



**PRESS RELEASE: July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

## **Renew Consultants is pleased to announce the release of *How Readers Discovery Content in Scholarly Publications, 2021***

**Survey attracted over 15,000 respondents working and studying all over the world.**

*How Readers Discover Content in Scholarly Publications 2021* is the latest in a series of reports spanning 16 years identifying the trends in user discovery behaviour. The research has been carried out every three years since 2005 and maps the changing nature of how readers find academic content.

The latest research was carried out with the support of leading publishers and other organisations involved in scholarly communications and attracted responses from over 15,000 people working and studying across all sectors, subject disciplines, and regions.

Headline results include:

- *In terms of overall trend, A&Is are still the most important search tool for people in high-income countries working in the broad subject area of life sciences. This has been consistently true since 2005. However, Google Scholar is catching up.*
- *Google Scholar is by far the most important discovery resource for people working and studying in the broad area of Humanities and Social Science. The library is still much more important to this group of people than it is to people in STEM subjects (Scientific, Technical, Engineering but it's become less important over time.*
- *Social and Professional networking sites have increased significantly in importance, although less so in North America where growth in importance has been slower than all other parts of the world.*
- *Google Scholar continues to be the dominant search engine used for journal discovery in the US and most European countries. It is also the most popular search engine for journal discovery in China, although the popularity of Baidu continues*
- *People actively search for open access articles, and unsurprising the wealth of their country has an impact on this. People in poorer countries actively search for OA content more than people in richer countries. People in the corporate sector search for OA content more often than their counterparts in the academic and medical sectors*
- *80% of article downloads are believed by readers to be the Version of Record. As only around 40% of article downloads are obtained from publisher-controlled resources, we presume that readers are accessing Version of Record articles from repositories*

- *People discover articles through search around 45% of the time. 55% of the time they are doing something else. However, discovery via search has increased over time*

The survey took place between January and March 2021 and provides publishers, societies, and the wider scholarly communications community with insights into changing user behaviour. Thanks to the support of the following organisations, the report has been published under an CC BY NC licence and can be found at [renew.pub/discovery2021](http://renew.pub/discovery2021). The supporting data has been made freely available and can be accessed via Figshare: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14923917.v1>

- American Psychological Association
- American Society for Microbiology
- Annual Reviews
- Bone and Joint Publishing
- Institute of Physics Publishing
- JAMA
- Kudos
- Royal Society of Chemistry
- Taylor and Francis Group
- TrendMD
- Wiley

Tracy Gardner said *“Our research provides the scholarly communications community with vital information about how researchers find content, and shows the difference in discovery behaviour across disciplines, regions, sectors, and job roles. We see that A&Is are still really important in life sciences but have declined elsewhere. Google Scholar has become even more dominant and social media is vastly more important in some regions than other. We hope that the scholarly communications community will find the report insightful and useful.”*

The report can be downloaded at <http://renew.pub/discovery2021>

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