# The story of the mega journal

## A quick bio

Started my career in consumer goods – Holden, Kraft Foods, JnJ, English National Lottery

2008, moved to Nature Publishing Group
Publishing Manager, Scientific Reports

2013, started at Elsevier
Publishing & Product Director, Heliyon

*Open access:*

*In general, open access stands for the* **free** *and* **permanent access** *to published research, combined with clear* **guidelines** *for readers to share and use the content.*

*Source: https://www.elsevier.com/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/181433/openaccessbooklet_May.pdf

*The mega journal:*

*'Very, very **large***

***Open access***

*(Preferably) **without** any **artificial***

*constraints on its **ability to grow**[1]'*

[1]Pete Binfield, 31/10/14, http://www.slideshare.net/ssprca/367-peter-binfield

# A timeline



arXiv.org — 1991

BioMed Central — 2000

PLOS ONE — 2006

Scientific Reports, BMJ Open — 2011

PeerJ — 2013

Heliyon — 2015

*And others…*

1991    2000    2006    2011    2013    2015
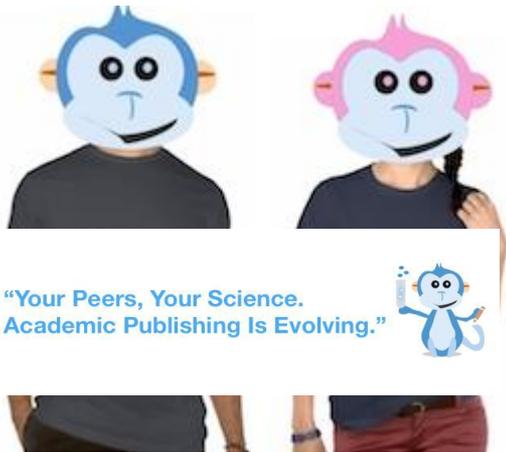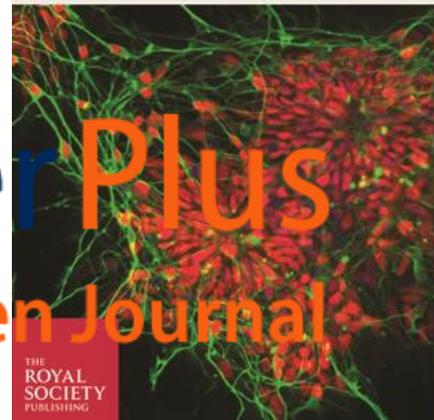
# What do mega journals aim to deliver?

- A home for all research that is technically sound, without making objective decisions on novelty/impact
    - *Letting the community decide the merit of the work post-publication*
    - *No constraints on size – therefore everything sound can be published*
- Asking 'should this be published?' rather than 'should this be published in this journal'?
- Broad coverage of subject areas – removing subject-led scope constraints
- Rapid (but still rigorous!) peer review
- Fast publication post review
- Web-based platforms for publication
    - *Mega journals are online-only!*

# Key features – editorial scope

- All articles reporting sound science are suitable for publication, regardless of subject area/scope

  - Papers are assessed on merit, rather than novelty or impact

  - Editors and reviewers are asked to ask objective questions on how well done the work is

  - Most importantly, all research must be…

    - Technically and ETHICALLY correct, meaning…

# Key features – editorial scope*

- Originality
  - The study reports original research and conclusions
- Data
  - All data to support the conclusions have been either provided or are otherwise publically available
- Statistics
  - All data have been analysed with the appropriate statistical tests and these are defined clearly
- Methods
  - The methods are described in sufficient detail to be replicated
- Citations
  - Previous work has been appropriately acknowledged
- Interpretation
  - The conclusions are a reasonable extension of the results

Source: Heliyon.com
Other mega journals will have variations on these criteria!

# Key features – publishing process

- A focus on rapid publication via:

    - Online only publication

    - Rapid turnaround from acceptance to publication online

    - (Depending on the journal) a rapid proofing process, or no proofing process at all

- Easy and transparent sharing

    - Creative commons licensing

    - Accessibility globally, without paywalls

    - Clear requirements for re-use

# Key features – platform

- Article-driven web designs

- Bundling of content into subject areas to ensure articles are still discoverable

  - *Discoverability is key!*

- Use of metrics (Altmetric, Plum, PLOS metrics, amongst others) to enable readers to assess the content in multiple ways

- Indexing on most, if not all, traditional indexing sites – ISI, Scopus, PubMed Central

- Press coverage and social media focus to enable papers to stand out

Twitter
Facebook
Google+
Blog
Alerts

# How mega journals work with other titles – Article Transfer

- An article transfer option eliminates the need for authors to reformat and re-submit their papers

- Provides authors with an easy and fast path to publication in a quality journal

- If a transfer is not offered, authors may still submit to mega journals directly

# How many articles are published in mega journals?

# An introduction to Heliyon

- Elsevier's open access mega journal

- Sound science journal: Papers are assessed on technical merit, rather than scope and impact

- Broad scope: All research is welcome (but only primary research articles)

- Gold open access journal – APC is $1,250 (plus taxes)

- Opened for submissions March 2015, first publications September 2015

ELSEVIER

# Heliyon's value proposition

- Editorial excellence: In-house editorial team and external editorial board of

  over 900 active researchers across all research disciplines

- Speedy publication:

  20 days submission to first editorial decision
  60 days submission to first decision after review
  130 days submission to publication

- High visibility

  - *Full-time marketing manager*

  - *User-friendly website*

  - *User data provided with every paper*

# Published Papers - Highlights

- Investigation of how the season of birth may affect later life traits - [Heliyon 1 (2015) e00031](#)

- Presentation of a method to generate smart earthquake-resistant building systems - [Heliyon 2 (2016) e00069](#)

- Description how decaying pig carcasses may help forensic investigations - [Heliyon 2 (2016) e00070](#)

- Development a new material to be used in Li-ion batteries - [Heliyon 2 (2016) e00081](#)

- Announcement that a protein in sweet potato affects lipid metabolism and body weight - [Heliyon 2 (2016) e00201](#)

- Presentation evidence for the existence of a bird species thought to be extinct - [Heliyon 3 (2017) e00230](#)

- Suggestion that based on a theoretical model it may be possible to redistribute the energy contained in tsunamis using acoustic–gravity waves - [Heliyon 3 (2017) e00234](#)

# So why mega journals?

- A different model of publishing

- Fuss free – no worries about scope or subject matter, because every subject area is accepted

- Taking the subjectivity out of peer review

- Supporting individuals who want to publish quickly

- Supporting individuals who wish to publish open access

- *Offering authors choice over how and where to publish!*

Niche?     OR     Mega journal?

THEN…

Which one?

**Ultimately, it's all about author choice!**