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## Editorial

### Science Popularization through Open Access

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## Introduction

The science plays a crucial role in the modern society, and the *popularization of science* in its electronic form is closely related to the rise and development of the *World Wide Web*. Since 1990s -the introduction of the Web as a part of the Internet- the *science popularization* has become more and more involved in the web-based society. Therefore, the Web has become an important technical support of the *science popularization*.

The Web, on the one hand, has increased the accessibility, visibility and popularity of science and scientific research. On the other hand, the increased accessibility and visibility has also increased the citations and research impact or educational impact received by a popular journal or a paper.

*Science popularization* has now made an important step forward, because the Web contributes today as an effective means of improving the public understanding of science. The Web has made it possible to popularize the science via popular search engines. The Web creates a link between specialists and the public; in short, between science and common sense, just by a hyperlink.

The *science popularization* is an attempt to reduce the distance standing between science specialists and the public. *Science popularization* is interpretation of scientific information (science) intended for a general audience, rather than for other experts or students. *Science popularization* via the Web is a programme that takes science to web users with an objective of making them aware of the efforts, achievements and advances of science. Such programmes could include e-books, e-conferences, e-newspapers, online journalism, online workshops, seminars, and meetings, electronic forums, open-access journals, audio-visual material, etc.

"*Popularization of science is nothing else than an endeavour to image scientific ideas in such a way that everyone (especially non-scientists) can grasp the fundamental concepts and have an idea of what science in essence is*" ([Cornelis](#), 1998). The primary objective of the *popularization of science* is to increase public understanding of science. In the *popularization of science* the capabilities of the possible reader (web searcher) has to take into consideration. Since the reader is not a scientist, a 'translation' has to be made, making science more accessible ([Cornelis](#), 1998).

There is no doubt that the *science popularization* relies on simplification. Popularisers simplify science because they think it is the only way to make it affordable to lay audiences ([Leon](#), 1998). The main goals of *science popularization* are:

- to provide generalized, simplified science concepts,

- to increase the interest and awareness of the public about the science and scientific research and realization of their results in practice,
- to support collaboration and participation of the public on developments in science,
- to improve the scholarly-communication skills of scientific institutions and scientists,
- to integrate the public into the popularization of solutions of research and development tasks ([Government of the Slovak Republic](#), 2007).

The open-access (OA) movement makes it possible to popularize science to a great extent, by a means of wide dissemination of scientific information. OA can popularize science and new technologies, at the same time, motivate learning and utilization of science. A major step forward (a golden road), and a foundation upon which we can popularize science, is to bring down the walls around scientific databases and scientific information, especially scholarly journals.

OA is at the heart of the *democratization and popularization of science* -helping to bring down the walls that separated science from society, knowing that both communities would benefit as a result, and enabling greater participation in scientific production. Therefore, popularizers of science can publish in OA journals. *Science popularization* via OA seems to be functional because:

- OA serves the democratization and popularization of science.
- OA science can be employed as a medium to improve democracy.
- OA science encourages collaboration and participation.

Therefore, OA science can be regarded as an effective method for exploiting people's wisdom and increasing the *social wisdom*. It should be noted that the print-based *science popularization* faces challenges throughout the world. OA plays an important role as a new strategy for legitimating the main values and ideas of the scientific information.

## Conclusion

The Web is a powerful medium which can be used to popularize science. The Web can be used for public education and circulation of scientific information, therefore, the Web plays a major role in the *science popularization* and dissemination of scientific information to the public. OA plays an important role in this process of *science popularization* and it should be promoted.

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