ALPSP Discussion and Networking event, Wednesday 24 April (17:30 – 20:30)

Society Publishers Accelerating Open access and Plan S (SPA-OPS)
Towards transition strategies and business models for Society Publishers who wish to accelerate Open Access and Plan S

An initial discussion document from the Society Publishers Accelerating Open access and Plan S (SPA-OPS) project

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1. Introduction

The SPA-OPS project was commissioned by Wellcome, UKRI, and the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP) to support learned society publishers successfully transition to open access (OA) and align with Plan S. Information Power Ltd was selected to undertake this work at the end of January 2019.

This project will, we hope, be useful to a broad array of learned society publishers around the world. The focus of this work, however, is on learned society publishers serving UK researchers and in disciplines relevant to UKRI and Wellcome funding areas. We are aware of related initiatives in other parts of the world and aim to share information with and to learn from these.

Wellcome and UKRI – and indeed other funders – recognise the value learned societies play in supporting researchers and contributing to a vibrant research ecosystem. They wish to explore a range of potential strategies and business models through which learned societies could adapt and thrive under Plan S.

The SPA-OPS project is structured in the following way:

1. A short background study to identify the key issues learned societies face in the light of Plan S

2. A discussion document which assesses options for how learned society publishers could transition to OA and develop Plan S-compliant business models
26 responses from library consortia

From around the world

- Austria
- Canada
- Germany
- Greece
- Jordan
- Norway
- Qatar
- Slovakia
- Republic of Korea
- Romania
- Slovakia
- United States
- United Kingdom
We asked about their willingness to work with Learned Society Publishers.

91% Agree or Strongly Agree that they look forward to working with Learned Society Publishers to develop new models.

“Consider this as an opportunity to strengthen networks across and among libraries and scholars with the Learned Society publishers. Build the new models TOGETHER!”
Would you participate in new initiatives that redirect funds currently used to pay subscriptions to make journals open access to users all over the world?

“With all those initiatives we have been an early adopter, if not co-developer. We want to continue on that frontline path.”
Societies who responded were based in
How many title do you publish?

- Less than 5: 80%
- 5 to 10: 20%
- More than 10: 0%
STEM vs HSS: Do you self-publish
A small difference in transition status for STEM and HSS publishers, but less than we had anticipated
We listed five Transformative Models and asked societies publishers about their interest and experience of these models.

- 29.89% have experience
- 60.92% are interested
- 18.39% are not interested

Of those that have experience with these models:
- 65.38% publish five titles or less.
- 15.38% self-publish
- 84.62% do not self-publish

- Break down by discipline
  - STEM 61.54%
  - HSS 19.23%
  - STEM and HSS 11.54%
Of those that have experimented, some report positive experiences:

‘Transformative models are perfectly feasible’.

We consider the ‘publish and read’ model to be the most feasible of the options presented. We publish our journals with PUBLISHER and, therefore, benefit from the ‘publish and read’ agreements. [THE PUBLISHER has] recently made – for example, with Projekt Deal. We appreciate that both publishing and reading have value in this model’.

‘Our society launched a read and publish model in 2016 and it has grown in interest over the past 3 years. In our fourth year, we have over 1000 subscribers participate in this program.’
And some expressed concerns

- Need for confidence that transformative models are viable in the long-term, with predictable income, noting shifting global changes in the production and consumption of knowledge.

- Read & Publish and Publish & Read not possible without the support of a publishing partner. Lock in with publishing partner and that publishing partner decides income share and parameters.

- Choreographed shift models are not "available" to publishers. They can only react to schemes set up by the choreographer.

- Switching from read-based payments to publish-based payments will require some institutions to pay more and others to pay less. Unless this is addressed, transformative agreements will not be universally applicable.

- Publishers [might] adopt more explicit country-level publication, submission, and marketing strategies. Such approaches would appear to be in tension with the collaborative nature of the international research environment.
Countries with at least 1 transformative agreement – April 2019