

Academic Oligarchy: Majority of Science Publishing is Controlled by Just Six Companies

By [Ethan A. Huff](#)

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Theme: [Science and Medicine](#)

The flow of science in this modern age is largely controlled by just six corporate publishing groups, which by calculated design have been gobbling up the journal market since at least the 1970s. And a new study out of Canada reveals that this mass consolidation of publishing power is, to a large extent, skewing what passes as scientific progress.

Researchers from the University of Montreal pored through the whole of scientific literature published between 1973 and 2013 and found that the publishing realm has changed dramatically during this time. Many smaller publishers have been absorbed into larger ones, for instance, and academic research groups have become increasingly beholden to the interests of these major publishers, which tend to favor large industries like pharmaceuticals and vaccines.

Much of the independence that was once cherished within the scientific community, in other words, has gone by the wayside as these major publishers have taken control and now dictate what types of content get published. The result is a publishing oligopoly in which scientists are muzzled by and overarching trend toward politically correct, and industry-favoring, “science.”

“Overall, the major publishers control more than half of the market of scientific papers both in the natural and medical sciences and in the social sciences and humanities,” said Professor Vincent Lariviere, lead author of the study from the University of Montreal’s School of Library and Information Science.

“Furthermore, these large commercial publishers have huge sales, with profit margins of nearly 40%. While it is true that publishers have historically played a vital role in the dissemination of scientific knowledge in the print era, it is questionable whether they are still necessary in today’s digital era.”

The following *Natural News* infographic illustrates the disturbing reach of this [academic oligarchy](#):

ACADEMIC OLIGARCHY:

MAJORITY OF SCIENCE PUBLISHING IS CONTROLLED BY JUST

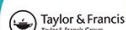
SIX COMPANIES

ACS Chemical Biology
ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces
ACS Synthetic Biology
ACS Nano
Biochemistry
Environmental Science & Technology
Industrial & Engineering Chemistry
Journal of the American Chemical Society
Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry
The Journal of Organic Chemistry



American Journal of Sports Medicine
American Sociological Review
Communication Research
Journal of Consumer Culture
Journal of Management
Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair
Personality and Social Psychology Review
Psychology of Women Quarterly
Review of Educational Research
Trauma Violence & Abuse
The Neuroscientist
Progress in Human Geography
Multiple Sclerosis Journal
American Sociological Review

Building Research & Information
Civil Engineering and Environmental Systems
Electromagnetics
Advanced Robotics
Applied Artificial Intelligence
Behaviour & Information Technology
Connection Science
Cryptologia
Cybernetics and Systems
Ergonomics
Aerosol Science and Technology
Chemical Engineering Communications
Combustion Science and Technology



Hydrobiologia
Pharmaceutical Research
Climatic Change
Journal of Happiness Studies
Journal of Materials Science
Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology
Journal of Business Ethics
Cellular and Molecular Life Sciences
Diabetologia
Metallurgical and Materials Transactions A
Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry
Oecologia
Plant and Soil
Planta
Intensive Care Medicine

The American Journal of Medicine
Energy
Cell
The Lancet
Gray's Anatomy
Connect



Anatomical Sciences Education
CA-A Cancer Journal for Clinicians
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews
Journal of Pathology
Addiction Biology
Addiction
Journal of Clinical Periodontology
Transboundary and Emerging Diseases
Evolutionary Anthropology
Anatomical Sciences Education

Natural News com

Sources:
"The Oligopoly of Academic
Publishers in the Digital Era"
PLOS ONE



Six major publishers control fields of chemistry, psychology and social sciences

The fields most controlled by this academic oligarchy include those dealing with chemistry, psychology, social sciences and the professional fields. On the flip side, biomedical research, physics, and the arts and humanities are influenced to a much lesser degree by these six corporate publishers, according to the study.

What this suggests is that, over time, certain disciplines have become more corrupted than others as they've been absorbed into the corporate [publishing](#) fold. Such content, though often skewed, is highly profitable for publishers which not only don't have to pay for the articles they publish but also resell such content digitally at profit margins upwards of 40%.

"As long as publishing in high impact factor journals is a requirement for researchers to obtain positions, research funding, and recognition from peers, the major commercial publishers will maintain their hold on the academic publishing system," added Lariviere.

Publishing in one of "Big Six" corporate journals doesn't add value, study finds

But does publishing in high-impact journals really make much of a difference in terms of article exposure and the quantity of citations? Not really, the researchers found. The reach is roughly the same, they found, except that smaller publishers are less likely to be actively promoting a special interest agenda, and are thus less likely censor [science](#) that doesn't correspond with the official narrative.

"One would expect that a major publisher acquiring a journal would have the effect of increasing the latter's visibility," said Lariviere. "However, our study shows that there is no clear increase in terms of citations after switching from a small to large publisher."

"Our findings question the real added value of big publishers. Ultimately, the question is whether the services provided to the scientific community by these publishers warrant the growing share of university budgets allocated to them."

Sources for this article include:

<http://www.nouvelles.umontreal.ca>

<http://journals.plos.org>

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