



#### About ASM Journals

As a division of the American Society for Microbiology, [ASM Journals](#) advances microbial sciences by sharing the results of fundamental and applied research. ASM publishes high-quality research drawn from eminent institutions around the world that has been rigorously peer-reviewed by experts. Articles published by ASM Journals have received international media attention and have been featured in dozens of media outlets, including the New York Times, Science Magazine, Los Angeles Times, CNN, National Public Radio, and CNBC.



#### Case Study

## American Society for Microbiology Smooths the Transition to Open Access by Collaborating with CCC

### The Challenge: Adapt to New Models for Publishing Research

As scholarly publishing continues its move to OA, publishers need OA management solutions that simplify payment workflows while also enabling the testing of new business models. This was the challenge facing the publishing division of the American Society for Microbiology, [ASM Journals](#).

The organization manages a portfolio of 15 journals and looked to transition to a Subscribe to Open (S2O) OA publishing model to align with the industry movement to make it easier for scholars, researchers, and scientists to access, cite, and share their work. To launch the effort, David Haber, the Director of Journal Publishing Operations for ASM Journals, started looking for a solution to manage OA agreements.

“We first needed to get a clear picture of how the financials would work and understand our data requirements so that both our finance and data teams could hit the ground running once we made the switch,” Haber explains.

As part of looking at workflows, Haber wanted to make sure the ASM Journals finance and sales teams understood the internal costs relating to OA agreements. The solution for managing OA agreements would need to provide detailed reporting to know how publication fees impact the bottom line so the division could ensure it continued to operate profitably.

“We also required the solution to integrate with our other systems, such as our customer database, which collects data on scientific research authors,” Haber adds. “When presented with a potential publishing agreement, we need to know author affiliations, where their funding is coming from, and who on our sales team is responsible for that affiliation.”

Historically, ASM Journals granted fee promotions and waivers to research authors based on specific criteria. The process was manual and involved complex payment rules. Haber hoped the chosen OA solution would simplify the management of these financial business rules.

“It’s critical to understand all the agreements we have in place with authors,” Haber says. “This is difficult when multiple people track agreements with their own spreadsheets. In addition to automating the tracking process, we wanted to centralize the data we captured so everyone would have access to a single source that is always accurate and up-to-date.”



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**David Haber**

Director, Journal Publishing Operations,  
ASM Journals

## The Solution: RightsLink for Scientific Communications

To find the best solution for managing emerging OA publishing models, Haber conferred with internal colleagues as well as contacts at other publishers. The top recommendation he received from both perspectives was RightsLink for Scientific Communications.

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RightsLink simplifies OA for publishers, funders, institutions, and authors. With workflows to accommodate both single payments and consolidated funding through institutional agreements, RightsLink drives efficiencies and collaboration across scholarly communications to help publishers like ASM Journals launch and scale their OA programs.

"With OA, we need to operationalize many processes and track a large volume of data," Haber points out. "This is simply not possible if we try to do all that in spreadsheets. Knowing RightsLink collects data and automates processes behind the scenes gives us peace-of-mind as we contemplate major changes to our publishing model. We could not make those changes without CCC and RightsLink."

The RightsLink implementation managed by CCC also turned out to be the best deployment of a software solution that Haber has ever experienced in his 20 years in publishing. "It was smooth, easy and thorough—even with all the pricing and discount changes we were going through," says Haber. "CCC has so much experience with publishers that they know the best practices to follow and the scripts to use to streamline the process. They also know precisely where to tweak the software and where to leave it alone for each use-case scenario."

## The Benefits: Setting the Stage for Open Science Leadership

In addition to helping the ASM finance team understand internal costs and the finances associated with new OA publishing models, RightsLink allows ASM Journals to handle the pressure of funders wanting to publish science research through the OA model. "We can apply the publishing models that we are developing, each of which RightsLink can enable—both open participation and open access—without making it unsustainable to publish," Haber says. "This allows us to go where we want to go strategically—from an equity standpoint and a diversity standpoint—so we can continue to be an open science leader."

The RightsLink solution also taps into a CCC solution that another ASM division had previously deployed—Ringgold Identify Database. Ringgold Identify Database provides over 725,000 persistent identifiers and organization records with rich hierarchies of over 30 descriptive metadata elements to improve data quality, and it also supports interoperability across scholarly infrastructure.

"Because Ringgold captures subdomains in nested hierarchies, we can more easily relate authors and researchers to their location and then match them to our subscribing institutions," Haber emphasizes. "As a result, we can make sure our S2O deals work."



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ASM Journals will use Ringgold during the production process leveraging standardized institution lists to generate better demographics and identity information about authors throughout the system. This will eliminate duplicate data and consolidate entries in the ASM peer review submission system.

“Ringgold will also help our sales team because they can map author IDs to research areas,” Haber adds. “It opens a new realm of data about places and people that we didn’t have before. We can then use RightsLink as the conduit that connects all these systems to centralized identity information.”

## A New Perspective on Product Offerings

Another CCC solution ASM will explore is RightsLink Author Services, specifically Author Reprints. RightsLink Author Reprints will help ASM Journals track and collect fees on e-print and reprint requests when authors want to buy articles. This will provide authors with a better author experience by streamlining the publication process and will also allow them to increase the visibility of their research while ASM can look to diversify its offerings and expand revenue streams.

Ultimately, the partnership with CCC prompted the management team at ASM Journals to think about product offerings in a different way.

“RightsLink and the other CCC solutions allow us to think creatively about new products—such as translation services,” says Haber. “We couldn’t do this before because we couldn’t conceive of a fair and efficient way to collect fees on the new service. It was always an onerous process. But because RightsLink integrates with our workflows, we can think about the best time to offer new author services, and that will help us expand our revenue streams.”

## The Results

By partnering with CCC to deploy RightsLink for Scientific Communications, ASM Journals is paving the way for its transition to OA publishing models. In addition to automating author agreement workflows to reduce manual work and improve staff efficiency, ASM’s use of Ringgold IDs will improve the accuracy of data when matching researchers to funding institutions during the agreement process. The powerful combination of RightsLink and Ringgold enables ASM Journals to scale its publication capacity more easily.

### About CCC

A pioneer in voluntary collective licensing, CCC advances copyright, accelerates knowledge, and powers innovation. With expertise in copyright, data quality, data analytics, and FAIR data implementations, CCC and its subsidiary RightsDirect collaborate with stakeholders on innovative solutions to harness the power of data and AI.



Copyright Clearance Center

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