



EDITORIAL

Global market for scientific journals: STM Report 2021

The scientific journals sector is highly dynamic and multifaceted, leading to numerous international studies. Notably, the STM report, a triennial publication, tracks the evolution of this sector globally. Commissioned by the STM (International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers), the report reflects the interests of both commercial and open access scientific publishers [1].

The 2022 edition, analyzing data from 2019 to 2021, titled "2021 STM Report: Global Research Trends and Transformation in Open Access Publishing," provides an in-depth overview of the scientific and academic publication market. It highlights significant growth driven by Open Access (OA) publishers and examines variations across different global markets [2].

Key points from the report include [3]:

1. The global scholarly publishing market saw steady growth, increasing from \$27 billion in 2018 to \$28 billion in 2019. However, the pandemic caused a contraction to \$26.5 billion in 2020. Outsell, Inc. projects the market will return to \$28 billion by 2023.
2. The STM Report from 2018 noted an annual growth rate of 4% in articles and 5% in journals. Current data shows continued growth in articles, averaging 5-6.5% from 2015 to 2020, while journal growth has slowed to 2-3% since 2015.
3. Social Science and Humanities (SSH) journals and online content experienced annual growth rates of 1.7% and 3.8%, respectively, between 2018 and 2020. However, print books have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.
4. Open Access publishing is expanding rapidly, with revenues projected to grow at 11.5% and output at 12.5% annually from 2019 to 2022.
5. The USA maintains a dominant share of the global market, accounting for 40% of revenue in 2018 and 2019. In specific segments, it held 39% of the Scientific and Technical Information market and 42% of the Medical Information market in 2020.
6. China remains the top producer of publishable research, showing the highest average growth rate globally from 2018 to 2020. Other countries with strong growth include Russia, India, Spain, Italy, Brazil, and Australia.

7. Digital formats dominate, making up 89% of the scientific and technical segment in 2020, a 10% increase from 2019. Digital formats represented 77% of the global STM market in 2019.
8. The year 2020 likely saw a record number of submissions due to increased research on COVID-19.
9. Over the past two decades, university budgets in the USA have nearly doubled, but spending on libraries has halved. The pandemic has exacerbated budget strains and driven institutions to focus more on online delivery, impacting print publication sales.
10. Simba Information forecasts that journals will surpass books as the largest social sciences and humanities publishing sector by 2025.
11. Outsell, Inc. predicts that the Medical Information and Solutions segment will surpass the Scientific and Technical segment in market value by 2024.
12. The long-term effects of Brexit remain uncertain but may have worsened the decline in UK university income from international students and research funding. It could also affect international collaboration and increase subscription costs due to customs issues.

Outsell, Inc. reports that the Scientific and Technical Information and Solutions segment was valued at \$13.8 billion in 2020, down from \$14.9 billion in 2019. They projected a 1% growth rate for 2021 and a 0.1% compound annual growth rate from 2018 to 2024. Books in this segment have experienced a negative growth rate, and journal revenue fell significantly in 2020, with a modest improvement expected in 2021 [3].

Journals

The number of new scholarly journals grows by 2-3% annually. Since 2015, active peer-reviewed journals have shown a 2.3% annual growth rate. English-language journals have seen a 2.5% growth rate over the same period.

In 2020, Scopus listed 25,648 active journals, Web of Science recorded 24,974, and Ulrich's Web tracked over 48,000 peer-reviewed journals, with more than 35,000 in English. The number of new STM journals has been declining annually since 2015 [3].

In Figure 3, the number of journals by country of origin is shown according to SCOPUS as of March 1, 2021. All the journals considered had published at least one article in 2020 [3].

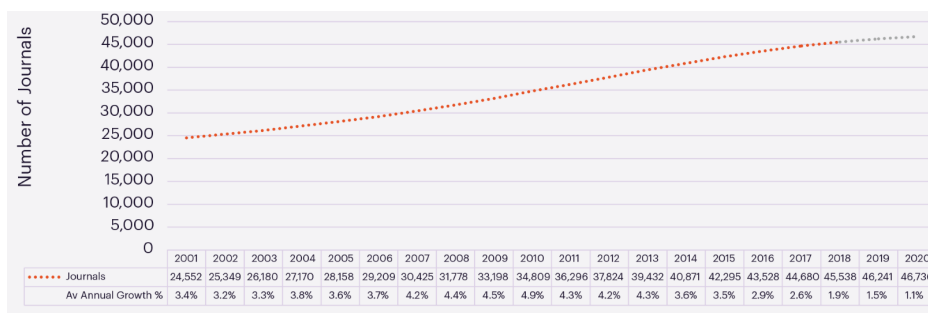


Figure 1 Growth in Number of Journals 2000-2020 (Source: [3])

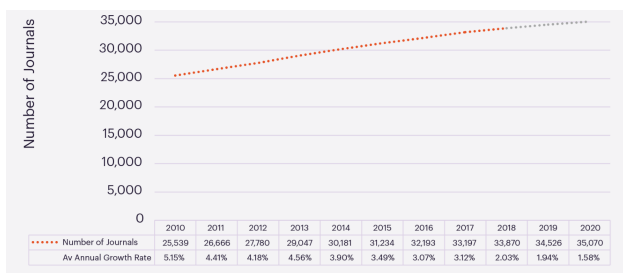


Figure 2 Growth in English-language Journals, 2010-2020 (Source: [3])

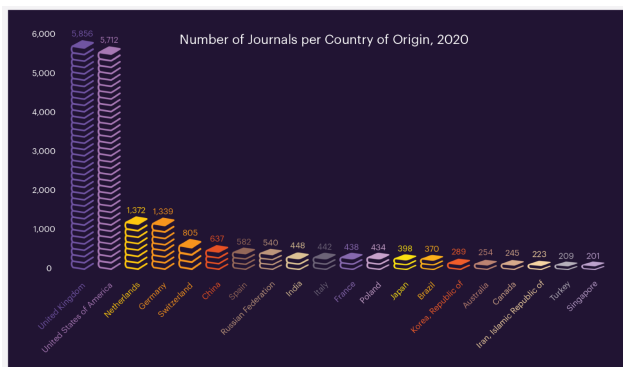


Figure 3 Number of Journals per Country or Origin, 2020

Submissions

The 2018 STM Report noted a 4% annual growth in articles and a 5% growth in journals. By 2021, article

growth had risen to 5-6.5% on average between 2015 and 2020, while journal growth slowed to 2.3%. In 2020, Scopus data recorded 4.2 million citable documents, and the Dimensions database showed 4.7 million articles. Submissions grew by 3% annually, with 2020 potentially being a record year due to COVID-19-related papers. The Copyright Clearance Center reported a 25% increase in total submissions, with some publishers experiencing up to five times the usual submission rates.

References

- [1] E. Abadal, *Revistas científicas. Situación actual y retos de futuro*. Spain: Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2017.
- [2] biblioteca de Traducción y Documentación de la Universidad de Salamanca, "Mercado global de las revistas científicas: Stm report 2021," Jan. 15 2024.
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