



Annarita Barbaro

Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy
annarita.barbaro@iss.it

Dear colleagues,

in this issue's "Publications and New Products" column, I am pleased to present a selection of recent publications and initiatives that have caught my attention and that I hope you will find interesting. The topics explored reflect several of the key challenges and developments shaping our daily work, including artificial intelligence, research integrity, and Open Science. Among the recommended readings, I would particularly like to highlight the article on hyper-prolific authors—an important research integrity issue that, in my view, still does not receive the attention it deserves. Enjoy!

FROM THE WEB

- **An analysis of the paper mills market: BuyTheBy**

Reese Richardson, Spencer Hong, and Anna Abalkina have created a dataset called "BuyTheBy" (available on Zenodo: <https://zenodo.org/records/19684278>), which systematically analyses the paper mill market. Paper mills are fraudulent companies that sell scientific articles or authorship positions on papers that are ready to be, or in the process of being, published. Paper mills have existed for years and have become especially widespread in countries where academic careers depend heavily on the number of published works, offering shortcuts to researchers (or aspiring researchers) who want to obtain publications quickly. BuyTheBy collects more than 18,000 advertisements from seven paper mills operating in different countries (including India, Russia, and Ukraine), gathered between 2020 and 2026. Analysis of the dataset shows that prices vary widely: from about \$56 to over \$5,600 to be listed as the first author. According to the dataset's creators—although they affirm that this point still requires further investigation—some advertisements appear to be linked to published articles. Combating the phenomenon seems difficult, as this market evolves rapidly, also thanks to the use of artificial intelligence. For further reading related to the subject: A preprint on the dataset, published on arXiv: [BuyTheBy: A dataset of 18,710 text-based paper mill advertisements with 51,812 timestamped prices](#); a preprint on paper mills in conferences, published on arXiv: [Opening Pandora's box: Paper mills in conference proceedings](#)

- **Living guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research**

The European Research Area Forum has published an update of the [ERA Living Guidelines on the responsible use of Generative AI in research](#) with the goal of helping the scientific community to use generative AI in a responsible manner. While non-binding, they should be considered as a supporting tool for researchers, research organisations and research funding bodies, including the ones applying to the European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. These Guidelines consider key principles on research integrity as well as already existing frameworks for the use of AI in general and in research specifically. Given the dynamic nature of this technology and its surrounding policy landscape, these guidelines will be updated on a regular basis to ensure that they remain a useful resource for researchers and organisations.

Bengaluru Roadmap and Action Plan on Diamond Open Access

The [Bengaluru Roadmap and Action Plan on Diamond Open Access](#) is the outcome document of the 3rd Global Summit on Diamond Open Access, organised in Bengaluru, India, from 2 to 6 February 2026. The Roadmap affirms that Diamond Open Access is a necessary structural transformation of scholarly communication, which requires the alignment of policy, funding and evaluation systems, and the necessary governance to enable Diamond Open Access to function as the primary model for disseminating publicly funded knowledge. The Roadmap advances a coordinated global vision across six priority action areas: integrating Diamond Open Access into national policy and legal frameworks; redirecting publishing expenditure toward community-governed infrastructures; reforming research evaluation systems so that they recognise Diamond Open Access publications, multilingual scholarship, and community-governed venues; strengthening shared infrastructure and interoperability; recognising and supporting the human labour behind scholarly communication; and promoting linguistic diversity and marginalised knowledge systems.

- **Is Subscribe to Open Good for Libraries?**

The article [Is Subscribe to Open Good for Libraries?](#) discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the Subscribe to Open (S2O) model for academic libraries. In S2O, journals become openly accessible if enough libraries continue their subscriptions, allowing publishers to fund open access without charging authors APCs (Article Processing Charges). The authors, three librarians from different research libraries, argue that S2O has several advantages for libraries: it supports equitable open access, avoids shifting costs to researchers, and helps maintain sustainable scholarly publishing. However, they also point out challenges, such as uncertainty around long-term funding, the risk of “free riders” (institutions benefiting without subscribing), and the difficulty libraries face in evaluating the real value of supporting S2O initiatives.

- **DORA course on responsible research assessment**

The Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) [responsible research assessment \(RRA\) course](#) aims to empower anyone to challenge existing assumptions around research quality and impact, by introducing them to the concept of responsible research assessment, its foundational principles, and how RRA aims to improve evaluation practices. The course is free, self-paced, and designed to pick and choose which lessons are most relevant and useful. Each lesson includes a glossary of key terms and annotated bibliography. The course is designed for anyone working in research, research administration or leadership, research funding or policy, scholarly publishing or communication, or metrics providers who seek to drive positive change in the research system.

- **The Economic Benefits of Open Science**

PLOS commissioned Technopolis to provide an independent study on [the economic benefits of Open Science](#) (OS) to clarify where economic value is created in an OS ecosystem, what conditions enable it, and where structural barriers and cost pressures remain. This report, [The economic benefits of Open Science](#), examines the economic implications of OS and what it would mean to move towards a research ecosystem in which research elements, including data, code, software, workflows, methods, and publications, are openly shared and valued. The study focuses on three key areas: understanding the impacts of migrating to an OS ecosystem in which all types of research outputs are valued; exploring the costs of such a transition for the scholarly communication ecosystem; and evaluating the variety of economic impacts arising from an OS transition. To ensure the findings reflect the breadth of OS beyond publications alone, the study includes five illustrative case studies spanning digital collections, computational workflows, open-source software, an open large language model, and open training resources.

PUBLICATIONS AND NEW PRODUCTS

READING SUGGESTIONS

- Gibney E. [Open-source AI tool beats giant LLMs in literature reviews — and gets citations right](#). Nature News, 04 February 2026
- Almeida JM, Antelmi A, Gonçalves MA et al. [The complex ecosystem of hyperprolific authors](#). Scientometrics 131, 1847–1895 (2026)
- Knowledge Exchange, Fraser, K., Pinfield, S., & Chiarelli, A. (2026). [Charting New Paths: The Promise of Alternative Publishing Practices](#). Zenodo.
- Naddaf M, Quill E. [Hallucinated citations are polluting the scientific literature. What can be done?](#) Nature News, 01 April 2026

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DCMI 2026 Conference

August 3 – 7, Seoul, South Korea

DCMI 2026, the twenty-fourth International Conference on Dublin Core and Metadata Applications, invites researchers, practitioners, and experts from diverse domains to explore the dynamic landscape of metadata in the theme of “Meaning-Driven AI: Using Metadata to Align Systems with Human Values”. More info at this [link](#)

IFLA 2026 World Library and Information Congress

August 10-13, Busan, South Korea

The theme of the Congress, “Libraries Powering Transformation,” reflects the vision of the IFLA Strategy 2024–2029: “Sustainable futures for all through knowledge and information.” For registration and more information click [here](#).

PUBMET. 13th Conference on Scholarly Communication in the Context of Open Science

September 9-11, Zadar, Croatia

The main Conference topic is “Communities in Open Scholarly Communication: Governance, Responsibility, and Shared Infrastructures”. The PUBMET 2026 proposes a reflection on how Open Science works in practice, including questions of responsibility, ownership, governance, inclusion, and sustainability, as well as the gap between Open Science policies and everyday research practices. More info [here](#)

Peer review week

September 14-18 everywhere

This year’s theme is “Peer Review Capacity: Volume, Speed, and Quality” addressing the sustainability of peer review under increased pressure, ensuring robust, fair, and high-quality assessments. To be updated on all the initiatives click [here](#)

OASPA annual conference

September 21-23, Zagreb, Croatia

For registration and more information click [here](#)

19th IFLA Interlending and Document Supply Conference

September 28-20 Rome, Italy

The conference focus is "Knowledge Without Walls," targeting international delegates to discuss library operations, technology, and resource sharing. For registration and more information click [here](#)

Please feel free to contact me (annarita.barbaro@iss.it) if you have any further suggestion about initiatives or events you would like to promote