduction due to open access (%)*
0	26	+8%	0%
1–5	20	+3%	-2%
6–10	6	0%	-8%
11–20	2	-3%	-18%**

* cf. our normal pricing model

**these two journals had a -9% online price adjustment in 2007 due to open access uptake in 2005

Table 3: Carcinogenesis case study

In 2006, *Carcinogenesis* published 8% of its pages under an open access model. Under our standard pricing model, the online-only price would have been £990 (95% of the combined price of £1042). However, with the 8% open access discount applied, the actual 2008 online price is £907. The same process applied in setting the 2007 online-only price, taking 95% of the combined subscription price and applying an additional 9% discount because that represented the amount of open access content published in the journal in 2005.

Because the 2008 combined price for *Carcinogenesis* (which forms the basis for all other adjustments) increased by 5% from 2007, and because similar open access adjustments were applied to both the 2007 and 2008 online prices, the online-only price still increased by 5.4%, from £860 to £907.

