

# Frequently asked questions

## **Who's behind Unpaywall?**

We're [Impactstory](#), a nonprofit working to make science more open and reusable online. We're supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

## **Why did you make it?**

Now more than ever, humanity needs to *access* our collective knowledge, not hoard it behind paywalls. Lots of researchers feel the same; that's why they upload their papers to free, legal servers online. We want to help bring that [open access](#) content to the masses.

## **How often does Unpaywall find full text?**

We find fulltext for 50-85% of articles, depending on their topic and year of publication. We think that's a game-changer for the publishing industry. Now that most articles are free, why subscribe? Over the longer term, we'll keep getting even better as mandatory open access requirements begin to take effect in the [US](#), [UK](#), [Europe](#), and elsewhere.

## How do you find all these fulltext articles?

We gather content from thousands of open-access repositories worldwide. To help us, we rely on a number of data sources, including [PubMed Central](#), [the DOAJ](#), [Crossref](#) (particularly their license info), [DataCite](#), [Google Scholar](#), and [BASE](#). After we put all this data together, we in turn make it open for reuse via the [oaDOI API](#): a free, fast, and very scalable way to leverage our data and infrastructure to support your own projects.

## How's this different from Sci-Hub?

Like Unpaywall, Sci-Hub finds fulltext PDFs for paywalled articles. The main difference is where those PDFs come from: Unpaywall finds PDFs legally uploaded by the authors themselves, while Sci-Hub uses PDFs that are obtained by other means, including automated web scraping of publisher sites. Sci-Hub's method delivers more comprehensive results, but is not super legal. So while [we're not against Sci-Hub](#), we think Unpaywall offers a more sustainable approach by working within copyright law and supporting the growing open access movement.

## How's this different from the Open Access Button?

The [OA Button](#) and Unpaywall are similar. But the OA Button is a more mature project (it's been working since 2013), and has a different user interface as well as extra features including author emailing and finding open datasets. Unpaywall is more focused on seamlessly finding free content. The great thing is, both are open-source and free, so you can install both, or [fork 'em](#) and make your own better extension!

## What's your privacy policy?

The extension doesn't store or ask for any personal information from you, so when you use Unpaywall we don't know who you are. The extension doesn't track your browsing history, and it doesn't send any content from any page you visit to our servers, with one exception: when a page has a DOI (a short identifier used by scholarly articles), we send that DOI to our server (using an encrypted HTTPS connection) to find any free versions. We will log requests to our servers (which include the DOI and the IP address the request came from) in order to monitor and improve service. But those logs aren't connected to your identity. Furthermore, the extension won't send or use any kind of browser fingerprinting technology to identify your computer.

## Can Unpaywall tell me whether an article is "Green" or "Gold" OA?

Indeed we can. Click the green Unpaywall extension icon in your browser toolbar and choose "Settings." Once there, tick "Color-code tab for Green and Gold OA." Thenceforth, you'll enjoy a veritable rainbow of OA colorfully goodness as you browse different articles:

**Gold tab** for **Gold OA**, articles available from the publisher under an open license. [\(example\)](#)


**Green tab** for **Green OA** articles on a preprint server or institutional repository. [\(example\)](#)

**Blue tab** for articles available on the current page, but lacking license information (often that's because you're browsing from behind the paywall). [\(example\)](#)

## I found a bug

Sorry about that! Unfortunately this is pretty common, especially where publishers don't follow standard practices for article display (as they often do

not). For instance, we don't work for articles missing [DOIs](#). The good news is that it's still early days for this project and it's under very active development. When you find an error, [drop us an email](#) and we'll get it fixed for you.

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