

## Introduction

Preprints in the life sciences are on the rise as increasingly more researchers use them to rapidly communicate research findings. The current pandemic has resulted in a further surge of preprint posting, but has also highlighted the value of curation and public commenting on preprints to help researchers navigate the preprint literature and point to important and reliable studies. Similar challenges around preprints were also the main motivation The Company of Biologists launched preLights, a community platform for selecting, highlighting and commenting on preprints across the biological sciences, in early 2018.

## The platform and the community

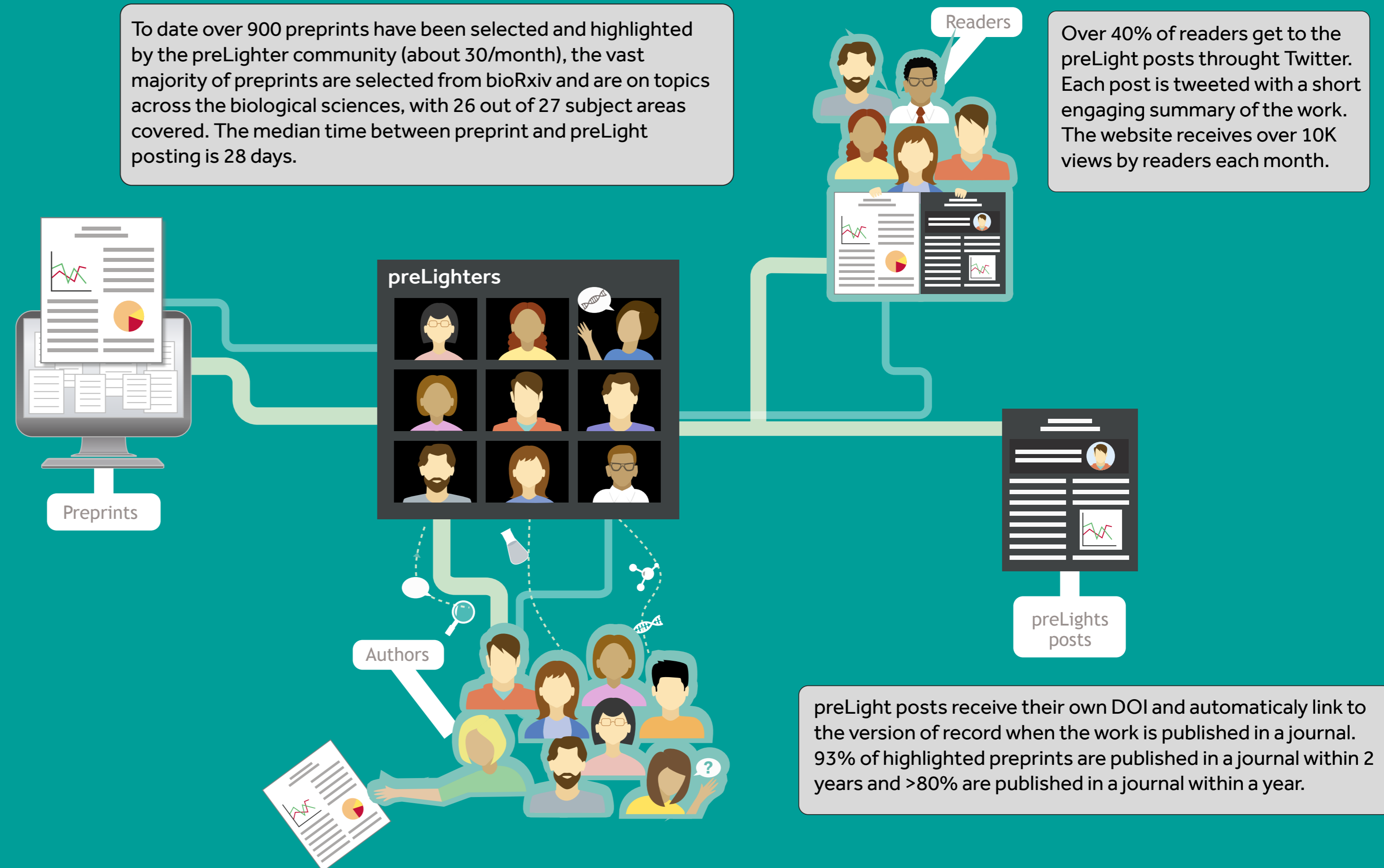
At the heart of preLights is the team of over 250 early-career researchers (the 'preLighters') who select which preprints to feature and summarize the key findings of the preprint, highlighting why they think the study is important. Uniquely, the preLighters directly question preprint authors about their work, and the resulting discussions are published at the end of the articles (which are free to read), thereby promoting open communication. A further way preprints are curated on the website is through 'preLists', which are lists of preprints centred around a certain topic or preprints that were presented at scientific conferences.

## New initiatives in response to the pandemic

As the first COVID-19 related preprints were posted on preprint servers, some members of the preLights community created the website covidpreprints.com to collect significant preprints in COVID-19 research and, together with major events of the ongoing pandemic, position them on a timeline. The selected preprints include short digests, refer to expert discussions, and the website also links to key COVID-19 resources. Members of the community also contributed to a meta-analysis of COVID-19 preprints (Fraser et al. 2020, bioRxiv).

To date over 900 preprints have been selected and highlighted by the preLighter community (about 30/month), the vast majority of preprints are selected from bioRxiv and are on topics across the biological sciences, with 26 out of 27 subject areas covered. The median time between preprint and preLight posting is 28 days.

Over 40% of readers get to the preLight posts through Twitter. Each post is tweeted with a short engaging summary of the work. The website receives over 10K views by readers each month.



Over 60% of preLight posts have comments by authors, with authors typically giving detailed responses to questions raised in the post. Multiple authors have told us that they incorporated comments into an updated version of their work. We encourage authors to also comment on the key changes to their work as a result of peer review once their paper is published.

preLight posts receive their own DOI and automatically link to the version of record when the work is published in a journal. 93% of highlighted preprints are published in a journal within 2 years and >80% are published in a journal within a year.