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## A Comparison Between Electronic and Printed Journals

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### Abstract

The number of journals is rapidly rising worldwide. There is public debate about published articles comparing the costs, benefits, and various pros and cons of printed versus electronic full-text journals. The advancement of online journals during recent years has given librarians a powerful new resource to support learning and research. This article explores issues relating to the print publication process and the electronic publication process in order to clarify the unique advantages and disadvantages of each media. Most commercial sites are subscription-based, or allow pay-per-view access. Many universities subscribe to electronic journals to provide access to their students and faculty, and it is generally also possible for individuals to subscribe. An increasing number of journals are now available with open access, requiring no subscription. This is the case with the Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities. Most working paper archives and articles on personal homepages are free; as are collections in institutional repositories and subject repositories. One of the great advantages of electronic journals is the possibility of acquiring article-level metrics.

Printed journals are portable and convenient, don't require a device to read, have a high graphical resolution (easier to read) and are self-archiving. Printed journals should continue to survive, but only with a decrease in production and changes in content to suit more restricted niches left in the wake of the electronic journals.

**Key words:** *e-journal, electronic journal, printed journal, academic journal, open access (OA), information technology (IT).*

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## Introduction

Scientific journals are only one tool to meet the goals of science; the availability of the scientific work to a larger circle of readers and increase of its visibility. The publishing of scientific articles is an obligation of scientific and academic professionals (Trajkovski, 2015). The number of journals is rapidly rising worldwide. The number of online published papers is increasing as well. The developments in information technology (IT) have made large changes in the way the information is collected, stored, retrieved, and distributed. Electronic journals are one of the products of that technology. It seems that scientific e-journals will replace printed one.

Lots of journals in all fields, both printed and electronic, are currently available electronically via the word-wide web (Kacherki & Thombare, 2010). Some journals have printed and electronic versions such as the Journal of Special Education and Rehabilitation (JSER) where I was an editor from 2004 to 2017. The editorial board of that journal faced lots of problems such as finding financial resources for printing each issue of the journal. There was a lack of money and no interest from the Ministry of Education and Science to invest in academic publishing. In journals coming from small countries, such as JSER, it is always important to provide high quality articles which will then be widely cited. By doing so, we would have a greater influence as a scientific journal (Trajkovski & Donev, 2017).

Some journals only exist in their online format. An electronic journal (or e-journal) is simply a journal available in electronic format. Online articles are usually available in PDF or HTML formats which means they will have the same typography, content, pagination and layout as the journal in print format. Because of this, the ReAttach Therapy International Foundation launched this journal entitled: “Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities” (JRTDD) only as an electronic

journal. Without doubt, electronic publications in general and electronic journals in particular, provide some advantages compared to paper-based documents. Printed journals serve four key functions: disseminating information, ensuring the credibility of its content, establishing a permanent archive for scientific research and offering its authors professional recognition (Ulaby, 2006).

Journals that are published exclusively in electronic format present an innovation in the way that scientific information is communicated easily to the scientific community. Significant concerns remain regarding the transient nature of the electronically formatted material especially since e-only journals have only recently become integrated into information science systems. These e-journals were first suggested some years ago as a possible means of revolutionizing the world of research journals. However, print journals have been used for decades and there is quite a bit of difference between the usage of e-journals and print journals within the information system (Trivedi & Joshi, 2009).

E-journals offer several advantages that can not be offered to a printed version such as: available as soon as (or even before) the print version is published, accessible via the Internet including from your PC at home, available when the library is closed or when another user wants the same issue (24 hours) and subjects can be searched across a range of titles.

The **aim** of this article is to explore issues relating to the print publication process and the electronic publication process in order to clarify the unique advantages and disadvantages of each media.

## Definitions of Terms

Here are definitions of some expressions which will be used in this article:

Electronic Journal: A scholarly journal that can be accessed via electronic transmission and has

the purpose of providing material for academic research and study. Some electronic journals are online-only journals; others are online versions of printed journals.

Print Journal: The paper version of journal; print journal issues are the ones that we usually checked in through library integrated systems (Halloumeh & Jirjees, 2016).

## **Electronic versus Print-based Publications**

Electronic documents are typically delivered with a powerful mechanism to easily search through them. Navigation tools allow readers to jump to particular sections e.g. to references or graphics, and from there to the relevant section in the body of the text. “Forward referencing” provides links to articles which were published earlier or later, but cite the original article. Corrections can be included without difficulty. References can be linked to abstracting services, from where abstracts or full texts of cited papers can be obtained and similar publications can be retrieved, based on the original article. Electronic versions of journals usually are available in advance of printed versions, and in addition users can browse the contents tables of forthcoming issues. Journal issues need not be shipped, thus avoiding delays due to mailing systems. Electronic documents can be accessed from anywhere, at any time and by as many simultaneous users as needed. Graphics are available together with the underlying data, allowing readers to modify them according to their needs; video or sound sequences as well as computer programs can be embedded. Journal issues can be linked to data archives and image libraries. Costs for electronic publications are not limited to purchasing equipment. The myth of all information on the Internet being free-of-charge has not yet been destroyed. In the first days of the internet, many documents were maintained by individuals who spent their private time and personal efforts into setting up network

resources. This voluntary attitude has led to the widespread, but wrong assumption that electronically delivered information doesn't cost anything. Open access doesn't mean that there are no expenses for publishers. The truth is that the Internet is just the communication channel. Valuable content must be paid for as much as before. Commercial publishers are about to leave their experimental phase during which access to their publications often was allowed without any charge, for testing purposes, and now are establishing subscription rates. Combined subscriptions for a printed copy plus access to the electronic version of journals typically are more expensive than print-only subscriptions. While the reasons for price increases may be understood by librarians, it can be very difficult to explain them to those who decide on the size of library budgets. The editorial office of JRTDD decided not to charge the authors and will invest their own money from the ReAttach Therapy Institute Foundation.

It was suggested that print journals and online journals can be distinguished by their respective costs of production and distribution, and that online journals are typically less expensive (Collins & Berge, 1994). Print and electronic journals also differ in the timing and type of feedback they elicit from readers (Hamad, 1992). The format of electronic journals can allow for immediate feedback from readers and a response from the author or editor, whereas this process can take up to two years for printed journals. A benefit that has contributed to the rapid growth of online journals is the addition of sound, graphics, and movies, which can be embedded in journal articles (Miller & Dufek, 1995). The ability of online journals to create links to other information sources such as related journals or web sites is another benefit.

E-journals offer several advantages that can not be offered from a printed version such as increased speed of production through electronic interaction between authors, editors,

reviewers, publishers and readers, fast downloading, printing, availability through computer networks and use of multimedia molecular models structure of molecules in 2D, 3D editing etc. On the other hand the use of printed journals is time tested, has developed over several centuries and has evolved in specialized ways to fulfill their primary activities of easy and elaborate dissemination of information, quality control and recognition of authors. Accessing printed journal articles involves a number of methods including the use and variety of both specialized and general indexes, library catalogues, key words searching, usage of Boolean operators, reference citing from other articles, recommendations from readers and colleagues and meticulous arrangement of printed journals by libraries. E-journals can be distributed more economically than printed journals because the main cost of preparing the text, the review process and other similar procedures are not as capital intensive as the cost of printing and mailing printed copies. Consequently, it is usually hoped that the financial cost of the journals in the electronic environment could slow or reverse the escalating cost of scientific journals, in a print version (Trivedi & Joshi, 2009).

Electronic journals have several advantages over traditional printed journals:

- It is possible to search the contents pages and/or the full text of journals to find articles on a certain subject.
- You can read journal articles on your desktop, you don't have to be in the library.
- You can e-mail articles to yourself or download them for printing.
- The article that you want to read will always be available, even when the library is closed.
- Hypertext links allow you to move to different sections within individual journals or articles and can link you to related resources on the Internet.

- Journals can include more images and audio-visual material.
- Journals can be interactive - you can e-mail the author or editor with your comments.
- Article-level metrics.

One of the great advantages of electronic journals is the possibility for having article-level metrics. Article-level metrics is a tool being more frequently used in most journals during the last decade. It is an approach to quantify how much an individual article is used, discussed and shared on social media. Researchers and authors may freely and ethically use the social media tools available to thus increase the availability of published articles and other professional and scientific publications. Altmetrics are not an alternative to the traditional metrics, but complementary to them. Altmetrics offer a wide spectrum of direct visibility of the publications on social networks and are characterized with the possibility to rapidly spread on the Internet network. Publishers of developed countries have the possibility for commercial use of altmetric data, unlike developing countries (Trajkovski, 2016). Some journals are only available in electronic format and although some of these journals are of a high academic quality, we should be aware that not all of them have gone through the same process of academic peer review as traditional printed journals.

Advantages of printed journals are that they portable, convenient, don't require a device to read, they have a high graphical resolution (easier to read), and they are self archiving. Printed journals have stood the test of time and have a proven record of reliability. The main disadvantages of printed journals are availability (the library may not subscribe, the issue may be missing) and the time required to physically visit the library, find articles, and photocopy them.

## About JRTDD

Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities (eISSN 2589-7799) (<https://jrtdd.com>) is a multidisciplinary, scholarly, peer reviewed, international, electronic journal published by the ReAttach Therapy International Foundation from the Netherlands. In the journal the following articles are considered for publication: original and review articles, short reports, letters to the editor, clinical experiences, surveys of cases, doctoral dissertations, master of arts, editorials, rapid communications and other contributions from all the fields of reattach therapy, psychology, special education, rehabilitation, social policy, and the related sciences. The aim of the journal is to share and disseminate knowledge between all disciplines that work in the field of developmental diversities. All articles will be critically reviewed by at least two unknown reviewers within 2 months, but longer delays sometimes are unavoidable. All submitted manuscripts have to comply with Instructions for Authors. There will be at least 20 articles published per year. At the beginning, the frequency of publishing will be biannual (two issues per year) with the possibility of increasing the number of issues per year. JRTDD is open access journal which means that its contents is free of charge and permits authors to self-archive final accepted versions of the articles on any OAI-compliant institutional / subject-based repository. Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. Open access removes price barriers (subscriptions, licensing fees, pay-per-view fees) and permission barriers (most copyright and licensing restrictions). The legal basis of OA is the consent of the copyright holder (for newer literature) or the expiration of copyright (for older literature). OA is compatible with peer review, and all the major OA initiatives for scientific and scholarly literature insist on its

importance. The Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities is devoted to the scientific study of disability and new schema therapy. The subject matter is broad and includes, but is not restricted to, findings from psychological, biological, educational, genetic, medical, psychiatric, and sociological studies, ethical, philosophical, and legal contributions that increase knowledge on the prevention and treatment of disability and/or inform public policy and practice (JRTDD, 2018).

## Conclusions

As electronic journal usage has increased, users face problems such as searching, accessing, saving and printing. There are some problems related to printed journals such as physical access, delayed issues and missing or damaged issues. The prevalence of electronic journals or other sources for digital articles is probably one of the main causes for the increase in the amount of readings in all work fields. Electronic publishing serves an important need in disseminating scientific and scholarly information quickly and easily, but not at the expense of print. It is not a killer technology, but rather an evolutionary development that adds yet another dimension to the various ways that we as a society share knowledge. The future of online journals seems one of divergent paths. Privatization of the Internet has and will continue to guide changes in regulation, ownership, and use of online journals. The use and sophistication of online advertising will increase because advertisers and editors have only begun to explore the commercial aspects of online advertising. Obtaining information about target users is critical to enlist advertisers and security and privacy issues related to this, need to be solved. Scholarly journals that have limited target audiences will need to find means other than advertisers for financial sponsorship. Electronic journals offer economic benefits too valuable to be dismissed by scholarly publishers.

Printed journals should continue to survive, but only with a decrease in production and changes in content to suit more restricted niches left in the wake of the online journals.

Electronic versions are favoured when they make access easier, save the reader's time, and when they are familiar to the specific scholarly discipline. The variety of access choices will likely continue for some time to come.

The staff in libraries require training in handling the e-journals and users need an orientation for using them. Library staff should be provided with proper training, which will help them acquire more sophisticated searching and retrieval skills. The librarian's role has to be redefined in view of technological developments keeping in mind the best interest of users and retrieval efficiency.

### Conflicts of interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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