

## 2010 – 2019 APC update

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### Summary

This is an update of the 2010 study of Solomon & Björk (2012) of a sample of 1,046 journals charging APCs listed in DOAJ at that time. 74% of these journals are still active and actively charging publication fees. The average APC reported by Solomon & Björk was 906 USD; the average in 2019 for the 739 journals for which we have APC data for both years is 1,363 USD. This represents a 50% price increase during this time frame, an increase that is 3 times the inflation rate. Not all journals increased in price; some decreased or remained the same price. Nearly a quarter of the journals (23%) are ceased or not found. Most of this attrition rate can be attributed to new OA APC-based commercial publishers with a start-up strategy involving roll-out of a broad range of journals, with unsuccessful journals being retired.

**Research question:** what is the status, charging tendency (to charge or not to charge) and pricing trends of these journals?

### Method

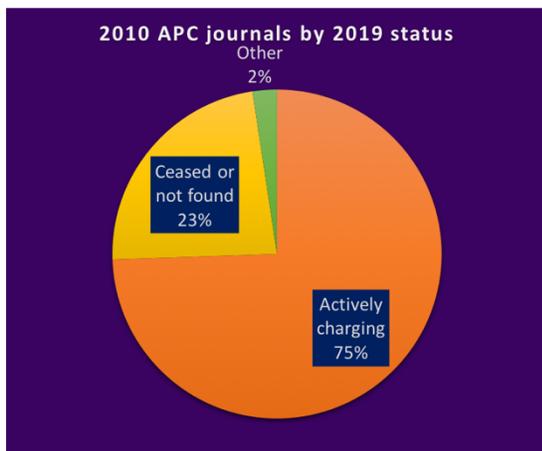
A subset of the OA Main 2019 Dataset (Morrison et al., 2019) containing Solomon & Björk's 2010 data was used as the basis for this study. This sample was compared with the 2010 data and journals missing from OA Main (due to having been dropped from DOAJ prior to our study) were added to complete the sample. The current status of journals was developed using a pivot table. Pricing trends for 739 journals (tendency to increase or decrease in price) that are still charging APCs was calculated separately for journals with matching original currency (to avoid conflation with currency fluctuations) and non-matching currency in USD. An attempt was made to estimate APC for the 31 journals currently charging APPC but abandoned as the results did not match the APC trends and there is not enough detail in the 2012 study to be certain that the method of estimating APC was correct.

### Results

#### Status

As illustrated in the following table and chart, the majority (779 or 74%) of the 2010 journals are still active and actively charging publication fees. 242 (23%) titles are ceased or not found. 25 (2%) have a status of other. Of these, 8 journals are now non-charging (no publication fee), for 11 journals it was not possible to determine whether or not there is a charge (no cost found), 2 journals are now hybrid, 3 are inactive, and one has been merged with another journal.

2010 journals by 2019 status		
Actively charging	779	74%
Ceased or not found	242	23%
Other	25	2%
Grand Total	1,046	



### Active APC journals: trends analysis

The average APC reported by Solomon & Björk (2012) for 2010 was 906 USD. 779 of these journals are still active and charging publication fees; of these, 739 are still charging APCs and we were able to identify the amount. The average APC for these 739 journals in 2019 is 1,363 USD. This represents a 50% increase in the average APC for this group of journals. According to the Bank of Canada (n.d.) currency calculator, the cumulative inflation rate from 2010 – 2019 is 16.35% An average increase of 50% is more than 3 times the inflation rate.

### Pricing direction trend

Not all journals increased in price. As the following table illustrates, 75% of journals increased in price, 18% decreased in price and 8% had no change in price. Where possible, original currency was used to avoid conflation with currency fluctuations.

Pricing trends by number of journals	Matching currency	Non-matching currency	Total	% of total
Journals decreasing in price	56	75	131	18%
No change in price	57	0	57	8%
Price increase	393	158	551	75%
Total I# of journals	506	233	739	

### Ceased / title not found analysis

#### Ceased journals

Based on knowledge of the history of pioneering APC OA based publishers, a publisher type analysis was conducted of the 210 ceased journals. 199 or 95% of these journals were developed by such publishers that pursued a strategy of starting out their business with a broad range of journals, then dropping

journals that were not successful. 7 or 3% of these journals were started by publishers that have been acquired by other publishers that did not continue all of the others. No pattern was discerned for 4 (2%) of the journals.

<b>2010 journals ceased as of 2019 - publisher type analysis</b>		
<b>Publishers with broad range of journals start-up strategy</b>		
Bentham open	143	
BioMed Central	12	
Dove Medical Press	10	
Frontiers Media S.A.	3	
Hindawi Limited	31	
Total broad range strategy	199	95%
<b>Publishers that were acquired by other publishers</b>		
Co-Action Publishing	1	
Libertas Academica	6	
Total publishers acquired by other publishers	7	3%
<b>Other</b>		
Academic and Business Research Institute	2	
SAGE Publishing	1	
SpringerOpen	1	
Total other	4	2%
Total ceased journals	210	

#### **Title not found**

A similar analysis was conducted on the 32 “title not found” journals. There was some overlap in the results; Bentham Open, one of the publishers with a broad range of journals start-up strategy, accounts for half of the total, with BioMedCentral accounting for 3 of the titles.

## References

Bank of Canada (n.d.) *Currency calculator*. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

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