What Do Libraries Want to Know About Usage of Open Access Materials? (And Why?)

Wide Open or Just Ajar? Evaluating Real User Metrics in Open Access
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The Problem

It’s very difficult for libraries to gauge usage of OA content.

— with a few exceptions: things that we financially support and receive statistics for as part of that service model (eg. Knowledge Unlatched, SCOAP³)
Types of Usage We’d like to Know About

• Faculty/students using it in their research
• Faculty using it for course readings
• Users accessing green OA versions of subscribed content
• Users accessing gold OA content in hybrid journals we don’t subscribe to
• Users accessing OA content that is not formally published (eg. dissertations/theses, white papers, digital collections, etc.)
• And more!
Why Do We Want to Know?

We’d like to assess whether OA resources:

• adequately fill in gaps in subscribed content
• could replace some subscribed content
• are supporting research and instruction
• are able to serve as a component of our textbook affordability initiatives
• and more!
Journal Article & Conference Paper Citations in 39 Articles Authored by College of Engineering Faculty, 2014 (n=885)

- **Not subscribed/No OA**: 92 (10%)
- **Gold OA**: 294 (33%)
- **Subscription only**: 433 (49%)
- **Green OA**: 66 (8%)

Source: Web of Science. Note: 119 self-citations were not counted as part of this data set.
User Behavior: A Complicating Factor

• They often start their literature search in Google Scholar or just regular Google

• If they need a specific article but run up against a paywall, they often try to obtain a free copy through a variety of other means
Further Reading


Thank you!

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