Sustaining the Knowledge Commons: Open Access Scholarship
sustainingknowledgecommons.org

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Overview

• My idea of the knowledge commons
• Small scholar-led journals & OA
• OA APCs – model used by minority of OA journals
• Surprising new entrants in OA journal publishing
• Ideas for scholarly society publishers
• References
Knowledge commons

As open as possible

Public good

Priority: advancing knowledge

Collective knowledge of humankind: open access

Everyone qualified can contribute
How?

**Demand** side economics (subscriptions, purchase, pay-per-view)

**Supply** side economics (fund production, ongoing access and preservation for open access)
$8 billion USD for about $1.5 billion peer-reviewed articles: revenue sources

- Academic libraries: 73%
- Corporate subscriptions: 16%
- Other: 11%

Details and sources: (Morrison, 2013)
Current library spend v. possible OA transition scenarios

Per-article cost comparison

Small scholar-led journals: can they survive and thrive in an OA future?

• Small scholar-led journals that either are, or would like to be, OA, interviews & focus group
• Q: resource requirements to survive & thrive in an open access future
• 15 total – 4 countries, different disciplines – not representative
• Half OA, half non-OA
• (Morrison, 2016a)
Small scholar-led journals: highlights

- All but one unsure how to make ends meet for OA

Existing supports
- Volunteer editors
- Sponsorship (e.g. SSHRC Aid to Scholarly Journals)
- Library publishing services (hosting)
- Pockets of support from universities
Small scholar-led publishers: some challenges

• University & funding agency budget squeeze
• Could use more support from libraries
  – Total loss of subscriptions when moved to open access (suggestions: dialogue; publishing cooperatives)
  – Library pays APCs but charge local journals for hosting
  – Beta site hosting
Small scholar-led publishers: further research & opportunities

Value-add to universities

• Knowledge translation / deep community connections
• Local leadership opportunities
• Hosting conferences: irrational rationality

Success stories (healthy societies with OA publishing) (~ 2017 – 2018)
OA Article Processing Charges (OA APCs)

• Most OA journals (about 2/3) do not charge OA APCs
• Average cost per article ≠ APC (e.g. sponsorship model)
• Average cost per article key metric for assessing economic efficiency
• Model works well for some publishers & may work well for some disciplines
OA APCs – DOAJ survey 2014

- 1,432 of 2,567 DOAJ journals with APCs sampled
- Global average APC < $1,000 USD (similar to Solomon & Björk)
- Volatile sector – mode $0 (introductory offer)
- Flat per-article charge is rare

(Morrison et al, 2014)
OA APCs Pricing Variation Types
(Mondésir, 2015)

- By article type (research article, case reports, editorial)
- By article length (per-page or per-article up to X pages)
- Waivers / discounts based on contributions (society membership, reviewing, editing)
- Waivers / discounts based on actual or presumed ability to pay (developing countries, unspecified)
- Language editing / quality of writing
- Currency / location of author or payer
OA APCs in 2015: a surprise & a preliminary sample publication

• 2015 sample based on publishers included in DOAJ in 2014
• Quick check DOAJ near completion
• Surprise! De Gruyter 3rd largest publisher in DOAJ – not present in 2014
• Published data and peer-reviewed data documentation (Morrison, 2016b)
OA APCs 2016

• 2016 – continuing longitudinal study – in process
• Publisher case studies – because the average does not tell the story (rapid change, not all publishers pursuing same strategy)
De Gruyter Open (Dumais-DesRosiers & Brutus, 2016)

• 435 open access journals
• 3rd largest publisher in DOAJ
• 98% of journals do not charge OA APCs
• 84% produced in partnership with universities, societies, government (focus Eastern Europe)
Hindawi (Salhab, 2016)

• All journals use APC (rotating free APC)
• 406 OA journals (publisher’s website)
• 2015 average APC: $632 USD
• 2016 average APC: $697 USD (10% increase)
• 2010 – 2016: some prices increases, some decreases, others remain the same ) (2010 data courtesy Solomon & Björk (2012)
Hindawi & Egypt (Salhab & Morrison, 2015)

- Cairo-based Hindawi a commercial success
- APC for high end Hindawi journal = 3 months’ salary for senior researcher at an Egyptian public university
- Waivers for authors from developing countries – but not Egypt
OA APCs: BioMedCentral 2010 – 2016 (Wheatley, S.)

• 165 journals compared
• all but 1 journal increased in price
• Average APC 2010: $1,750
• Average APC 2016: $2,197
• 18% increase in average
• Compound U.S. interest 2010 – 2016: 8.7%
• BMC average increase 2010 – 2016 more than double the inflation rate
Open access journals in French only: no APCs (Kakou, 2016)

- 73 journals in DOAJ with “French” the only language of publication listed
- 72 / 73 (99%) do not charge APCs
- 1 journal: 50 € submission fee, 50 € publication fee
World’s 3 largest fully open access journal publishers May 2016

# journals (data from publishers’ websites)

- Elsevier: 511
- De Gruyter: 435
- Hindawi: 405
Elsevier open access journals as of May 2016 (Morrison, 2016c in review)

- 511 fully open access journals
  - 315 (62%) APC of $0 “fee not payable by author”
- 2,149 hybrid open access journals
  - 4 (.002%) APC of $0 “fee not payable by author”
Elsevier “average” APC (in USD)

- Hybrid: $2,500
- Open access: $660
- Open access excluding “fee not payable by author”: $1,731
- Range: $0 - $5,000
Elsevier “fee not payable by author”

- Sample of 10 journals
- 9 / 10 sponsored by society or institution
- 8 / 10 society owns the copyright
Elsevier “supports open access”

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Ideas for publishing for the knowledge commons: copyright

- License (agreement) between author and journal / publisher is needed in addition to Creative Commons licensing (implicit if not addressed)
- Copyright / licensing rights can be shared by authors, journals, others
- Reserving exclusive *commercial* rights may be a good idea for smaller publishers (Morrison & Desautels (2016): OA, copyright & licensing: basics for OA publishers)
- Society journals with commercial partners: recommendation – retain copyright (nonexclusive or exclusive commercial rights)
Ideas: economics of transition to open access

• Seek *real* transformation
  – $10 average revenue *Journal of Machine Learning*
  – Support return from commercial to scholar-led publishing (library journal hosting, publishing cooperatives)
  – Institutional repositories with peer-review overlay

• Paying APCs? Check copyright. Track pricing over time.
Ideas: economics of transition to open access

• **Direct sponsorship** is more efficient
• University / grant funding ➔ subscriptions ➔ journals & publishers is indirect sponsorship
• University / grant funding ➔ OA APCs ➔ journals & publishers is indirect sponsorship
• University / grant funding ➔ qualified scholar-led journals is direct sponsorship
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Open research approach: sustainingknowledgecommons.org research blog

OA APC dataverse
http://dataverse.scholarsportal.info/dvn/dv/oaapc

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References

  - https://sustainingknowledgecommons.org/2016/04/27/de-gruyter-open-english/
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