

## Open Access Status of CSSCI Source Journals in Library, Information and Archives: A Post-print Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the Suzhou Declaration

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### Abstract

2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the release of the “Suzhou Declaration on Open Access Publishing of Chinese Library and Information Science Journals” (hereinafter referred to as the “Suzhou Declaration”). Investigating the current status, challenges, and strategies of open access for library, information and archival science (LIAS) CSSCI-source journals in China holds significant importance for the exchange and sharing of academic resources in LIAS for discipline development. This article analyzes the current state of open access for LIAS CSSCI-source journals from five perspectives—sponsoring institutions, open content, quality control, paper publication and usage, and user services—through channels including journal official websites, print journals, email, and telephone inquiries. The study finds that Chinese LIAS professional journals have significantly accelerated the pace of open access during the decade since the release of the Suzhou Declaration, yet face constraints in policy, awareness, funding, and platform. Effective strategies for open access of LIAS academic journals need to be explored regarding policy support, promotion and publicity, funding guarantee, and platform construction.

### Full Text

### Preamble

**Journal:** University Library Work

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## 1. Status of Open Access in Chinese LIS CSSCI Source Journals

The year 2023 marks the anniversary of the release of the “Suzhou Declaration on Open Access Publishing for Chinese Library and Information Science Journals” (hereinafter referred to as the “Suzhou Declaration”). Investigating the current state, challenges, and strategies for open access (OA) in Chinese library, information, and archives science (LIS) CSSCI source journals holds significant importance for promoting academic resource exchange and sharing oriented toward disciplinary development. Through multiple channels including journal official websites, print journals, email, and telephone inquiries, this study analyzes the OA status of LIS CSSCI source journals from five dimensions: hosting institutions, open content, quality control, paper publishing and usage, and user services.

The findings reveal that Chinese LIS professional journals have notably accelerated their OA pace following the release of the Suzhou Declaration. However, they continue to face constraints related to policy, awareness, funding, and platforms, necessitating targeted strategies in policy support, promotion, financial security, and platform development to advance OA in LIS academic journals.

### 1.1 Investigation Methods and Sample

Employing literature research and web-based survey methods, this study examines the OA practices of 18 LIS journals included in the CSSCI source journal directory (2021-2022). Data collection was conducted from multiple channels between 2022 and 2023, focusing on five key aspects: hosting institutions, open content, quality control mechanisms, publishing and usage policies, and user services. The analysis specifically evaluates whether journals maintain official websites, provide free full-text access, implement quality control measures, and offer user-friendly services.

### 1.2 Hosting Institutions

The hosting institutions of these journals include universities, research institutes, libraries, and professional societies. University-hosted journals (13 titles) leverage disciplinary advantages in LIS, providing strong support in talent, technology, and resources. Research institute-hosted journals (3 titles) emphasize theoretical depth and scientific rigor. Library-hosted journals (2 titles) possess practical insights into library operations and public service needs. The diverse institutional backgrounds create distinct advantages: universities and research institutes excel in talent and technology, libraries understand current professional

dynamics, and societies facilitate academic exchange. Notably, co-sponsored journals, such as those jointly operated by library societies and libraries or technology societies and research institutes, demonstrate strong potential for driving OA transformation.

### 1.3 Open Content

Journals exhibit three primary OA models regarding content openness:

**Complete OA:** All published papers are freely available without restrictions. Three journals—*Archives Science Research*, *Journal of Library Science in China*, and *Journal of Library and Information Science*—provide complete retrospective archives from their inaugural issues, demonstrating excellent OA continuity and integrity.

**Hybrid OA:** Only portions of content are freely accessible. This manifests in two ways: (1) Current issues where non-OA-marked articles remain paywalled, and (2) Back issues with limited free access (e.g., only 回溯到 1994). Most LIS CSSCI journals implement delayed OA, where articles become freely available only after an embargo period rather than immediately upon publication.

**Platform Inconsistency:** Discrepancies exist between journal websites and WeChat public accounts regarding the scope and depth of open content. For instance, some journals allow free access to articles dating back to 1995 on their websites but only to 2010 on their WeChat platforms. Such inconsistencies pose challenges to OA sustainability and user experience.

### 1.4 Quality Control Mechanisms

Peer review serves as the critical mechanism for ensuring journal quality. Among the surveyed journals, 4 employ single-blind review (reviewers anonymous to authors) while 14 use double-blind review (both parties anonymous). The double-blind approach, though more prevalent, enhances objectivity by minimizing personal biases.

Several journals actively participate in the China Information Resource Management Preprint Platform (ChinaXiv), enabling preprint deposit simultaneous with manuscript submission. This practice enhances research timeliness while respecting academic iteration patterns. However, most LIS CSSCI journals have yet to adopt transparent, interactive open peer review mechanisms, representing an area for future development.

### 1.5 Copyright Management and Licensing

Copyright policies vary significantly:

**Full Copyright Transfer:** The most common model where authors transfer all economic rights to publishers. This is typical for journals like *Library and Information Service* and *Library Tribune*.

**Partial Rights Retention:** Authors retain copyright while granting publishers usage licenses. For example, *Library and Information Knowledge* and *Journal of Library Science in China* allow authors to retain copyright while licensing reproduction and distribution rights.

**Self-Archiving Rights:** While some copyright agreements mention authors' self-archiving rights, few explicitly codify these provisions, creating potential conflicts between policy and practice.

**CC License Adoption:** Four journals utilize Creative Commons licenses. *Data Analysis and Knowledge Discovery* and *Library and Information Science* employ the most permissive CC-BY license, enabling free reuse with attribution. *Journal of Library and Information Science* uses CC-BY-NC-ND, restricting commercial use and derivative works. CC-BY is recommended for maximizing dissemination and jurisdictional adaptability.

## 1.6 User Services

All surveyed journals maintain official websites as the primary channel for OA content, with 16 also operating WeChat public accounts. Search functionalities include basic keyword, author, and title searches, with *Library and Information Service* offering advanced features like abstract, keyword, and figure searches. Bilingual search capabilities in some journals facilitate internationalization.

Full-text reading primarily utilizes PDF format, though HTML versions offer better accessibility across operating systems and align more closely with OA principles. While basic functions are relatively complete, journals need to enhance mobile platforms and interactive services (e.g., comment functions) to improve user engagement and resource utilization.

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## 2. Constraints on Open Access in Chinese LIS CSSCI Source Journals

Despite serving as key drivers for academic exchange, LIS CSSCI source journals face multiple constraints that hinder OA advancement.

### 2.1 Policy Constraints

China's OA policy system remains incomplete. While national strategies like the 2014 "Management Measures for Scientific Data" and 2019 OA mandates for publicly funded research projects demonstrate commitment, specific implementation guidelines for LIS journals are lacking. Policies tend to be directional rather than mandatory, resulting in slow progress. No comprehensive evaluation mechanisms exist to assess policy effectiveness, and inconsistencies between policies (e.g., copyright vs. storage requirements) create confusion.

## 2.2 Cognitive Constraints

Awareness of OA remains limited across stakeholder groups. Among university librarians, 33.3% have poor understanding of OA2020 initiatives, and 66.7% are unfamiliar with major publishers' OA policies. Researchers express concerns about OA journal quality, with 45.7% worrying about quality degradation. Student usage is also low—only 23.8% of university students regularly utilize OA resources. LIS curricula rarely cover OA topics, and inadequate training perpetuates mistrust in OA value propositions.

## 2.3 Funding Constraints

The lack of stable funding poses the most significant barrier. Currently, 94.4% of LIS CSSCI journals operate on subscription models, with only 5.6% charging article processing charges (APCs). Reliance on limited government and institutional subsidies makes sustainable OA transformation difficult. Without diversified revenue streams, journals struggle to maintain consistent investment in OA infrastructure.

## 2.4 Platform Constraints

Platform development lags behind OA needs. While all journals have websites offering submission and search functions, quality varies considerably. A 2011 accessibility study found that 40% of LIS journal websites had errors, 60% featured monotonous content, and 20% had unstable operation—all directly impacting usability. The LIS Journal Alliance Network and China Science Paper Online platforms have ceased operations or become inaccessible. Although ChinaXiv represents progress in preprint platforms, its scale and influence remain limited. Most journals rely solely on self-built websites without integrated, collaborative platforms.

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## 3. Recommendations for Advancing Open Access in Chinese LIS CSSCI Source Journals

Building on the above analysis, we propose the following strategies to overcome constraints and promote sustainable OA development.

### 3.1 Strengthen Policy Guidance and Evaluation

Drawing from international experience (e.g., NIH's mandatory OA policies), China should develop mandatory OA policies with robust evaluation mechanisms. Policies must clearly define the rights and obligations of authors, institutions, and publishers while ensuring internal consistency. For instance, if storage policies permit self-archiving, copyright agreements should explicitly reflect this. Evaluation periods should assess policy completeness, rigor, and effectiveness to guide continuous improvement.

### 3.2 Enhance Promotion and Education

Targeted advocacy is essential for improving OA recognition. Journals and institutions should: - Participate in OA conferences and training programs (e.g., China OA Promotion Week, OA Publishing Association events) - Develop online courses and workshops, such as the successful OA Specialist Training Program organized by the National Science Library - Launch collaborative initiatives, like the 2022 Shanghai International Library Forum' s joint OA declaration signed by 17 LIS journals - Integrate OA concepts into LIS curricula and professional training to build awareness among students and practitioners

### 3.3 Diversify Funding Models

Journals should explore multiple funding sources aligned with international practices. The National Science Library' s 2020 “transformative agreement” with Oxford University Press, converting subscription fees to OA publishing funds, exemplifies innovative approaches. Other strategies include: - Seeking government, foundation, and corporate sponsorships - Offering advertising opportunities - Collaborating with universities and research institutes to reallocate subscription budgets toward OA publishing - Balancing public resource returns with brand benefits for sponsors

### 3.4 Build Integrated Platform Infrastructure

Robust platforms are essential for OA sustainability. Journals should: - Improve website functionality, mobile accessibility, and interactive features (e.g., comment systems, social media integration via WeChat and Weibo) - Develop collaborative OA platforms enabling integrated submission, preprint deposit, peer review, and cross-journal expert review - Implement community-based collaborative publishing where users share and solve problems collectively - Ensure platform stability, content timeliness, and resource completeness to maximize user engagement

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## 4. Conclusion

Open access is integral to China' s rapid research development and equitable global knowledge access. Over the past decade since the Suzhou Declaration, LIS CSSCI source journals have made notable progress in OA adoption, with expanding scale and deepening implementation. However, persistent constraints in policy, awareness, funding, and platforms require continued efforts. By strengthening policy guidance, enhancing promotion, securing diversified funding, and building integrated platforms, Chinese LIS journals can provide expanded venues for scholarly communication, accelerate academic dissemination, and elevate the discipline' s global influence.

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## Abstract

This study examines the status of open access (OA) in Chinese library, information, and archives science (LIS) CSSCI source journals, commemorating the anniversary of the “Suzhou Declaration on Open Access Publishing for Chinese Library and Information Science Journals.” Through investigations of journal websites, print issues, and direct inquiries, we analyze OA implementation across five dimensions: hosting institutions, open content, quality control, publishing practices, and user services. While LIS journals have accelerated OA adoption since the Suzhou Declaration, they face constraints in policy, awareness, funding, and platform development. We propose targeted strategies for policy support, promotional campaigns, financial sustainability, and platform integration to advance OA in Chinese LIS academic journals, thereby enhancing research visibility and disciplinary impact.

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

*Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.*