Open Access Survey at ETH Zurich
Summary report

17th of March 2017

iafob – Institut für Arbeitsforschung und Organisationsberatung
Management Summary (1/4)

Project description and reading aid

- **Objectives:**
  - Adapt the existing Open Access (OA) services of ETHZ even more effectively to the needs of scientists, and the specifications of research sponsors
  - Establish a basis for strategic and political discussions about the development of OA at ETHZ

- **Questionnaire:**
  - Online
  - German and English

- **External expertise:**
  - iafob - Institut für Arbeitsforschung und Organisationsberatung, Zürich

- **Survey period:**
  - 1st of February – 24th of February 2017

- **Population:**
  - Scientific employees of ETHZ (N = 6'212)

- **Participation:**
  - 992 persons took part in the survey (response rate = ca. 16%)

- **Reading aid:**
  - The answers were measured with a 5 point scale or listings of multiple answers.
  - The graphs show different answer options by colour coding according to a traffic light system. Red colours represent for negative and green colours positive results.
Management Summary (2/4)

Response rate and representativity

- High response rate for professors (28%), assistant professors (29%), senior scientists (71%) and scientists with temporary terms of employment (39%)
- Low response rate for assistants (<1%), which partially can be explained by the chosen allocation as research associates instead of assistants
- High response rate for the departments D-BAUG (26%), D-USYS (24%), D-GESS (21%), und D-MATL (21%)
- Low response rate for the department D-ARCH (8%)

Publication of academic results and own publication behaviour

- The impact factor is for 83% of the respondents important to very important
- The option to publish supplementary information is considered as important to very important by 59%
- About half of the respondents consider the permitted length of the publication, not having to pay publication fees, as well as the option to publish the pre-print or post-print of the publication on the own website or on a document server (repository) as self-archiving as important
- 77% would be willing to reject or step down from duties on an editorial board and 76% would be willing to reject or step down from duties as a reviewer if the publisher pursued an inappropriate pricing policy.
- 49% agree that publishers provide key services, 22% disagree
- 56% share the opinion that universities ought to offer more support on publishing research results
- 52% would be prepared to do without access to certain journals if the publisher demanded journal prices that were unacceptable from ETH Zurich’s viewpoint, whereas 28% wouldn’t be prepared
Open Access publishing

- The most used OA publication options in the past 12 months were OA journals (33%), followed by Academic Social Networks (27%). Hybrid journals and the ETH E-Collection (now: Research Collection) were used for publication by 24%, the ETH Website by 21% and subject-specific document servers by 17% of the respondents.

- Reasons for using an Open Access publication option in the past 12 months: 64% because the research results should be freely accessible worldwide, 35% because it was already being practiced successfully by colleagues and 20% upon recommendation by co-authors or supervisors. 20% indicated as well that their article would be cited more frequently than if published in a subscription journal. Less frequent were reasons such as “the publication process takes less time than publishing in a subscription journal” (14%) or „the relevant journals in my field are already Open Access“ (12%).

- Reasons why no Open Access publishing options were used: Most frequently mentioned was the reason to be insufficiently familiar with the topic (25%) or other reasons (26%), while 19% didn’t publish anything in the last 12 months.

- A document server was used in the past 12 months due to following reasons: for 61% in order to raise the visibility of their recently published research paper(s). Less frequently mentioned were “to improve my academic career prospects” (27%) and “I followed the ETH Zurich’s Open Access policy” (19%).

- The main reason for not having used a document server in the past 12 months is the lack of knowledge of this publication option (58%).

- Reasons why an OA journal article has been published in the past 12 months: No fees had to be paid (21%), fees were paid by the research group’s budget (58%), ETH Library funded the costs (17%).

- 43% of respondents know how much money they have spent for the publication of OA publications in the past 12 months. If fees were paid, they amounted 3’144 CHF on average, whereas no information is available for how many publications.

- Likewise 43% of respondents know how much they have spent for the publications in subscription journals in the past 12 months (not OA). If fees were paid, they were 2’399 CHF on average, whereby it is not known for how many publications.

- 74% of respondents would rate a complete transformation of the academic publishing system from the subscription-based model towards Open Access as positive.
Open Access services at ETH Library

- 76% are aware of ETH E-Collection [since July 2017: Research Collection]
- 25% are aware of funding of APCs, 23% are aware of the OA website, 14% of the Open Access training courses and 6% of the consulting services
- The satisfaction with all used services is relatively high and in each case less than 5% dissatisfied persons were identified
- Respondents are most satisfied with the funding of APCs, followed by the consulting services, the OA website, the ETH E-Collection and the training courses
- The share of respondents who never used the respective services is comparatively high and varies between 65% for training courses and down to 22% for the OA website
- The satisfaction concerning the information by ETH Library on the subject of OA and the respective services is intermediate, whilst the variance with 18% dissatisfied, 46% moderately satisfied and 33% satisfied persons is high
- Reasons for the dissatisfaction: 76% indicated to never have been informed about OA, 37% indicated that the information is difficult to find, 11% that the information available does not answer their questions and 7% that the topic is too complex
- 74% are not aware of the Open Access Policy at ETHZ
- For an OA Policy, the following aspects are important from the perspective of respondents (in all cases more than 70% agreed): free choice of publication medium, free access to publications by third parties and preservation of exploitation rights
- A general compulsory policy which is not merely regarded as a recommendation was considered as less important

Open question at the end of the questionnaire

- 154 persons made use of the open text box at the end of the questionnaire. 302 mentions were listed overall. 36% of mentions contain expectations regarding OA at ETHZ (future concept, ETH as a role model, more and better information), 26% concerns (costs, quality level), 32% requirements for a successful implementation of OA (consistent quality level, costs) and 6% other mentions.
Composition of the sample (1/2)

**Distribution of positions in the sample (n=992)**

- Professor (n=112) 7%
- Assistant professor (n=26) 11%
- Assistant (n=6) 3%
- Senior assistant (n=61) 6%
- Senior scientist (n=96) 10%
- Scientist (temporary, e.g. doctoral student or postdoc) (n=559) 60%
- Scientist (permanent) (n=15) 6%

**Distribution of positions in the population (N=6'212)**

- Professor (n=402) 7%
- Assistant professor (n=90) 7%
- Assistant (n=3503) 56%
- Senior assistant (n=427) 25%
- Senior scientist (n=136) 7%
- Scientist (temporary, e.g. doctoral student or postdoc) (n=1529) 56%
- Scientist (permanent) (n=117) 7%
- Other (n=8) 35%

**Overall years in research (n=992)**

- <3 years (n=180) 18%
- 3 to 10 years (n=419) 42%
- 10 to 20 years (n=190) 19%
- >20 years (n=119) 12%
- no answer (n=84) 9%

**Years in research at ETH (n=992)**

- <3 years (n=349) 35%
- 3 to 10 years (n=417) 42%
- 10 to 20 years (n=96) 10%
- >20 years (n=41) 9%
- no answer (n=89) 4%
## Composition of the sample (2/3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>population</th>
<th>sample</th>
<th>response rate</th>
<th>total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and construction engineering</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture (D-ARCH)</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering (D-BAUG)</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biosystems Science and Engineering (D-BSSE)</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science (D-INFK)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology and Electrical Engineerig (D-ITET)</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical and Process Engineering (D-MAVT)</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials (D-MATL)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences and mathematics</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology (D-BIOL)</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry and Applied Biosciences (D-CHAB)</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics (D-MATH)</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics (D-PHYS)</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Sciences (D-ERDW)</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System-oriented natural sciences</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences and Technology (D-HEST)</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Systems Science (D-USYS)</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and social sciences</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>69/6</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management, Technology and Economics (D-MTEC)</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities, Social and Political Sciences (D-GESS)</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside of departments</td>
<td>6212</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How important are the following factors for you when you submit your research paper to a publishing house (or any other publisher) for publication?

- Impact Factor: 4.0 (40% important)
- The option to publish the pre-or post-print of the publication on your own website or a document server: 3.3 (33% important)
- No publication fees: 3.3 (33% important)
- Permitted length of the publication: 3.3 (33% important)
- Option of publishing additional data as "supplementary information" or "supplementary material": 3.6 (36% important)

*Note: The results show significant differences by department, position, overall research years and research years at ETH Zurich. For details, see group comparisons in the appendix.*
Publication of academic results and own publication behaviour

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1 = strongly disagree  2 = disagree  3 = neither agree nor disagree  4 = agree  5 = strongly agree  no answer  mean

n=992

**Note:** The results show significant differences by department, position, overall research years and research years at ETH Zurich. For details, see group comparisons in the appendix.
Open Access services at ETH Library

Satisfaction with information of ETH Library on Open Access

How satisfied are you overall with how ETH Library keeps you informed about Open Access and associated services?

1= very dissatisfied  2= rather dissatisfied  3= neutral  4= rather satisfied  5= very satisfied  no answer

Follow-up question: reasons for dissatisfaction (n=178)

* Note: The results show significant differences by overall research years. For details, see group comparisons in the appendix.
Open Access services at ETH Library

Are you aware of ETH Zurich's Open Access policy?

n=992

Proportion of „yes“ by position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>No answer (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor (n=112)</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor (n=26)</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant (n=6)</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior assistant (n=61)</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior scientist (n=96)</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientist (temporary) (n=599)</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientist (permanent) (n=15)</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The results show significant differences by position, overall research years and research years at ETH Zurich. For details, see group comparisons in the appendix.
Open Access services at ETH Library

How important are the following aspects of an Open Access policy for you?°

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>1= not important at all</th>
<th>2= not important</th>
<th>3= neutral</th>
<th>4= rather satisfied</th>
<th>5= very satisfied</th>
<th>n=992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free choice of publication medium</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free access to my publication by third parties</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can retain my author's exploitation rights</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy should generally be compulsory and not merely regarded as a recommendation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: The results show significant differences by department, position, overall research years and research years at ETH Zurich. For details, see group comparisons in the appendix.
Open Access publishing

Which of the following Open Access publication options have you used to publish research results in the past 12 months?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Access journals</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid journal</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETH E-Collection</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private website</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETH website</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-specific document server</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinary document server</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic social network</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog/Wiki</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other: e.g. website of institute, fractalflows.com, self publication, Youtube, Open Science Framework, Conference paper, Google, ResearchGate, github.com, bitbucket.org, distribution PDF via e-mail

n=992
I have used an Open Access publication option because it was …?
(This question was only asked to 70% of the respondents who indicated to have used at least one OA publication option)

- already practised successfully by my colleagues: 34.9%
- recommended by co-authors: 19.9%
- recommended by my supervisor: 20.3%
- recommended by ETH Zurich’s Open Access policy: 10.7%
- recommended by another research funding organisation: 5.3%
- required by another research promotion organisation: 8.1%
- required by the SNSF: 9.7%

n=694
Open Access publishing

Further reasons for the use of Open Access publication options

- The relevant journals in my field are already Open Access: 11.8%
- My research results should be freely accessible all over the world: 63.8%
- My article is cited more frequently than if published in a subscription journal: 19.9%
- The publication process takes less time: 14.3%
- The services of the Open Access journal’s publisher were compelling: 11.2%
- ETH Zurich supported me financially: 7.6%
- Other: 7.9%

Other: e.g. thematic match, requirement, better dissemination, takeover of costs by journal, supplementary publication, random, by conviction, quality of OA journal, less effort

n=694
Open Access publishing

Please give the reasons why you have not used an Open Access publication option in the past 12 months?
(This question was only asked to respondents who never used an OA publication option)

- There are no Open Access journals in my scientific subject area: 5.8%
- The financial resources have been lacking: 6.2%
- I am not personally prepared to pay for publication fees: 13.4%
- The journal’s impact factor was too low: 14.1%
- The peer review for Open Access journals is inadequate: 5.1%
- Open Access journals are cited less frequently than traditional publication options: 8.0%
- My colleagues advised me against: 4.0%
- I am satisfied with the publication options of publishing houses: 12.3%
- I’m not familiar with the topic: 24.6%
- Other: 26.1%

Other: e.g. no publication (n=51;18%), high costs, insufficient quality of OA journals, standards/specifications, to pay for publications is the wrong concept, never busied myself with the subject
You indicated that you have used a document server as a publication option in the past 12 months. What were the reasons?

(This question was only asked to the 37% of the respondents who indicated to have used a document server as a publication option)

- Increase the visibility of my recently published research paper(s) 61.4%
- To improve my academic career prospects 26.6%
- To increase my chances of third-party funding 8.2%
- I followed ETH Zurich’s Open Access policy 19.0%
- Required by the SNSF 7.6%
- Required by another research funding organisation 5.2%
- Encouragement by another research funding organisation 3.3%
- Other 18.5%

Other: e.g. free availability, standard/specification, increased visibility, early feedback to work, record in annual report, simplified overview, only possibility, long-term archiving, by conviction
You indicated that you have never used a document server in the past 12 months. What were the reasons?
(This question was only asked to respondents who never used a document server)

- I am insufficiently familiar with this publication option: 58.3%
- From my perspective, the additional publication via a document server does not offer any advantages: 11.3%
- The additional publication process involves too much effort on my part: 10.1%
- After publication with a commercial publisher, this was no longer possible: 14.0%
- I would not like to publish any version of my article that did not correspond to the publisher's version: 11.6%
- Other: e.g. no publication, no influence on decision, legal aspects, no relevance in my discipline, unfamiliarity with opportunity, no standard, more than 12 months, no advantages: 18.3%

n=602
How did you fund the costs of the Open Access journal paper(s) you have published in the past 12 months?
(This question was only asked to the 32.5% of respondents who indicated to have published an Open Access journal article)

- There were no fees to be paid: 20.5%
- From my research group’s budget: 58.4%
- By ETH Library: 16.8%
- By a research promotion organisation*: 6.5%
- By first authors: 4.3%
- By co-authors: 6.8%
- I funded the publication privately: 1.6%
- By a commercial sponsor: 0.6%
- By other sponsors**: 1.6%

*Research funding organisations: e.g. SNF, ERC, ACS, nano-tera.ch, Max Planck Society, EU H2020, CERN, Wellcome Trust, openAire, SNG, NWO

**Other sponsors: University of Cambridge Library, VERN, EU PF 7 SNF, Max Planck Society, COST
43% (428 persons) know how much money they have spent in the past 12 months on publishing Open Access in general.

If fees were paid (n = 114):

- 0 CHF
- <1000 CHF
- 1000 bis <5000
- 5000 bis 10000
- > 10000
- I know it, however I do not give any information

The results show significant differences by department, position and overall research years. For details, see group comparisons in the appendix.
Future dealing with Open Access at ETH Zurich

How would you rate a complete transformation of academic publishing from the subscription-based model to Open Access?

1= negative  
2= rather negative  
3= neutral  
4= rather positive  
5= positive  
no answer  
mean

n = 992

Note: The results show significant differences by department, position, overall research years and research years at ETH Zurich. For details, see group comparisons in the appendix.
### Expectations regarding Open Access (OA) at ETH Zurich

154 persons (16%) have given additional comments at the end of the questionnaire (302 entries). 36% expectations regarding OA at ETHZ, 26% concerns, 32% requirements for a successful implementation of OA and 6% other remarks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>expectations</th>
<th>aspects</th>
<th>number of entries</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>concept of the future</td>
<td>future system for publication; free access as social responsibility, should generally be obligatory to support the change; only a question of time until OA is standard; question if ETH wants to be a leader or follower</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETH as a role model</td>
<td>leading role of ETH in promotion of OA; coordination with other universities; improvement of reputation; own multidisciplinary ETH university press wanted</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marketing</td>
<td>introduction courses; more information wanted; active support and promotion of ETH; differentiated information about options; conditions and costs in different fields of research; transparency; bolder communication</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>costs</td>
<td>reduction of publication fees; takeover of costs by ETH or support; better transparency of publication fees</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lobbying to reduce the power of publishers</td>
<td>system change is due; apply pressure on overcharging publishers; specific information on concerned publishing houses</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no change</td>
<td>all abstracts of papers are already accessible today; possibility of direct contact with authors if interested in articles; existing problems are not being solved through OA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democratisation of knowledge</td>
<td>higher range; also less privileged authors should be able to publish; easier access to information</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university policy</td>
<td>differentiated assessment of political positions; claim for OA on a political level</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high satisfaction with ETH Library; patience needed; transition to OA will be challenging, because leading journals are not OA yet; broaden the discussion to intellectual property and licences; define the term „OA“ more clearly; different situation depending on discipline; satisfied with the survey</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

107 35.8%
## Concerns and requirements regarding Open Access (OA) at ETH Zurich

### Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aspects</th>
<th>number of entries</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quality level</td>
<td>worse/no peer-review; great importance of impact factor as obstacle; insufficient quality and therefore attractiveness of the existing OA journals; expected loss of quality of the articles; quality will surpass the monetary aspect; scientific level of the journal is essential; shift of selection criteria from quality to financial means</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general concerns</td>
<td>OA does not solve any problems; a collective effort is necessary; fear of premature changes; challenging realisation; impact factor and names of journals are still too important; disadvantage for younger scientists</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>costs</td>
<td>exorbitant prices; disadvantage for students from low-income countries or younger scientists</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power of publishers</td>
<td>exploitation of the situation through journals, e.g. the more renowned the journal the higher the publication fees; OA as a commercial vehicle; shift of publication criteria from quality to quantity</td>
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</tr>
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### Requirements, possible solutions

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