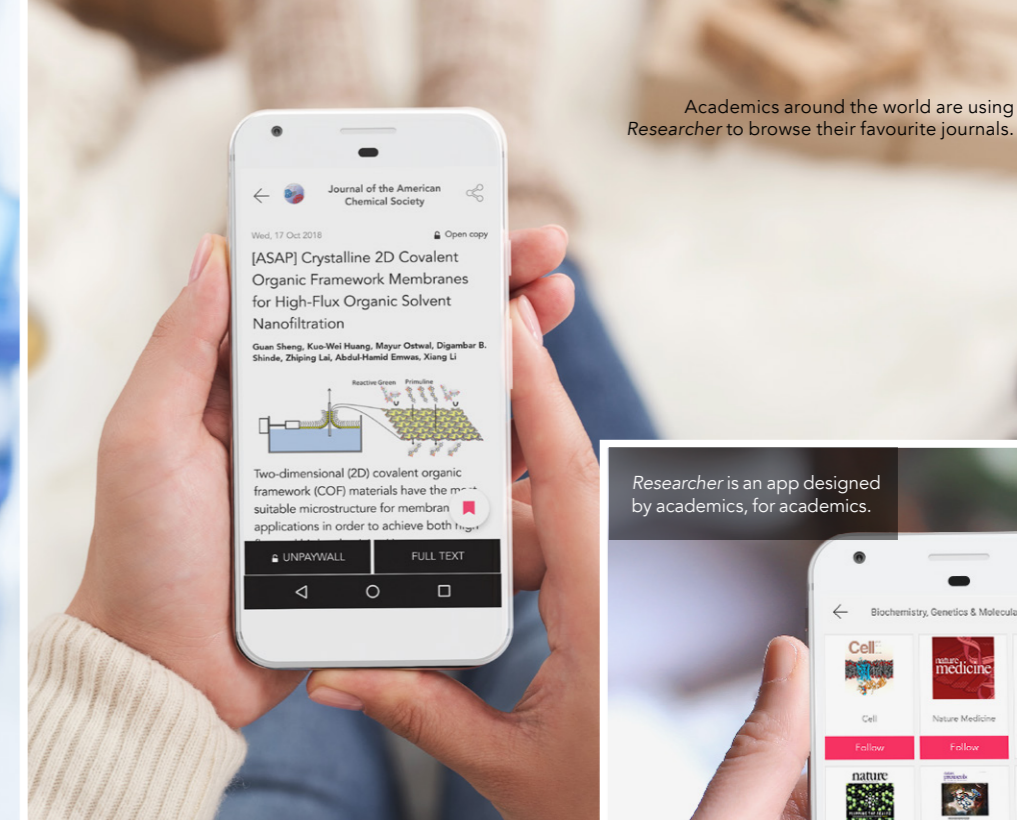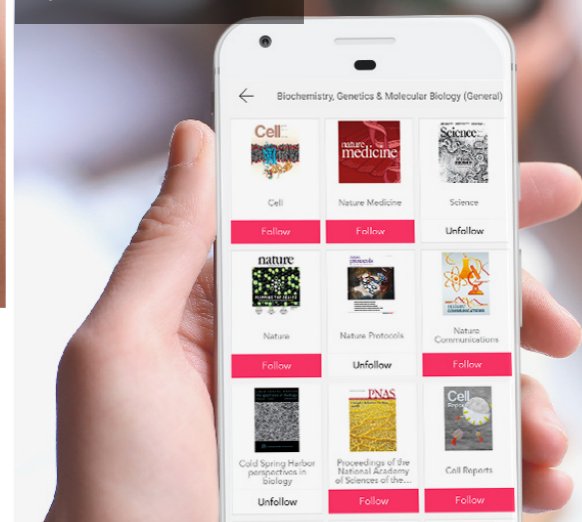Academics around the world are using *Researcher* to browse their favourite journals.

Researcher is an app designed by academics, for academics.

Keeping up to date with all new papers is a crucial part of any researcher's day to day life.

Researcher

An app to keep scientists on top of science

Olly Cooper, CEO and co-founder of the Researcher app, thinks he and his team have found a solution for scientists who need to be confident that they have heard about all the latest research and publications in their field, but don't have the time to check every publication channel themselves. Researcher makes keeping up to speed quick and easy, and more importantly, is reliable.

Over three million research papers are published every year, and as people's lives get busier and fuller, it is increasingly difficult for academics and researchers to keep up to date and on top of all the studies being published in their field. While journals and institutions do often publish their own roundups or summaries of recent work, following and collating this information and news is labour intensive for the already time-pressed scientist.

Especially poignant in times such as the current COVID-19 global pandemic, when studies are being reviewed and published at an accelerated rate, the *Researcher* app has been built to make sure scientists don't miss out on anything relevant or important.

In a recent interview with *Research Outreach*, CEO and co-founder Olly Cooper told us how the idea for *Researcher* came about, why it's so important and how it might

be disrupting traditional science, technology and medical publishing.

Tell us a bit about yourselves, your backgrounds and how you came together.
The business was founded by a team of five: Dr Ramiz Nathani, Hristina Kamburova, Toby Stephens, Carlos Engel and myself (Olly Cooper). We had all worked together building and launching apps across the Blenheim Chalcot (BC; www.blenheimchalcot.

com) group of companies. BC is a venture builder with around 20 businesses in its portfolio, many of which wanted to launch customer facing apps. We built and tested apps across fintech, media, sport, edtech and e-commerce, which has given us a great grounding on what works (and what doesn't!) on mobile.

Ramiz and I had direct experience of the scholarly communications space from either end of the market; I spent six years as a marketer at Taylor & Francis and Ramiz had a career as a research scientist, first at University College London and then at Oxford Nanopore.

What's the story behind the development of the app?
Our motivation really came from Ramiz's direct experience of one

How do you efficiently stay up to date with the avalanche of research work that is being published?

of the most difficult challenges for any scientist or researcher: how do you efficiently stay up to date with the avalanche of research work that is being published, and how do you make sure that you never miss something important that should impact your work?

There are over three million papers published every year from over 30,000 journals, and the only ways to keep up were really clunky and time consuming. Many scientists have to fall back on setting up hundreds of e-table of contents alert emails ("e-tocs"), constantly checking journal websites or hours of searching through tools like Scopus and PubMed to make sure they don't miss new and relevant work.

We felt that there was a great opportunity to make this whole process

much easier using smartphones. We wanted to make sure that users could rest easy knowing that we will push relevant work to them without them having to go out and look for it themselves.

How might someone use the app on a day to day basis?
What our users do is to set themselves up to 'follow' journals, keywords (including any combination you like) and authors; it's a bit like following people on Instagram or Twitter. You can set as many filters up as you want, and follow new journals and keywords whenever you want.

Every time a journal you follow publishes a paper, or a paper appears that contains the relevant keyword, or an author in your list publishes a paper, you will see that paper in your feed.

Access to the latest research is right at your fingertips whenever you need it.
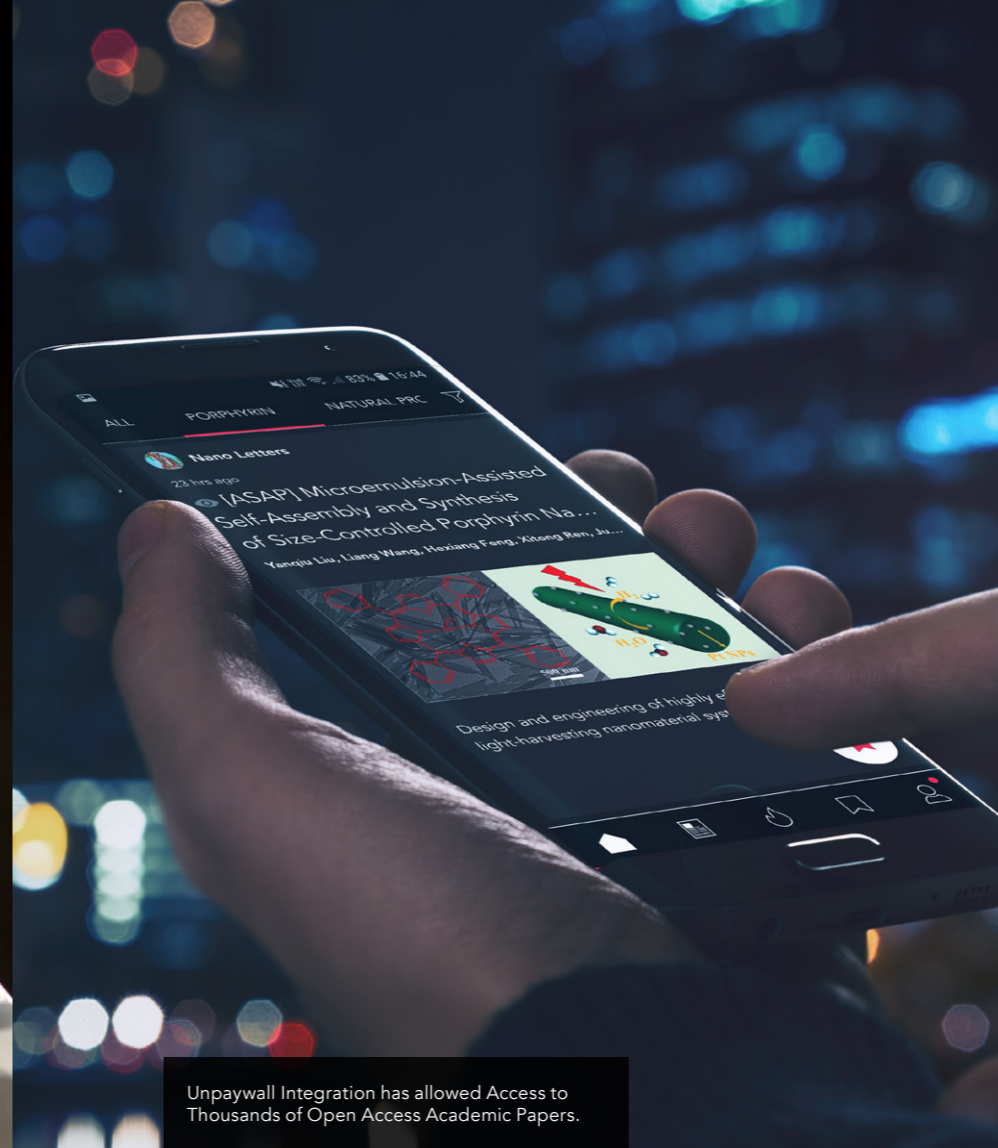
Unpaywall Integration has allowed Access to Thousands of Open Access Academic Papers.

Helping academics get to the information they need to make bigger and faster breakthroughs.

All you have to do is to take your phone out of your pocket and scroll through your feed. You can bookmark any relevant papers, send them to colleagues and friends, share them on social media, send them to your reference manager and get through to full-text versions of paywalled content via your institutional access. Hopefully what we've then done is to make sure that you are up to date in a few minutes, and can have the peace of mind that you haven't missed anything crucial.

Most importantly, it's completely free to use.

What scale are we talking in terms of current user numbers, numbers of papers, journals, etc? What are you most proud of?
We have 1.6 million users, and parse 16,000 journals and about 5,000 new papers every day.

The thing that makes us most proud is the user feedback; the people who have

taken time to either give us suggestions, or to tell us we have made a difference for them in their work. That's the most motivating thing to read.

How much control do users of Researcher have over how they search for relevant content?
What we try to do is to give as much control to the user as possible. While we do use an algorithm to help users build keyword filters and to make related article recommendations, everything a user sees in either their main feed or one of their filtered feeds is there because the user has requested it, unless it's an advert of course, but even those should always be highly relevant to their research interests.

We've chosen to work this way because we know our product is for an expert audience; our users know their own interests better than anyone, and have told us that they trust their own knowledge more than any algorithm we could create.

Researcher has been described as disruptive in the world of academic

publishing; tell us more about how you see the app redefining access to research but also redefining what is classified as research.
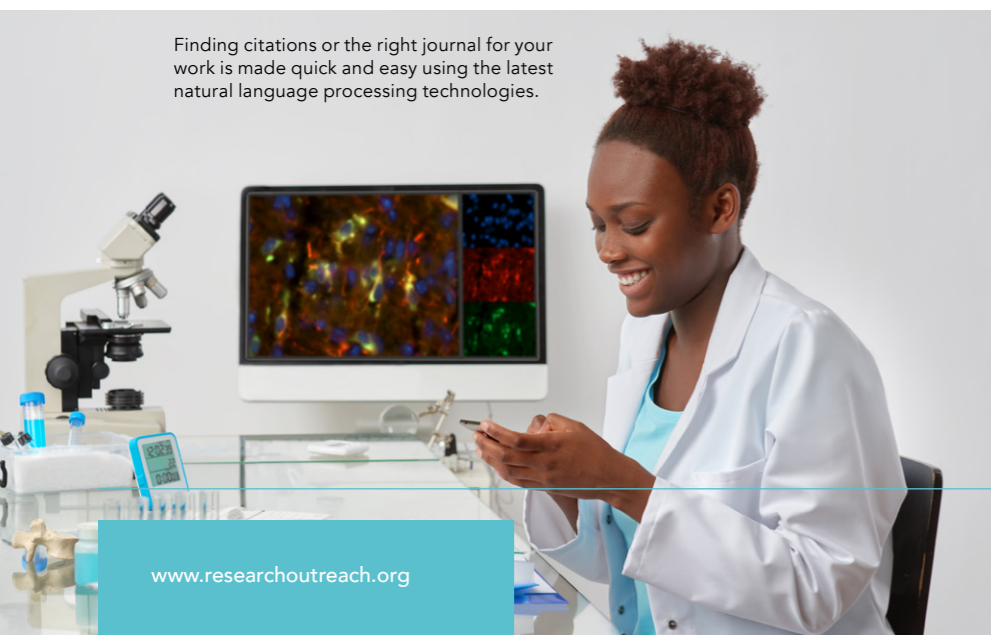What we'd like to do is to make a contribution to enabling legitimate access in general, but also specifically opening up access use cases on mobiles. We know this is particularly important outside the global West, where in many emerging research economies the smartphone plays a hugely important role. I think routes to access content have traditionally – and perhaps understandably – always centred on the desktop computer use cases that are prevalent in the United Kingdom, United States and Europe, and it's really important to give people everywhere

good discovery, access and consumption tools on mobile.

One of our big objectives for 2020 is to broaden the range of content sources and types that we offer our users, in recognition that there's valuable and important information emerging at pace in formats beyond the traditional peer-reviewed journal article; the COVID-19 pandemic has been an amazing case study of this in action. This will include research produced by businesses, as well as different media types like video, audio and blogs, and of course we'll continue to support preprint servers. Clearly we also need to label these new sources correctly, and offer users the ability to filter them in and out of their feeds to suit their needs.

You seem to know the habits of your users very well; do you have any final tips for them beyond using Researcher?
There are so many great tools to support researchers' workflows now! There are a few things that we use often, but the one that our team loves is the Google Scholar Chrome extension. It's great for exporting references for the paper you're currently reading and saves a lot of time.

≷ Researcher

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It's really important to give people everywhere good discovery, access and consumption tools on mobile.