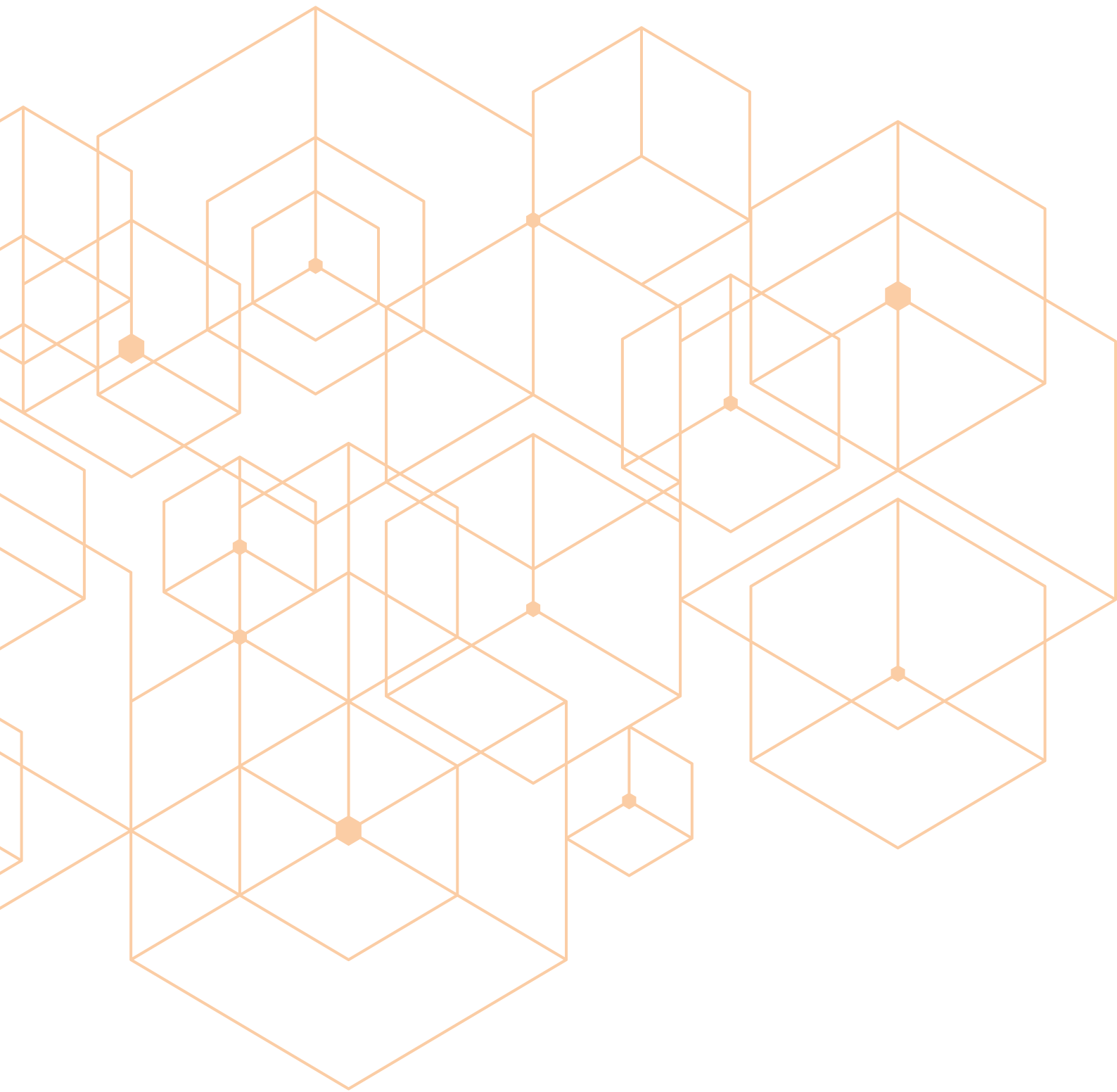




**Subscribe To Open  
Survey Report 2020**

**EM  
S**   
PRESS



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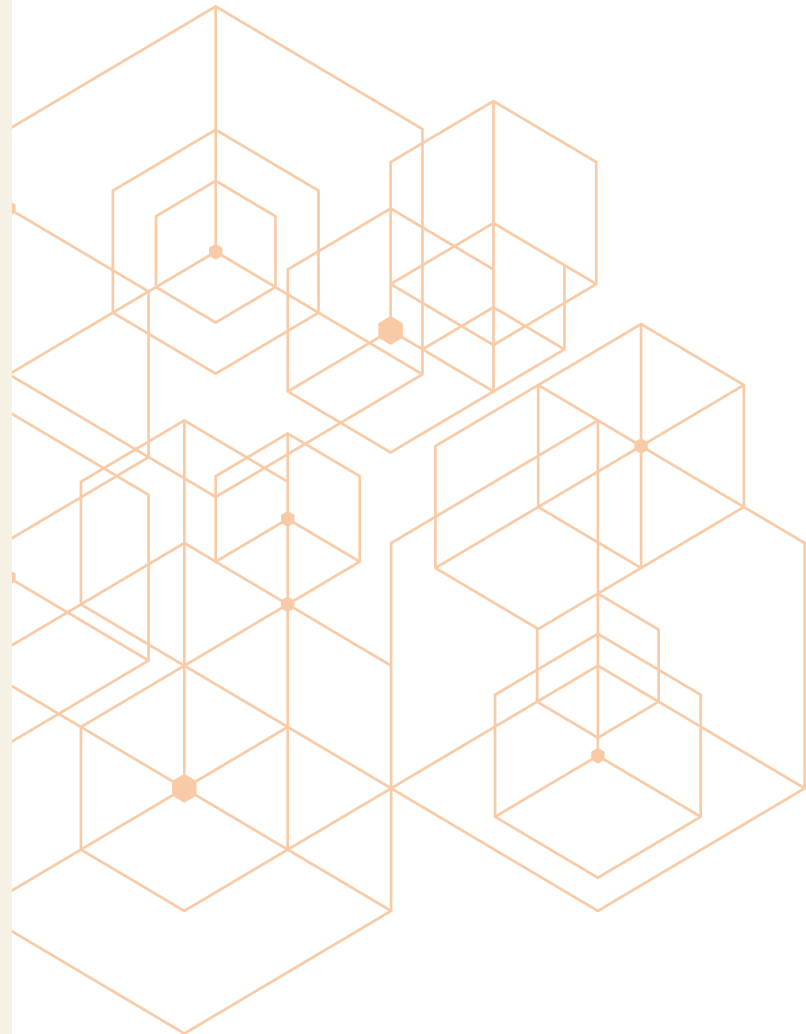
# Introduction

## Background

Since coming under new management in 2019, a key goal for the EMS Publishing House and its new imprint - EMS Press - has been to transform its journal portfolio to open access. In addition to this company objective, The European Mathematical Society (owner of EMS Press) mandated that the Press become open access, under the principles of the [ICIAM initiative on open access](#).

After exploring and analysing some 30+ open access business models currently being used by other publishers both large and small, the Press found that Subscribe To Open (S2O) was the most compatible with its own goals, and the goals of the society.

However as a society publisher, the Press felt it was important to receive feedback from the mathematics community.



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# Introduction

## What is Subscribe To Open?

One of the findings from the survey was that S2O as a concept is not widely known or understood within the mathematics community (see [page 13](#)).

S2O is a sustainable and equitable model for open access. Libraries continue to subscribe to journals for the coming year, as they always have (with subscriber benefits, such as archive access). At the end of the current year if a journal has achieved the target set by the Press then the journal becomes open access - if not then it remains behind a paywall and only subscribers have access<sup>1</sup>.

The only way to guarantee access to any of the Press's journals is to subscribe, and doing so has the added effect of flipping titles to open access once a threshold is achieved, benefitting the whole mathematics research community.

S2O has clear benefits for all participants in the publishing ecosystem.

### For the subject librarian

- Retain control of budgets and collection;
- Administratively, subscriptions operate as before but now support OA;
- Guaranteed access to journal content when subscribing (including full archive), regardless of outcome.

### For the researcher

- No APCs or other financial barriers to publication;
- Publish where you choose, not where your institution has a deal;
- Support an equitable system for all researchers based on relevance and quality, not cost.

### For the publisher

- Streamlined administrative processes, reducing internal costs allowing focus to be on content;
- Support OA in a truly sustainable way;
- Support global equity in scholarly publishing.

<sup>1</sup>Where there is a funder requirement for open access EMS Press will publish articles under Green Open Access, ensuring that the article is freely available regardless of the overall journal status.

# Introduction

## What is Subscribe To Open?

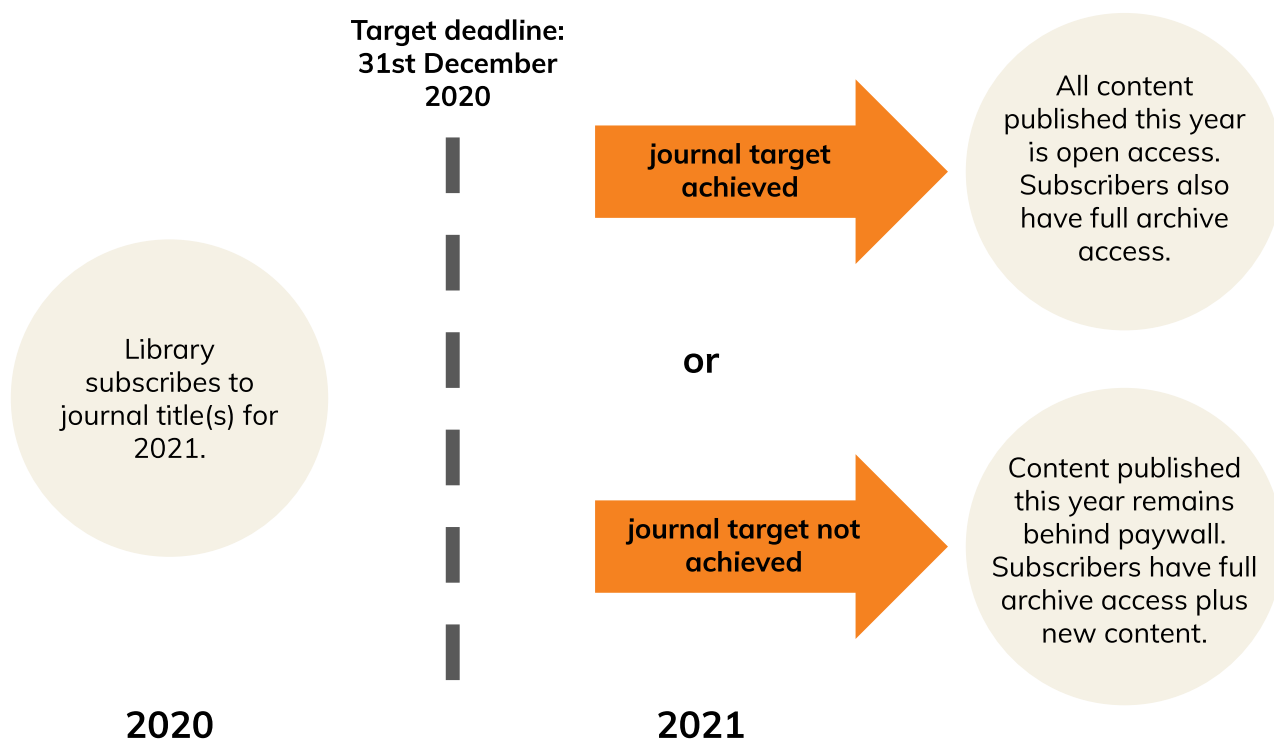


Figure 1: Subscribe To Open workflow for 2021 subscription year.

## About the Survey

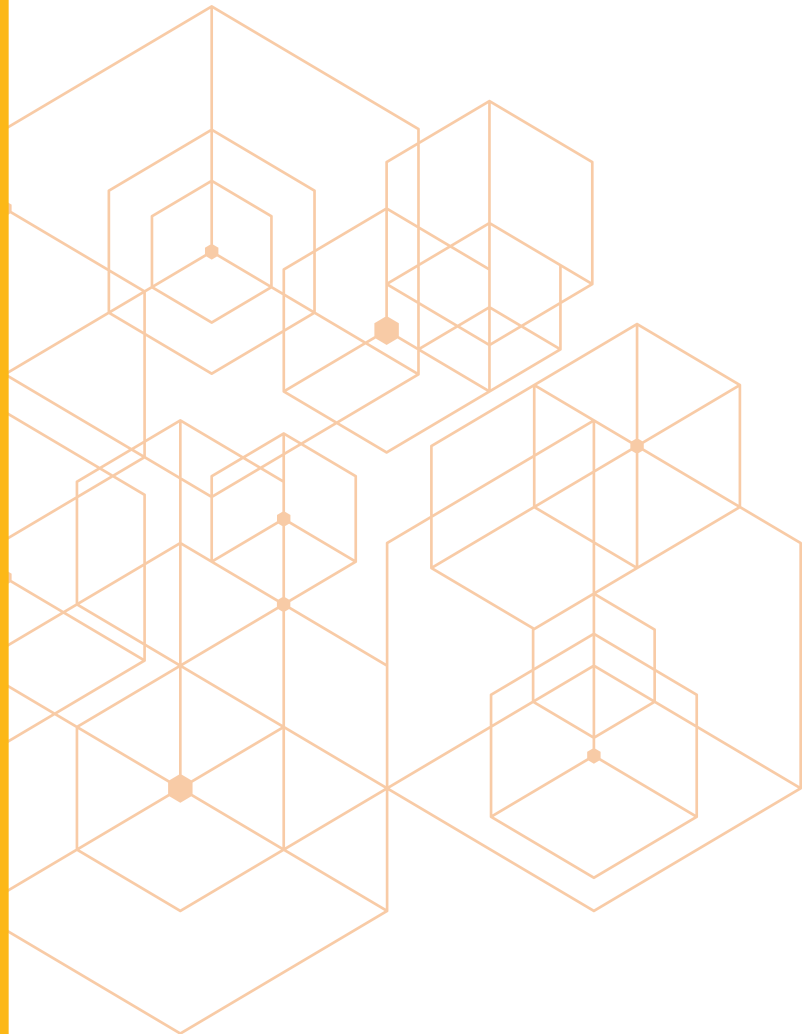
The EMS Press Subscribe To Open community consultation survey was open for responses from 18th March 2020 through to 30th April 2020. It was primarily promoted via social media and email, and resulted in 65 completed responses. The anonymised data from this survey is available to download from the [EMS Press website](#).

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# Introduction

## Key Findings

- A majority of respondents consider open access to be important or very important to the mathematics community;
- Almost three quarters of respondents are engaged in the discussion around open access;
- Over 70% of respondents had not heard of S2O prior to our consultation;
- Only 5% of respondents felt negatively or very negatively about S2O, around one third were neutral on the subject, with almost 60% feeling positive or very positive about it.



# Survey Results

## Demographics

In order to gain a better understanding of the mathematics community engaging with the survey, respondents were asked to complete some demographic questions.

First, respondents were asked to define their role(s) within the community, allowing them to select as many roles as required, and to add any additional roles.

From the responses received it is clear that the results of this survey largely address the attitudes of researchers, these being the most significant group by number of respondents. This group also overlaps to a large extent with the other heavily represented groups - readers, authors and editors - which is to be expected, and validates the Press's emphasis on a community approach to publishing.

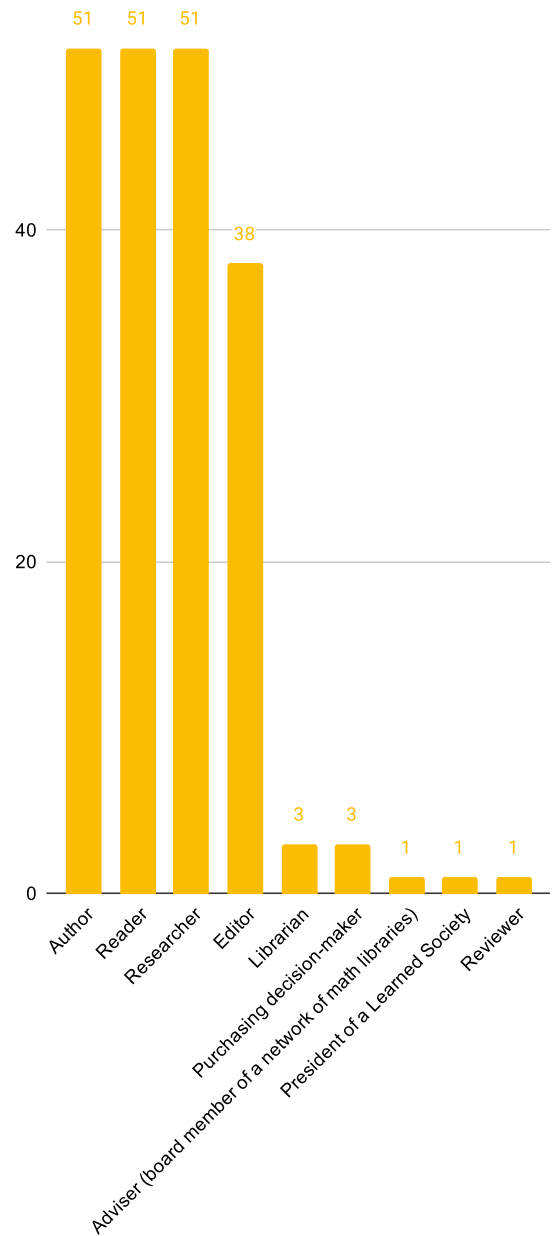


Figure 2: What is your role in our community (select all that apply)?



# Survey Results

## Demographics

The survey then asked participants to identify where they are usually located. Most respondents are located in Europe, with France being the most prominent country. Participants were also asked their gender; over 80% of respondents identified as male.

In terms of age, there were relatively few respondents under 35, but a fairly even distribution across the remaining age brackets. This suggests that the survey findings are broadly applicable to the whole community, capturing a range of career stages and degrees of seniority.

It should be noted that respondents were not asked to identify their career stage, as it was felt that attitudes to open access were more likely to be generational than tied to seniority.

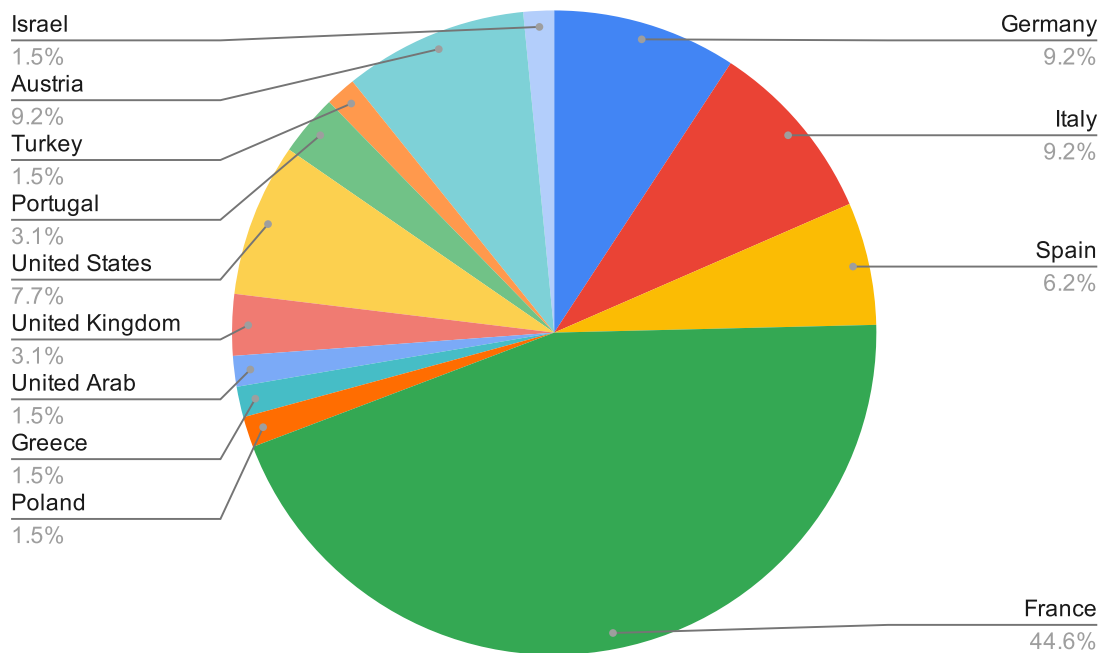


Figure 3: Where are you usually located?

# Survey Results

## Attitudes Towards Open Access

The latter half of the survey was concerned with attitudes towards open access, and the respondents' level of engagement with the discourse around that topic.

They were first asked to rate their own knowledge and understanding of the open access landscape, finding that results across the whole cohort tended towards being somewhat to- very knowledgeable (79.9%).

However, examining this by location and age gave a more nuanced picture, identifying that those aged 45-64 were more likely to rate themselves as very knowledgeable.

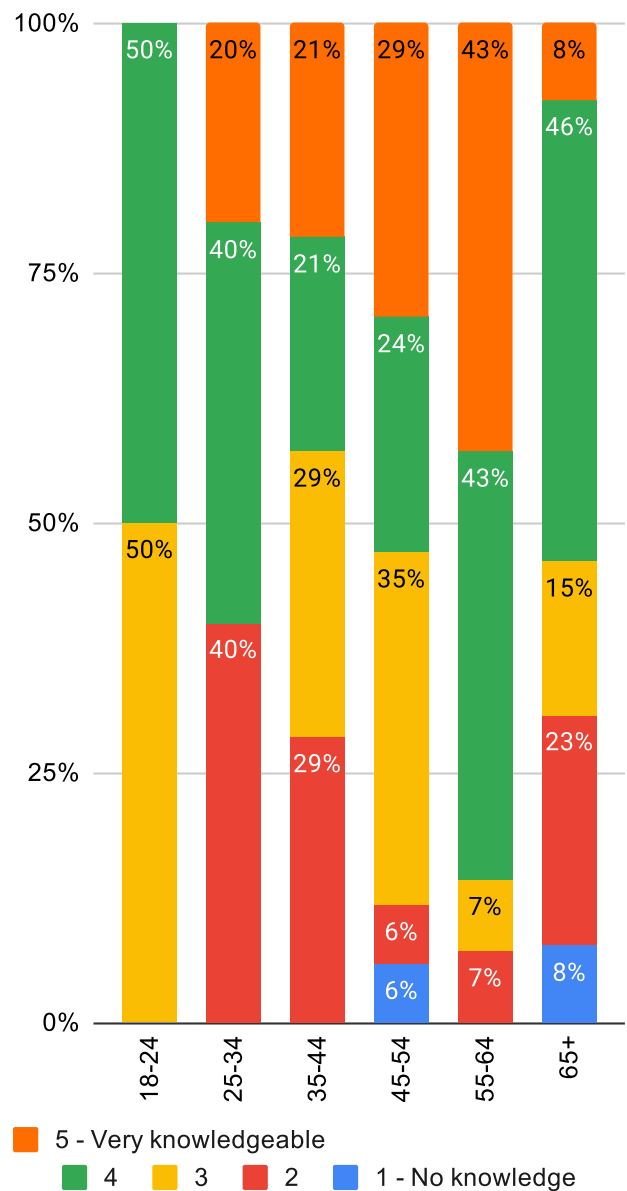


Figure 4: Rate your knowledge of the open access landscape (by age).

# Survey Results

## Attitudes Towards Open Access

When respondents were asked to assess the importance of open access to mathematics and research in general, there was general agreement that it is somewhat to- very important. Interrogating this question by age showed that the over 65s, while agreeing with the overall trend (61.5% rated OA “5 - very important”), had the greatest spread of opinion across the scale.

When examined by geographic location, the survey found that respondents from the USA had the greatest range in opinion on this question, while researchers in France showed the highest level of agreement (when excluding countries where n=1).

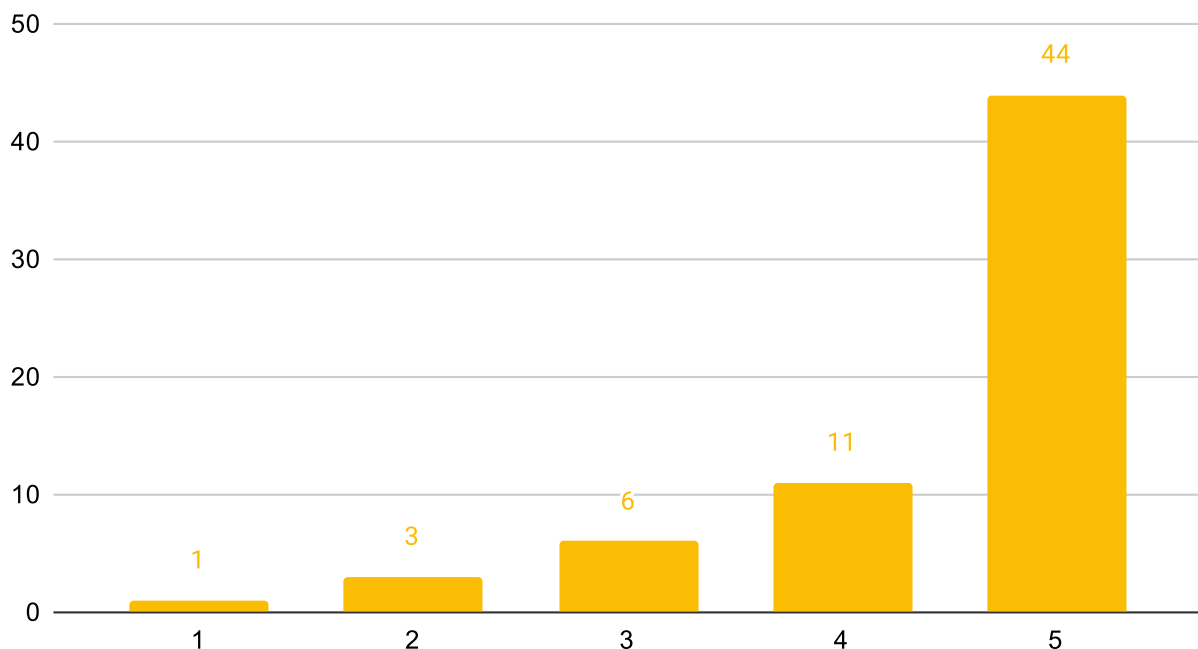
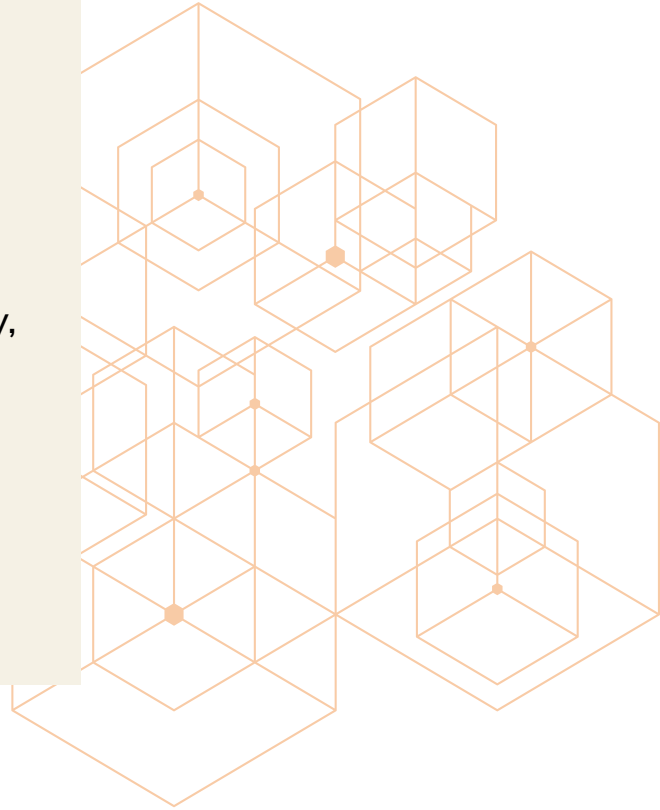


Figure 5: How important do you think Open Access is to the mathematics community and research in general? (1: not at all - 5: very important)

# Survey Results

## Attitudes Towards Open Access

The next question examined respondents' engagement with discussions around open access, on and offline. A majority of the respondents claimed to be active or occasional participants - over 70%. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who are more actively involved in open access conversations appear to assign greater importance to open access within the community.



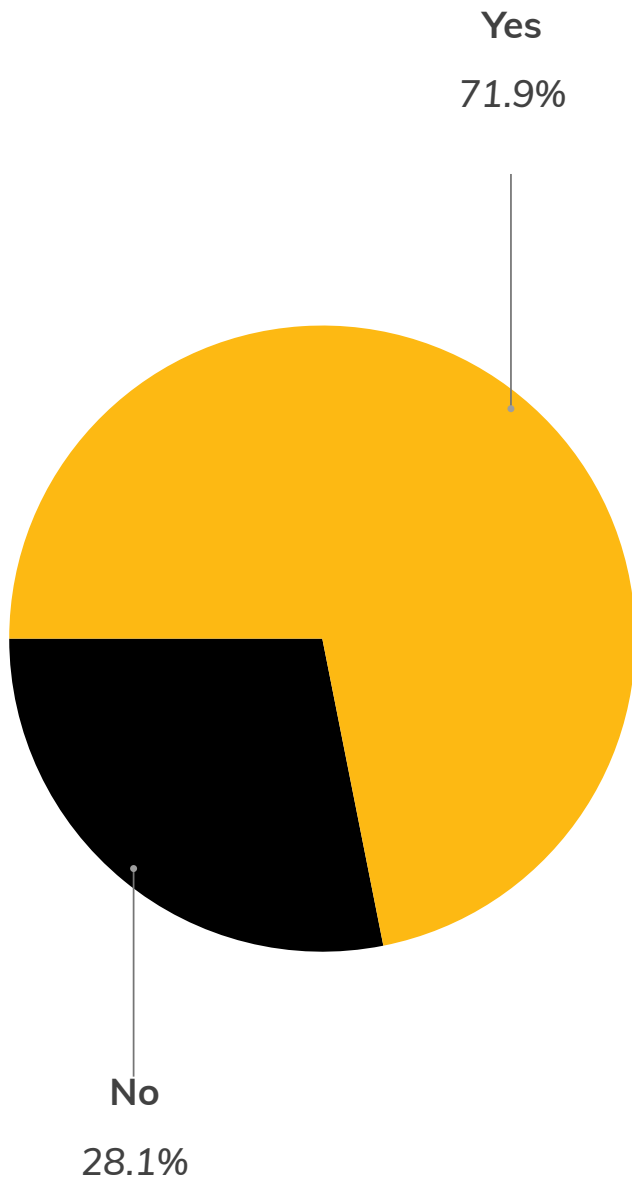
How important do you think Open Access is to the mathematics community and research in general?					
How involved are you in the conversation around Open Access?	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very Important
1 - Active participant (online or offline)			6.25%	12.50%	81.25%
2 - I sometimes participate in the conversation		6.45%	6.45%	19.35%	67.74%
3 - I rarely participate in the conversation		6.67%	20.00%	13.33%	60.00%
4 - I never participate	33.33%			33.33%	33.33%

Figure 6: Involvement in open access discussion versus perceived importance of open access.



# Survey Results

## Subscribe To Open



The final few questions focused on **Subscribe To Open**, discovering that over 70% of respondents had not heard of this particular model.

Anticipating that this might be the case given the relative lack of exposure given to non-APC open access business models, a [webpage](#) was prepared and linked to from within the survey, outlining the basic premise of S2O. Further reading and additional resources on the topic were also provided on this page, allowing respondents to read as deeply as they chose on the subject.

Respondents were then asked to qualify their own understanding of the S2O having reviewed the materials, resulting in just over 70% stating that they did understand the model<sup>2</sup>.

Figure 7: Do you feel that - having read the information on ems.press - that you now understand this business model?

<sup>2</sup>This question allowed for free text in order that we might be able to extract more detail regarding areas of confusion or lack of clarity. Sentiment analysis was employed on the answers given in order to simplify to the “yes” or “no” answers used here. Full answers available in raw data.

# Survey Results

## Attitudes Towards Open Access

**After verifying understanding, respondents were then polled on their attitudes towards S2O<sup>3</sup>.**

Encouragingly, a large number of the responses - over 75% - expressed a positive or very positive attitude towards S2O.

Interrogating the data further does not appear to yield any discernible patterns in terms of geography, gender, or age. Although not well represented in this survey, the responses received from librarians suggest that they are strongly in favour of S2O as a path to open access.

The survey closed with a free text field where respondents were able to offer additional opinions, perspectives, elaborations and information regarding their thoughts about S2O for EMS Press. These are not included in this report, and are instead addressed in a comprehensive FAQ on [ems.press](#) - you can view all of these responses in the [raw data file](#) that accompanies this report.

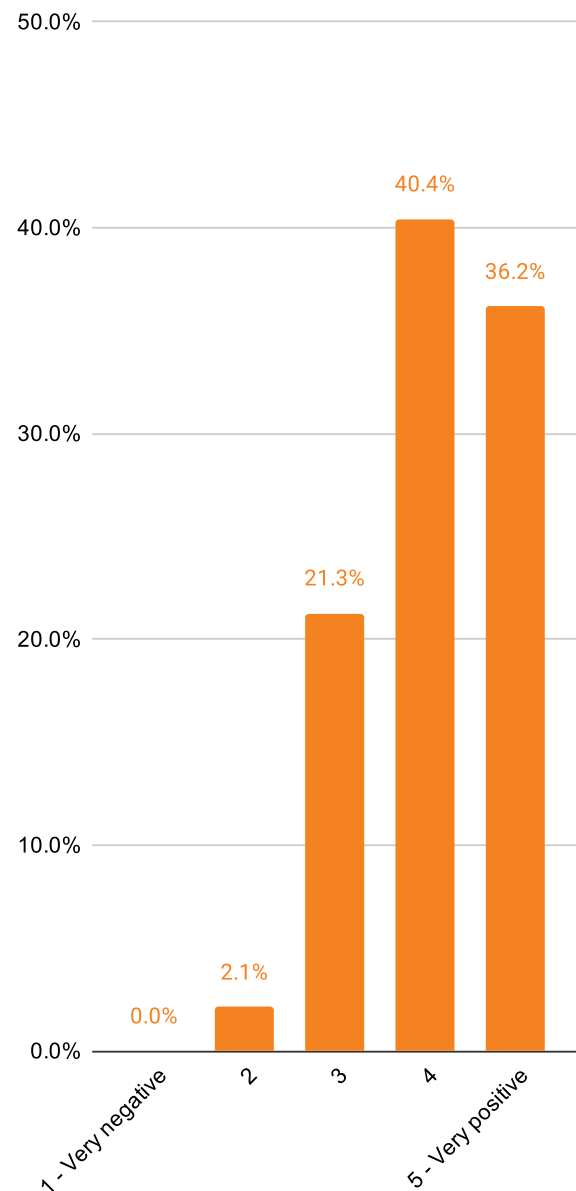


Figure 8: How do you feel about S2O, based on what you've read and any prior knowledge you have (n=47)?

<sup>3</sup>Participants answering "no" when asked about their understanding of S2O were excluded from this part of the data - their responses can be viewed in this report's raw data.

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# Conclusion and Next Steps

**With this survey the Press hoped to ascertain the perspectives of a representative cross-section of the mathematics community with regard to open access and S2O.**

Whilst the number of respondents was not huge there was general agreement on most questions posed, suggesting that this was achieved. As a company, we have been encouraged by the largely positive results of the survey, and the overall level of engagement from participants.

As a publisher, we would like to encourage further feedback from all sectors of the mathematics research world, and specifically from library and information management professionals. We are also keen to hear perspectives from the whole community regarding your thoughts on the role arXiv and other preprint services play when considering professionally published open access articles.

Following the positive outcome of the survey, we are pleased to announce that we are moving

ahead with our plans for S2O and have announced a programme of 11 journals to be included in our initial round of titles which - subject to successful target attainment - will flip to open access in January 2021. A full list of these titles is available in our 2021 pricing information flyer along with information about our package offers.

EMS Press's journey as an open access publisher is just beginning, so ongoing feedback on how we're serving our community is vital and welcome - contact details are given at the end of this report.

## Contact

We're happy to discuss any of our findings with you in more detail, and would love to hear your feedback on both this report and our plans. You can contact us via email at:

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