Open Access (OA) has become the hot topic in the scholarly world. According to Peter Suber, the Director of the Harvard Open Access Project, OA literature is “digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. What makes it possible is the internet and the consent of the author or copyright-holder.”

To meet the growing demand for OA content, publishers are testing different business models to determine what will work best for their organizations. This means addressing the needs of various constituents; effectively collecting fees from authors and other funders; managing variable licensing rules at the article level; and continually measuring and testing – all with a focus on maintaining a sustainable business.

To help you develop or refine your OA strategy, we’ve developed Five Considerations for Publishers Developing Open Access Business Models.

1. **OPEN ACCESS DOESN’T NECESSARILY MEAN FREE**

   This is true in more ways than one. First, publishers incur costs for publication, including recruiting content, maintaining a peer review system, compositing, tagging and linking articles. Publishers seek to recoup these costs through Author Processing Charges (APCs). Meanwhile, even when a fee has been paid, OA does not mean making content available free-of-charge for all uses to everyone. Instead, it is the rightsholder who ultimately determines when license fees are collected for use of content. Today, publishers of OA journals are often choosing either to a) make their content available for reuse at no charge to all users OR b) to charge a fee when used by commercial organizations. This decision can be based on a number of factors, including the business model, the goals of a specific journal, a funding organization’s policy and more.

1 http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/brief.htm
2

DIVERSIFIED SOURCES OF REVENUE

OA can expand sources of revenue beyond corporate and academic content users — and especially libraries — to include non-traditional sources. Depending on the business model, this can include authors, funding organizations and content users with commercial needs.

- **Authors:** In any scholarly publishing model, authors are an important source of content. However, under Open Access, authors also represent a sizable source of funding. In many models, an author pays a fee to make the article available as Open Access to users. The author may also pay page submission charges and color charges, as well as reprints charges.

- **Funding Organizations:** Increasingly, funding organizations are playing a significant role in Open Access. Similar to authors, funding agencies can fund the publication of an Open Access article, either directly through a publisher or indirectly through author sponsorship, and are doing so in significant numbers. This puts an onus on the publisher to be able to effectively collect fees and provide a professional transactional experience to authors, funders and others.

- **Content Users:** Depending on the licensing terms a publisher sets, reuse of an OA article for commercial purposes (such as redistribution to users’ customers) may carry a fee. With such high industry demand for the latest research, commercial reuse may represent a meaningful source of revenue for OA journals. It may also represent a threat to existing business models where commercial rights are abdicated.

3

NEW FOCUS ON BOTH PRE-PUBLICATION AND POST-PUBLICATION TRANSACTIONS

With funding agencies and authors becoming increasingly important in the OA paradigm, publishers must focus on providing a professional (and easy) transactional experience — both pre- and post-publication. Funding agencies and academic institutions represent and manage large pools of funding dollars that are governed by various requirements. Authors are not going to be expert in these and may get caught in the middle. To address this, pre-publication, publishers must make it easy for authors to manage to these requirements. Meanwhile, post-publication, they must effectively communicate available rights licensing options to users at both the journal and the article level in order to comply with funder requirements and policies.

Continued
MEASUREMENT, MEASUREMENT, MEASUREMENT

It’s important that publishers understand what content users are interested in, how their publications are being used and reused, and what prices to set for various sets of content.

When charging for commercial reuse of OA journals, one price does not necessarily fit all. Publishers may wish to employ a tiered pricing structure across their OA content — by journal, by audience, etc. — similar to the system they use to manage their non-OA content. To refine this, publishers must have the ability to test and measure the impact of price. Based on that feedback, publishers can make intelligent changes to pricing and rights for various constituents (society members, Hinari countries, etc.) — even at the article level.

Even if a publisher chooses to make content available for use and reuse to all users without a fee, publishers should still employ mechanisms to track and measure usage. This will lead to stronger decision-making and better reporting back to authors and funding agents.

INCREASED ROLE FOR INTERMEDIARIES

When considering an OA model, different business rules may be required for different content types, markets, sectors, funding agency requirements, etc. A well-regarded and trusted intermediary that understands the complexities of scholarly publishing operations and is able to manage precisely against publication rules will become an essential partner. Technology investment will be required to employ sophisticated and variable business models and existing processes will quickly become outdated. By employing intermediaries to provide automation and standardization, publishers can deliver greatly improved customer experiences for all OA stakeholders.

For more details, read the recent report from the Research Information Network, “The Potential Role for Intermediaries in Managing the Payment of Open Access Article Processing Charges (APCs)” at www.researchinfonet.org.

CCC — HELPING RIGHTSHOLDERS FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS

For over 30 years, Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) has developed licensing and content solutions to help rightsholders increase revenue, automate processes, contain costs, and protect their rights and content. To learn how CCC can help you, please visit www.rightscentral.com.