What is Open Access?

Open Access scholarship is available to read online at no cost, and is free to re-use for teaching, research, and other scholarly pursuits.

Open Access removes both financial and legal barriers that make accessing and using scholarly materials difficult or expensive.

To learn more, read Open Access at https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/open-access

There are many ways to make your work openly accessible.

» deposit pre-prints in an institutional repository
» negotiate to retain rights in new publications
» publish in open access venues
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Open Access is about your rights as an author, and how readers access and use scholarly works.

There are many myths about Open Access.

» Open Access does not preclude peer review. It is not a measure of the quality of the work or of its source.
» Publishing Open Access does not revoke your right to be recognized as the author of a work.
» Open Access does not encourage plagiarism. Sharing your work openly makes it easier to identify plagiarism.

Making Your Work Open

Repositories provide a long-term home for your work, and are a better solution than commercial websites like academia.edu. To share your scholarship you might use:

» institutional repository
» disciplinary repository, like SocArXiv
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Negotiation!

Think about how you want others to use your work, and how you might use it in the future. Ask for specific rights, or use an open license when appropriate. And be persistent!

Open Access Publishing

Find publisher archiving and copyright policies at www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/
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Rights Reversion

If you published something many years ago, it’s often possible to make it openly available. The Authors Alliance has the definitive guide to rights reversion at authorsalliance.org

Open Access as Feminist Praxis

“Sharing feminist thought and practice sustains feminist movement.

Feminist knowledge is for everybody.”


[Feminist theory] became and remains a privileged discourse available to those among us who are highly literate, well-educated, and usually materially privileged.”

— hooks, Feminism is for Everybody, 3.

Feminism as a political commitment requires a focus on action over identity. Perhaps we should consider how making our work openly accessible could, in hooks’s phrasing, “advocate” scholarship.


Feminist writing that is inaccessible to the public is depoliticized and deradicalized. Inaccessibility creates conditions in which “lifestyle” feminism can thrive in place of radical thought and action.

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