A Scalable and Sustainable Approach to Open Access Publishing and Archiving for Humanities and Social Sciences

A White Paper by K|N Consultants

K|N

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This white paper outlines a model for open access (OA) publishing that offers a scalable, fair, responsive, and discipline-independent solution that can be applied to the entire scholarly communication ecosystem in an incremental fashion, rolled out at both small and large scale.
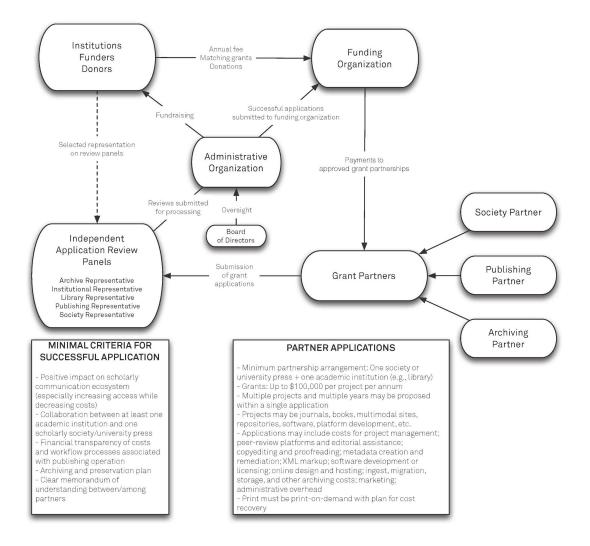
The solution proposed here is one that encourages partnerships among scholarly societies, research libraries, and other institutional partners (e.g., collaborative e-archives and university presses) who share a common mission to support the creation and distribution of research and scholarship to improve society and to help solve the world's most challenging problems. Our proposal includes a plan to convert traditional subscription publication formats, including society-published journals and books or monographs, to OA; however, our ultimate goal is to present an approach to funding infrastructure for scholarly communication that is fair and open and fully supports new and evolving forms of research output.

The financial model we propose is based on an annual or multi-year payment made by every institution of higher education, no matter what its size or classification, and by any institution that benefits from the research that is generated by those within the academy. For tertiary institutions, the payment is based on the number of their students and full-time faculty on a sliding scale tied to the Carnegie (or, in some cases, Carnegie-like) classification, as well as on the number of researchers, scientists, or scholars at other types of institutions (e.g., medical research centers). The payment is modest relative to the overall budget of most institutions, but, when spread broadly across all institutions, results in a sum substantial enough to sustain a vibrant and open scholarly communication environment.

The institutional payment goes into a centrally managed fund. Institutions and scholarly societies come together in partnership to apply for funds through a competitive grant process; the funds dispensed are used to provide direct support for the distribution, access, and long-term archival preservation infrastructure of the partnerships. Because the goal of this program is sustainability, grants are

open-ended so recipients are guaranteed a reliable source of income. At the same time, adherence to strict guidelines and oversight of the funding are required.

Institutions
Funders
Donors

Annual fee
Matching grants
Donations

Funding
Organization

Fundraising

Successful applications
submitted to funding organization

Selected representation
on review panels

Administrative
Organization

Payments to
approved grant partnerships

Society Partner

Reviews submitted
for processing

Oversight

Independent
Application Review
Panels

Archive Representative
Institutional Representative
Library Representative
Publishing Representative
Society Representative

Board
of Directors

Submission
of grant
applications

Grant Partners

Publishing
Partner

Archiving
Partner

**MINIMAL CRITERIA FOR
SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION**

- Positive impact on scholarly
communication ecosystem
(especially increasing access while
decreasing costs)
- Collaboration between at least one
academic institution and one
scholarly society/university press
- Financial transparency of costs
and workflow processes associated
with publishing operation
- Archiving and preservation plan
- Clear memorandum of
understanding between/among
partners

PARTNER APPLICATIONS

- Minimum partnership arrangement: One society or
university press + one academic institution (e.g., library)
- Grants: Up to $100,000 per project per annum
- Multiple projects and multiple years may be proposed
within a single application
- Projects may be journals, books, multimodal sites,
repositories, software, platform development, etc.
- Applications may include costs for project management;
peer-review platforms and editorial assistance;
copyediting and proofreading; metadata creation and
remediation; XML markup; software development or
licensing; online design and hosting; ingest, migration,
storage, and other archiving costs; marketing;
administrative overhead
- Print must be print-on-demand with plan for cost
recovery

Sharing, curating, and preserving scholarship is imperative for the advancement of research, just as openness is central to the development of new modes of teaching and learning. Deep structural changes to the scholarly communication system are needed not only to respond to the current funding crises in higher education and the emerging forms of scholarship in the digital age, but also to foster and deepen the connections between the academy and the wider public. Only a model that builds collaborative alliances across a wide variety of institutions and that engages a range of stakeholders can provide a fair and equitable path to truly open and sustainable forms of scholarship.

Key Components of Our Proposal:

– We are focusing in the first instance on supporting the transition to OA in the humanities and social sciences (HSS). For all the problems inherent in an article-processing charge (APC) OA funding model, in the STEM disciplines that model does work, at least for now. HSS needs are different.
– We are looking to academic and research institutions to fund this model, not to their libraries. The dollar amounts provided in the white paper may look large to a library, but are modest at an institutional scale.
– We want full participation from the entire higher education community, from small community colleges and large research universities alike. As everyone will benefit from a world in which all research output is freely available, everyone in the academic community has the responsibility to play a part in creating this reality.
– A bold rethinking of the economics of OA, our plan is nevertheless designed to assuage the fears and embrace the investments of the stakeholders in the scholarly communication system.
– Our plan is intentionally incremental, acknowledging the inherent conservatism of academia. It also suggests employing traditional roles in evolving ways. Preservation and curation, for example, should be a primary role for libraries, because this is a natural space for libraries to occupy and has always been part of their mission.
– Our model enables scholarly societies to have the financial freedom to develop the strategies they need to continue to provide their members with services that are useful and meaningful.
– Our plan allows all the partners in the scholarly communication ecosystem to begin to work together to agree on best practices, not only for infrastructure, metadata, etc., but for business practices as well.
– Our model provides a clear but ever-evolving and expanding roadmap to address concerns about "free riders," including a campaign in a stepwise but nevertheless assertive way to persuade all tertiary academic institutions to participate financially, raise endowment funds from foundations, accept donations from the public, and otherwise engage all beneficiaries — very much in keeping with the core mission of academic institutions, societies, and libraries: the advancement of knowledge and learning and communication of the products of those efforts to the entire world.
– And just as research and scholarship are increasingly global and collaborative, our plan is not bound by national borders but can — and we hope will — be adopted in all countries by those looking for a more equitable and sustainable OA model.