Publishing in Open Access increases usage and has no effect on book sales

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Open Access publishing has no negative effect on book sales, and increases online usage and discovery considerably.

This is one of the conclusions of OAPEN-NL, a project exploring Open Access monograph publishing in the Netherlands. OAPEN-NL's final report, published yesterday, gives recommendations for research funders, libraries, publishers and authors.
OAPEN-NL

OAPEN-NL builds on the European OAPEN-project which was set up to gain experience with Open Access publishing of academic books. OAPEN-NL was supported by NWO, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, and the Ministry of OCW via the National PRIMA-subsidy program. The project was conducted by OAPEN Foundation, in collaboration with NWO, SURF and nine academic publishers.

Sales, use and impact of Open Access books

In total 50 academic books were published in Open Access with subsidy from NWO. For every Open Access title, the publishers provided a similar title that was published in the conventional way for comparison. Research showed that publishing in Open Access had no effect whatever on the sale of books. The publisher's fear that book sales would decline if publications would be available in Open Access, was unfounded. However, online usage of books in Open Access increased considerably as did online discovery of these books. Although online usage increased, this did not (yet) lead to an increase of citations in the research timeframe.

The final report contains a large amount of recommendations to improve Open Access for monographs, aimed at all stakeholders in academic book publishing. OAPEN-NL's research report was presented during OAPEN's final seminar 'Open Access for academic books in the Netherlands'.

Costs of Open Access books

OAPEN-NL also gathered data of all 50 books to get an insight in the costs related to publishing academic books. Based on this research, publishing a monograph in the Netherlands costs an average of €
12,000. Roughly half of these costs are for the Open Access edition. Remaining costs regard printing and disseminating the paper version. These results are important for the funding of Open Access monographs in the Netherlands.

Provided by Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)

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