

Insights into the Economy of Open Scholarship

A Collection of Interviews

Knowledge Exchange aimed to collect, describe, and learn from examples and initiatives that pioneered to change towards new or alternative business models and payment structures that facilitate and support Open Scholarship functioning at its full potential.

www.knowledge-exchange.info/projects/project/open-scholarship



Position in the Open Scholarship Ecosystem



- Optimism about own position within the ecosystem
- Frustration about lack of policy alignment
- Timing is crucial: sometimes the right idea can come at the wrong time
- Usability and flexibility is crucial to attract and keep customers/users - not only 'if you build it, they will come!'
- Marketing and outreach: effort needed often underestimated

We have a significant influence at the national level, because we have reached a critical mass. But I don't think our model can be copy-pasted to other environments without changes.



- Pierre Mounier, OpenEdition

"What's the role of the library in the 21st century if they are not facilitating open scholarship? Part of the role of the library has to be to enable new approaches"



- Martin Paul Eve, OLH

"Funders and policymakers have a big role to play; the current funding and evaluation systems are confusing and do not necessarily steer researchers towards more Open Scholarship. Open access mandates and policies need to be accompanied by concrete measures in order for them to be effective."



- Leena Kaakinen, Helsinki University Press

"What is important to stress is that our platform was open access at its earliest state - even when there was no formal policy in place yet."



- Jadranka Stojanovski, HRČAK

Gaps and Challenges



- Institutional inertia
- Lack of policy alignment
- Infrastructural and technical challenges
- Lack of clear funding streams supporting open scholarship policies
- Insufficient incentives for researchers
- Market failures



If not the whole community respect preprints as a legitimate form of scientific communication, a competitor might see it as an opportunity to scoop research. That's why I think the concept of being able to cite them properly is so important."

- Jessica Polka, ASAPbio



"Inadequate metadata leads to a serious underestimation of the total amount of Open Access materials that is available out there."

- Stephanie Dawson, ScienceOpen



Permanent funding makes you run the risk that you'll lose the connection with your users. If you are not attentive to their needs, you'll gradually lose your users. This can take a long time and you might not even notice it at first because it is not directly reflected in your income streams.

- Pierre Mounier, OpenEdition



"I think the larger commercial operators can spawn innovation in the short term, and provide valuable transient services, but in the long term they don't serve the aims of open science.

Evidence shows that no matter what the guarantees the commercial companies contract to, the moment they change leadership or get taken over they're no longer capable of fulfilling those promises."

- Tim Smith, Zenodo

Human Resources



- No budget to hire all needed profiles
- Often, the relation with the host institution is crucial
- Challenge of surpassing the 'one (wo)man show'
- External grant funding is crucial to hire new staff for innovative worklines



"The plan for the future is to leave the day-to-day workings to dedicated staff and for us to supervise the academic aspects."

- Martin Paul Eve, OLH



"If we want to do some more innovative work again, we'll need more team members working on the wiki."

- Jouni Tuomisto, Opasnet



"If you asked us 4 years ago, I'd say that the general demographic profile of our staff was your typical 25-35 year old white male, but we're making an effort to become more diverse."

- Mark Hahnel, Figshare



"A downside of being a small-sized organization is that there's no inhouse support for administrative and legal matters and for the pursuing of grants, so a lot of the already limited staff time goes to working on that instead of actually developing the services."

- Heather Piwowar, Impactstory

Intellectual Property



- No monetisation of IP
- Creative Commons: CC BY & CC0
- Pragmatism: more restrictive IP are allowed for aggregated content
- Codebase: usually open source
- Customers/Users: Lack of knowledge about the consequences about using and applying open licenses
- Non-commercial license is not a solution to protect assets

"Our free service only offers CC BY and CC0 as options. We believe that nudging our users into this direction - it's 'the price' they pay - is essential to making research as open as possible."

- Mark Hahnel, Figshare



"Publishers for years have relied on academics not reading contracts, but if we want to claim that we are better than that, we have to make an effort in explaining authors the what and why in order to get an informed consent."

- Martin Paul Eve, OLH



"I believe that, regardless of the license you choose, knowing the exact ramifications of applying that license is essential."

- Jessica Polka, ASAPbio



"Non-commercial licenses are notoriously difficult to enforce and non-compliance is difficult to detect."

- Heather Piwowar, Impactstory



Revenue Streams



- Mix of revenue streams
- Application for grant funding, but never as core of the model
- Certain non-profits have a very mature business model
- Some commercial start-ups are facing scalability questions
- Despite friction between commercial and non-commercial business models, hybrid models often occur



"Open access is for sure the future of scholarly publishing, but we need to support a variety of approaches and not-for-profit business models equally."

- Jadranka Stojanovski, HRČAK



"Licensing out our infrastructure allows us to establish a level of sustainability while keeping the researcher-oriented services free."

- Mark Hahnel, Figshare



"We thought long about whether we wanted to be a non-profit or a commercial company. I think the fact that we are so much in doubt about this, makes us different than other players in the field."

- Heather Piwowar, Impactstory



"Libraries work with commercial publishers all the time, but when they start thinking about open access infrastructure, they project their bad experiences with those publishers onto us."

- Stephanie Dawson, ScienceOpen