D2O

3 years

483K downloads

354 libraries

240 OA books

Impact D2O 2024
We’ve been shaking things up at the MIT Press for over 60 years, changing how knowledge flows between academics and the world.

Reflecting and amplifying the values of an educational institution that places a premium on experimentation and open knowledge, the MIT Press has been a leader in open access publishing for decades.

We know that open scholarship benefits authors, readers, and the academy at large. Our experience echoes a growing number of studies showing that open access books see exponentially more use and significantly more citations than their paywalled counterparts and tend to be more successful in reaching audiences beyond the academy. This is why we designed and implemented a new solution that would better serve scholars and the research monographs that are vital to our mission.

Direct to Open (D2O) is a game changer. It’s a collective action model built to support the open access publication of scholarly books where neither authors nor readers have to pay. We are using it to move high quality, long-form digital publications from a paywalled purchase model to an open, community supported approach that benefits authors, libraries, and readers. D2O has exceeded expectations in its first three years, and we’re thrilled to share the impact!

Amy Brand, PhD
Director and Publisher
The MIT Press
Direct to Open allows scores of new books to be published open access immediately upon publication every year.

Before the launch of Direct to Open, open access books at the MIT Press were funded primarily on a single title or small subject collection basis. While this allowed us to gradually open more of our books, it did not provide a long-term, sustainable way to open our monographs immediately upon publication or at scale.

In the program’s first three years, D2O has funded 240 books: 159 in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), and 81 in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Design, and Mathematics (STEAM). Our data show that open access books are embraced by readers around the world and are making meaningful contributions to debates both within and beyond the academy.

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Direct to Open books reach larger global audiences and receive more citations than their paywalled counterparts

On average, our open access Humanities and Social Sciences books are used 3.75 times more and receive 21% more citations than their non-open counterparts.

Our open access STEAM books are used 2.67 times more and receive 15% more citations than their non-open counterparts, on average.
“Engineering and geosciences are less ‘booky’ disciplines, but the D2O edition of my book has circulated and bolstered my reach substantially. I wrote about Mexico, and have given one major talk at UNAM and one for a Latin America-based Environmental Humanities group. Given the difficulty of accessing physical books and lower income of scholars based in these regions, open access is key to making the book available in diverse sites in Latin America. I have also received substantial recognition for my book outside of my disciplinary circles, specifically in government agencies including USGS and the Bureau of Reclamation, which is enabled by the open access edition.”

—Elizabeth Reddy, Assistant Professor of Engineering, Design, & Society at the Colorado School of Mines and author of ¡Alerta!: Engineering on Shaky Ground
“As a group of early-career researchers interested in urban infrastructures, the Flow/Overflow/Shortage (FOS) Research Collective and its online reading group were literally brought together by the intellectual trajectory that *The Infrastructural South* follows and advances. The book has informed our debates about how to understand infrastructural problems today and continues to shape our thinking about extreme urban conditions. Our members have different institutional backgrounds at North American, European, and African institutions, or are independent researchers, so the open access version of the book allowed us to discuss it collectively, across geographies and institutional capacities.”

—FOS (Flow/ Overflow/ Shortage) Research Collective
“In my course, I used the software platform Perusall to let students comment and ask questions on our D2O book *Model Systems in Biology* in an online group setting. This interactive approach made the readings more engaging for the students and allowed me to monitor their comprehension and interests effectively. This approach isn’t possible with high-cost textbooks that my students can’t easily afford. Thus, the D2O option has notably improved the book’s accessibility, benefiting both my teaching and the students’ learning experience. Thank you, MIT Press.”

—Georg Striedter, Professor in the Department of Neurobiology and Behavior at the University of California, Irvine and author of *Model Systems in Biology*
expanding access

“For the Indian market, MIT Press books are prohibitively expensive. Indian book stores are reluctant to stock them and they are also expensive for individual buyers. People are very interested in the book in India, where the book is based, so it’s been a blessing to have the open access edition. Several people I met during my talks and at other events in India said they were able to access the book because it was open access.”

—Janaki Srinivasan, Associate Professor at the International Institute of Information Technology in Bangalore, India and author of *The Political Lives of Information: Information and the Production of Development in India*
embracing equity and inclusion

“This is huge for humanities publishing. We often do not have the funding resources that the natural sciences do for publishing open access and so our books are not as accessible to people outside academia. I’m very grateful my book has been available open access because I think it’s increased my audience tremendously. I have also received messages from grateful students. My institution only provides some open access fee waivers for journal articles, not books, so there’s no way to publish books open access without significant funding.”

—Amanda Wasielewski, Assistant Professor in Digital Humanities at Uppsala University and author of Computational Formalism: Art History and Machine Learning
allying with libraries

Direct to Open brings the MIT Press and libraries together to achieve equitable, academy-based open access for long-form scholarship at scale.

In D2O's first three years, 12 consortia have partnered with the Press on the program and 354 libraries have participated for at least one year.

Direct to Open gives libraries and consortia worldwide an opportunity to partner with a nonprofit, university-based publisher to achieve open access for books at scale without book processing charges (BPCs) and with real local benefits for supporters.
“Our contribution to D2O was less than we usually spend on MIT Press books in STEAM fields and provides much broader access than our usual title-by-title purchases. Our participation in D2O is part of a broader OA strategy in our collections. It contributes to the development of scholar-led, sustainable OA monograph publishing models, while also providing immediate benefits in the form of backfile access.”

— University Libraries, George Mason University

“The D2O model creates an open-knowledge commons by re-shaping the academic publishing ecosystem of university presses and research libraries. It is exactly the opportunity libraries should be supporting.”

— Greg Eow, President, Center for Research Libraries and member of the MIT Press Management Board
Readers all over the world benefit from immediate access to cutting-edge research

“Open access is very important in my field of anthropology. Our work often speaks to issues that are relevant to non-specialists and open access helps to build bridges to other fields and audiences. The D2O version of my book has enabled me to reach colleagues in anthropology, as well as clinical and social services and community stakeholders who have used the book to inform their understanding of regional housing issues. I firmly believe that the open access option has allowed the book to be much more broadly disseminated and used.”

—Elizabeth Carpenter-Song, Research Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Dartmouth College and author of Families on the Edge: Experiences of Homelessness and Care in Rural New England
483K reads as of May 1, 2024

3.21x open access books receive more use

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Germany • 32,183
Canada • 29,886
Japan • 14,957
China • 14,809
Italy • 13,563
Spain • 12,881
Australia • 12,235
India • 11,972
9 D2O books have surpassed 10K reads

Our most read book has 43K+ downloads
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Winner, 2023 PROSE Award for Architecture and Urban Planning

Winner, Society for the History of Technology Sally Hacker Prize

Winner, Society for Cinema and Media Studies Anne Friedberg Innovative Scholarship Award

Winner, American Society for Public Administration SPAR Best Book Award

Winner, 2023 PROSE Award for Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry

Finalist, 2024 PROSE Award for Engineering and Technology
Support open and equitable access

“Participating in models like Direct to Open is a part of our library’s diversity, equity, and inclusion work and bringing those values into alignment with how we’re spending our budget.”

—Curtis Brundy, Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Communications and Collections at Iowa State University and member of the MIT Press Library Advisory Board

By participating in Direct to Open, libraries shift from buying digital monographs from the MIT Press once for a single collection to funding them once for the world. Together, we can make scholarship more open and accessible. Learn more about joining Direct to Open and our dynamic participation benefits.

Contacts:

• Library Relations: Amy Harris, aeharris@mit.edu
• Open Access Leadership: Nick Lindsay, nlindsay@mit.edu
• Giving: Kathryn DeNitto, kdenitto@mit.edu

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