

INSTANT GRATIFICATION: FINDING VETERINARY ARTICLES FREELY AND LEGALLY ONLINE

We live in a world of instant gratification. Immediate communication via mobile phone and texting. On-demand television and movies. 24-hour stores. Next day delivery of online orders.

We want the same convenience for information, especially journal articles. And we want them to be free.

Veterinarians are a profession of readers. A 2016 international survey of veterinarians, in which nearly 90% of respondents were clinicians in high-income countries, showed that journals are the most commonly used evidence in practice. The respondents were also asked to nominate their top journals.¹

Seven of the top 22 journals identified in the survey are free to read online²: *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*, *BMC Veterinary Research*, *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, *Compendium, Veterinary Medicine* (from *DVM360*) and *DVM360*. One requires registration: *Clinician's Brief*.

A new study looking at the availability of veterinary articles online found 62% of the articles published from 2000-2014 by authors at veterinary colleges are freely available.³

It is great news that some of the most highly read journals are freely available. It also indicates that free and legal online access for many articles is either unavailable or less obvious.

What are the easiest avenues to access? The answer depends on a couple of circumstances.

If you have access to an academic library through work, alumni affiliation or association membership, that's great. The best advice is to learn to use those privileges efficiently and leverage them with the advice below to suit your work style.

Realistically, most practitioners do not have online access to an academic library. In 2016, of the AVMA members who provided employment information, 94% indicated being employed in an area other than the academe.⁴



LIBRARIES TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

By Heather K. Moberly

Coordinator of Veterinary Services, Medical Sciences Library, Texas A&M University

Four best bets for finding free, legal and immediate online access to articles:

Unpaywall:

<http://unpaywall.org>

- Chrome or Firefox extension⁵
- Click after installation for instructions and settings.
- Go to article page. If a free copy is located, the padlock on the right side of screen will open.

Directory of Open Access Journals

(DOAJ): <http://doaj.org>

- Website
- Search for free journals by title or browse titles by subject.
- Includes links to some free articles.

Open Access Button:

<https://openaccessbutton.org>


- Website; Chrome extension (Firefox in development)
- Search website for free copy of article or go to article webpage and click extension to search.

Google Scholar:

<http://scholar.google.com>

- Website; Chrome extension
- Search website for topic or specific article. Look to right of each result for links to article. Results are prioritized, and generally only the first link displays. To view all links, click all versions in the last line of each result.
- Extension is useful several ways.

Click to open, and then enter search terms or a specific article while you are viewing something else in your main browser window. Click next to an article to see a citation in a variety of styles or to export to citation management software.

1. Huntley SJ, Dean RS, Massey A, Brennan ML (2016). International Evidence-Based Medicine Survey of the Veterinary Profession: Information Sources Used by Veterinarians. *PLoS ONE* 11(7): e0159732. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0159732> (accessed 15 April 2017)
2. Open access status determined by searching journal titles in the Directory of Open Access Journals (<https://doaj.org>) and using the Google search engine (<http://google.com>) (15 April 2017)
3. Page, JR (in press, under review). Can they find the evidence? Availability of veterinary medical research publications to practicing veterinarians (personal communication, 27 April 2017)
4. American Veterinary Medical Association (2016) Market Research Statistics: AVMA Membership 2016. <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Statistics/Pages/Market-research-statistics-AVMA-membership.aspx> (accessed 24 April 2017); academe = animal science department + other academia + veterinary medical college/school + veterinary science department + veterinary technician program
5. An internet browser extension/button/plug-in is a small software application installed in your browser to the right of the URL area and activated in one click. 

Do you need a full copy of an article? A literature search? Economic facts and figures about veterinary practice? Animal owner demographics and spending patterns? Texas veterinarians may contact the Medical Sciences Library at Texas A&M University for assistance at no cost for reference service, literature searching and copies of articles, chapters and conference papers from our collection. Details can be found at <http://guides.library.tamu.edu/txvetalum>.