OA: Its Impact on Access and Subscriptions

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How open is scholarly literature?

Journal subscription models

• The Big Deal
• Generally based on print spend
• Subscribed vs unsubscribed journals
• Often negotiated at the level of the consortium
• Everyone’s deal is constructed a little bit differently

➢ Difficult to disentangle
➢ Difficult to understand costs at the journal level (and even harder at the article level)
Assessing the value of subscriptions

• Cost per use
  • Assumes that all use is good use
    • But maybe use of many articles is a sign of inefficiency
    • Maybe increased choice means more use, but less critical use

As long as we assume that this is the way to measure value, it’s very hard to move beyond subscriptions

Time for a new model: value linked to outcomes
Shifting Costs – Can we flip journals to OA?

California Institute of Technology
- 3,700 articles (plus 25% more not indexed in Web of Science) = 4,900
- Assume 60% corresponding authors = 2,960
- $3.1 million spent on continuing resources
- At $2,500 per APC, Cal Tech would spend $7.5 million on publication costs

University of Denver
- 700 articles (plus 25% more not indexed in Web of Science) = 875
- Assume 60% corresponding authors = 525
- $4.1 million spent on continuing resources
- At $2,500 per APC, Denver would spend $1.3 million on publication costs

Uneven distribution of publishing and subscriptions

2016 data from ACRL and Web of Science
Shifting Costs – Can we flip journals to OA?

• In theory, if someone pays for an article to be open, it benefits all subscribers
  • But no way to track hybrid articles
  • And, everyone’s subscription costs are different
  • And, some journals are subscribed, while others in a package are not

Hypothetical Big Deal (1,000 journals)
• Library A – 200 subscribed, 800 unsubscribed/accessible. $400,000
• Library B – 500 subscribed, 500 accessible. $1.2 million

Article in hybrid Journal of X is open
• Author paid $4,000 APC
• Library A subscribes to this journal, Library B does not
• How do you calculate a discount?
How should we fund something like *Science*?

- Very high rejection rate
- Many news/review articles that are requested by editors

*An APC for accepted articles would have to cover these costs*
What will a more open world mean for libraries?

Two Predictions

• For a while, the institution will pay MORE: the cost of the subscription and the cost of APCs (and the costs of IR staffing and infrastructure)

• As more becomes open, the institution will pull money out of the library subscription budget
  • Is this a bad thing?
Offsetting

- As a benefit of subscription, the institution gets either
  - Discounted APCs
  - A set number of free APCs
- Varies by publisher, with some not offering the option

But...

- The library often (always?) doesn’t know who is planning to publish with a given publisher, and whether there is an interest in OA publishing
- Subscription spending doesn’t match research output
- Consortial deals complicate this idea
A possible transition

• The problems
  • Wide variety in pricing for subscriptions
  • Wide variety in research output
  • No central funding in US
  • Most academic libraries work through consortia for subscriptions

• A solution?
  • Transition subscription pricing toward OA
  • Renew big deal, but with some portion of current subscription costs going to open up all articles by authors at participating institutions (including older articles)
  • Across multiple consortia this would make a difference
  • After a predetermined time, there would have to be a plan to transition to a different model
If everything is open – what about discovery?

• What is the role of library discovery?
  • Won’t it all be available via Google/GS?

• Will we pay more for discovery?
  • Business models around enhancing access to open content?
    • Profiling
    • Metadata
    • Discovery
    • Enhanced user features