

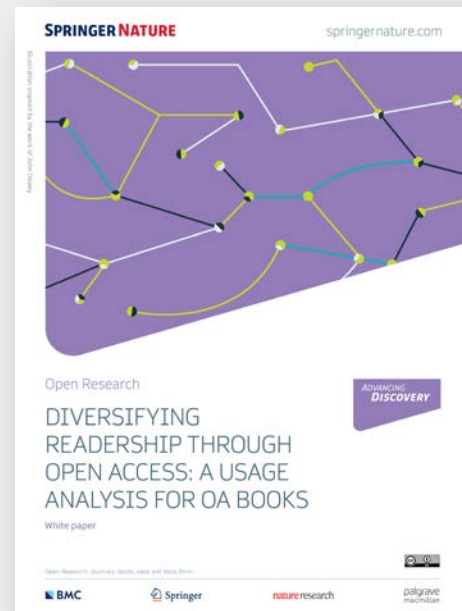
Diversifying readership through open access: A usage analysis for open access books

A collaboration between Springer Nature and COARD

OA for books is increasing, but still in the minority. Providing evidence for the benefits of OA for books can be powerful in helping to convince authors and funders to support it.

With this in mind, [Springer Nature](#) and [COARD](#) (Collaborative Open Access Research and Development) teamed up to better understand how OA affects the geographic usage of scholarly books.

Read the white paper: www.springernature.com/diversifyingreadership



Ros Pyne 0000-0002-7310-3153



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Diversifying readership through open access – Springer Nature / COARD

Introduction

The project focused on four key questions:

1. Are patterns of geographic usage different for OA books compared with non-OA books?
2. Is there evidence of wider usage for OA books, particularly from low-income and lower-middle-income countries?
3. Is there robust evidence that OA books outperform non-OA books on various proxy measures of usage?
4. Does such performance vary depending on the type of book (e.g. monograph, Brief/Pivot, contributed volume) or its disciplinary area?

Report authors

Springer Nature:

Ros Pyne

Christina Emery


Mithu Lucraft

COARD:

Alkim Özeygen

Lucy Montgomery

Cameron Neylon

 Ros Pyne 0000-0002-7310-3153



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Methods

- In 2019, Springer Nature made usage data relating to 281 OA books and 21,059 non-OA books available to COARD; of the non-OA books, a comparison set of 3,653 books was selected for closer analysis.
- Books in the study were limited to monographs, edited collections, and mid-length formats, and covered a range of disciplines from humanities and social sciences to science, technology, and medicine.
- The usage data included both COUNTER-compliant download data and citation data from date of publication (2015, 2016, or 2017) to Sept 2019.
- The webometric visibility of the books included in the study was investigated as an additional proxy for use of the books.



Ros Pyne 0000-0002-7310-3153



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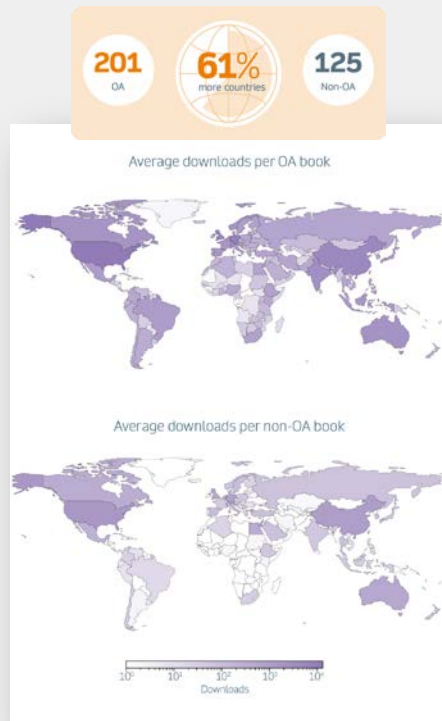
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Results

OA books showed:

- **Greater reach:** OA books achieved 10x more downloads, 2.4x more citations than non-OA books.
- **Consistent advantage:** OA usage benefit was seen for all book types, in all subject years, in all years of publication
- **More diverse readership:** OA books were downloaded in 61% more countries, including a higher number of LMICs, and showed greater diversity in readership. Downloads of OA books from the open web were 2x downloads from institutional network points.
- **Title advantage:** OA boosts readership of books that mention countries or regions in their titles; the effect is strongest for Africa and Latin America



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