

From Open Access to Societal Impact: A Short-Video Workflow for Research Dissemination and Impact Measurement

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Abstract

This note presents *Window to Science* (in Danish, *Vindue til Videnskaben*), a pilot project that aims at developing and testing a structured workflow for disseminating Open Access research through a short-form video format. The project translates recently published, peer-reviewed Open Access articles into short “paper videos,” distributed via platform-based channels such as YouTube and social media. This note focuses on three aspects: (1) the methodological design of a scalable workflow covering article selection, narrative transformation, standardized production, and distribution; (2) an integrated framework for measuring impact using platform analytics, referrals to original publications, and alternative metric indicators; and (3) contributing to the general public awareness and appreciation of science, to support the integrity of science, while combatting fake news and misinformation. The project draws on early experience and contributes to a practice-based model for linking Open Access publishing with measurable forms of public engagement.

Keywords

Open Access, communication, metrics, impact, Open Science, public outreach, video, research integrity

Over the past couple of decades, Open Access policies have substantially increased the formal availability of scholarly literature. Although a main driver has been the scholarly publishing crisis and the associated economic problems of a highly monopolized publishing market – political and ethical concerns have also been central to the debate. As a result, Open Access policies have often been framed in terms of a concrete goal: increasing the positive impact on society through unhindered access to research (e.g. Dorch & Christensen-Dalsgaard 2008; Dorch, Demaiio & Hersch 2012). However,

increased access does not automatically translate into broader societal use. While scientific articles are increasingly accessible, the main channel for their circulation is still scholarly journals, aimed mainly at academic communities. A local analysis of university Open Access repositories in Denmark suggests that a Pareto Principle applies, i.e. that the bulk part of downloads from repositories corresponds to a small number of Open Access publications (cf. Dorch 2017). The distribution of downloads per item exhibits a heavily skewed, long-tail distribution consistent with a power-law, where a small fraction of items accounts for most downloads. This illustrates that there is a risk of an “access–use gap”, which can be central to achieving the potentials of Open Access, and it raises the question of whether accessibility is a sufficient outcome or merely a prerequisite for achieving the desired benefits for society. This note positions short-form platform-based communication as a complementary infrastructure for realizing the potential of Open Access.

The *Window to Science* (in Danish, *Vindue til Videnskaben*) project addresses the access–use gap challenge by developing a structured and scalable workflow for transforming Open Access research articles into short-form video content, presented by a host, aimed at a broader public audience (e.g. practitioners, educators, small and medium-sized enterprises, patients, amateurs) as well as academic communities (researchers, teachers, students). The project is funded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation and carried out during 2026 by the university library at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), cf. SDU (2026). It is based on the premise that individual peer-reviewed publications can function as units of direct communication both within and beyond academia, if they are translated into user-relevant formats that reduce cognitive, linguistic, and contextual barriers, and disseminated across broader media channels and formats than traditional journals.

The project develops a standardized workflow with four core stages: selection, transformation, production, and dissemination. Article selection is guided by explicit criteria, focusing on recently published, peer-reviewed Open Access articles within natural and technical sciences, with emphasis on Green Open Access in accordance with Denmark’s national Open Access strategy, as well as early-career authors. The aim is to ensure both accessibility and timeliness.

Selected articles are then transformed into structured narratives following a consistent template: scientific context, research question, methodological approach, and key findings, that are presented by a researcher, sometimes author, or a student assistant. Use of AI and other technologies is regulated by university policies. The role of the host is central to the project, and provides an authentic and authoritative human face to research. This human-in-the-loop preserves the epistemic structure of the original work while enabling translation into accessible language. Each video maintains a DOI link to the original article, ensuring transparency and traceability.

Production is based on a lightweight model using short 3–5 minute “paper videos” with minimal post-production. The use of standardized formats enables scalability and relatively high throughput, supporting continuous dissemination of new research outputs.

Dissemination takes place via a platform-based infrastructure (YouTube), supplemented by social media such as e.g. LinkedIn. This strategy leverages existing mechanisms of discovery and circulation, including algorithmic recommendation and network sharing, positioning research outputs within broader digital attention environments.



Figure 1. An example of a video from the project disseminating the results of a recent Open Access article on the recycling of phosphorus from dredged lake sediments. The article is presented in 3:27 minutes by biology bachelor student Josefine Melchior, with a focus on the results of the research presented in the paper: whether mud can be used as fertilizer, cf. <https://www.youtube.com/SDUBibliotek>. © University Library of Southern Denmark, [CC BY 4.0](#).

A central feature of the project is its integrated framework for impact measurement, combining multiple types of indicators. At the platform level, video analytics provide measures of exposure and engagement, including views, watch time, and interaction metrics etc. Early observations suggest that a large proportion of viewers are new users and that external platforms contribute significantly to traffic.

At the research level, the project aims to capture referrals to underlying publications, including article downloads and repository access. This makes it possible to assess whether mediated communication leads to increased engagement with Open Access output.

The framework also incorporates alternative metric indicators, capturing attention across social media, news, and other public communication channels. These serve as proxies for broader societal visibility beyond academic citation patterns.

Furthermore, the project situates its measurements within a broader open science metrics context, including emerging approaches that integrate open access, open data, and open outreach dimensions (Vlachos et al. 2023).

The *Window to Science* project demonstrates how Open Access dissemination can be extended through a structured and scalable communication workflow combined with systematic impact measurement. By linking research outputs directly to short-form

video formats and embedding them within platform-based ecosystems, the project provides a practical model for enhancing the societal visibility of research.

More broadly, the project supports a shift from viewing Open Access as a property of publications to understanding it as part of a dynamic communication system, in which format, mediation, and distribution determine whether research becomes visible, understandable, and usable beyond academia.

The outcome of the project is also relevant as seen from a CoARA perspective (Dorch 2025), since it relies on a broader understanding of research value than can be captured by citation-based indicators alone. By documenting how Open Access publications are translated into public-facing formats and by combining qualitative considerations of communication and societal relevance with responsible use of quantitative indicators such as platform analytics and referral data, the project aligns with CoARA's emphasis on recognizing diverse research contributions, including outreach and science communication, and on evaluating research through context-sensitive, plural forms of evidence rather than narrow journal- or publication-based metrics.

Finally, the project is relevant in relation to countering misinformation and strengthening research integrity through Open Science (e.g. Dorch 2015). By translating peer-reviewed Open Access articles into accessible, traceable short-form formats (presented by real people), while preserving key elements and direct connection to the original publication, it supports more trustworthy public circulation of research-based knowledge. In this way, the project does not merely increase visibility – it also helps make the provenance, quality, and evidentiary basis of scientific claims more transparent to broader audiences. This is consistent with current discussions of research integrity, which emphasize rigor, transparency, and responsibility, and with broader efforts to strengthen trust in scholarly communication as a response to misinformation, disinformation and fake news.

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About the author

Bertil Dorch has 20 years of experience as an astrophysicist at, inter alia, The Royal Swedish Academy of Science (1999–2002) and at The Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen (2002–2011). Previously at The Royal Library of Denmark (2005–2013), Bertil is presently employed at University of Southern Denmark as Library Director and Associate Professor. Bertil has been President of the Danish Research Library Association (2014–2020), chairman of the Danish Library Directors' Conference (2015–2017), board member of SPARC Europe (2014–2018), and of the Evidence-based Research Network (EBRN).

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