

Open Access Publishing Models: The Differences

Open Access (OA) publishing models are categorized by "colors" that describe how and where research is made freely available. The primary models are **Gold**, **Green**, and **Diamond**.

Primary Publishing Models

- **Gold OA:** The final version of an article is made freely and permanently available on the publisher's platform immediately upon publication. Authors typically pay an **Article Processing Charge (APC)** to cover costs, though they usually retain copyright.
- **Green OA (Self-Archiving):** Authors publish in a journal (often subscription-based) and then deposit a version of the manuscript—usually the **Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM)**—into a freely accessible institutional or subject-specific repository. This version is often subject to an **embargo period** (e.g., 6–24 months) before it can be made public.
- **Diamond (or Platinum) OA:** These journals provide free access to readers and do **not charge authors any fees (APCs)**. They are typically funded by academic institutions, societies, or government grants and are often community-driven.
- **Hybrid OA:** A subscription-based journal that allows authors the *option* to make individual articles open access by paying an APC. Articles not paid for remain behind a paywall, leading to "double dipping" concerns where publishers receive both subscription and OA fees.

Secondary and Informal Models

- **Bronze OA:** Articles are free to read on the publisher's website but lack a formal open license (like [Creative Commons](#)). This means they may not be available for reuse and can be removed from free access at any time.
- **Black OA:** This refers to the unauthorized or illegal sharing of copyrighted content through some platforms or social media hashtags.
- **Subscribe to Open (S2O):** A model where a journal flips from subscription to OA if enough libraries renew their subscriptions, removing the need for author-facing APCs.