

## Q&A UKSG Webinar: Getting out from the back of the sofa: Or, how can we achieve sustainable funding for Open Access books?

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Questions	Answers
<p>How can we address anxieties relating to oa book publishing, such as a perceived lack of prestige of publishing OA, particularly amongst early career researchers who are on more precarious contracts?</p>	<p><b>Tom:</b> I asked my Copim colleague Lucy Barnes for some thoughts here as I am not best-placed to respond to this. Lucy is Senior Editor at Open Book Publishers and kindly noted the following thoughts and links:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Smaller presses are not prestige-free. Books at smaller OA presses are well-reviewed in respected journals and win prizes. There are also prizes that are beginning to be offered specifically for OA books, such as the ACLS Open Access Book Prize and the Arcadia Open Access Publishing Award: <a href="https://www.acls.org/programs/open-access-book-prize/">https://www.acls.org/programs/open-access-book-prize/</a></li><li>2) If you are worried about how a certain publisher might look on your CV, contextualise it with a few lines explaining why you chose that press, and what the benefits have been e.g. if you chose it for wider readership, what are the usage stats like so far?</li><li>3) For more structural ways of addressing this problem, we need institutional leadership. The REF is publisher-neutral, so start emphasising to authors that the name of the publisher is not a guide to the quality of the work. Sign DORA. Live up to it! And: can you incentivise OA publishing within your institution, and make it plain that smaller OA presses will not be penalised (in fact, could there even be a way to reward publishing with such a press)?</li><li>4) Elaine's point about Lancaster looking for OA champions at more senior level is also important. It's understandable that more senior academics would encourage junior colleagues to do what they did to achieve success, but academic publishing is changing!</li></ol>

	<p>Encourage them to embrace that change and use their greater 'career capital' to make bolder choices when publishing, so it is easier for others.</p> <p><b>Elaine:</b> Firstly, I would say we need to recruit champions from within departments, preferably more established researchers who are keen on OA publishing. As Lucy says, we can engage them to themselves publish with other presses and also ask them to provide support and encouragement to ECRs.</p> <p>Secondly, I would also suggest that we link in wherever possible with any current work on Research Culture that is taking place in our institutions at the moment, especially if it is looking at promotions and section criteria. We should be ensuring that things like 'prestige' measures are explicitly excluded.</p> <p>Finally I would say that we need to be in contact with our ECRs. I've found that some are just looking for options as to where they can publish and unsure what's out there. We can provide that advice and often give a wider range of options than their departmental colleagues.</p>
<p>Great talk! What changes would Tom &amp; Elaine like to see in how the UKRI fund can be used to support alternative models and challenge expensive BPCs?</p>	<p><b>Tom:</b> Glad you enjoyed it, thanks for coming! The UKRI policy was a laudable attempt to include Diamond models and I really respect they had the guts to try it. It has suffered from unintended consequences perhaps as it's financially more prudent for presses to claim the £10k BPC than the lower £6 Diamond funding available but there are also issues with the workflow of it, i.e. at what point libraries and publishers can access the money and if the timing is quite right. One suggestion might be that, given consortial models depend on support from institutions that potentially renew annually, could libraries use these funds to reclaim support for multi-year subscriptions?</p> <p>I believe the policy can be workable with non-BPC models though with some consultation and tweaking! One practical first step would be for UKRI to meet with the <a href="#">Open Institutional Publishing Association</a></p>

	<p><a href="#">(OIPA)</a> group and workshop the workflow of when and how presses can access the fund. OIPA also has suggestions on greater transparency around expensive BPCs so that libraries and authors can make more informed decisions on all of this.</p> <p>Copim wrote down some <a href="#">initial thoughts in a blog post here after it came out</a> and the project would be very happy to meet and discuss practical ideas with UKRI if that would help, please just get in touch on <a href="mailto:info@copim.ac.uk">info@copim.ac.uk</a></p> <p><b>Elaine:</b> I would like to see UKRI play a more active role in supporting the wider publishing infrastructure. I understand their reluctance to be seen to be influencing where people are publishing, but I'd love to see an annual allowance made to institutions (along the lines of the block grant) that we were able to use to support diamond/alternative presses. Obviously this would all need thinking through by someone far cleverer than I but I think it would go a long way towards removing the risk that I mentioned in the talk of institutions having to speculatively sign up to these deals in anticipation of recouping costs later on from publishing authors.</p>
<p>Interested in your comment about power. Authors will always be very influential here. Are we doing enough to take messages and options out to academic conferences and academic societies?</p>	<p><b>Elaine:</b> In a word, no! I think there's a lot more we can do in terms of advocating for alternative models/presses. I'd not thought of it before but I think it's a great idea to go to conferences and societies. We've always relied on our authors for this, but it would be fantastic to link in more actively with our authors - perhaps a co-presentation with an academic champion or a piece in a learned society?</p>
<p>What do you do if you are a small institution who might only publish 3 books a year, and you have no idea which publisher they will be with - and no budget - how could you justify any of these schemes, however much you support them in principle?</p>	<p><b>Tom:</b>In terms of practical ideas, these three blog posts contain specific arguments and language from librarians working on the same problem as you that might be helpful:  1) <i>How can I persuade my institution to support collective funding for open access books?</i> <a href="#">Part 1</a> &amp; <a href="#">Part 2</a></p>

	<p>2) <a href="#">Building assessment criteria for collection development policies</a></p> <p>I would consider this not from the angle of where your own researchers publish but instead whose books you currently <b>buy</b>. So, for example, if your institution has a strong history and politics research or teaching component and you buy books from a multitude of presses publishing in those fields, then those are the presses whose OA programmes you may consider supporting. I think the big journal publishers have done tremendous damage in entrenching the Read and Publish concept because we shouldn't be thinking about these OA book models as 'pay to publish' at all. What we're trying to do is <b>uncouple</b> this link between a university paying a fee so its own researchers can publish openly. Instead we need to encourage universities to sustain presses that they value, and that publish work in relevant fields: work with presses to make BPC-free models successful and then <b>any</b> authors (including your own) who come to those presses with a book proposal will be able to publish OA.</p> <p><b>Elaine:</b> I'd agree with Tom's point above regarding looking at it from a collection point of view. Could you liaise with the relevant department to review a press' OA offer and look to incorporate it in their reading lists? If so, could this lead to potential content savings that you could use to support an OA offer? Some are very low cost and could perhaps offer at least a start?</p>
<p>Do you think there might be a place for library/scholar led open monograph publishing. We have recently set up open textbook publishing through Pressbooks and wondering how monographs might work.</p>	<p><b>Tom:</b> I think we answered this on the call but just to add, I was on the original team that set up the library-led White Rose University Press and I think it makes a lot of sense to bring publishing back into the academy like this. Giving back the means of production to the workers! Good luck in your endeavours - there are loads of excellent resources out there on publishing OA monographs, but the following links here would be a good place to start:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Open Institutional Publishing Association (OIPA)</a> - support and advocacy for established</li> </ul>

	<p>and emerging university presses and institutionally-affiliated publishing operations striving for open access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Open Access Books Network (OABN)</a> is a space for conversations about OA books. Researchers, publishers, librarians, research funders, infrastructure providers can engage in discussions, events and find helpful materials via the network.</li> <li>● Jisc's <a href="#">New University Press Toolkit</a> supporting and giving guidance to new university presses and library-led publishing ventures.</li> <li>● <a href="#">Library Publishing Coalition</a> is an independent, community-led membership association of academic and research libraries and library consortia engaged in scholarly publishing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Elaine:</b> Yes definitely! But the only thing I would say is not to underestimate the amount of work involved. It's not just the standard functions of a press (editing, hosting etc) but also the relentless task of promoting and marketing it and trying to engage authors to publish with it, particularly in the first few years. I thought Worcester's suggestion of partnering with other institutions sounded brilliant, and I'm forever inspired by the White Rose!</p>
<p>University presses have previously made their titles available across multiple paywalled platforms (I assume to maximise reach?). Is that proving problematic with making the backlist access to fund new OA model attractive? We've purchased all over the place traditionally and can have significant existing access</p>	<p><b>Tom:</b> In terms of the <i>Opening the Future</i> model, I don't think it's been too problematic because the backlist packages on offer have all been especially curated by the presses to contain a mix of books that cover specific research areas. They have also been priced much lower than the traditional sales route. So that means the majority of libraries may have only already bought some titles but not others, and the remaining titles in the package are useful to enhance local collections cheaply with relevant subject material. The books included are all concurrent usage licences with no-DRM, so compared to other purchase models they work well for readers. We did a lot of collection analysis against usage during some 'free access' months in the early days of the Covid pandemic and tried to include titles in the packages</p>

	<p>that were clearly important to readers. Two examples:</p> <p>1) Liverpool UP's package on Latin American studies and modern languages might include some titles that potentially libraries already have if they have courses and researchers working in this area, but the remainder of the titles would be considered excellent supporting research material, but for a lot less money: <a href="https://lup.openingthefuture.net/packages/7/">https://lup.openingthefuture.net/packages/7/</a></p> <p>2) CEU Press' package on the history and politics of the Ukraine/Russian region is obviously highly relevant to current studies but many of the books may not have been collected into a themed package like this before and so may not have been purchased routinely together: <a href="https://ceup.openingthefuture.net/packages/11/">https://ceup.openingthefuture.net/packages/11/</a></p>
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