Purdue University

Purdue e-Pubs

The British National Approach to Scholarly Communication

Lorraine Estelle
JISC Collections

The British National Approach to Scholarly Communication

Lorraine Estelle, CEO, JISC Collections

The following is a transcription of a live presentation at the 2013 Charleston Conference. Slides and video are available online at http://sched.co/1cMVQ3W.

This presentation is about library consortium as government and funders' policies change our role and as our member libraries expect new and different things from us. In the UK, new policies require that all UK academics in all disciplines publish funded research outputs in open access. These policies have implications for academics, publishers, funders, and higher education institutions (HEIs). Within HEIs, many departments and functions are impacted, and, as result, we find ourselves engaging not only with the libraries, but also with research managers, institutional repository managers, and even the finance managers.

Some of you yesterday may have heard the presentation by Brandon Nordin from the American Chemical Society who remarked that not all markets move at the same pace in the transition to open access. That is certainly true of the UK, especially in relation to gold open access (author pays open access). The policies of our government and funders put us in the lead in a transition to gold open access. I was discussing this over lunch with Bruce Heterick (JSTOR), and he said, "Ah, yes, you in the UK are in the vanguard. Now that either means the UK is going to be an exemplar of best practice, or you're going to show everybody else how *not* to do it." We are not quite sure at this stage which it is going to be, but I hope this presentation will give you a flavor of what we are doing.

First, a little background about JISC: JISC is a nationally funded organization for the academic community, and we have a number of roles. Our Technology division provides the academic network, (Janet) Network, and is responsible for implementing and providing our identity access system. Our Futures division looks at new technologies and emerging standards. The division I lead is Digital Content and Resource Discovery.

As a library consortium, JISC serves all of UK HEIs and further education colleges.

As a library consortium, we have a number of functions: to provide our academic community with digital archives (heritage collections) at very low or at no cost. We also provide a number of shared services to support libraries: JUSP, the Journals Usage Statistics Portal, a one-stop shop for library COUNTER statistics, and our new service launched this year, KB+, providing open data to knowledge bases and to libraries. However, our main task, our core mission, is to negotiate with vendors on behalf of our member libraries, and we really have a very wide range of negotiated license agreements: databases, e-books, and multimedia, the whole range of digital resources that can support research, learning, and teaching. However, our members always tell us the most important task, the highest priority, has been to negotiate the "big deal" with the leading journal publishers and to get the best deal that we can with them. That has been our top priority for many years, but in 2012, our landscape changed dramatically, and the requirements and demands from our community have changed as a result.

Two things happened. The first was the publication of what is known as the "Finch Report"[1]. Secondly, shortly following the publication of the report, Research Funders UK announced funded mandates for open access. The "Finch Report" was a report commissioned by a government department, the Department of Business Innovation and Skills. This department is responsible both for the university sector and for the business sector. The minister in charge, Rt Hon. David Willetts MP, sees the potential of open access especially as a way of stimulating business and innovation. He commissioned Dame Janet Finch to chair a committee of stakeholders in scholarly communications to discuss how access to research publications could be expanded across the UK for the benefit of society and business

---

[1] http://www.researchinfonet.org/publish/finch/

innovation. It is important to understand that the committee that was behind the Finch Report had representation from the research funders, from universities, and from publishers. Janet Finch successfully brought those quite diverse stakeholders together in order to agree on a final report with ten recommendations.

The ten recommendations are in these rather dense slides (http://slidesha.re/1l5IeaE). You will all be pleased to know that I am not going to read them word for word, but I will point out to you a few of the recommendations because you will see what sort of implications they have later on when I talk about our changing role.

The first recommendation, and perhaps the most important, is "Support for publication in open access or hybrid journals, funded by APCs, as the main vehicle for the publication of research." The report does not suggest that green open access is not a good option, but it has a preference for gold.

The second recommendation is that "The Research Councils and other public sector bodies funding research in the UK should establish more effective and flexible arrangements to meet the costs of publishing in open access and hybrid journals." Another important recommendation is that "Support for OA publication should be accompanied by policies to minimise restrictions on the rights of use and reuse and on the ability to use the latest tools and services to organise and manipulate text and other content." This means, in effect, that open access articles funded through article processing charges should be published under the most liberal of the Creative Commons licenses. For us as a library consortium, the most important recommendation is that "...discussions between universities and publishers on the pricing of big deals should take into account the financial implications of the shift to publication in open access and hybrid journals."

The 10 recommendations in the Finch Report have been accepted, and the policies are being implemented. Shortly after publication, Research Councils UK (the largest funder of university research across all disciplines) announced a funded mandate for open access.

The mandate states that all research outputs resulting from their funding should be published in open access and that there is a great preference for gold open access. The reason for the gold open access, rather than green, is that it is immediate and that it can have the most liberal Creative Commons (CC-BY) license attached. Research Councils of UK provided funding for around 33 institutions: £17 million in the first year between those universities for this academic year and £20 million in year two. The funding for open access was based on an average article processing charge cost of £1,727 plus value-added tax (VAT). All articles funded through the Research Councils UK block grant must comply with the requirement to be published under a CC-BY license. Another important funder of research in the UK is the Wellcome Trust, and for many years, the Wellcome Trust has had a policy of open access and is funded and has required that all research outputs from its funded research is open access.

Another important change in the UK is that the Higher Education Funding Council in England (HEFCE), is carrying out a consultation about the Research Excellence Framework (REF) which is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK HEIs. The funding bodies use the assessment outcomes to inform the selective allocation of their research funding to HEIs.

The consultation is regarding the proposal that, in order to support and encourage the further implementation of open access, HEFCE will introduce a requirement that all outputs submitted to the 2020 Research Excellence Framework be published on an open-access basis. Outputs in this context mean all journal articles and conference proceedings but not monographs.

The policies of funders in the UK mean that open access is not a theoretical option. It is now day-to-day business and something we have to implement as efficiently as possible.

We have been consulting with our member libraries very closely and talking to them about their concerns in this new environment. The HEIs are all very concerned about the cost of article processing charges (APC) and that the funding they have received is not sufficient to meet what

will be the actual cost of these accumulated charges. The cost of open access has been the theme of other presentations at this conference, and one I attended yesterday provided relevant data on how the cost of APCs has increased significantly over the past 5 years in both fully open access and hybrid journals.

There is a concern that HEIs are paying for article processing charges only to find that the published article does not comply with the funder's mandates. The requirement is for CC-BY, but authors are often confused and choose the incorrect form of Creative Commons license. However, the top concern for UK HEIs is the combined cost of subscriptions, maintaining subscriptions for content, and meeting the cost of article processing charges.

So what do HEIs want JISC Collections as the library consortium to do? They really want us to negotiate on the cost of article processing charges, and some want us to negotiate schemes that will reduce the overall cost. We have already negotiated and facilitated prepayment schemes with some publishers, whereby HEIs pay a block of money in advance against articles that will be published by authors in their University. These schemes do offer considerable discounts on the standard article processing charge, and they can be a very good deal. However, some HEIs do not like the idea of these prepaid packages because they worry about getting into the open access version of the "big deal" that they will need to maintain year after year after year. Some are also concerned that prepayment models disguise the true cost of the APCs, and would prefer a transparent model that would encourage researchers to shop around for the best APC rates.

Prepayment packages are helpful, but do not fully address the issue that UK HEIs face of having to fund APCs and maintain subscriptions. It is important to say that I do not mean that publishers "double-dip." This issue is to do with the financial impact on individual HEIs, depending on their publishing profile with each publisher. Most publishers, the large publishers of hybrid journals, very clearly state that they have a no double dip policy. In practice, what that means is that they have reduced the global list price of the

journals if a reasonably large percentage of its articles are funded to be open access. This small reduction in the list price does not help the universities in the UK faced with maintaining the cost of subscriptions and APCs, in some cases, (depending on research profile) doubling expenditure with the same publisher.

For example, an HEI might spend £20,000 annually on a subscription package with a particular publisher. Its academics typically have around 10 articles each year accepted by that publisher. If those articles are funded at a cost of £2,000 each, the total expenditure with the publisher more than doubles.

The publisher policies that ensure there is no double dipping would be enough if the move to gold open access happened at the same rate across the world. However, at the moment, a preference for gold open access is not universal. Many publishers of hybrid journals say that only 1 or 2% are funded for open access. UK research accounts for (depending on discipline) just 6 to 8% of any publisher's output. We cannot see that, in the short term, the need for UK HEIs to maintain the cost subscribed content and APCs will disappear. As a library consortium, this is our biggest challenge.

The other thing that we are working on is ensuring compliance and this is very much about workflow. Authors get confused about which Creative Commons license they should choose in order to comply with funder mandates. Reasonably enough, publishers are not there to tell authors which type of license they should use, but we have been talking to publishers about how they can amend their workflow, when and if an author is accepted, in order to help them choose the correct license for compliance.

The other thing that all HEIs and funders want us to help with is in monitoring the overall cost of this transition to open access. We really need to develop the systems and infrastructure to gather the data. It is quite difficult to get a handle on how much money is being spent with each publisher on APCs, how many articles are being published in open access, and so on. We need to model what is happening to understand the

financial implications so that we can enter into meaningful and evidence-based discussion with a publisher and so that we can plan.

Our HEIs are also asking for help in making efficient and accurate payments to the publishers for APCs. In the UK, mostly the library is responsible for managing funds for open access. One librarian with such responsibility told me the processing of one invoice for one APC, including the resolution of invoice queries took around five hours of university staff time. With many hundreds of APC payments to process, there comes a considerable burden of administration cost—not only for the HEIs but also for the publishers. This can be a particular challenge for publishers of hybrid journals who do not have an infrastructure in place to deal with APC transactions.

One of the things we have been doing, and I must say one of the most complicated projects, is our JISC APC pilot. We are seeing if it is possible, as a library consortium, to provide a platform that will help in that management of making all of these APC charges, and really to see if we can reduce administration by developing such a shared service. Sometimes an intermediary can just add another stage to the workflow, so we have to test to see if a shared service for APC processing would really provide efficiencies to the sector. We have worked with Open Access Key (OAK) as a technology partner, and we are trialing our JISC Article Processing Charge platform. As a result, we now know a lot more about handling APC transactions, and it certainly is not an easy process. We will report more fully at the end of our pilot in July 2014. Looking ahead as a library consortium, we are integrating open access into normal life. I was talking to some publishers yesterday who said that the take up of the RCUK mandate seems to be quite slow. However, HEIs only received funding in April, so it really is early days. Even though compliance RCUK mandate is

modest at the moment, we can see that the financial impact is quite significant.

We are working with publishers to find ways to make this transition sustainable. There are some publishers who are leading the way and who have already come up with helpful initiatives. For example, the Royal Society of Chemistry's "Gold for Gold" model provides subscribing HEIs with vouchers to cover the cost of article processing charges in the RSC journals. HEIs receive one voucher per £1,600 subscription value. Another publisher demonstrating an imaginative and flexible approach is Sage, that is, I have helped host one of the roundtables where the publisher listened carefully to the concerns of librarians about implementation of open access policies. HEIs that subscribe to the full Sage package receive a considerable discount on their standard article processing charge.

I think these are two models that we would very much hope to see other publishers embracing. Now, they are quite high-risk models for publishers, in some ways, because it is early days and they do not know yet how high the compliance with funder mandates will be. However, I think these models, which acknowledge the subscription income and the money spent on article processing charges and link them together, are very helpful in this transitional period. HEIs welcome these models, even on a pilot basis, as they allow experimentation to see what works best for both universities and for publishers.

I think we are in for a very interesting time! As I say, this is very new, there is a great deal of work to be done to support the implementation of open access in the UK, and the role of the library consortium is really quite extensive. Thank you.