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Before the

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Hearing

"The State of Scientific Publishing: Assessing Trends, Emerging Issues, and Policy Considerations"

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The Association of American Publishers (AAP) welcomes this opportunity to provide testimony on scholarly communication before the House Science, Space, and Technology Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee. AAP represents over 80 professional and scholarly publishers, including dozens of domestic scholarly.[1] Globally, technical, engineering, and medical (STEM) publishing is an $11 billion industry,[2] a small but important portion of the nearly $3 trillion worldwide research enterprise.[3] AAP STEM members directly employee over 27,100 employees domestically, with over 1.6 million individual members of the global scientific and medical community.[4]

The Role and Value of Scholarly Publishing

For two hundred years, STEM publishers have played a defined role in the medium through which science is communicated, scrutinized, and ultimately used to support future research and innovation. We manage peer review, curating and editing research outputs, disseminating publications and making them easily discoverable, while preserving the validated scientific record over time. Each published article is a data point in a cumulative, iterative scientific process, not an endpoint. Publishers help ensure that what enters that record has been vetted, is traceable, and can be corrected when necessary. Moreover, publishers create an entire research infrastructure to incorporate metadata, indexing, and other elements of the research process to enhance discoverability.

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[1] Given its role as a trade association for book, journal, and education publishers in the United States and its commitment to fostering a competitive marketplace, AAP has adopted policies to ensure compliance with applicable competition and antitrust laws. In preparing this testimony, AAP has relied solely on publicly available information and there were no discussions or exchanges of competitively sensitive, non-public information between AAP and its members concerning members' individual pricing, costs, or submission policies.

[2] Dan Pollock et al., *News & Views: Total Value of Scholarly Journals Market*, Delta Think, (April 16, 2024), https://www.deltathink.com/news-views-total-value-of-scholarly-journals-market. By comparison, STEM publishing is roughly on par with the global hazelnut industry in market size. (https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/hazelnut-market-112330. Accessed 25 Mar. 2026.)

[3] David Bonaglia et al., *End of Year Edition – Against All Odds, Global R&D Has Grown Close to USD 3 Trillion in 2023*, World Intell. Prop. Org. (Dec. 18, 2024), https://www.wipo.int/en/web/global-innovation-index/w/blogs/2024/end-of-year-edition.

[4] Across all sectors, the AAP represents the leading book, journal, and education publishers in the United States on matters of law and policy, advocating for outcomes that incentivize the publication of creative expression, professional content, and learning solutions. AAP members directly contribute to over 200,000 jobs domestically.

Most major research funders expect grantees to publish their findings in peer-reviewed journals, even though this is not an explicit obligation of their grants, precisely because publication in such journals confers key benefits: formal dissemination to the relevant communities, validation and quality control through peer review and editorial processes, and durable integration into the literature. Scientific publishing is not a luxury add-on to research; it is integral to how research is communicated, scrutinized, and built upon. When combined with artificial intelligence and other evolving data and research products, publishers stand at the forefront of a scientific revolution.

Ensuring the Integrity of Gold Standard Science

The volume of research outputs is accelerating – driven by substantial increases in global R&D investment – and the number of research articles has grown dramatically over the last decade.[5] This growth is straining the peer-review system and created openings for bad actors. Paper mills, predatory journals, and other unscrupulous entities exploit "publish or perish" incentives by producing low-quality or fabricated articles bypassing meaningful peer review. At the same time, generative AI has introduced new forms of fraud and manipulation that are harder to detect with traditional tools.

Responsible publishers, on the other hand, continue to make massive investments in order to protect research integrity. They deploy plagiarism and image-manipulation detection, AI-generated content checks, and specialized integrity teams. They refine peer-review and editorial processes and support robust systems for corrections, expressions of concern, and retractions.

It is important to note that retractions are still a small fraction of the record, and their increase often reflects detection and stronger oversight rather than a collapse in quality. In a larger sense, retractions are a correction of the scientific record, and they are a feature, rather than a bug, illustrating the critical importance of research publishers.

The work of supporting the integrity of the scientific record is resource-intensive and must be adequately funded in order to ensure the highest possible standards in research and science, and in order to ensure that taxpayers can rely on the accuracy of federally supported research.

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[5] Mark A. Hanson et al., *The strain on scientific publishing*, QUANTITATIVE SCIENCE STUDIES. (Nov. 8, 2024), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2309.15884

Preprints, or pre-publisher manuscripts, illustrate both opportunity and risk. They are valuable for rapid scientific dialogue and early sharing of results, but they are not substitutes for peer-reviewed articles. To non-specialist readers and the media, preprints can appear to be as authoritative as journal articles even though they have not been vetted and may have errors or preliminary interpretations. Recent examples include faster than light travel, [6] room temperature semi-conductors,[7] and classically, cold fusion.[8] Government and research funder policies should recognize the distinct roles of preprints and peer-reviewed publications and avoid treating them as interchangeable in compliance frameworks.

The Importance of Promoting Investment in Publishing

Publishing high-quality scientific and medical literature requires substantial, ongoing investment in people, technology, integrity checks, and long-term preservation. Yet across the research enterprise, publishing represents well under one percent of total spending, while enabling the dissemination, evaluation, and reuse of the other 99+%. Scholarly publishing is one of the most leveraged investments in the research value chain and directly supports a quality US workforce. The US copyright industries, including the publishing industry, are a significant net exporter,[9] and expanded investments in publishing further boost innovation and discovery.

Historically, most investments in publishing were recovered through subscriptions and related revenues from readers and institutions. As research grant funder mandates for immediate public access have expanded, publishers have developed additional models, especially Gold Open Access, where publishers' investments are recovered through article publishing charges (APCs) or institutional agreements rather than subscriptions. Even nonprofit publishers which embrace open-access-only publishing models, such as the Public Library of Science (PLOS), often charge several thousand dollars per article, and

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[6] Tajmar, Neunzig, et al. *High-accuracy thrust measurements of the EMDrive and elimination of false-positive effects*. CEAS SPACE J **14**, 31–44 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12567-021-00385-1

[7] Lemonick, *Leslie Schoop on busting the LK-99 myth.* ***Vol. 102,*** **Issue 17.** CHEM & ENG NEWS. https://cen.acs.org/materials/electronic-materials/Leslie-Schoop-debunking-claims-LK-99-room-temperature-superconductor/102/i17 (accessed on 4/8/2026)

[8] https://www.axios.com/local/salt-lake-city/2024/03/18/cold-fusion-1989-university-utah-pons-fleischmann (accessed on 4/8/2026)

[9] Dutra and Stoner, *Copyright Industries in the U.S. Economy: The 2024 Report*, prepared for the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA), December 2024, available at www.iipa.org.

may seek external support to expand or reenvision operations, underscoring how tight margins are across the sector.[10]

Public access is not free. There are significant costs to high-quality scholarly publishing. Author self-deposit ("Green" Open Access) relies on journals that have already funded peer review, editing, and publication. "Free to deposit" does not mean "free to publish." Rapid cancellation of subscriptions in response to unfunded public access mandates erodes the revenues sustaining peer review and stewardship, particularly for U.S.-based scientific and medical societies that depend on publishing to finance member services, conferences, and disciplinary infrastructure. It also risks confusion about which version of the article the public is accessing, including articles later retracted, corrected, or updated. One-size-fits-all mandates which ignore these economic and integrity risks threaten the very system that creates and supports trusted scientific literature.

Policy Risks to Avoid

Well-intentioned policies can have unintended consequences if they overlook how the publishing ecosystem functions. Focusing on one output, rather than looking holistically at the scientific and medical community ecosystem, jeopardizes the quality and integrity of research. For example:

- Treating preprints or other non-reviewed products as functional equivalents of peer-reviewed articles for public access or assessment purposes risks amplifying misinformation and devaluing peer review.
- Mandates to displace the Version of Record with unedited manuscripts as the primary public access route can destabilize viable business models without providing comparable integrity protections.
- Policies treating publication and access costs as "diversions" of research funding, rather than as necessary and important components of the research process, risk pushing systems toward the lowest-cost, lowest-integrity publications.

[10] *Publication Fees*, PLOS, https://plos.org/fees/ (last visited Sep. 9, 2025). (Range of current fees for Research Articles - PLOS One: $2382-PLOS Medicine: $6460. PLOS is not an AAP member.)

At a time of rising integrity challenges, including organized fraud and AI-enabled manipulation, the answer is more robust peer review and editorial oversight, not less.

Recommendations for Congress

AAP supports robust investment in federal research as critical to the advancement of American science. The United States should cultivate the discoveries which have led our great nation to a position of leadership in technology and innovation. Investments should include strong resources for American universities and research libraries as a necessary part of supporting investigators. Publishing is an important part of the scientific and medical ecosystem and is necessary to ensure we can overcome the challenges of the 21st century.

AAP offers the following recommendations to the Committee:

1. **Prioritize integrity and quality.**
    - Recognize peer-reviewed publications as the primary, trusted record of research findings.
    - Encourage grant-funding agencies to prioritize outputs with strong integrity safeguards in grant reviews and policy design.
    - Support initiatives to expand and improve peer review, including training, structured review, registered reports, and funding and recognition for reproducibility studies.
2. **Support sustainable public access.**
    - Acknowledge that public access requires funding; ensure grant budgets and agency policies realistically cover the costs of high-quality publication and data stewardship.
    - Prefer the Version of Record in public repositories where possible and clearly label material that has not been peer-reviewed or formally published.
    - Consider waivers or delays in article deposit requirements to allow authors the opportunity to publish in high-quality peer reviewed publications at minimal taxpayer cost.

- Avoid one-size-fits-all mandates that undermine the financial sustainability of domestic non-profit scientific and medical societies and other high-integrity publishers.

3. **Preserve author choice and intellectual property.**
    - Allow researchers to choose where and how to publish their work, including the licenses applied, within a framework that advances public access.
    - Uphold robust intellectual property protections and contractual freedom as foundational to a vibrant, competitive publishing marketplace that can innovate in support of open science and AI-era needs.
4. **Partner with publishers on open science and AI.**
    - Collaborate with publishers to design public access, data-sharing, and AI-related policies that leverage existing infrastructure for provenance, corrections, retractions, and integrity checks.
    - Encourage the use of licensed, verified Versions of Record and curated datasets as preferred inputs for high-stakes AI systems, recognizing publishers as part of the trust and safety infrastructure for scientific information.

A financially sustainable and collaborative open science system that engages the publishing community can be a powerful engine for research and innovation. AAP members stand ready to work with the Committee to ensure that America's investment in science advances human health and welfare, supports high-quality jobs, and strengthens U.S. leadership in discovery and innovation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.