Preprints

opportunity or challenge?

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Knowledge Exchange
Task and Finish Group on Preprints

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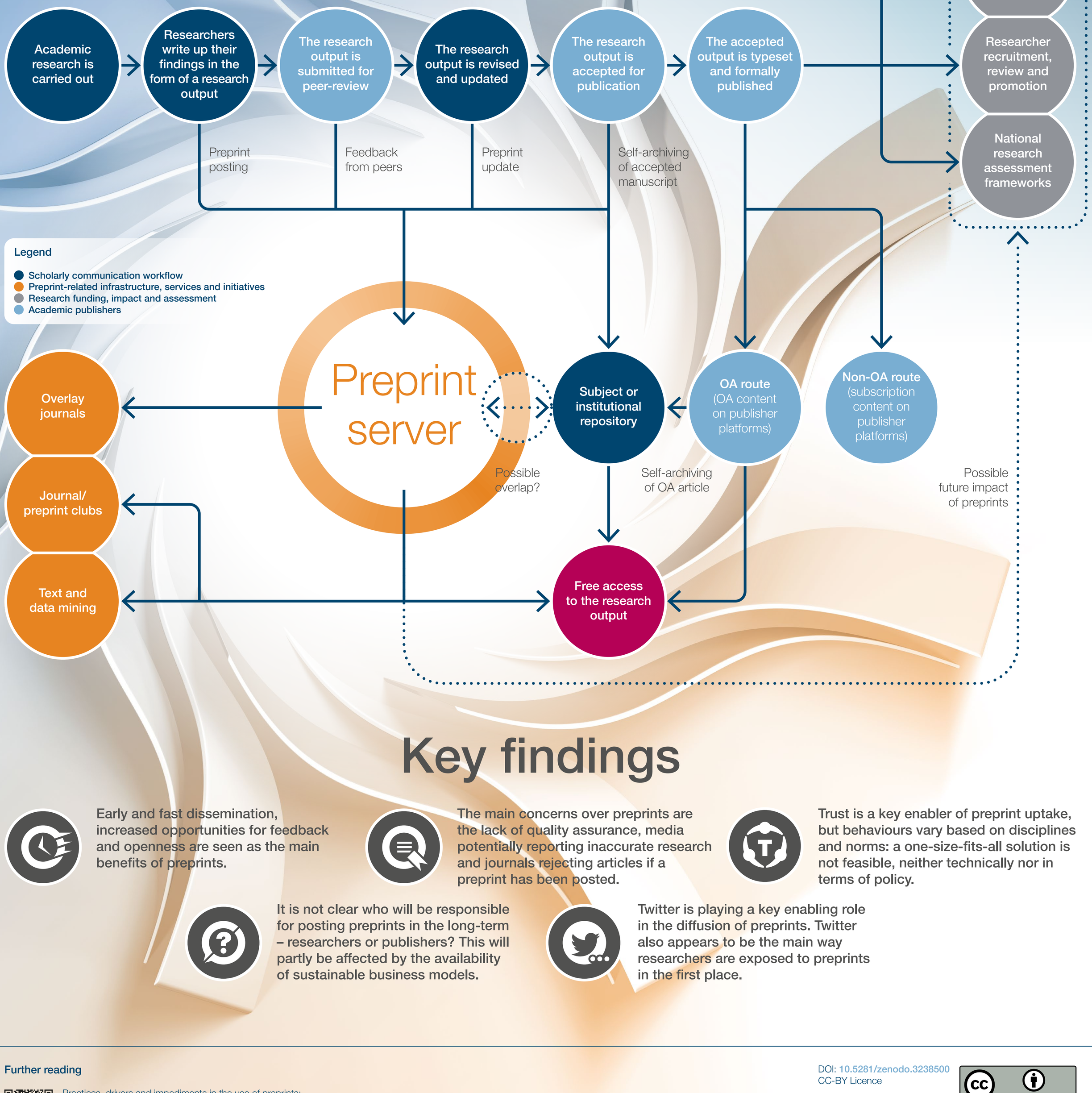
Knowledge Exchange has been investigating the preprints landscape since 2018. Our recent research, which included an extensive literature review (60+ sources), 38 stakeholder interviews and qualitative coding, led to the development of this flowchart depicting the evolving role of preprints within the scholarly communication process.



Key findings

Early and fast dissemination, increased opportunities for feedback and openness are seen as the main benefits of preprints.

The main concerns over preprints are the lack of quality assurance, media potentially reporting inaccurate research and journals rejecting articles if a preprint has been posted.

Trust is a key enabler of preprint uptake, but behaviours vary based on disciplines and norms: a one-size-fits-all solution is not feasible, neither technically nor in terms of policy.

It is not clear who will be responsible for posting preprints in the long-term – researchers or publishers? This will partly be affected by the availability of sustainable business models.

Twitter is playing a key enabling role in the diffusion of preprints. Twitter also appears to be the main way researchers are exposed to preprints in the first place.

Further reading

Practices, drivers and impediments in the use of preprints:
http://bit.ly/KEpreprintslides

Blog post:
http://bit.ly/KEpreprintsblog

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http://www.knowledge-exchange.info/