

# STM Trends 2026:

# The Beauty of Open AT SCALE

## *A Play for Platform Pluriformity and Proliferation*

Launching our new STM Trends 2026 forecast

by Eefke Smit

STM Director for Standards and Technology

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**STM** Advancing trusted research



# STM TRENDS 2026

## The Beauty of Open at Scale

The next 3 to 5 years will see a sharp rise of Open Access within scholarly communications. In an eco-system that is Open-at-Scale, there will be vast new opportunities for scalable tools for knowledge discovery on massively available content. In our annual STM Trends forecast we foresee a proliferation of platforms offering open access – here depicted as open sunflowers.

Each of them serving certain users:

### Bees: Authors, Editors, Peers

We can expect a fierce battle for authors seeking the best and the most convenient publisher platforms. Journal brands will lure them. Institutional platforms may mandate publishing via their home institutes.

### Butterflies: a new generation of researchers

A new, younger generation embraces new channels, attracted by preprint platforms and using social media; they go for speed and ease. They seek personal recognition and reward.

### Birds: new audiences

Covid and Climate Change have sparked new interest from new audiences in science and research results. They find it on discovery platforms, in social media and on paper sites.

### Influencers:

Influencers and their followers are a here-to-stay phenomenon. Amidst an abundance of information flows, they guide specific target audiences to the information they like.

### Scarecrows:

How to secure trust and avoid fake science in this environment of information overflow; Do we need more scarecrows to warn people of untrustworthy information?

### Beehives:

Creators of research information seek trusted places where they can be certain of reliable processing. They seek quality, peer review, integrity, trust. They want Trusted Research.

The supportive role of STM publishers in the scholarly comms eco-system is to safeguard quality, integrity and to advance trusted research.

Find more on [www.stm-assoc.org](http://www.stm-assoc.org)

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THE BEAUTY of

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A very different process via ZOOM, but still:



**Editing Committee:** IJsbrand Jan Aalbersberg (chair of STEC/ FutureLab), Heather Staines (DeltaThink), Anita de Waard (Elsevier), Erin Foley (CCC), Marten Stavenga (J Benjamins), Hylke Koers (STM), Joris van Rossum (STM), Eefke Smit (STM)

## Collaboration at work!

- December 2021: STM Future Lab Brainstorm Meeting
- Two afternoon sessions via ZOOM
- Using the Delphi Method for Technology Forecasting
- This year: 24 participants from STM member organisations
- Mostly senior staff in: Innovations, Technology, Strategy, Business development, Platforms, IT

HOW IT WAS BEFORE:







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**WE HAVE TOOLS THAT SCALE**  
 TM - AI - Data Analytics - New Metrics - Integrity Checks - AND MORE!



**Bees:** authors, editors, peer reviewers



**Butterflies:** the next generation of researchers



**Birds:** new audiences eager to learn about research outcomes



**Influencers:** pointing and guiding to information they like(d) and use



**Scarecrows:** warning against bad actors, fake information, untrustworthy sources



**Beehives:** where trust and integrity are the basis of reliable research information



## Platform Pluriformity and Proliferation





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## Tools that Scale:

Artificial Intelligence

Text & Data Mining

Data Analytics

New Metrics

Integrity Checks

*And more....*





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