Award-winning diamond open access in the humanities.
We are the Open Library of Humanities.
For free. For everyone. Forever.

The Open Library of Humanities (OLH) is an award-winning diamond open access publisher of internationally leading academic scholarship. Our goal is to liberate university research from commercial control. We believe that scholarship should be academic-led and community-owned.

"The Open Library of Humanities is a transformative venture on the leading edge of open-access initiatives on both sides of the Atlantic. There is hardly a more important project in train for scholarship in the humanities today."

Prof. David Armitage, Lloyd C. Blankfein Professor of History, Harvard University

"Many publishers believe that radical openness is not sustainable. Yet the remarkable growth of the OLH over the last ten years demonstrates that it is, with the right ingenuity and commitment. The OLH is a model for what publishing should be."

Prof. Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Director of Digital Humanities and Professor of English at Michigan State University

"In the past decade, the OLH has demonstrated the viability of a collective and solidarity-driven investment approach within research communities. This model offers a sustainable and scalable route towards achieving genuine open access in the creation and dissemination of knowledge."

Prof. Leslie Chan
Associate Director, Centre for Critical Development Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough, and original signatory of the Budapest Open Access Initiative (2001)
Who we are.

Since 2013, the OLH has become one of the most prestigious diamond open access publishers of humanities journals. We leverage international library funding to return journals to the academic communities that founded them. Working closely with scholarly associations and research funders, we protect niche humanities fields and preserve their research cultures for the future.

If your journal decides to join us, you will become part of a powerful global community of like-minded scholars. We value research excellence but not at the expense of excluding scholars who cannot access the same funds and opportunities. We use open access to address structural inequalities within our disciplines. To do this, we stand united against the commercial acquisition of humanities journals by publishers preoccupied with their own profit margins.

“Launching the OLH has been an extraordinary journey. We built a public good out of passion and rage and hope. We continue to build it collectively every day.”

Dr Caroline Edwards
Executive Director and Co-Founder, Open Library of Humanities and Senior Lecturer in Contemporary Literature and Culture, Birkbeck, University of London
What we do.

Everything we do at the OLH is designed to preserve access to humanities scholarship in the digital age.

Day-to-day, this means publishing articles in our journals, developing open source software, researching new possibilities for scholarly communication, and engaging our community of researchers, editors and librarians.

Publish

We publish 30 peer-reviewed academic journals (and counting!), including our flagship Open Library of Humanities Journal.

We oversee editorial processes and provide support to our editors, to ensure the highest standards of research integrity. As our library supporters grow, we expand our portfolio by ‘flipping’ subscription journals to diamond open access.

Research

We are a scholar-led organisation based at Birkbeck, University of London.

Co-Founder Prof. Martin Paul Eve researches scholarly communications in books such as Theses on the Metaphors of Digital-Textual History (2024), and Open Access and the Humanities (2014).

Co-Founder Dr Caroline Edwards has 15 years experience building academic networks in the humanities, including setting up new journals, building scholarly research associations, and working with editors to enshrine community ownership and governance of journals that protects against commercial acquisition.

Our wider OLH team use their doctorates in humanities subjects to underpin best practice in scholarly publishing.

Develop

We develop Janeway, a powerful, flexible, emphatically open source publishing platform.

Having our own software makes OLH journals sustainable, and gives us independence from commercial publishing platforms. We listen to our journal editors and continually improve the platform with scholars’ needs in mind.

Engage

We engage our global community of librarians, editors, and academics around our shared vision of not-for-profit humanities publishing.

We deliver talks, participate in working groups and committees, write, lead, and collaborate, championing open access as an equitable and sustainable alternative to commercial publishing. We also present awards to recognise exemplary contributions to the OA community (and we’ve won a few of our own!).
The OLH model.

We’ve spent 10 years building a sustainable business model for funding diamond open access publishing. Our model places equity at the heart of scholarly publishing – for readers, authors, editors, libraries, and funders.

We believe that Article Processing Charges (APCs) and Transformative Agreements (TAs) are unaffordable and unfair. They perpetuate legacy subscription models that privilege wealthier institutions in the Global North at the expense of scholars working in the Global South.

Our model makes diamond open access affordable and sustainable.

More than 340 university and public libraries worldwide have joined us in our mission. Diverting small sums from their commercial open access budgets, these partner libraries help the OLH grow its portfolio of journals and build open source publishing technologies that benefit the entire academic community.

This challenges commercial academic publishers to reduce their library subscriptions and improve the transparency of their own business models.

“The Open Library of Humanities is a light in the darkness: innovative, dynamic publishing that centres equity and inclusivity for both readers and authors by providing open access without APCs.”

Prof. Kathleen Fitzpatrick Director of Digital Humanities and Professor of English at Michigan State University

How it works

01. Many universities and libraries contribute small, affordable sums.

02. These funds cover OLH publishing expenses and journal funding.

03. OLH journals publish research that is archived, secure and free to access.
Award-winning publishing.

The OLH has been internationally recognised as a leading example of best practice in diamond open access publishing.

We have received several awards, including the Open Scholarship Award from the Canadian Social Knowledge Institute in 2022, the Coko Foundation Open Publishing Award in 2019, and Small Digital Publisher of the Year from the Association of Online Publishers in 2020. The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers gave us a Highly Commended certificate for Innovation in Publishing in 2020.

Our innovative business model has also been featured in studies on sustainability in not-for-profit open access publishing. In 2022, the OLH was highlighted as one of seven case studies exemplifying sustainable OA models in a European Commission report. The report, ‘Operationalising Open Research Europe as a collective publishing enterprise,’ was commissioned by the European Commission for their Open Research Europe (ORE) publishing platform. We were recognised for our ‘ground-breaking’ business model in a 2021 speech on UKRI policy delivered by Amanda Solloway MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the UK’s Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Many of the journals that we publish also have award-winning articles in their back catalogues. For example:

Dr Amy Butt received the 2022 SFRA Innovative Research Award for her article ‘The Present as Past: Science Fiction and the Museum’ published in the Open Library of Humanities journal. The prize is awarded by the Science Fiction Research Association for the year’s best critical essay-length work published in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Dr Janet Smith received the 2021 Elizabeth Eisenstein Essay Prize for her article ‘Crossing the Border of Citizenship: Helen Taylor, the Independent Radical Democrat Candidate for Camberwell North, 1885’ published in the Open Library of Humanities journal. The prize is awarded annually for the best peer-reviewed article/book chapter by a member of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS).

Dr Aleisha Ward received the 2017 Rebecca Coyle Prize for her article ‘New Zealand Jazz Concerts, the Use and Abuse of Grand Pianos, and One Cartoonist’s Response’, published in the OLH journal The Comics Grid. The prize is awarded by the International Association for the Study of Popular Music – Australia / New Zealand (IASPM ANZ) to the best journal article on popular music in the Australia-New Zealand region that year.

Professor Jason Camlot won the prestigious Donald Gray Prize in 2016 for his article ‘Historicist Audio Forensics: The Archive of Voices as Repository of Material and Conceptual Artefacts’ in the OLH journal 19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Nineteenth Century. The prize is awarded by the North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA) for the best journal article published that year.
What is it?

The Open Library of Humanities (OLH) is a charitable organisation dedicated to publishing open access to scholarship in the humanities – for free, for everyone, for ever. The Open Library of Humanities prospectus though, are unaffordable in humanities disciplines. Gold open access means that this service is provided by publishers. This usually means that a manuscript submission, review, journal hosting, migration, acquisition. Our publishing platform will remain truly open for the entire scholarly community.

Johan Rooryck
Executive Director of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. David Armitage, the Lloyd C. Blankfein Professor of History at Harvard writes that “there is hardly a more important project in train surrounding open access” that the project has already triggered.

Camille Regnault
Former Scholarly Communication Assistant at the University of West London, notes the “crucial changes in the debate terms of user experience, and it was the only platform to offer all of the integration, analytical and dissemination features which we were keen to have.”

Megan Taylor
Former Press Manager, University of Huddersfield Press

“By migrating to Janeway, our university press content is finally curated and indexed at a level that we are truly proud of as well as fully open access. The Open Library of Humanities are brilliant partners and Andy and the team really helped us to understand the full suite of services and were extremely quick to respond to our queries which in turn provided a very quick turnaround time for implementation.”

The OLH has received two substantial grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to date, 2013, 2016. By removing the profit margins of publishing infrastructure providers, the OLH has demonstrated that diamond open access publishing is affordable, scalable, and sustainable. Releasing our own publishing technology open source under a Copyleft license ensures that the software built by the OLH tech team is safeguarded against commercial acquisition. Our publishing platform will remain truly open for the entire scholarly community.

Janeway is rapidly becoming the platform of choice for other scholarly publishers, including California Digital Library, MIT, University of Michigan Press, UCL Press, New York University, TU Darmstadt, Society for Clinical Data Management, Iowa State University, Dublin City University, University of Ghent, and University of Westminster Press.

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“The first thing to know about Janeway is that it is not just a submission system and platform. It is a complete publishing tool that allows the editors to basically operate as a publisher. That makes it hugely empowering.”

Johan Rooryck
Executive Director of cOAlition S, Professor of Linguistics at Leiden University and Editor-in-Chief of Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics

Our dedicated in-house software engineers have built a leading platform for journal hosting, migration, manuscript submission, review, peer review and the scholarship we publish and is easy to use for authors and editors.

Publishing OLH journals on our own platform also reduces the cost of open access publishing. By removing the profit margins of publishing infrastructure providers, the OLH has demonstrated that diamond open access publishing is affordable, scalable, and sustainable. Releasing our own publishing technology open source under a Copyleft license ensures that the software built by the OLH tech team is safeguarded against commercial acquisition. Our publishing platform will remain truly open for the entire scholarly community.

Janeway is built on open infrastructure, easily integrated into other systems, follows the highest metadata, accessibility and interoperability standards and is easy to use for authors and editors.

Janeway is rapidly becoming the platform of choice for other scholarly publishers, including California Digital Library, MIT, University of Michigan Press, UCL Press, New York University, TU Darmstadt, Society for Clinical Data Management, Iowa State University, Dublin City University, University of Ghent, and University of Westminster Press.

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A world-leading, open source digital publishing platform.

Our dedicated in-house software engineers have built a leading platform for journal hosting, migration, manuscript submission, review,
What we offer.

When your journal moves to the OLH you join a worldwide community. We offer experienced, friendly editorial guidance, bespoke technological support, and regular events organised for our editors, authors, and librarians.

We have a competitive application process for journals looking to join the OLH. If your journal is successful, we can offer you:

**A small, friendly publishing team.**

Our team of ten full-time employees provides years of academic editorial experience in the humanities. Our editorial team have humanities PhDs and several continue their own research alongside working full-time at the OLH. They understand the needs of editors and authors alike and are available to help you — via email, video call, and instant messaging. You also have direct access to our tech developers who can be contacted for support via instant messaging. We run regular live online training events for our journals and networking events for OLH authors and editors.

**Full funding to publish your journal in perpetuity.**

As a diamond open access publisher, we will never demand any payments from your authors. When you join the OLH, we commit to publishing your journal on our platform in perpetuity.

Our reputation as a leading diamond open access publisher and our sustainable business model are trusted by scholars and librarians worldwide. Our business model represents the future of academic publishing, reducing reliance on commercial publishers that are beholden to their stakeholders and bringing research funding back into universities.

**Retention of full intellectual rights for your authors.**

Your authors remain the copyright holders of their articles, granting third parties the right to use, reproduce, and share their work according to a Creative Commons license agreement.

We believe that the greatest societal good is possible when people are free to re-distribute scholarship and to create derivative works. This is why we use the CC BY 4.0 license, under which others may re-use your work, on condition that they cite you. If a more restrictive licence is required (for example, if an author is reproducing third party material that cannot be shared under more open licences), this can be facilitated through a less permissive license, such as non-commercial, or non-derivative CC BY.
Retention of full intellectual rights to your journal.

The OLH doesn’t “acquire” journals. Whilst we are a publisher, we see our role as that of a funder and facilitator — building sustainable financial support to protect humanities and social sciences journals for the future. Once you’ve joined, we don’t think you’ll ever want to leave. However, if you decide to move to a different publisher in the future, we will provide full support for migrating your journal. You will retain all property rights associated with your journal, including journal title, logo and design.

Confidence that your publisher is improving digital publishing standards.

The OLH is internationally recognised as a leader in digital publishing standards. We use our reputation to campaign for an equitable transition to full open access along not-for-profit principles. Our team collaborates with numerous academic publishing and technology partners to promote best practices in open access publishing.

We are a leading member of several open access publishing initiatives including cOAlition S, launched in 2018 by the European Commission and European Research Council (ERC), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), DIAMAS (Developing Institutional Open Access Publishing Models to Advance Scholarly Communication) funded by the European Union, and the Open Institutional Publishing Association (OIPA).

In 2022, the OLH was showcased in a European Commission report as an example of best practice. Published on Open Research Europe (ORE), the report stated that the OLH “demonstrated that open-source software represents a viable alternative to proprietary platforms”.

Community ownership.

Unlike other publishers, the OLH does not seek to “own” the journals it publishes. We see our mission as liberating journals from commercial control and returning them to their academic research communities.

Some journals, often originally set up by scholarly associations dating back decades, already own their own intellectual rights to the journal. Many, however, were set up by commercial publishers looking to expand their portfolios and profit from university budgets.

We work with editors to protect their journals against future commercial acquisition. This involves organisational and legal advice on finding the best governance structure for the journal. Rather than relying on individuals expending heroic amounts of their own time and energy, the right organisational structure can secure the journal’s sustainability in the decades to come.

We’re building a sustainable home for humanities journals – not just now, or in the next few years, but looking ahead decades into the future.

“Many of our contributors expressed their happiness about the speed with which articles were published and the wide readership they gained. We thank the editorial team and the copy editors at the OLH for making the process extremely smooth for us and guiding us through every step. We were extremely impressed with the OLH’s production team and the layout of the articles. I have already received enquiries about publishing with OLH from colleagues all over the world.”

Prof. Souvik Mukherjee
Assistant Professor in Cultural Studies, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta, India

“The fact that the OLH is open access reinforces that it is an ideal academic venue in which to publish: the open-access articles have been widely accessed in places where it is difficult to access paywalled knowledge sources. The hard-working staff at the OLH manage to attain a high degree of academic rigour while having an incredibly fast turnaround for publishing submitted research. We very much look forward to working with the OLH again on a second special collection.”

Emil Hammar
Researcher in Media and Documentation Studies, UiT, The Arctic University of Norway
Our journals.

OLH journals publish leading peer-reviewed articles that highlight the breadth of today’s research in the humanities.

Each journal that joins the OLH has been evaluated by expert peer reviewers to assess the rigour of its content, international standing of its authors and editorial board, and value to its discipline. As part of our mission to bring journals back into academic ownership, all OLH titles are community-governed.
C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writings

C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-century Writings is the official journal of the British Association for Contemporary Literary Studies (BACLS).

Digital Medievalist

Digital Medievalist (DM) publishes original scholarship on digital and technological topics, commentary pieces discussing developments in the field, bibliographic and review articles, tutorials, and project reports.

Digital Studies / Le champ numérique

Digital Studies / Le champ numérique is the official journal of the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations directed by the Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/Société canadienne deshumanités numériques (CSDH/SCHN).

Francosphères

Francosphères is a multilingual journal based at the Centre for Postcolonial Studies (CPS) in Paris and London. It publishes leading scholarship on transcultural and intercultural French Studies across frontiers and borders.

Genealogy+Critique

Genealogy+Critique publishes articles in English, German, and French on genealogical research within critical theory. It covers media studies, digital humanities, science and technology studies, as well as postcolonial, gender, and race studies.

Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics

Glossa is a leading journal in the international field of general linguistics. It publishes contributions from all areas of linguistics, provided they contain theoretical implications that shed light on the nature of language and the language faculty.

International Journal of Welsh Writing in English

The International Journal of Welsh Writing in English is the official journal of the Association for Welsh Writing in English. It publishes leading research on Welsh literature in the English language, Welsh drama and performance in English, translation, and cultural studies.

[in]Transition

[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies

[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies is the first peer-reviewed academic journal of videographic film and moving image studies. Launching at the OLH in 2024.

Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry

The Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry publishes leading scholarship on poetic writings appearing in Britain and Ireland since the late 1950s.

Journal of Embodied Research

The Journal of Embodied Research is the first peer-reviewed journal to focus on the dissemination of embodied knowledge through video. It advances cutting-edge videographic scholarship, innovating relationships between textuality, audiovisuality, and embodiment.

Journal of Portuguese Linguistics

Journal of Portuguese Linguistics publishes high-quality papers in the field of Portuguese linguistics, including the comparison between any varieties of Portuguese and any other language(s).
Laboratory Phonology

Laboratory Phonology is the official journal of the Association for Laboratory Phonology. Its focus is the scientific study of the elements of spoken and signed language, their organization, their grammatical functions, and their roles in speech communication.

Open Library of Humanities Journal

The Open Library of Humanities Journal is the flagship journal of the Open Library of Humanities. It publishes Special Collections on curated topics across the humanities disciplines.

Pynchon Notes

Pynchon Notes was a journal devoted to studying the works of Thomas Pynchon. Running from 1979 to 2009, the journal is preserved by the Open Library of Humanities and does not accept any new submissions.

Quaker Studies

Quaker Studies is the official journal of the international Quaker Studies Research Association (QSRA). The journal publishes articles on Quaker history, ethics, and practice in a range of fields, including anthropology, cultural studies, history, literature, peace studies, philosophy, and women’s studies.

Regeneration: Environment, Art, Culture

Regeneration is supported by leading scholars in the environmental humanities to bring humanists, activists, artists, and scientists into conversation around environmental matters. Launching at the OLH in 2024.

Review of the History of Economic Thought and Methodology

With over 40 years of uninterrupted publication, the Review of the History of Economic Thought and Methodology is one of the longest standing journals dedicated to the history and methodology of economics. Launching at the OLH in 2025.
Studies in the Maternal

Studies in the Maternal publishes scholarship on the maternal, understood as lived experience, social location, economic and ethical challenge, a theoretical question, and a structural dimension in human relations, politics, and ethics.

Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal

The Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal publishes innovative and interdisciplinary research in the field of Roman Archaeology. The journal promotes the use of theoretical approaches to the Roman past and facilitates fresh interpretations of datasets, rather than solely the presentation of archaeological data.

Zeitschrift für Fantastikforschung


Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science

Published since 1966, Zygon is dedicated to interactions between the sciences and human religious and moral convictions. The journal publishes articles exploring science in relation to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, as well as naturalism, secular humanism, and atheism. Launching at the OLH in 2024.
Editorial quality.

OLH journals are supported by a dedicated editorial team who work closely with journal editors and authors to ensure the quality of journal policies and research integrity of published articles. Journals adhere to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines, which set out the highest standards in scholarly publishing.

Rights retention.

OLH authors remain the copyright holders of their articles, granting third parties the right to use, reproduce, and share their work according to a Creative Commons Attribution license agreement (CC BY 4.0).

Comprehensive indexing.

All OLH journal content is registered with Crossref and assigned a Digital Object Identifier (DOI). Our journal information is harvested by Google Scholar and metadata is available for harvesting via OAI-PMH. Journals are registered with Open Archives at Cornell University, which maintains interoperability standards through metadata exchange among repositories.

OLH journals are indexed by the following services: Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), ISSN Portal, British Library legal deposit, Sherpa Romeo, JISC Knowledge Base+, Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, ERIH PLUS, ChronosHub, EBSCO Knowledge Services, ScienceOpen, and OpenAIRE. As of 2023, we are in the process of indexing journals with Scopus (CiteScore for 2022: 1.1) and Clarivate services, including Web of Science, ExLibris, and ProQuest.

Robust archiving.

OLH archival practices have been designed to ensure the long-term availability and preservation of all our journals.

We automatically archive journal content with subject specific archives such as PubMed Central and Europe PMC / PMC Bookshelf. Articles are preserved in Portico, a community-supported “dark archive” certified by the Center for Research Libraries as a Trustworthy Digital Repository. We also deposit articles in the CLOCKSS and LOCKSS permanent archiving systems at Stanford University. These systems use open source technologies to ensure a distributed digital preservation across the world’s libraries (following the principle “lots of copies keeps stuff safe”) and are the world leaders in high-confidence, resilient, secure digital preservation.

For added security, OLH journals are also backed-up on 3 offsite data servers located in different countries to protect against cyberattacks in any part of the world. This robust approach to archiving and data security has earned us a silver rating from Crossref, the not-for-profit membership organisation that exists to make scholarly communications better.
Accessibility

OLH journals are intended to be fully accessible. This includes the use of dyslexia-friendly fonts and compliant markup to aid screen readers. We seek the highest standards of accessibility and are working towards full WCAG 2.1 compliance across our journals. We have hired a new member of staff on our tech team to make the entire platform WCAG 2.1 AA compliant by the end of 2024.

Metadata standards.

All OLH journals expose OAI harvestable metadata in NLM, MARC, MARC21, RFC1807 and DC formats. This includes title, author and content type.

Article metrics.

OLH journal citations are monitored by Crossref. These metrics can be generated as reports for our journals, along with our own internal OLH statistics for article downloads and page reads. Our in-house digital publishing platform allows for integration with Google Analytics for further detailed information about your journal’s website traffic.

Usage statistics

Our publishing platform collects COUNTER-compliant statistics. We do not provide per-institution access statistics as we cannot reliably track these in an open-access environment.
Migrating your journal.

Our publishing model is built on the concept of migrating journals from other publishers to enable them to publish open access. We have a leading tech team with bespoke skills and experience in the technical processes required to make this happen smoothly.

Here’s how it works.

01. You tell us about your journal and decide on its new website design.

02. Our tech team set up your new website.

03. At this point, your journal is ready to accept article submissions.

04. Our editorial team help you update your journal policy information to meet the highest digital publishing standards.

05. We provide training on how to use our publishing system for authors and editors.

06. Our typesetter designs an article template for your journal.

07. We migrate your journal’s back content.

08. We co-ordinate publicity for a journal launch and create promotional materials for academic conferences and events.

09. You launch the journal.

10. Once launched, we add your journal to our indexing and archiving services.
“I really enjoyed working with OLH, and thought their work was excellent: just the right amount of editing and always fast, and always patient as we tried to navigate the workflow. I’ve worked with a lot of publishers and journals by now, and that was the smoothest, friendliest and best-value experience I’ve had in the last 15 years. I hope to work with them again in the future.”

Bettina Bildhauer
Professor of German,
University of St Andrews

“We were lucky to launch the Journal of Embodied Research with the OLH and have been continually inspired by the work they do. Through our partnership, we receive logistical and production support on an excellent and continually improving open source platform. More than this, we feel part of an extended community of vibrant humanities research. This stretches from all the OLH journals out into the wider consortium of academic libraries that support this vital initiative.”

Dr Ben Spatz
Reader in Media and Performance,
University of Huddersfield
Join the publishing revolution.
If you would like to apply for your journal to join the OLH, or have questions about the application process, please scan this QR code to visit our website.