

openCost: The Road To Publication Cost Transparency - The Next Stage

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Book of Abstracts

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Hands-on Lab / 1

Hands-on Lab: Central publication cost reporting

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The Hands-on Lab offers practical insights and an open exchange for publication cost managers. The focus is on the effective processing of publication fees in scientific institutions as a contribution to the sustainable establishment of an information budget. We invite you to look over each other's shoulders as we demonstrate individual workflows and meet collective challenges. We all share the overarching goal of optimizing structures and making structural adjustments in order to enable central cost monitoring in support of the OA transformation and to come closer to the conceptual implementation of an information budget. Scientific publishing and the associated costs are a complex endeavor: In the jungle of cost models, publishing agreements and terminology, we will jointly examine concrete case studies based on invoices. Participants are invited to contribute ideas, arguments, everyday reports, sample invoices or similar materials. While sifting through heterogeneous internal processes, we will come across homogeneous problems and questions. Topics such as internal communication, the cost management department, terminologies, cost splitting, currency conversions, data transfers to funding bodies or OpenAPC are just some of the aspects that can be addressed in order to learn from each other and develop best practices. The experience of the openCost project will also be incorporated into the hands-on lab. Using the repositories of DESY and the University of Regensburg, practical exercises can be carried out and workflows from invoice receipt and documentation in a cost module to invoice payment can be simulated using centralized processes.

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Paying is not enough

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In the past, centralised library budgets were used to ensure the best possible information supply through purchasing and licensing. However, due to the monopoly structures that have developed over time, this 'information budget 1.0' has reached its limits.

The aim of Open Access is to re-establish an adequate supply of information for the needs of science and scholarship.

However, in order to guarantee Open Access, publishing is often made subject to charges, especially with the current focus on APC-based models and hybrid Open Access covered by so-called transformation contracts.

At first glance, this appears to lead merely to a shift in financial flows. At the same time, however, there is often a redistribution of costs within institutions, as publication funds, for example, can no longer fully cover the costs. The 'information budget 2.0' is therefore often distributed and virtual, which makes monitoring more difficult. Currently, libraries focus mainly to handle that.

On the other hand, this development is also an opportunity for libraries to improve their services to the research community. There is no doubt that the necessary invoice processing and contract

management are in good hands. However, when the entire publication process is taken into account, including the different roles of publications in scholarly communication, there are synergies that go far beyond monitoring, to the benefit of all.

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Opening of the conference

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The openCost metadata schema

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Within the framework of openCost, the project team has developed a metadata schema for costs associated with scholarly publishing, in collaboration with a number of various stakeholders. In addition to modelling cost data for individual items, modelling of contracts and their associated costs has also been developed. The metadata schema is needed to enable an automated and standardised exchange of cost data in order to improve cost transparency on an institutional, national and international level. For data exchange, openCost proposes the well-established OAI-PMH protocol, leading us to propose an XML serialisation first.

In this talk we present the results in detail and some use cases. The first part focuses on the schema for fee-based, individual articles, which includes Open Access (e.g. APC) and non-Open Access costs (e.g. page or colour charges) as well as costs for processing fees (e.g. costs for bank transfer, credit cards etc.). In the second part, we illustrate the schema for contracts, which contains data related to payment models like transformative agreements, association memberships or subscriptions. In addition to cost data, this schema also includes unique identifiers, allowing individual publications to be directly linked to specific contracts.

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OpenAPC: New features and extensions in the context of open-Cost

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The OpenAPC initiative collects and disseminates datasets on fees paid for open access publishing under an open database license. OpenAPC is operated by Bielefeld University Library. The aims of OpenAPC are transparency and reproducibility of OA costs, as well as to illustrate the development of costs over time. The initiative aggregates data on Open Access journal articles (APCs), Open Access Books (BPCs) and data on articles published under transformative agreements.

So far, only the actual OA fees have been collected and processed, i.e. APCs and BPCs, including taxes and discounts. Additional costs that are also linked to electronic publishing, such as colour

or page charges, were not included. Within the framework of the openCost project the OpenAPC infrastructure was extended so that these additional costs can also be aggregated. Collecting and analysing these types of costs is intended to show how relevant they are in relation to classical APCs and what share the various cost items make up in the overall picture.

By using the openCost format, OpenAPC is able to standardise its harvesting process and offer institutions the possibility to report additional costs. The talk presents the implementation and processing workflows, including some initial data and analysis options, as well as potentials and ways of providing your additional cost data to OpenAPC.

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Shaping Transparency for Publication Costs: Collecting, Analyzing and Reporting Cost Data Using a Standardized Data Schema

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Through the “Open Access Publication Funding” programme [1], the German Research Foundation (DFG) is providing scientific institutions with financial support for open access publication fees. One of the programme’s key objectives is to enable a system of transparent monitoring of publication fees at scientific institutions, with the intent to leverage to the national and international level. The monitoring [2] of these publications and associated costs has been established since 2022. Data collection is based on the submission of data from funded institutions in an ongoing process that is subject to changes and adjustments. Criticism and suggestions from the participants [3] were collected in the Transform2Open project [4], and have been incorporated as far as possible into the data schema and the submission process for the second and subsequent reporting years. At the same time, adjustments were made to the data schema in collaboration with the openCost project in order to facilitate the transfer of data to other systems, mainly OpenAPC [5]. Decisive steps have thus been taken towards a unified, standardized publication and cost monitoring system. This can simplify the reporting process for institutions and is an important tool for drawing up and monitoring an information budget.

[1] <https://www.dfg.de/en/research-funding/funding-opportunities/programmes/infrastructure/lis/funding-opportunities/open-access-publication-funding>

[2] https://go.fzj.de/DFG_OAPK_en

[3] <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10810729>

[4] <https://www.transform2open.de/en/>

[5] <https://openapc.net/>

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Irene Barbers is Head of the Literature Acquisition Department at the Central Library of Forschungszentrum Jülich. She is responsible for the further development and operation of the Open Access Monitor as well as for monitoring the DFG funding program Open Access Publication Costs, which is carried out by Forschungszentrum Jülich on behalf of DFG. She is also part of the Transform2Open project team.

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Monitoring and Analysis of Publication Costs - The Austrian Approach

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Alongside the open access transformation process, the monitoring, allocation, analysis and presentation of (open access) publication costs becomes more and more important for research institutions to gain a better overview on their financial expenditures for publishing. Christian Kaier and Melanie Stummvoll will talk about the Austrian approach to harmonise the monitoring of publication costs on an institutional level and to set up national standards. In the framework of the Austrian Transition to Open Access Two [1] project, subproject 3 has developed best practice workflows, information materials, reports and recommendations. The speakers will talk about findings as well as lessons learned during the four year project phase.

[1] <https://at2oa.at/en/>

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Opening of the Workshop

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A new dataobject (entity) in EPrints for contracts/agreements with publishers

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Lessons learned when using the DESY JOIN2 APC-Modul at GSI in different publication infrastructure for the DFG OA monitoring

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This presentation reports on the use of the JOIN2 APC module from DESY at the GSI Helmholtz Center for Heavy Ion Research in Darmstadt. In contrast to DESY, there is no central office for all publication billing at the GSI Helmholtz Center and no approval procedure.

Topics will be problems of experimental use or “no” corresponding authors in the health research area, the usage as quality and error control etc.

Lessons learned for the new module for JOIN2 MyCore/MIR will be presented - especially the pre-set assignments for the transformative contracts.

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The Repository as focal point: Cost data in Bielefeld's PUB system as part of an information budget

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openCost@EZB: Journal Information for Repositories

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The Electronic Journals Library (EZB) offers information on over 100,000 journals, with metadata managed by more than 660 libraries. As part of the openCost project, the EZB has been expanded and now offers information on publishing in journals, publication costs, and the funding conditions of institutions. This information is available to end users in the EZB and via its interfaces for subsequent use by repositories or others.

In this workshop, we will introduce the EZB's new openCost features. Together with the participants, we will discuss how repositories, their operators and, most notably, their users can benefit from the information provided by the EZB. Based on this, we will jointly define the requirements for further interfaces used for data exchange.

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An Aggregator's Perspective: Harvesting Repositories in OpenAPC

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Concluding Discussion

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openCost@GEOMAR

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We will give a short insight how we, as a Helmholtz Research Centre, use our institutional repository OceanRep to monitor open access publication costs. We started with the first steps in 2016 and are still learning. We will show what already works quite well and where we experience technical or organizational challenges.

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Open access safari: Tracking the hidden costs of APCs in the wild

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The University of Groningen (UG) Library conducted a financial investigation into its OA costs outside of the institutional R&P deals in 2022. This investigation showed that at least 1M€ per year is spent on Article Processing Charges outside of the deals. This is in addition to the 4M€ spent on R&P deals. The data was obtained via the financial system by downloading all invoices labeled as 'publication costs'. This figure is a rough estimate, as the financial system is not set up in a way that allows these costs to be monitored accurately and without manual processing.

As a follow-up to this exercise, the open access team looked at expenditure at the faculty level. Beside invoices retrieved via the financial system, an alternative data source (DataHub) and method was used. The results obtained via the two methods vary greatly. We expect the method based on invoices to be an underestimation of the expenditure, while the DataHub method is most likely an overestimation.

This talk will outline the two methods used, the results obtained, as well as discuss the difficulties the UG encounters in monitoring these costs efficiently and accurately.

Lastly, the presentation will outline our efforts to support open access books via a dedicated fund that partially covers BPCs. Here too, we are looking for ways to get a grip on what we spend our scarce resources on.

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RWTH Aachen University on the way to cost transparency in publishing

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As a project partner of the JOIN² cooperation [1] and thus also as a supporter of the openCost project, the University Library of RWTH Aachen University collects data on publication costs in its institutional repository. The cost information on articles from the DEAL project from the years 2022 and 2023 was successfully harvested and integrated for the first time to OpenAPC.

The two-layered structure of the library system and the affiliated university hospital are a particular organisational challenge for cost monitoring.

With effect from 1 January 2024, the University Library has set up an Open Access Publication Fund with third-party funding from the DFG's funding program 'Open Access Publication Costs' to improve the services for open scientific publishing at the university and thus further increase the global visibility of RWTH's research output.

The transparent documentation of the cost information is the first step towards comprehensive cost monitoring at RWTH Aachen University.

[1] <https://join2-wiki.gsi.de/>

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openCost & EZB: An Introduction to the New Features for Providing Information on Publication Costs and OA Publishing

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Driven by the openCost project, the EZB is being extended to provide researchers and authors with information on the costs of OA publishing, as well as on funding conditions and subsidies available at their own institution. The new features allow authors to use the EZB to navigate through the details of funding conditions and to estimate publication costs. Additionally, library staff or researchers benefit from the EZB as it facilitates providing information on publication cost funding, memberships, or even transformative agreements, such as DEAL.

The EZB makes this information available for further use through its data export and user interfaces. In order to implement these innovations, both the EZB user interface and parts of the EZB administration have been extended and updated. Furthermore, the OpenAPC cost aggregation service has been integrated into the EZB data source, so users are being provided with journal-specific cost data via the user and data interfaces. Participating institutions use the EZB administration to maintain up-to-date information on publication cost coverage and to release their applicable funding conditions, cost information, and memberships for various journals. Both general and institution-specific publishing information are now accessible in a user-friendly manner on the EZB journal details page and additionally, via its data interfaces. Working closely with the openCost and EZB community, these new features will be significantly extended in the future.

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Negotiating Transformative Agreements –Standards and Variation, Achievements and Challenges

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The ESAC Transformative Agreement Registry lists around 540 transformative deals for 2024, concluded with about 60 publishers and covering more than 60 countries. While these agreements follow the same underlying principle of combining open access publishing and reading with the ultimate goal of open access transformation, they tend to differ significantly in detail. Drawing on examples and negotiation experience, the presentation will look into key elements of this type of agreement, attempts at standardisation and best practice, and reasons for variation. It will also ask what has been achieved so far and what challenges remain, especially in terms of the transformative nature of the agreements and what we mean by that.

Dr. Hildegard Schäffler, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

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Progress report on the integration of openCost into the MyCoRe repository framework

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Monitoring costs of scholarly publishing in Sweden –read and publish agreements, APC:s in the wild and subscriptions

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Since 2017, The National Library of Sweden is commissioned by the government to monitor the total expenditures for scholarly publishing at higher education institutions (HEI). The result is presented in a yearly report to the government. The Bibsam Consortium negotiates national read and/or publish agreements with 30-plus publishers, which the HEIs can choose to participate in. The presentation will provide an overview of the processes involved in gathering different types of expenditures, with a focus on article processing charges not covered by the agreements –information shared with the Open APC Initiative.

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The hidden costs of open access: navigating to a more equitable future

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Initiatives such as openCost play an important role in improving transparency and understanding around open access publication costs. There are other hidden costs and unintended consequences that open access is often criticised for: the growth of unsustainable business models, the rise of questionable journals that exploit the APC, and a less equitable publishing landscape. However, it's a myth that open access means APCs, and two-thirds of open access journals listed in DOAJ do not charge publication fees. The presentation will explore the wave of enthusiasm for, and investment in, no-fee institutional and scholar-led publishing as an alternative to the APC model. What are the challenges for this form of publishing? What role does DOAJ, an open scholarly infrastructure, play in supporting these journals, and how can the wider research and library community create a more equitable and fair future for open access?

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Two Years After: Cost Monitoring in Finland

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For about ten years, the National Library of Finland and the FinELib consortium office (part of the National Library) have been monitoring Finland's institutional expenditure to guide FinELib's negotiations with publishers and to enable the administration of our existing agreements. Most major Finnish HEI's now share their APC cost data with OpenAPC, while all Finnish HEI's provide data for our national cost survey, conducted every second year since 2022 and designed to provide an up-to-date picture of the total costs of OA and publication to Finnish institutions. This presentation will provide an overview of the Finnish approach to cost monitoring, while offering some reflections on the first two years of this exercise: what have we learned and what kind of changes have we made (or should make) to our approach? In addition, it will discuss the metrics used by FinELib to evaluate the value of transformative agreements, before concluding with some remarks on the principles of cost monitoring.

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Supporting Strategic Decision-Making with Open Cost Data: Insights from OpenAIRE and PathOS

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Effective strategic decision-making in Open Science (OS) relies on a nuanced understanding of how journal business models influence market dynamics and research activities. This talk will explore how integrating detailed Open Cost Data with the advanced tools, data and evaluation frameworks from OpenAIRE [1] and the PathOS project [2] can support the assessment and optimization of OS practices.

The OpenAIRE Graph [3], a comprehensive scientific knowledge database, provides essential insights into the OS landscape with the OpenAIRE monitoring services [4, 5] offering data-driven dashboards and tools for evaluating OS metrics and trends. Complementing this, the PathOS project offers sophisticated methodologies, including a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) and a range of impact indicators, to measure the societal, academic, and economic impacts of OS initiatives.

We will briefly address the critical gaps in current tools and approaches. Specifically, we will discuss the challenges in effectively estimating the full impact of OS practices and what additional elements are needed for these tools to provide more accurate and actionable insights. This includes addressing limitations in data integration, enhancing methodological frameworks, and identifying key areas for improvement in impact evaluation.

Attendees will gain insights into how open cost data can uncover essential market dynamics, such as cost trends and resource allocation patterns, and learn what is needed to improve the effectiveness of current tools in supporting policymaking.

[1] <https://www.openaire.eu/>

[2] <https://pathos-project.eu/>

[3] <https://graph.openaire.eu/>

[4] <https://oamonitor.ireland.openaire.eu/>

[5] <https://monitor.openaire.eu/>

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APCs Under the Microscope: Six Years of Monitoring and Analyzing Scientific Publication Costs in France

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The french national Couperin consortium conducts each year a large-scale survey among its members to monitor and analyze the costs related to scientific publications from French laboratories. This survey covers the costs associated with immediate open access publication of scientific articles (APC), as well as other related expenses such as color illustrations and page overlength charges. Since 2017, approximately 80 institutions have participated each year, with over 26,400 APCs recorded, totaling nearly 50 million euros. During this presentation, we will discuss the methodology implemented by the consortium for data collection using accountingsoftware, ensuring precise and comparable results between institutions. We will also cover the channels for disseminating the collected data to ensure maximum transparency, accessibility, and value, as well as the challenges of collecting these data on a national scale in a particularly complex landscape.

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Closing Speech: The Future of openCost

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Tracking institution and journal relationships in TAs: the devil in the details

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As part of our work with cOAlition S, Cottage Labs has been involved in tracking the details of Transformative Agreements, and especially the changing lists of institutions and journals to which they apply. We use this information to give authors up-to-date information about the agreements that cover their work, to ensure compliant Open Access publishing.

Transformative Agreements are not a well-defined thing; in our work we have encountered many types of agreements with various strange internal structures and eligibility criteria. They can also change who they apply to over time, and require substantial ongoing effort to keep up-to-date. Nonetheless, this effort is necessary if we are to provide authors with good, timely advice on their compliant Open Access publishing options, and to point them to resources to help them with their publication financing. There are also limits on what can be known about these agreements: there are many that are not on ESAC, the most authoritative register of these deals, and the actual finances backing these agreements are opaque. Even the formats of the agreements and the way that they are published online (if at all) provide challenges in extracting information.

At Cottage Labs we have developed a variety of tools and processes to help us manage a large corpus of information about Transformative Agreements. This presentation will expose the detailed internals of these agreements and the challenges involved in tracking them, and how the data is used to support authors and institutions through cOAlition S tools.