

Case Study



Company

The Company of Biologists

Location

Cambridge, UK

About

The Company of Biologists is a not-for-profit publishing organization dedicated to supporting and inspiring the biological community. It publishes five leading peer-reviewed journals, facilitates scientific meetings and communities, provides travel grants for young researchers, and supports and funds research societies.

The Company of Biologists shortens publication timeline and scales Read & Publish program

With CCC's RightsLink for Scientific Communications and OA Intelligence

The Company of Biologists, publisher of five leading peer-reviewed journals, has a century-long history supporting and inspiring science. As the field of biology has evolved, so too has The Company of Biologists, from the days of in-house printing presses to today's online-only publishing.

In 2004, The Company of Biologists began introducing open access (OA) publishing. Collecting article processing charges (APCs) was a manual, time-consuming process, in which the finance team sent invoices and authors faxed payment details.

As with many publishers, market pressures to publish OA increased, and their OA program grew. As a result, managing institutional agreements and their varying rules became increasingly complex, causing a significant administrative burden.





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Kirsty McCormack
Technical Operations Director
The Company of Biologists

The solution: A streamlined APC workflow enables OA to scale

In response to the need to simplify OA publishing workflows, in 2014, CCC launched a solution for publishers to simplify APC collection and manage OA agreements: RightsLink for Scientific Communications. The Company of Biologists had already built a trusted relationship with CCC as a rightsholder, and they soon became an early adopter of RightsLink.

According to Kirsty McCormack, Technical Operations Director at The Company of Biologists, RightsLink was a natural fit.

"We chose to leverage CCC's RightsLink as we felt the services on offer would help us streamline our processes and reduce the workload on our staff while providing an industry-leading customer experience," she said.

Having RightsLink in place allowed The Company of Biologists to streamline their workflow, and they gradually increased the share of articles published OA each year.

The Company of Biologists easily integrated RightsLink into their submission system, Aries Systems' Editorial Manager. This allows authors to view their specific OA publishing charges, based on a calculation of several factors: their institutional affiliation, article metadata, and The Company of Biologists' publishing rules and discounts. Once their paper is accepted, authors receive an APC payment link by email, which takes them to RightsLink's payment portal. There, authors either complete their billing details and provide VAT numbers or request OA funding through their institution.

In 2020, the need for quickly and freely available scientific communications during the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the push toward OA publishing. That year, The Company of Biologists was one of the first not-for-profit publishers to launch a cost-neutral Read & Publish program to help in their transition. Within five years, the Read & Publish program grew to more than 300 agreements with more than 1,000 institutions.

"We would not have been able to manage the introduction and rapid growth in Read & Publish agreements without RightsLink's agreement management capabilities," Shelly Turner, Sales & Marketing Director at The Company of Biologists, said.

Today, two of their five journals are fully OA, and three are transformative. More than 50% of total research articles are published OA.

The results: Improved author experience and publication efficiency

Author experience is a top priority for The Company of Biologists, and RightsLink has become an essential piece of their author-facing OA workflow.

"We have found that RightsLink offers us many benefits, the most important being it provides a positive author experience due to its streamlined service and integration with our submission system," Kirsty McCormack said.

"We regularly receive very positive feedback on the simplicity and ease of use of the RightsLink system from our authors via social media and direct to our editorial team," Turner added.



The OA Intelligence tool helps us create new agreement offers and allows us to model scenarios so we can easily predict the progression of our Open Access article output which, in turn, will help us with future strategic scenario planning.”

Shelly Turner
Sales & Marketing Director
The Company of Biologists

The simplified workflow with RightsLink increases speed to publication by ensuring that APCs are paid quickly or Read & Publish agreements are approved before content is released online. Their average publication timeline is now only six weeks from acceptance to final version of record, with accepted manuscripts posted earlier at 12-14 days. Lastly, RightsLink significantly reduces the administrative burden associated with OA publishing.

“RightsLink offers improved efficiencies for billing and collection of fees, the ability to integrate different pricing rules including Tax and VAT rules through different regions and the ability to run customized reports to assist us in future planning,” Shelly Turner said.

Looking ahead: OA Intelligence improves strategic planning

More recently, The Company of Biologists adopted OA Intelligence, CCC’s tool for publishers to disambiguate, model, and analyze publication data with AI-enabled affiliation matching technology. Their regional sales managers found immediate value in the tool, according to Shelly Turner.

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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.



Learn more

Learn more about CCC’s Scholarly Communications Suite:

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