

The publication process ensures that only reliable, peer-reviewed research findings are disseminated as scientific knowledge. However, it also implies that important research outputs can stay hidden in submission systems for a significant amount of time before being released as published content.

During this session, we will present two innovative options for surfacing manuscripts at different stages of the publication process prior to acceptance and publication. We will explore the value of the two approaches, considerations when releasing pre-publication content, as well as ways to encourage responsible sharing. The discussion will be based on learnings from two families of premium health and basic science journals which have developed and successfully piloted these two, different manuscript-sharing programs.

“Preprints with The Lancet” is a partnership between the family of premium journals and SSRN – a pre-print server. Authors can either opt in at submission to The Lancet journals or directly submit them to SSRN. The papers are taken through an initial set of editorial checks for transparency (funding source, conflict of interest disclosures etc.) and suitability (registration, scientific content etc.) before being made public. The major novelty comes from the way the papers are sourced: when submitting to this journal authors can tick a box to confirm that they would like their paper to be shared on the pre-print server through this service. The results are spectacular, with numbers going as high as 311 opt-ins per journal in the space of ten weeks. Opt-in rates went as high as 70.4%, and never lower than 29% for each journal. Such figures reflect a steep increase in openness and visibility for researchers early-on in the publication process.

Cell’s “Sneak Peek” program invites authors to post their paper on a preprint server, under the same trusted brand as the family of journals they submitted to, after a paper has been editorially selected to enter the peer review process. Authors can accept the invitation via e-mail, and the journal team will do the upload work for them. The paper is citable even as the paper is under consideration and if it gets published, its status on the server is updated, ensuring that readers are aware of the latest version available.

Such best-case practices are aligned with open science but come with their own advantages and challenges. These will be addressed in the session in order to further inspire and gather feedback from the research community.