

Refereed/peer-reviewed Journals That Are Only Published In Electronic Format Are Referred To As

Refereed/peer-reviewed Journals That Are Only Published In Electronic Format Are Referred To As electronic-only, digital, or online-only peer-reviewed journals. These publications have become increasingly prevalent in the academic community, driven by advancements in digital technology, the need for rapid dissemination of research, and cost-effective publishing models. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore what these journals are, their characteristics, how they differ from traditional print journals, and their significance within the scholarly publishing landscape.

Understanding Electronic-Only or Online-Only Peer-Reviewed Journals

Definition and Key Characteristics

Electronic-only peer-reviewed journals are scholarly publications that exist exclusively in digital formats without any print counterparts. They are subjected to rigorous peer review processes similar to traditional print journals but are published solely on digital platforms.

Key characteristics include:

- **Digital Format Only:** No physical copies are produced, reducing costs and environmental impact.
- **Online Accessibility:** Articles are accessible via the internet, often through journal websites, repositories, or aggregators.
- **Rapid Publication Cycles:** Electronic publishing allows for faster dissemination of research findings.
- **Interactive Content:** Many online journals incorporate multimedia, supplementary data, and hyperlinks.
- **Open Access Options:** A significant number of electronic-only journals adopt open access policies, making research freely available.

Historical Context and Emergence

The transition from print to digital publishing began in the late 20th

century and gained momentum in the early 2000s. Factors contributing to this shift include:

- Advances in internet technology.
- The need for immediate access to research.
- Cost reductions associated with digital distribution.
- The global push for open access publishing models.

This evolution has led to the rise of electronic-only journals, which have become a staple in many academic disciplines.

Terminology Used for Electronic-Only Peer-Reviewed Journals

Different terms are used interchangeably or specifically to describe these publications, depending on context, publisher preferences, and scholarly conventions.

Common Terms and Their Meanings

- Electronic-only Journals: Emphasizes the exclusive digital format.
- Online-only Journals: Highlights that the journal is published solely on the internet.
- Digital Journals: Focuses on the digital nature, sometimes used broadly.
- E-journals: A shorthand term for electronic journals.
- Web-based Journals: Indicates online presence, often implying accessibility via the web.
- Born-digital Journals: Refers to journals that were conceived and developed as digital from inception, not converted from print.
- Open Access Journals: While not exclusive to electronic-only formats, many are open access due to the digital medium.

Preferred Terminology in Academic Publishing

The term "electronic-only" or "online-only" is often preferred in scholarly contexts because it clearly distinguishes these journals from hybrid or print versions.

- "Electronic-only" underscores the absence of print and the purely digital nature.
- "Online-only" emphasizes the online accessibility.

Advantages of Electronic-Only Peer-Reviewed Journals

Cost-Effectiveness and Sustainability

- Reduced printing and distribution costs.
- Lower subscription prices, increasing accessibility.
- Enables publishers to allocate resources to peer review and editorial processes.

Rapid Dissemination of Research

- Accelerated publication timelines.
- Immediate online availability upon acceptance.
- Supports fast-paced research areas like medicine and technology.

Enhanced Accessibility and Reach

- Global access without geographical barriers.
- Compatibility with various devices (computers, tablets, smartphones).
- Facilitates open access, broadening readership.

Interactive and Rich Content

- Multimedia support including videos, datasets, and interactive figures.
- Hyperlinks to related articles, references, and supplementary materials.

Environmental Benefits

- Reduced paper consumption.
- Decreased carbon footprint associated with printing and distribution.

Challenges and Limitations of Electronic-Only Journals

While electronic-only journals offer numerous benefits, they also face specific challenges.

Digital Preservation and Archiving

- Ensuring long-term access requires robust digital preservation strategies.
- Risks of data loss or platform obsolescence.

Perception and Credibility

- Some stakeholders may perceive electronic-only journals as less credible than traditional print counterparts.
- Peer review rigor and indexing influence reputation.

Technological Dependence

- Reliance on digital infrastructure and platform stability.
- Accessibility issues related to internet connectivity and device compatibility.

Copyright and Licensing Concerns

- Navigating open access licenses and copyright laws.
- Ensuring compliance with publisher policies.

Distinguishing Electronic-Only Journals from Other Publishing Models

Hybrid Journals

- Publish both print and electronic versions.
- Offer options for print copies alongside online access.

Print Journals with Online Supplementary Content

- Traditional print journals may provide online supplementary materials.
- They are not considered electronic-only unless no print version exists.

Preprint Repositories

- Platforms like arXiv or bioRxiv host preprints.
- Not peer-reviewed, but some may evolve into peer-reviewed electronic journals.

How to Identify and Evaluate Electronic-Only Peer-Reviewed Journals

Key Indicators

- Publisher Information: Reputable publishers like Elsevier, Springer, or open access platforms like PLOS.
- Indexing and Abstracting Services: Presence in databases like PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science.
- Peer Review Statement: Clear description of peer review process.
- ISSN: International Standard Serial Number, often prefixed with an "E" for electronic journals.
- Website Credibility: Professional design, transparent editorial policies, contact information.

Assessing Quality and Credibility

- Check for inclusion in recognized indexes.
- Review editorial board members.
- Evaluate the journal's impact factor or alternative metrics.
- Confirm adherence to ethical standards (COPE membership).

Significance of Electronic-Only Journals in

Modern Academia

Facilitating Open Science

- Promoting transparency and accessibility of research.
- Supporting the open access movement.

Encouraging Interdisciplinary Research

- Easier dissemination across disciplines.
- Enhanced collaboration opportunities.

Adapting to Future Publishing Trends

- Integration with digital tools and platforms.
- Supporting data sharing and reproducibility.

Conclusion

Electronic-only peer-reviewed journals represent a transformative development in scholarly publishing. Referred to variously as digital, online-only, or born-digital journals, they embody the evolution of academic dissemination toward a more open, efficient, and environmentally sustainable model. While they offer numerous advantages, including rapid publication, broad accessibility, and multimedia integration, they also pose unique challenges related to preservation, perception, and technological reliance. Understanding the terminology, features, and evaluation criteria of these journals is essential for researchers, librarians, and academic institutions striving to navigate the dynamic landscape of modern scholarly communication.

In essence, electronic-only peer-reviewed journals are a vital component of contemporary academia, fostering innovation and expanding the reach of scholarly knowledge in the digital age. Their continued growth and development are set to shape the future of research dissemination for years to come.

Frequently Asked Questions

What term is used to describe refereed journals that are exclusively published online?

They are referred to as 'electronic-only peer-reviewed journals' or 'online-only peer-reviewed journals.'

Are there specific names for peer-reviewed journals published solely in electronic format?

Yes, they are often called 'e-only journals,' 'digital-only journals,' or 'online peer-reviewed journals.'

How are refereed journals that are exclusively available online classified in academic publishing?

They are classified as 'electronic-only peer-reviewed journals' or 'e-only peer-reviewed journals.'

Are electronic-only peer-reviewed journals considered credible sources for academic research?

Yes, provided they undergo rigorous peer review processes, electronic-only journals are considered credible and respected academic sources.

What are the main advantages of refereed journals published only in electronic format?

Advantages include faster publication times, wider accessibility, reduced printing costs, and easier dissemination of research findings.

Additional Resources

Refereed/peer-reviewed Journals That Are Only Published In Electronic Format Are Referred To As: An In-Depth Analysis

In the rapidly evolving landscape of academic publishing, technological advancements have significantly transformed how scholarly knowledge is disseminated. One notable development is the rise of refereed/peer-reviewed journals that are only published in electronic format. These digital-only journals have become integral to modern research ecosystems, offering advantages such as faster publication cycles, wider accessibility, and cost-effectiveness. Yet, their unique nature raises important questions about terminology, recognition, and the standards that govern scholarly

communication.

This comprehensive article aims to explore what these journals are called, how they are classified, their historical development, the implications for researchers and institutions, and future trends in digital-only peer-reviewed publishing.

Understanding Electronic-Only Peer-Reviewed Journals

Defining Electronic-Only Journals

Electronic-only journals are scholarly publications that exist exclusively in digital format, with no print counterpart. Their content is accessible via online platforms, often through dedicated websites, digital repositories, or academic databases. They utilize digital technologies not only for dissemination but also for peer review, editing, and archiving.

Key attributes include:

- Digital format only (no print version)
- Peer-reviewed or refereed, ensuring scholarly rigor
- Often open access or subscription-based
- Frequently utilize innovative publishing models such as open peer review or post-publication review

The Rise of Digital-Only Journals

The shift toward digital-only publishing gained momentum in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, driven by factors such as:

- Cost reductions in printing and distribution
- Increased demand for rapid dissemination of research
- The proliferation of internet infrastructure
- The need for dynamic, multimedia-rich content (videos, datasets, interactive figures)

Major publishers and academic societies started launching digital-only titles, recognizing their potential to reach global audiences efficiently.

Terminology and Nomenclature

What Are These Journals Called?

The terminology used to describe these journals varies among scholars, publishers, and indexing agencies. While there is no universally mandated term, certain descriptors have gained widespread acceptance:

- Electronic-only journals: Emphasizes the exclusive digital nature
- Digital-only journals: Synonymous with electronic-only, highlighting digital format
- Online-only journals: Focuses on the platform-based aspect
- E-only journals: A shorthand, less formal term
- Web-based journals: Emphasizes accessibility via the internet
- Virtual journals: Less common, more metaphorical
- Born-digital journals: Highlights that the journal was created digitally from inception

Among these, "Electronic-only" and "Digital-only" are the most precise and widely used terms in academic discourse.

Refereed/Peer-reviewed in the Context of Digital-Only Journals

The defining feature of these journals is their peer review process, which maintains scholarly standards. The peer-review process in digital-only journals is generally comparable to traditional print journals, involving expert evaluation, revisions, and editorial oversight.

The term "refereed" is often used interchangeably with "peer-reviewed", indicating the process where submitted manuscripts are evaluated by experts before publication.

Historical Development and Significance

Origins of Digital-Only Peer-Reviewed Journals

The earliest electronic journals appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s, notably in fields like physics and computer science. The pioneering efforts include:

- The Electronic Journal of Combinatorics (started in 1994)
- The New Journal of Physics (launched in 1998)
- BioMed Central (founded in 2000), which focused on open access and digital publishing

These initiatives challenged traditional publishing models, emphasizing speed, accessibility, and open dissemination.

Evolution and Growth

Over the past two decades, the number of electronic-only peer-reviewed journals has skyrocketed. Major publishers such as Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, and Taylor & Francis now offer numerous digital-only titles. Additionally, independent open access publishers, like PLOS (Public Library of Science), have championed digital-only formats.

The growth reflects broader trends:

- Emphasis on open access and open science
- Digital infrastructure enabling rapid publication
- Increased acceptance by academic institutions and funding agencies

Statistics:

- As of 2023, over 30% of peer-reviewed journals are exclusively digital
- The majority of new journals launched are digital-only

Implications for Researchers, Institutions, and the Academic Community

Recognition and Indexing

One challenge faced by digital-only peer-reviewed journals is gaining recognition and indexing in major databases such as:

- Web of Science
- Scopus
- PubMed
- DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)

Inclusion in these indexes often depends on quality standards, editorial policies, and the journal's reputation. Some digital-only journals have

achieved high impact factors and are considered prestigious.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

- Perception of lower prestige compared to traditional print journals
- Digital preservation concerns
- Ensuring long-term accessibility and archiving

Opportunities:

- Faster publication timelines
- Greater reach and accessibility worldwide
- Incorporation of multimedia and interactive content
- Facilitating open peer review and transparent processes

Impact on Academic Metrics and Career Advancement

The rise of digital-only peer-reviewed journals influences how scholarly impact is measured. Researchers increasingly publish in these venues to:

- Accelerate dissemination
- Engage broader audiences
- Enhance visibility through open access

However, some academic institutions and funding bodies still place higher value on traditional print journals, creating a transitional landscape.

Standards, Best Practices, and Future Directions

Standards for Digital-Only Peer-Reviewed Journals

To maintain credibility, digital-only journals typically adhere to standards such as:

- Clear peer review policies
- Digital archiving (e.g., via CLOCKSS, Portico)
- Metadata standards (e.g., Dublin Core)

- Open access licensing (e.g., Creative Commons)

Organizations like COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) provide guidelines to uphold ethical publishing practices.

Emerging Trends

- Open Peer Review: transparent review processes where reviewers may be named and reviews published
- Preprint Integration: linking preprint repositories with peer-reviewed journals
- Data and Code Sharing: encouraging supplementary material
- Enhanced Digital Features: multimedia, interactive figures, and integrated datasets

Future Outlook

The landscape of peer-reviewed publishing is poised for continued transformation, with digital-only journals becoming increasingly dominant. Anticipated developments include:

- Greater integration of open science principles
- Advances in digital preservation techniques
- Increased acceptance and recognition in academic evaluations
- Broader global participation, especially from underrepresented regions

Conclusion: What Are These Journals Called?

In summary, refereed/peer-reviewed journals that are only published in electronic format are most commonly referred to as "electronic-only journals" or "digital-only journals." These terms accurately reflect their digital nature and scholarly rigor. Their emergence marks a significant shift in scholarly publishing, offering numerous advantages but also posing challenges that the academic community continues to address.

As digital technology advances and open science initiatives gain momentum, these journals are expected to play an even more central role in the dissemination of scholarly knowledge. Recognizing their importance, understanding their nomenclature, and appreciating their standards are essential for researchers, librarians, publishers, and policymakers striving to navigate the future of academic publishing.

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In essence, when referring to peer-reviewed journals that exist solely in digital form, the most accurate and widely recognized terminology remains "digital-only journals" or "electronic-only journals." Their rise reflects ongoing innovations in scholarly communication, promising a more accessible, efficient, and open future for academic dissemination.

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