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## A new tool allows open-access search

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Sweden's Lund University said on Thursday (June 3) that it had launched a new online facility that allows users to search for and retrieve articles from open-access (OA) journals.

The development is an extension of the university's [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) (DOAJ), which aims to promote the use and impact of journals that do not charge users to access articles. At present, 276 of the 1100 journals listed on the directory are searchable by article. About 80 of those are in the medicine, biology, and life sciences categories.

"The new DOAJ service is the first time we've been able to search open-access journals at the article level, across multiple publishers, and limit our searches to open-access journals," US OA advocate [Peter Suber](#), from Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., told us. "Previously, we've been able to search the OA journals of a single publisher, search across publishers but without limiting ourselves to OA journals, and search across OA repositories rather than OA journals."

Lotte Jorgensen, project coordinator for the DOAJ, said the new article level search functionality creates an incentive for owners of OA journals to submit article level data to the DOAJ in order to further increase the visibility, reputation and impact of their journals.

Suber agreed that making the articles more visible and accessible was valuable. "There's a common misunderstanding that making content open access maximizes its visibility and usefulness," he said. "It doesn't. Open access brings us to a major plateau of visibility and usefulness, but it's closer to the minimum than the maximum of what we should expect in the digital age."

Another supporter of OA, [Stevan Harnad](#) from the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom, said he didn't consider the new facility a major breakthrough, but a useful tool.

It's thought that the approximately 1200 OA journals currently available make up about 5% of all scholarly journals, Harnad said. For the other 95% of journals, about 15% of their articles are also OA, because their authors have self-archived them.

"The only thing I would be ready to describe as a 'major breakthrough' for OA, would be something that significantly accelerated the growth of OA from 20% to 100%," Harnad told us.

The likelihood that this acceleration will come from the conversion of more journals to the OA model is low, he said, but the chance that it will come from journals giving their authors the green light to self-archive is higher, "as 80% of them have done it already, including the recent [announcement by Elsevier](#) that its 1800 journals have all gone 'green.'"

Many self-archived OA articles are accessible through [OAister](#), DOAJ's "sister project," Harnad pointed out.

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