

PRESS RELEASE

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zbMATH Open – the goal is in sight

The transformation of the renowned information service zbMATH into an open access platform for mathematics is nearing completion.

Karlsruhe, November 19, 2020 — In the beginning of 2021, the comprehensive international information service zbMATH will be transformed into an open access platform. This service, which has been subject to a charge up to now, will thus be available free of charge to all interested persons worldwide. The change in the business model will make it possible to use most information and data of zbMATH freely for research purposes and for linking to other non-commercial services.

Mathematics was and still is both the driving force behind and beneficiary of digitization. Scientists now use digital platforms for collaborative work as well as for disseminating mathematical knowledge and discussing research results. zbMATH (formerly Zentralblatt für Mathematik) has been serving as such a platform for a long time. It offers a comprehensive service with information about mathematical publications, authors, references and software. However, the reusability of this data and the possibilities of networking it were severely limited by the previous licensing model.

Therefore, the Joint Science Conference of the Federal Government and the federal states decided in 2019 to support the transformation of zbMATH into an open access platform. At present, the publishers of zbMATH – FIZ Karlsruhe, the European Mathematical Society (EMS) and Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften – stipulate this model in a new publisher's agreement. In addition, the contracts governing existing collaborations with publishing houses will be renewed and the terms of use and reviewer conditions will be adapted.

The extensive preparatory work is nearing completion. From 2021, as scheduled, the information service zbMATH with all its content will be freely accessible and also more strongly networked. Open interfaces will enable the integration of other services, e.g., better search functions for full texts from free digital libraries such as arXiv and EuDML. A further dimension of new applications is offered by the linkage with mathematical research data, which so far have been largely isolated and poorly developed.

Prof. Dr. Klaus Hulek, Editor in Chief of zbMATH, points out: "Opening zbMATH as an open access platform provides much added value for the scientific community. The increasing

networking of zbMATH with other services will open up new research opportunities. This will generate great potential for innovation“.

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The next steps

Since creating an open platform for the entirety of all mathematical research data is a task that goes far beyond the scope of zbMATH Open, FIZ Karlsruhe will initially integrate data sets that are already technically mature into zbMATH and make them available for further networked activities. One example is swMATH, the information service for mathematical software. Other important sources for mathematical research are DLMF (NIST Digital Library of Mathematical Functions), a library of mathematical reference data for special functions and their applications, and the English-language database OEIS (Online Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences). Work to link zbMATH Open with both data collections is already underway.

More information is available on the zbMATH product website www.zbmath.org and on our website www.fiz-karlsruhe.de.

FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure is a not-for-profit limited liability company. As one of the largest non-academic information infrastructure institutions in Germany, we have the public mission to provide researchers and scientists with scientific information and to develop the appropriate products and services. To this end, we edit and index large data volumes from manifold sources, develop and operate innovative information services and e-research solutions, and carry out research projects of our own. FIZ Karlsruhe is a member of the Leibniz Association which comprises more than 95 institutions involved in research activities and/or the development of scientific infrastructure. During the start-up phase of the NFDI, FIZ Karlsruhe, together with the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), is the supporting institution of the NFDI Directorate for an interim period.

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