

# TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES: FIND FREE COPIES OF VETERINARY ARTICLES

**I**n the February issue, we discussed article versions and how to identify them. In this issue, we delve into locating freely available copies of articles online. There are an increasing number available, and the tools to locate them have improved. For this column, we will consider articles you do not pay to read as open access (OA) versions.

## Why Is This Getting Better?

Tools to identify OA versions use a standard unique identifier for articles and authors to improve their accuracy. Authors publish OA and share articles not originally OA. Publishers allow authors to share versions of articles and make older articles available. Repositories provide websites for sharing articles.

## Considerations

- Remember that nothing is free. Resources are expended to create an article that you read "for free."
- You may locate one of several versions of an article. For more information about versions, see page 44 in the February 2021 issue.
- Your time is not free; consider the balance between time and money.
- Information about you may be the cost of reading an article instead of money.
- Is there one perfect tool or technique? No.
- Is one best for veterinary medicine? No.

## Techniques

There are two common scenarios. One is a literature search for articles accompanied by locating OA versions of the results. Conduct your search, and pick the best results for your situation. Remember that no single resource links to all the OA versions and you may need to seek OA for some results elsewhere. Try the following resources.

The other is knowing an article cita-



By Heather K. Moberly and L.M. Rey  
Coordinator of Veterinary Services, Medical  
Sciences Library, Texas A&M University

tion and seeking an OA version. Consider looking for that article in a database and then seeing if there is a link to OA. Try the following resources:

## Databases

- PubMed (<https://pubmed.gov>) has a free full-text filter on the left under the Text Availability section.
- The Lens (<https://lens.org>) has an open access filter on the left. OA articles are often categorized by color, so choose all the OA colors.
- Dimensions (<https://app.dimensions.ai>) has an open access filter on the left under the Scholarly Works section. Choose all OA.

## Websites

*Open Access Button:* This project provides both a website (<https://openaccessbutton.org>) and a browser extension. The website is a great option if you do not want to install a browser extension.

*Google and Google Scholar:* These are different tools. Although Google (<https://google.com>) may find both citations and full-text copies of articles, that is not its primary purpose. In contrast, Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com>) is designed to locate articles and chapters. OA links will be in two places. One is to the right of a Google Scholar result. The other is the "All # Versions" in the

last line of a result. To locate a specific article, search for the article title in quotes.

*Research Gate:* This social networking site for researchers (<https://researchgate.net>) includes a growing number of OA articles and supplemental data. Google Scholar varies in whether it links to results from content here.

## Browser Extensions

These are executable programs added to internet browsers. They are also called plug-ins, bookmarklets and buttons. Every tool is not available for every browser. Top extensions to consider are Unpaywall, Open Access Button, Google Scholar, Lazy Scholar and EndNote Click (formerly called Kopernio). Find information about these at their websites. Consider privacy and security. You may want to pay particular attention to whether the extension tracks everything you do in your internet browser and whether it can be turned on and off. Those readers with university library access also may have LibKey Nomad or Lean Library; talk to your librarian.

## Want More Freely Available Content?

Do you write or teach? Share your work. Ask to keep your rights. Ask publishers which version of your article you can share and when. Want assistance? Ask us!

## Takeaway

OA content is becoming more common, and the tools are improving. With a bit of preliminary exploration and thought, you can develop expertise to quickly locate available OA articles.

Additional information about this topic was published on p.50 of the June 2017 issue of the *Texas Veterinarian*. [TV](#)

*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://tamu.libguides.com/bxvetalum>.*