



MDPI: An Open Access Publisher

MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, www.mdpi.com) is an open access publishing house based in Basel, Switzerland with roots in Swiss chemical research. The chemistry roots are still reflected in the MDPI logo. Having previously received my doctorate in organic chemistry from ETH Zurich, in 1996 I founded the Swiss Verein MDPI (Molecular Diversity Preservation International) to preserve rare chemical samples that were being thrown away from retiring chemists' laboratories. Our first journal *Molecules* was launched in 1996 as a free online journal to support the chemical samples collection and distribution. The publishing side was a forerunner of what has become known as open access (OA). Over 190 journals have been launched to date, with a portfolio expanded from chemistry to cover all major disciplines. In 2017 we published over 35,000 articles, of which 60% are chemistry and materials science, including in the well-established journals *Molecules*, *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*, *Materials*, and *Polymers*. We are not alone in Switzerland: Frontiers (www.frontiersin.org), another OA publisher, publishes several well-known biomedical journals.

When I was a chemistry graduate student in Zurich, I heard stories about fast publishing in *Helvetica Chimica Acta* and my PhD work was also published there very quickly in two papers from 1991 and 1992. At MDPI, we seek to run fast, simple and efficient processes. We aim to allow the latest research results to be published and made available to research communities as soon as possible, frequently with less than 40 days from submission to publication. The concept of sustainability underpins much of what we do. Our journal *Sustainability* covers sustainable chemistry topics. The publication of research results is still complemented by voluntary deposit of samples (for *Molecules* and *Molbank*).

Looking to the future, open access is firmly establishing itself, although it may take different forms in the coming years. We live in exciting times, with significant moves on a global scale towards embracing of open access model. We have recently seen the implementation of national payment systems to replace article processing charges, the emergence of preprints to make work available before peer-review, and increasing discussions around open science and open data. We are excited about the future. We are also proud to have grown into one of the largest open access publishers, but recognise that this has only been possible through the support and collaboration of the research communities. Moving forward, this support will continue to be crucial to our success.

Switzerland has been a leader in implementing open access, with strong policies and funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF). The benefits of barrier-free access to knowledge for researchers, industry and the general public are starting to be realized. By reducing the focus on high levels of selectivity in what is published, open access contributes to efforts to promote transparency and reproducibility, including the publication of so-called negative results. In addition, open access goes beyond simply being free to read: reuse of content in a variety of contexts and licenses that allow data and content mining are also important. As the available literature grows substantially, different ways of reading and machine-readability will become increasingly important.

Switzerland is the best place either to conduct research or to run a successful company. One of my chemistry theory papers entitled "Correlation of entropy with similarity and symmetry" published 22 years ago was still cited 8 times since last year. I do not think I can return to my research, but I will certainly lead MDPI to serve the community of chemists by offering them an excellent OA publishing service in a typically Swiss way.



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