



Turnaround Time

Poor Customer Service

High Cost of Content Acquisition

Lack of Automation for Self-service Workflows

Inability to Serve Global Offices Responsively

# ACQUIRING SCIENTIFIC CONTENT

How Hard Can It Be?

A Practical Guide to Overcoming  
Research Challenges

WHITE PAPER



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## SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR

Is that how many documents seem to you? Indeed, getting what you want—when, where, and how you want it—can be a real uphill battle. It's a process that can be fraught with difficulties, not the least of which includes the overwhelming volume and complexity of content and the myriad ways of accessing and managing it. And that's true for everyone involved, from the content licensors to the aggregators to the librarians to the end users.

Researchers—the ultimate consumers of scholarly content—are especially in need of solutions for instantaneous access to this vital material: it's the very fuel that powers their discoveries and innovations. Moreover, the success of their organizations depends upon it. Perhaps more now than ever.

Fortunately the challenges are not insurmountable. The right partner, like a skilled Sherpa, can help you navigate the rocky paths and crevasses that stand between you and the information your organization needs.

To that end, we've created this guide, a continuing series of practical posts with the insights you need to reach your research-driven summits.

We kick things off by stepping back for a wider perspective, an overview of the what, where, when, and how of accessing scientific content, and the attributes you should look for in a provider when seeking a solution for better scientific and technical content access and management.

## GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

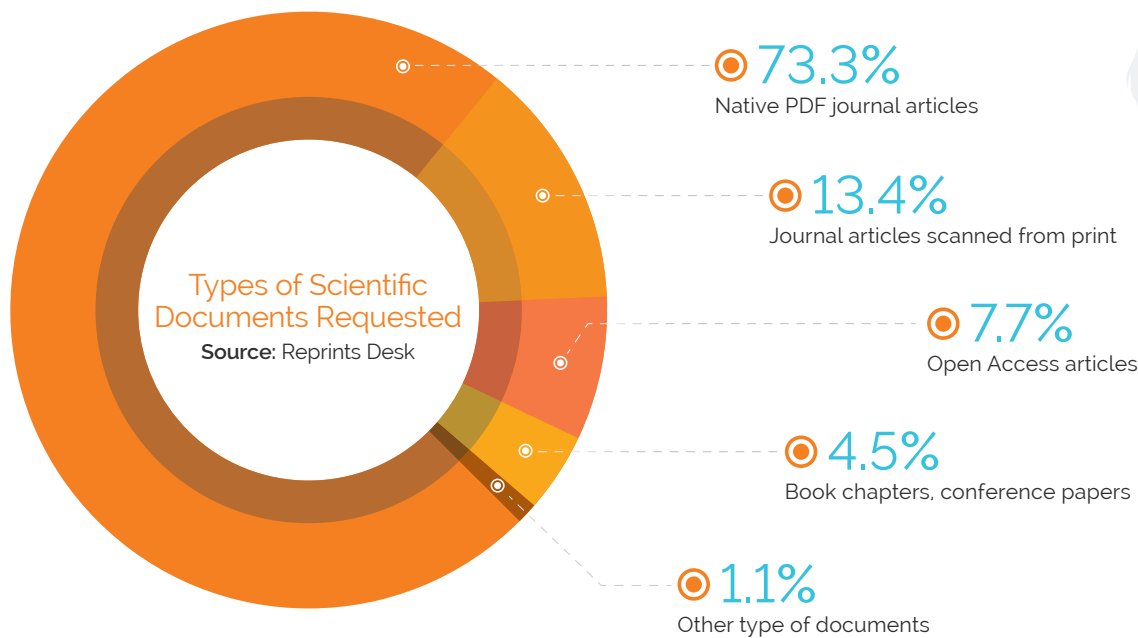
Where deep scientific research is concerned, no source is too esoteric or obscure. Whether it's embodied in journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, theses, posters, standards, pre-press articles, supplementary materials, pharmacopeias, or old print, you simply want the information you want. But while identifying the papers you need may be easy enough, getting your hands on them can be another matter.

For starters, there's the basic problem of access to the literature of all publishers, wherever they may be, and in whatever form their materials may be published.

This is particularly challenging for smaller research organizations, who often resort to manual methods to obtain content. The problem is, whenever you acquire articles from publisher websites, paying for them one at a time with a credit card, round up shared online alumni accounts to manually check for free full-text access, or send your scientists off to the university library in an effort to save money, you end up wasting valuable time and effort, spending more, and getting less.

It's simply not efficient, and takes valuable time away from other critical research activities.





So what to do? The first step is to link your discovery process directly to the delivery of content. In other words, remove the friction in order to speed the realization of your own discoveries.

That's precisely the value that a competent, efficient, and copyright-compliant content retrieval ("document delivery") solution brings to the table. But in addition to integrating the delivery of

content with your preferred discovery process, the best document delivery providers will also deliver research support services.

Look for one that not only goes the extra mile in locating and securing the most elusive of documents, but offers a comprehensive platform that delivers time and cost savings previously available only to the largest research organizations.

**" The first step is to link your discovery process directly to the delivery of content. "**

**PubMed.gov**  
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Search:  **Search**

Format: Abstract ▾

Public Health Nutr. 2011 Jul;14(7):1315-20. doi: 10.1017/S1368980011000371. Epub 2011 Apr 5.

**No association between coffee, tea or caffeine consumption and breast cancer risk in a prospective cohort study.**

Fagherazzi G<sup>1</sup>, Touillaud MS, Boutron-Ruault MC, Clavel-Chapelon F, Romieu J.

**Author information**

**Abstract**  
**OBJECTIVE:** Numerous mechanisms for the effects of coffee, tea and caffeine on the risk of breast cancer have been suggested. Caffeine intake has already been associated with high plasma levels of female hormones, but associations have not been clearly demonstrated in epidemiological studies.  
**DESIGN:** We examined prospectively the association of coffee, tea and caffeine consumption with breast cancer risk in a French cohort

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Coffee, tea and diabetes: the role of weight loss and caffeine. [Int J Obes (Lond). 2005]



## HOW YOU WANT IT

It's not only about the document format, but its quality, as well as the channels through which the document flows on its way to the researcher's desk. Let's deal with the latter point first. Simply stated, workflow matters. By that we mean the logistical hoops through which a document must pass, including any choke points there might be along the way, all of which impact how a researcher ultimately receives the information he or she is requesting.

No doubt, there is room for improvement. Even in the path of least resistance one still encounters resistance! Especially for researchers. With so many moving parts, it can be difficult to navigate the ins and outs of your own organization's particular workflows and procedures, whether they involve departmental or project-based charge-backs, integrations with other online tools, special requirements around authentication for secure access, and so forth.

In any case, a good document delivery solution provider can help optimize workflows as well as user experiences, and help all parties involved to become more productive.

As to the document itself, nowadays, the vast majority of articles and supplemental materials are delivered in native PDF format. Scanners aren't what they used to be. And that's a good thing. Unfortunately, documents that were scanned using older technology

are still with us. But that doesn't change the fact that you still need a crisp, clean PDF. What's needed is a quality assurance process, where each page of every document is squared up, cleaned up, and otherwise repaired in a host of other ways that transform that old scan into what looks like a fresh, native, color PDF. Look for a docdel provider who has a flow to deliver just that—and is able to do so with ultra-rapid turnaround. Which brings us to our next critical point: time.

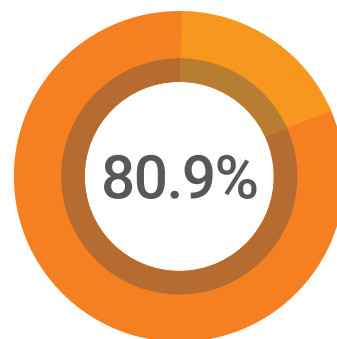
*“In research, urgency is typically the rule rather than the exception. And without exception, faster is always better.”*

## WHEN YOU WANT IT

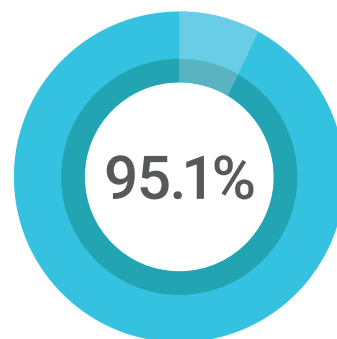
In research, urgency is typically the rule rather than the exception. And without exception, faster is always better. That's why many researchers understand the term “rush” to mean not “same day” but “within hours” if not “minutes.” In order to support that kind of demand, a docdel service provider needs a great diversity of document retrieval resources—including the more obscure variety (often born in print) or those that require hands-on attention.

### Docdel Response Times

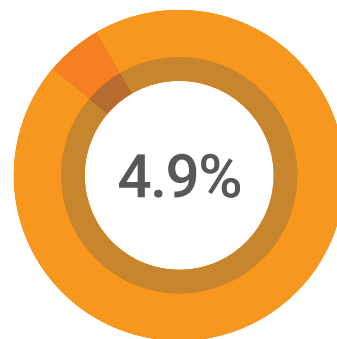
Source: Reprints Desk



WITHIN 1 HOUR



WITHIN 24 HOURS



24+ HOURS

To this end, achieving a 99% on-time docdel fulfilment rate (another important docdel metric to check) requires a combination of deep publisher relationships, a strong library network, and other content partners. Further, it requires the ability to process orders 24 hours a day.

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**“Docdel shouldn't come to a standstill when someone clocks out for the day in your company or at your vendor's regional office.”**

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Which means your organization's global coverage shouldn't be affected by time zones, odd working hours, or geographic locations. Your offices and researchers on the opposite coast or across the ocean work according to their own timescales, and they also need what they need, when they need it.

Look, then, for a 24/7 docdel provider who cannot only provide such levels of customer support, but also enable automation of docdel tasks when there is no librarian or other mediator available. Docdel shouldn't come to a standstill when someone clocks out for the day in your company or at your vendor's regional office. When desired, orders should be fulfilled automatically or,

as appropriate, be held in a queue when they call for special attention the next morning.

## WHERE YOU WANT IT

By “where” we mean both to and from: from your preferred document discovery platform, and to the destination of the desired documents, wherever they may be. It is often the case that a class of online link routing technology known as “link resolvers” will take researchers on a scenic route without ever arriving at the intended destination. A proper link resolver will bypass all the obstacles to deliver the full text article via a direct article-level link, whether it is to subscription content, Open Access articles, rentals, or other sources. And, by the way, it should always filter requests automatically against any existing subscriptions, holdings,

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**“Researchers should simply be able to place their order requests, and let intelligent filters take care of the rest, saving time, expense, and worry in the process.”**

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re-use rights and Open Access availability to ensure you never pay for documents unnecessarily. A good platform will simply take you where you need to go, and do so on the most favorable terms.

As for discovery platforms, look for a docdel provider whose offering is fully integrated with **PubMed, Google Scholar, SciFinder, EMBASE** and the many other essential research tools that you use on a routine basis. With this capability in place, there should be no logging in and entering credit cards at multiple publisher sites. Researchers should simply be able to place their order requests, and let intelligent filters take care of the rest, saving time, expense, and worry in the process. Again, the last thing you want is to be paying for content to which you already have access; a good docdel solution will preserve the value of your investments.

# GETTING IT AT THE LOWEST LEGAL COST

It's no secret: the document delivery process can be burdened by hidden costs. Sometimes the content is royalty-free; other times it's covered by your existing subscriptions. But even that won't keep certain providers from charging extra fees.

In any case, a good docdel service provider should deliver royalty-free Open Access copies of articles whenever possible and also alert your staff when an article has already been purchased by someone else in the company, or, of course, if it can be read for free via in-house subscriptions, paper holdings, or pre-paid tokens. In all cases, your docdel provider should always show you exactly what the costs are, broken out in detail, and not bundled into a non-transparent lump sum. That, after all, is where the hidden costs hide. The opportunity for cost savings, though, should really begin with an analysis of your workflows and spending patterns. This is important

because while one docdel provider may help save \$1 on a document delivery—and that certainly adds up over thousands of documents—you should also be able to identify and eliminate the equivalent of \$2, \$3, \$5, or more in overhead somewhere else along the line. This requires taking a holistic view of document delivery operations—including your order history—in order to account for the true total cost of ownership. The outcome of such an exercise should include "current state" and potential "future state" comparisons, demonstrating both improved processes and what could add up to significant cost savings.

Finally, a good docdel provider will provide options for acquiring content when necessary, including, for example, article rentals and guaranteed lowest cost transactional service fees—and without rush or special referencing fees, or other "extras" you could easily be paying for and not even know it.



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