

Increasing Diamond Open Access Journals quality, visibility, and recognition through the Diamond Discovery Hub

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ABSTRACT

As shown by the Open Access (OA) Diamond Journals study, which considers OA journals to be journals that are “free for the reader and for the author”, the landscape of academic publishing turns out to be much more diverse and rich than indicated by Research Assessment (RA) quantitative methods, such as the Impact Factor (IF). Indeed, RA policies relying mostly on the IF favour well-established journals supported by big publishers, and corresponding to a specific profile: Western, English-speaking, and primarily STEM focused journals. The Diamond OA model, on the other hand, represents a community-driven and scholar-led publishing model that is equitable and diverse (e.g. in terms of languages, and countries represented), capable of transforming the global publishing ecosystem towards a more equitable, diverse and scholar-owned future. In this sense, supporting and increasing Diamond OA journals’ quality and visibility means transforming not only the perception of the academic landscape but also the way RA policies are defined.

With this prospect in mind, the CRAFT-OA Horizon Europe project has been set up to support the quality improvement, build technical expertise, and enhance the visibility and discoverability of Open Access Diamond Journals (OADJs). A major contribution to this is the Diamond Discovery Hub (DDH), which CRAFT-OA is currently developing. The DDH is intended to be a strategic and game-changing service to increase the visibility of OADJs and, therefore, to give policymakers the appropriate tool to recognise the value of OADJs in their RA processes.

The DDH is a key element on the path from visibility to discoverability and finally, to the recognition of OADJs. While the CRAFT-OA project will support the OADJs’ quality through training and documentation and enhancements of some major publishing tools, the DDH will ensure that this global improvement has a concrete ecosystemic impact. The DDH will collect and validate high-quality metadata, with a special focus on diamond metadata based on refined criteria and verified manually. This set of richer and more consistent information about OADJs will thus constitute an authoritative list of OADJs and provide complete and reliable information to human users, and interoperable metadata to any indexer or aggregator.

However, the DDH is not designed only as a technical tool, but rather as a community service that can both preserve and promote equity and diversity. Its design takes into account the diverse landscape of Diamond OA publishing and the potential challenges for individual publishers to reach such a high-quality level. It will be implemented as a responsive and WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliant website with an SEO (Search Engine Optimization) friendly User Interface (UI) and will be scalable as well as easy to maintain and extend in the future. Furthermore, at the centre of the DDH operations will stand an “Editorial team”, initially composed of partners of the CRAFT-OA project. The Editorial team’s mission will be to communicate about the DDH requirements and facilitate their adoption. The Editorial team will support individual publishers who wish to join the DDH directly but it will primarily target trusted sources. A trusted source is a source of journal metadata that provides verified metadata about the Diamond OA criteria for journals. In the context of the DDH, the concept of trust relies on the verification of metadata by humans that check the metadata according to the Diamond OA criteria for journals developed by CRAFT-OA and DIAMAS. Concretely, the CRAFT-OA trusted sources will be either indexing or publishing services that will verify their journals’ compliance with the diamond criteria. This distribution of work between the DDH team and the Diamond community will ensure optimal coverage of the OADJs and secure both the consistency and flexibility necessary to offer a common framework and adapt to specific cases.

The DDH, alongside the other outputs of the CRAFT-OA project, is therefore a powerful tool to strengthen the Diamond OA community, facilitate the recognition of OADJs, and, ultimately, contribute to the reform of RA.

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KEYWORDS

academic publishing; diamond open access; open access; research assessment

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