

Nature Publishing Group and ReadCube Unveil Preliminary Results of Scientific Article Sharing Trial

Full-text articles on nature.com will continue to be made widely available to read and share as content sharing initiative becomes permanent

December 10th 2015. London, UK: Nature Publishing Group, part of Springer Nature, has announced the results of its ground-breaking 12-month content sharing initiative to support collaborative research. The trial has concluded with positive results and the initiative to offer on-platform sharing of the full text of nature.com articles using [ReadCube](http://ReadCube.com)'s enhanced PDF technology will continue indefinitely.

In December 2014, a 12-month content sharing trial was set up to enable subscribers to 49 journals on nature.com to legitimately and conveniently share the full text of articles of interest with colleagues without a subscription via a shareable web link on nature.com, enabled by publishing technology company, ReadCube. The trial was also extended to 100 media outlets and blogs around the world that report on the findings of articles published on nature.com, allowing them to provide their own readers with a link to a full text, read-only view of the original scientific paper.

The key findings of the year long trial are:

- The most popular method of sharing of scientific articles has been via the media and blogger referral programme, which gave readers of articles free, read-only access to the full text of scientific articles in news stories and posts. (77%)
- High-profile media reports of *Nature* journal articles from a plethora of international media outlets drove the most traffic of the trial. The most popular article of 2015 was, "A new antibiotic kills pathogens without detectable resistance" published in *Nature* in January 2015.
- In order, the most popular news outlets were: the BBC, the Guardian, the New York Times, Science Magazine and the Washington Post.
- Peer to peer sharing, where subscribers send or post shareable links to journal articles on nature.com tended to be mostly (67%) between subscribers and non-subscribers, with the remainder mainly accounted for by sharing between those who already had subscription access.
- The trial had no adverse implications for subscription-based journals either in terms of institutional business or individual article sales.
- The free read-only links were shared all across the globe but the most active sharing was instigated by subscribers in: the USA, the UK, Japan, Germany, China, Canada, Spain, France, India and the Republic of Korea.
- The free read-only links were also accessed by readers across the globe. Top receiving nations were, in order: USA, UK, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, Spain, Brazil the Netherlands.

Steven Inchcoombe, Managing Director, Nature Research Group, Springer Nature, said: "Our original aim had been to open up our treasure chest of scientific knowledge to both researchers and society at large, so we are very pleased that this content sharing trial has concluded with positive results. This means that the initiative to offer on-platform, convenient sharing of the full text of nature.com articles using ReadCube's enhanced PDF technology will continue indefinitely. No-one in our industry has so far been able to do this, that is, to create the policy, supply the content and provide the digital platform."

Nicko Goncharoff, Director of Publisher Relations, Digital Science added: "Nature's progressive policy combined with ReadCube technology enabled us to provide a positive, sustainable option for conveniently sharing subscription journal content. This is a significant step toward addressing researchers' needs to share articles and knowledge while giving publishers and authors visibility on sharing activity."

The technology behind this initiative was developed by ReadCube, part of the Digital Science family of companies. ReadCube develops software to make research literature more manageable, accessible and connected for researchers, institutions and publishers. Its publisher technologies have already been adopted by partners such as Wiley, Nature Publishing Group, Karger, De Gruyter, Rockefeller University Press and many others.

This initiative was developed in order to help researchers collaborate, and provide the public with a way to read scientific content that has not been available to them before. This is complementary to, not an alternative to Springer Nature's many open access and open research activities.

Springer Nature continues to be a pioneer in the field of open research. Over 60% of 2015 research articles on nature.com are OA. The percentage of authors choosing CC BY across all of NPG's open access journals has risen dramatically - from 26% in 2014 to 96% in September 2015.

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Notes for Editors

About the 2014-15 trial:

Two initiatives were introduced in December 2014 and will continue to stay in place:

1. Subscribers to 49 journals on nature.com are able to share a unique URL to a full text, read-only version of published scientific research with colleagues or collaborators in the most convenient way for them, e.g. via email and social media. Included are the world's most cited scientific publication, *Nature*; the *Nature* family of journals and fifteen other quality science journals. It is available to scientists and students at more than 6,000 universities and organizations worldwide, and serves the more 8 million monthly unique visitors to nature.com. This sharing is intended for personal, non-commercial use. To further aid collaboration, forthcoming annotation functionality will enable subscribers to share comments and highlighted text with their colleagues.
2. 100 media outlets and blogs across the globe that report on the findings of articles published on nature.com can also provide their own readers with a link to a full text, read-only view of the original scientific paper. *Nature* has published some of the leading scientific stories of our time, such as the Human Genome; the structure of DNA; Dolly the Sheep; the invention of the laser; the identification of the AIDS virus and the discovery of the hole in the ozone layer.

About Nature Publishing Group (NPG)

Nature Publishing Group (NPG) is a publisher of high impact scientific information in print and online. NPG publishes journals, online databases and services across the life, physical, chemical and applied sciences. Focusing on the needs of scientists, *Nature* (founded in 1869) is the leading weekly, international scientific journal. NPG publishes a range of Nature research journals and Nature Reviews journals, and a range of prestigious academic and partner journals including society-owned publications. Online, nature.com provides over 8 million visitors per month with access to NPG publications and services, including news and comment from *Nature*, and the leading scientific jobs board Naturejobs. Scientific American is at the heart of NPG's consumer media division. Founded in 1845, Scientific American is the oldest continuously published magazine in the US and the leading authoritative publication for science in the general media. Visit <http://www.nature.com> and follow @npgnews

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About ReadCube and Digital Science

ReadCube develops software to make the world of research more accessible and connected. The free ReadCube desktop application for PC and Mac helps researchers in any discipline easily organize and manage existing article libraries, and discover new literature through searches and personalized recommendations. ReadCube is supported by Digital Science, a technology business unit wholly owned by the Holtzbrinck Publishing Group. It offers a range of scientific technology and data solutions, from intelligent knowledge discovery tools to software applications for the laboratory and decision support systems for managers.

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