FAQ about open access journals
(originally written for faculty and grad students in the UO School of Journalism and Communications)

1. **What are open access journals?** The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) defines them as “journals that use a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access.” They have arisen as a response to the pricing structure of traditional academic journals, whose publishers charge for access to their content. The inflation rate of the subscription costs of these traditional journals has produced a crisis in the communication of academic research. Open access journals have responded to that crisis.

2. **Why would I want to have my research published in an open access journal?** Your research would be disseminated with fewer economic barriers to access. Some studies indicate that articles in open access journals are read and cited as much as (or in some cases more than) articles in more traditional journals. In addition, articles from open access journals are much more accessible to readers who are not at 1st world universities. Still, it should be said that in most fields, open access journals do not have the same prestige as the top-ranked journals with a more traditional publishing structure.

3. **How do I find out what open access journals are publishing in my field?** One method is to consult the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) at [http://www.doaj.org/](http://www.doaj.org/) For instance, to uncover the open access journals in the field of mass media, go to this link, choose “Browse”, then “Browse by Subject” and “Social Sciences”, then “Media and Communication.” You’ll see a list of 102 open access journals in the discipline.

4. **What should I consider in choosing an open access journal in which to publish?** Consider whether the journal is peer-reviewed (journals listed in DOAJ are either peer-reviewed or undergo some form of “editorial quality control”); who is on the editorial board; how long the journal has been around; what subject matter it focuses on and which languages it publishes in; the journal’s impact factor (a measure of the average number of citations to articles in recent issues); and your own reading of the quality of the articles published – in short, the same considerations you would have in choosing a more traditional journal.

5. **Why do these journals charge an author fee?** It’s true that some --not all-- open access journals charge the authors a fee for publishing their articles. The fee can be substantial. The author fee is part of the funding model for many open access journals. But the University of Oregon Libraries has a **subsidizing plan for authors who encounter charges.** Grants are available to help cover these costs up to a maximum reimbursement of $1000 for an article; see [http://libweb.uoregon.edu/scis/sc/oaps.html](http://libweb.uoregon.edu/scis/sc/oaps.html)

6. **How do I learn more about open access publishing?** See the UO Libraries
Scholarly Communication page
http://libweb.uoregon.edu/scis/sc/index.html which is devoted to this and other issues, or contact the library subject specialist for your department or school http://libweb.uoregon.edu/colldev/general/special.html

13 April 2012
Paul Frantz
Head, Reference & Research Services
University of Oregon Libraries
Eugene OR 97403