

## Open Access Monograph Publishing

“The core purpose of open access publishing is to widen access to research findings and therefore support more efficient research” (Collins et al, 2015)

### Background

#### **What does Open Access mean in the humanities and social sciences?**

- Open access monograph publishing is an issue specific to the humanities and social sciences. Most humanities and social sciences research output is in the form of monographs, whereas the sciences mainly show their output in the form of journal articles.
- A monograph and a journal article are very different, and therefore have different ‘needs’ in terms of open access.
- Journal articles are usually written quite quickly and have a particular structure; they are written to fulfil a specific objective and are seen as a means to an end.
- However, in the humanities the book (monograph) is the principle research output. These are written over a longer period of time and are longer and less structured.
- The production of the book is the end in itself – its objective is to start a dialogue, not necessarily to provide answers. ‘All’ it can change are the ways events, people or works are interpreted or talked about. (Bass and Edwards, 2013, OAPEN Conference report)

#### **Definition of a monograph**

“A **detailed** written study of a single **specialized** subject or an aspect of it” (Oxford Dictionaries)

‘Mono’ therefore refers to the content: it is about one subject. (Bass and Edwards, 2013 OAPEN Conference report). An OA monograph is an electronic book which is publicly available via the internet - an e-book which is freely available to anyone without fees, subscription or membership of a library or institution. (Bass and Edwards, 2013)

“Open access for monographs may need to work in a very different way from open access for journals” (Collins et al, 2015).

#### **Open access not mandatory for monographs**

Open access for monographs has not yet been made mandatory by Finch, AHRC, RCUK, Leverhulme or HEFCE. The Wellcome Trust is the only UK grant awarding body to have made this mandatory. (Bass and Edwards, 2013). There is no equivalent of the open access repositories we have for other types of research output (e.g. CReaTE) for monographs.

## **Academic culture**

The publication of a monograph is commonly regarded as vital for career progression in many academic disciplines – early career academics who choose to publish open access might miss out on the recognition and status that comes with publishing with a perceived ‘good quality’ publisher, even though their monographs would probably gain more readers if published via open access. Also, there is a fear that publishing via OA might imply that their work is not good enough to be published the usual way by a recognised publisher such as Oxford University Press.

This is connected to worries about the quality of open access publishing:

- What controls are in place?
- How is it different to vanity publishing?
- What happens to the peer review and editorial processes?

There is a perception that peer review is not undertaken in open access publishing with the same rigour as with traditional print monograph publishing. However, this is not the case (Collins et al, 2015). Many publishers who offer open access will actually be more rigorous in their peer review process for open access publications in order to reinforce their academic credentials. The Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) is a resource for academics who want to check the credentials of open access publishers (Collins et al, 2015).

## **Decline in sales, rise in costs**

In the last 20 years monograph sales have declined from an average of 2000 to just 200 sales per title. Research outputs are not being read – in which case there is not much point in doing the research in the first place. The humanities are not achieving open discussion and academic debate. A new business model is required for the monograph to survive, and for the humanities and social sciences research output to remain relevant in the digital age. (Bass and Edwards, 2013). The cost of the average monograph has increased to about £100. The fewer sold, the more expensive they become. (Bass and Edwards, OAPEN Conference report, 2013)

However, Crossick suggests that “the arguments for open access would appear to be for broader and more positive reasons than solving some supposed crisis.” (2015, p. 4)

## **Benefits of Open Access Monographs**

Summarised by Rupert Gatti, Open Book Publishers, Director of Studies in Economics, Trinity College, Cambridge:

- Broader readership – increase access to readers not connected with an institution. Gatti claimed that his open access titles averaged 506 readers/month – more readers in one month than entire sales for a traditional monograph. (Bass and Edwards, OAPEN Conference report, 2013). Also allows a wider readership in terms

geographical and socio-economic status due to reduced/lack of cost (subject to availability of internet).

- Reader interaction – a new peer review model at pre- and post- review. Readers can leave comments and build up a dialogue, which is what is wanted in arts and humanities research. New 'peer review' for all to see and participate in (Bass and Edwards, OCR, 2013)
- Opportunities for multimedia publications, e.g. overlay maps, incorporating text with video and music, audio and web apps
- Relate research to primary sources – connect back to digitised archive
- Innovations in research and dissemination – can be done by the academic community not just commercial publishers
- Reduced costs of text translation – enables non-native English speakers to be internationally competitive
- Use in teaching: a monograph published in OA is easier to use in teaching and can be more easily incorporated into teaching materials (Collins et al, 2015)

Evidence for the above benefits is still being gathered as OA monograph publishing is still new, but OAPEN\_NL, run over a single year has found that, on average, discovery of OA books (measured by book visits in Google Books) increased by 142% and online usage (measured as page views in Google Books) increased by 209%.

### **Business models for OA publishing?**

It is likely that a variety of business models will need to exist in order to support the varieties of AHSS research and the funding sources within it (Collins et al, 2015)

#### **Gold (author payment)**

Authors (or their funders or institution) pay a fee (book processing charge) to the publisher up front for open access. A range of payment models exist across established publishers, but also includes not for profit companies such as Open Book Publishers and Open Monograph Press. Typically the publisher will print on demand and see a hardback or paperback copy as well as providing the OA monograph.

#### **Green**

Authors deposit their monograph(s) in an institutional repository. But embargoes are a problem – they can be very restrictive, e.g. Palgrave allow one chapter to be open access after 36 months. There is no equivalent of [Sherpa/Romeo](#) to check permissions for the deposit of open access monographs. Also, book-based outputs (e.g. novels and plays) will remain in print for many years, making it hard to define an embargo period for these types of output (Collins et al, 2015).

Third party content is also an issue (as it is currently for theses). It would be important to ensure that third party content could be included in deposited versions of monographs. There are also concerns from authors over the version of their work that could be

deposited in a repository, as things like typesetting and layout are much more important in a monograph (an end in itself) than they are for journal articles (means to ends)

Deposit of open access monographs in repositories is not very common – most monograph publishers do not have a public policy on repository deposit for books (Collins et al, 2015). Funders (e.g. HEFCE, AHRC) do not formally require researchers to deposit monographs in repositories although all encourage it.

### **Freemium**

Publishers make basic HTML 'read-online' version available online for free and libraries pay through subscription/membership for formatted 'premium' versions (PDFs, edoc) with additional data. These premium sales then fund free version. E.g. Open Editions, OECD (Bass and Edward, 2013). In some cases the publisher will also charge authors a fee if they believe that the premium versions will only partially cover their costs, although this is usually very low or can be waived in some circumstances. Examples of 'freemium' publishers are OECD, Bloomsbury Academic, Open Book Publishers, Open Humanities Press (Collins et al, 2015).

In the 'freemium' model it is also possible for publishers to develop premium services aimed at libraries. E.g. offering libraries catalogue records for all the titles, usage data, discounts on print or e-book versions. By charging libraries for these premium services the basic OA version can be made available for free with no charge to the author (Collins et al, 2015).

### **Library consortia/partnerships (AKA collaborative underwriting)**

Groups of libraries pay fixed costs for collections of open access titles. The cost per title or collection reduces with the number of participating libraries. E.g. [Knowledge Unlatched](#) (Bass and Edwards, 2013). The publisher is still able to sell print and e-book editions but the libraries that have contributed to the costs will often receive a discount on these because of their membership of the consortia and contribution to the cost of publishing the open access monograph. There is no charge to the author (Collins et al, 2015).

Groups of libraries contribute to fund the publication of open access books. By sharing the cost the libraries also share the risk. The consortium pays a fixed upfront fee which the publisher incurs pays for the publisher to publish the book online under a Creative Commons license. Publishers are able to create enhanced versions of the books for sale. The cost to each library for a book depends on the size of the consortium. <http://osc.cam.ac.uk/modern-monographs/open-monograph-business-models>

### **Altruists/crowdfunding**

In this model, altruists or crowd funders pay for an open access monograph for the public benefit. This model is best for back titles, crowd sourced, e.g. [Unglue.it](#)

### **Selective open access**

Some presses and learned societies subsidise open access monograph publishing via other activities they carry out, e.g. subscription income from a journal published by the society. A fee to the author is unlikely to be charged and the monograph will also be available for purchase in print (Collins et al, 2015).

### **Increased university press publishing**

There is an increasing number of new open access university presses that receive subsidies from their institutions. The subsidies may be financial, but they may also be estate costs, services in kind, in house production equipment, staff expertise, etc., e.g. UCL Press and University of Huddersfield Press (Collins et al, 2015). Researchers from the home institution might not need to pay a fee to publish their book in open access, but researchers from other institutions will. These presses often have a strong relationship with the university library. As with the gold-like model, these presses will still print on demand and sell a hardback or paperback copy in addition to making the open access version available.

Larger institutions could see benefits, e.g. Michigan, but librarians were sceptical – publishers are a professional business and universities do not have the resources/skills to do this (Bass and Edwards, 2013). New open access publishers and presses face the same challenges as any new publisher in relation to prestige - they need to build a reputation. Open access presses and publishers are trying to do this by setting up prestigious editorial boards and peer review panels.

### **Embargo/delayed open access**

The monograph is published as open access after a pre-determined amount of time or after the publisher has recouped an agreed amount of money from sales of the print and/or e-book versions. This requires negotiation between the author and the publisher but the author does not have to pay a fee (Collins et al, 2015).

### **What consortium arrangements exist already? Who is using them? What do they cost?**

#### **Knowledge Unlatched**

The Knowledge Unlatched model depends on many libraries from around the world sharing the payment of a single Title Fee to a publisher, in return for a book being made available on a [Creative Commons](#) licence via [OAPEN](#) and [HathiTrust](#) as a fully downloadable PDF. The Title Fee represents the basic cost of publishing a book. Because the Title Fee is a fixed amount, as more libraries participate in Knowledge Unlatched, the per-library cost of 'unlatching' each title declines. Access to the Title Fee allows publishers to feel confident that they will not make a loss on a title if it is made [open access](#). Publishers are willing to provide libraries with discounts and make books available on Open Access licences if they can be assured that their core costs will be covered. Once it has reached scale, this model is expected to be financially self-sustaining: the costs of

operating Knowledge Unlatched will be covered by a very small percentage of each Title Fee.

During the Pilot, Knowledge Unlatched worked to secure pledges from more than 200 libraries in order to unlatch a collection of 28 front-list titles from 13 recognised scholarly publishers. Publishers agreed to recognise print and eBook purchases made by libraries during the Pilot as a contribution towards the Title Fee. As a result, if a library purchased a print or eBook copy of any of the titles included in the Pilot Collection, they were not asked to pay an unlatching fee for that title. The Pilot Collection consists of 28 new books from 13 recognised scholarly publishers. Full details of the books included in the Pilot Collection are available [here](#). With 250 libraries participating, each book cost USD \$50 per library. According to one Knowledge Unlatched tweet: 'Almost 30k downloads of KU titles, average download of each book 1058!' <http://osc.cam.ac.uk/modern-monographs/open-monograph-business-models>

The minimum cost of a 'pledge' to Knowledge Unlatched is currently (February 2016) a minimum of \$2,643 (£1,820.06) to unlatch six packages and the maximum cost (to unlatch all eight packages) is \$3,891 (£2,682.62). As with the pilot the cost will reduce if more than 300 libraries participate.

Although a relatively new phenomenon, open access publishing for monographs already has significant support from some authors. The 2014 OAPEN-UK survey of over 2,000 researchers found that nearly 50% were 'positive' or 'very positive' about OA for monographs, with that proportion rising to 71% for PhD candidates. In addition, the DOAB now includes over 3,000 open access books from over 100 publishers (Collins et al, 2015).

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