

## FJN FACT SHEET last revised 2024-11-24

### What is the Free Journal Network?

- [Free Journal Network](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, registered in Massachusetts in 2019. Twitter @freejournalnet, website <https://freejournals.org>.
- Its mission is to support the ecosystem of “diamond” open access journals - noncommercial, fully OA journals that are controlled by the scholarly community and are completely free to publish in and free to read.

### Who is associated with FJN?

- FJN is run by an elected [Board of Directors](#) (current president is [Mark C. Wilson](#)) and has an appointed [Advisory Board](#).
- FJN currently has 91 accepted [journals](#), with typically several more under review for admission at any given time.
- Each journal supplies a voting member and at least one person to participate in our online forum.

### What kind of journals are involved?

- All journals supported by FJN must be diamond open access (completely free both to read and to publish in), as well as satisfying our [acceptance criteria](#), which include conformance with all of the [Fair Open Access Principles](#). Beyond that, there is a lot of diversity.
- Our members include some of the oldest fully electronic journals dating back to the mid-1990s, such as [Electronic Journal of Combinatorics](#), [Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science](#), and [Journal of Political Ecology](#).
- We also include overlay journals such as [Discrete Analysis](#), [Open Journal of Astrophysics](#), [Advances in Combinatorics](#), and [SIGMA](#).
- Many of our journals are owned by learned societies, for example [Fennia](#), [Journal of Logic and Analysis](#), and [Journal of Numerical Cognition](#).
- We include journals whose editorial boards have chosen to break away from commercial publishers and reconstitute themselves on the free, open-access model (e.g. [Glossa](#), [Algebraic Combinatorics](#), [Combinatorial Theory](#), and [Precision Nanomedicine](#)).
- We include journals with rigorous innovative procedures in peer review, such as [SciPost Physics](#) and [Peer Community Journal](#).
- Our journals are all electronic and freely accessible worldwide, but each has a home base: these home bases currently include 20 different countries in Europe, North America, South America and Australasia.

### How does FJN serve the scholarly community?

- *Coordination*. By aggregating many small journals into a single network, we give libraries and other funders a way to directly support the diamond OA journal ecosystem

on a single invoice. The FJN board distributes the money to journals via a competitive grant process for one-time improvements and a transparent process for ongoing costs.

- *Quality control.* We vet journals carefully for quality and transparency. Our network of accepted journals helps the research community by serving as an 'approved' list of trustworthy, high-quality diamond OA journals. Our acceptance criteria for journals are made stricter over time, and journals are not guaranteed to remain on the list.
- *Value for money.* FJN helps university libraries by nurturing an ecosystem of high-quality, noncommercial scholarly publication without the perverse incentives that afflict subscription and APC journals and threaten scientific integrity. Under those models, billions of dollars per year are diverted from university systems into publishers' profits. The diamond OA model disrupts this system and lets libraries do more with scarce resources.
- *Promoting diversity.* Nurturing a decentralized system of modestly sized scholar-controlled journals allows for much greater ability to experiment and to be responsive to the particular research community, compared to what large commercial publishers do.
- *Commissioning and donating resources.* For example, we paid PKP to create resources to help diamond OA journals comply with Plan S, and made these available to anyone at <https://docs.pkp.sfu.ca/plan-s/en/> .

### **How does FJN help its journals?**

- *Community-building.* Our network helps our members by promoting the sharing of information, best practices and documents via our online forum. This includes everything from forming a legal organization, to overseeing a journal, to assisting with technical issues with publishing software, Crossref membership, innovation in peer review practices, etc.
- *Sustaining journals.* Because our journals rely on volunteer labor and do not seek to make a profit, their running costs are extraordinarily low compared to large commercially owned journals. However the costs are not zero: for example, Crossref membership is \$275 annually and DOIs cost \$1/article. We distribute money to journals where it can do the most good.
- *Journal improvements.* Diamond OA journals are typically run by overworked academics who can just manage the day-to-day running of the journal but no more. We aid journals by hiring specialist help, creating how-to documents and giving webinars to improve journal processes. For example, we are currently helping our journals comply with the requirements of Plan S such as inclusion in DOAJ (the Directory of Open Access Journals), archiving, and DOIs.

### **What will FJN do with more resources?**

Greater support from the community will allow us to provide increased services, such as:

- fully covering reasonable running costs (typically less than \$1500 per year) for our journals;
- technical support to member journals;
- helping to raise the profile of member journals;

- targeted campaigns to increase community in-kind support for our journals (for example, asking department chairs to count editorship as an important service task);
- promoting and publicizing the diamond OA publishing model more widely, for example via social media and through presentations at conferences;
- increased collaboration and input into policy developments such as Plan S, DIAMAS, Global Diamond OA Summit;
- surveying diamond OA journals to determine how best to sustain journals, building on the results of the recent study commissioned by cOAlition S.

### **Why do we believe in the diamond open access model?**

We see the diamond open-access model as the only long-term sustainable model for scholarly publishing. For-profit publishing creates conflicts of interest that undermine the integrity of scholarship, whether the business model is based on charging readers or on charging authors.

When publishers charge readers, there is competition to publish exciting findings that make news and lead to greater sales. Consequently, researchers are incentivized to exaggerate their results and overstate the impact of their findings in order to get published. The net result is that work published in the highest-impact journals (sometimes called “glamor magazines”) like *Science* and *Nature* is much more likely to be retracted than work published in other journals.

When subscriptions are replaced by author-facing article-processing charges (APCs), a different threat to scientific integrity arises. In this model the standards for acceptance can quickly become very lax, owing to the commercial publisher’s profit motive. Many of us have reviewed for journals that operate on this model and have recommended rejection of an article, only to see it accepted anyway. Furthermore, APCs are inherently unfair to scholars from lower-income institutions and countries.

A decentralized system of modestly sized scholar-controlled journals allows for much greater ability to experiment and to be responsive to the particular research community, compared to what large commercial publishers do, and is also a much cheaper way to communicate research without sacrificing peer review quality.