

What is the Free Journal Network, and what does it do?

The [Free Journal Network](#) is a nonprofit corporation registered in Massachusetts in 2019. FJN is run by a [Board of Directors](#) and has an [Advisory Board](#), all of whom are volunteers. Its mission is to support the ecosystem of “diamond” open access journals - noncommercial journals which are maintained by the scholarly community, and which are completely free to read and to publish in. More precisely, all journals supported by FJN must satisfy our [acceptance criteria](#), which include conformance with all of the [Fair Open Access Principles](#). A key feature of FJN is that all our accepted journals must gradually raise standards, which are tightened annually, in order to maintain acceptance. FJN is not simply an approved list but rather a network of scholar-led journals which support each other in creating synergy and economies of scale.

FJN currently has 63 accepted journals, with typically several more under review for admission at any given time. Accepted journals include some of the oldest fully electronic journals dating back to the mid-1990s, such as [Electronic Journal of Combinatorics](#), [Discrete Mathematics and Theoretical Computer Science](#), and [Journal of Political Ecology](#). Many of our journals are owned by learned societies (e.g. [Fennia](#), [Journal of Logic and Analysis](#), and [Journal of Numerical Cognition](#)). We also include overlay journals (e.g. [Discrete Analysis](#), [Advances in Combinatorics](#), and [SIGMA](#)) and journals whose editorial boards have chosen to break away from commercial publishers and reconstitute themselves on the free, open-access model (e.g. [Glossa](#), [Algebraic Combinatorics](#), and [Precision Nanomedicine](#)). Our journals are all electronic and accessible worldwide, but each has a home base: These currently cover 20 different countries in Europe, North America, South America and Australasia.

FJN serves our member journals in the following ways:

- *Quality control.* We vet journals carefully for quality and transparency. Our list of accepted journals helps the research community by serving as an ‘approved’ list of trustworthy, high-quality, scholar-led, open access journals with no author fees. Our acceptance criteria for journals are made stricter every year, and journals are not guaranteed to remain on the list.
- *Community-building.* Our network also helps our members by promoting the sharing of best practices via our online (Gitlab) forum - we aim for synergies to improve efficiency and quality. This includes everything from forming a legal organization, to overseeing a journal, to assisting with technical issues with publishing software, Crossref membership, innovation in peer review practices, etc.
- *Sustaining journals.* Because they rely on volunteer labor and do not seek to make a profit, running costs of diamond OA journals are extraordinarily low.. However the costs are not zero: for example, DOIs cost money. We distribute small amounts of money to journals where it can do the most good.
- *Journal improvements.* Diamond OA journals are typically run by overworked academics who can just manage the day-to-day running of the journal but no more. We aid journals by hiring specialist help on contract to improve journal processes. For example, we are currently helping our journals comply with the requirements of Plan S such as inclusion in DOAJ (the Directory of Open Access Journals), archiving, and

DOIs. Planned future activities include a webinar on OJS (the free and open-source publishing software platform), specialized to the concerns of our journals.

FJN also serves the scholarly community as a whole:

- *Value for money.* FJN helps university libraries by nurturing an ecosystem of high-quality, noncommercial scholarly publication. Under the subscription and APC models, billions of dollars per year are diverted from university systems into publishers' profits. The model of scholarly publishing supported by FJN disrupts those models, letting libraries do more with scarce resources.
- *Aggregation.* We provide an easier way for libraries and other funders to support the diamond OA journal ecosystem, by aggregating many small journals into a single invoice. The money received is awarded to journals by the FJN Board, via a competitive grant process for one-time improvements and a transparent process for ongoing costs.

The support of the community will allow us to provide other services, such as:

- fully covering reasonable running costs (typically less than \$1000 per year for expenses like DOIs and Crossref membership) for member journals;
- a higher level of technical support to member journals;
- performing a study of the diamond OA system, building on the results of the recent study commissioned by cOAlition S and focused on how best to sustain journals of high procedural quality but relatively low fame;
- helping to raise the profile of member journals;
- greatly expanding efforts to educate the scholarly community about the diamond open access journal ecosystem;
- introducing a common publishing platform for member journals.

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