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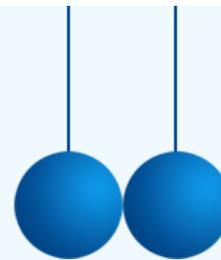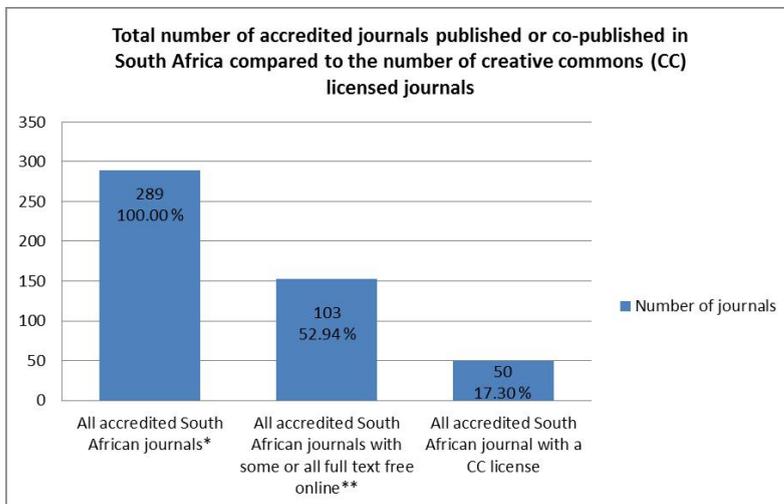
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Open Access Accredited Journals in South Africa: they do exist

Over the last few months I have been working with a digital deluge of spreadsheets and data. The purpose of this work was to put together a list of the accredited open access journals published in South Africa. By **open access**, I mean journals that are free to view and/or download and have an open license, usually a **creative commons license**. I also looked for those accredited journals which are available for users to read freely, but don't have an open license (in this case the publisher usually keeps the copyright and re-use is not allowed without permission from them).

Working from the DHET, ISI and IBSS accredited lists for 2013 (kindly provided by UCT's research office), as well as information from general online searches and the journal sites, I have pulled together a list of accredited South African journals and indicated their access status. Today, we are making the list of journals available (you can download it **HERE**; or find it on Figshare **HERE** - as a .ods file).
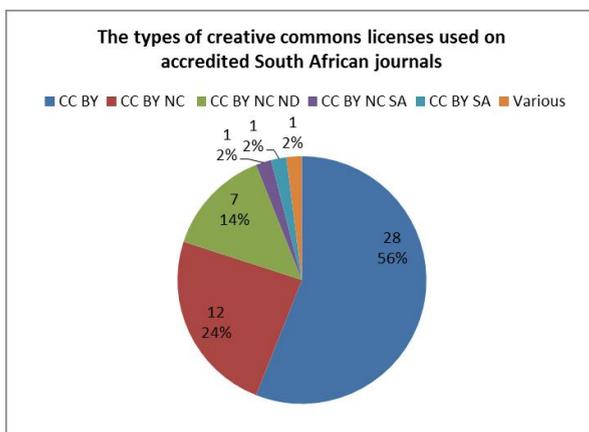
From the list data, we were able to provide a broad picture of the situation in South Africa with regard to accredited local journals:

Total number of accredited journals published or co-published in South Africa compared to the number of creative commons (CC) licensed journals

*all accredited journals (on the DHET, ISI and/or the IBSS lists) published or co-published in South Africa

**from the journal site, ScieloSA, African Journal Archive (AJA) and/or Sabinet Open; includes CC licensed journals

Of the 289 journals that met our criteria of i) being accredited - on the DHET, ISI and/or IBSS lists, and ii) being published or co-published in South Africa, 50 had CC licenses. Of those 50 journals with CC licenses, interestingly the majority (56%) have CC-BY licenses. A CC-BY license means anyone can "distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon" the work provided the original author is credited (the definition of CC-BY and all the other CC licenses are available at **http://creativecommons.org/licenses/**). This is an interesting finding because CC-BY is the most liberal creative commons license. It is also the license required to comply with aspects of several major funders' open access policies, including those of the **Wellcome Trust** and the **Research Councils UK**. The South African **National Research Foundation (NRF)** currently has no such requirements for the publication of research that it has funded.

The types of creative commons licenses used on accredited South African journals

We've also put together two interactive graphics: one of the open access journals (**HERE**) and one of those that are (at least partially) freely available online (**HERE**). For the latter graphic, we've linked to the journal site as well as to which of the three repositories we checked where the articles are freely available – the African Journal Archive, ScieloSA and/or Sabinet Open. We've grouped the journals by the UCT faculty that would be most likely to publish in them and made them clickable to take you through to

the journals' site. For those of you not at UCT, the groupings should still point you in the right direction. Many thanks to the following UCT libraries subject librarians for their input categorising the journals: Ingrid Thomson, Jen Eidelman, Gill Morgan, Glynnis Lawrence and Susanne Noll.

The cost to publish in any of these journals was not recorded on the list. While this is critical, many journal sites have no cost information or very outdated information on their website. A small sample group was emailed to ask for the up-to-date cost to publish but we received a very low response rate.

When it comes to choosing a journal to publish in, I hope academics and students can use our list and the graphics to help find a local, accredited open access option or at least to be aware that there are options available in almost all subject areas. And of course there are also good, often new, open access journals which are not yet on the accredited list, which academics may also wish to consider.

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A small plea to journal publishers: please make it clear on your site and your articles what your copyright and licensing positions are. In many cases this information is seemingly hidden away – often not in the instructions to authors or in any of the more obvious places and not on the final published pdfs. As potential authors for your journal, we'd like to know the situation before we submit a paper.

by SarahG
CC-BY-SA
Blog Posts

Comments

open formats!

Submitted by r on Mon, 06/24/2013 - 16:51

It would be of additional benefit that data (in this case a spreadsheet) is also published in an open format, i.e. open document format (see: **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OpenDocument**)

Open access

Submitted by Pamela Ryan on Fri, 06/28/2013 - 06:46

This is such worthwhile information. Thank you for doing this painstaking work.

Re: open formats!

Submitted by OpenUCT on Wed, 07/24/2013 - 10:25

Hi r. We have included a link in the post to an open format of the spreadsheet (.ods) - its hosted on Figshare: **goo.gl/yv5f7y**. Thanks for the suggestion.

I admit, I have not been on

Submitted by варикоз причина on Mon, 01/20/2014 - 19:12

I admit, I have not been on openuct.uct.ac.za in a long time however it was another joy to see It is such an important topic and ignored by so many, even professionals. I thank you to help making people more aware of possible issues. and Happy New Year!

Hi! I know this is kinda off

Submitted by Vicente on Mon, 02/24/2014 - 13:33

Hi! I know this is kinda off topic nevertheless I'd figured I'd ask. Would you be interested in trading links or maybe guest authoring a blog post or vice-versa? My site discusses a lot of the same subjects as yours and I believe we could greatly benefit from each other. If you are interested feel free to shoot me an email. I look forward to hearing from you! Great blog by the way!

Re: Hi! I know this is kinda off

Submitted by OpenUCT on Mon, 02/24/2014 - 16:35

Hi Vicente

Thanks for the positive feedback! All the posts on our site (unless otherwise indicated) are available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike license - so, if you'd like to repost them, you're welcome to under the terms of the license: **http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/za/**.

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Comment *

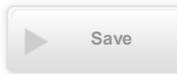Text format [Filtered HTML ▼]   **More information about text formats** ⍰

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