Transformative Agreements: Communicating Next Phase of Library Collections

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All about Transformative Agreements

Often known as:

• Transitional agreements
• Read & Publish agreements
• Publish and Read agreements

• Defined as agreements or contracts negotiated between libraries & publishers where subscription costs are redefined to support OA publishing by institution’s authors, recasting the business model of scholarly publishing bringing together the reading access with Author Payment Charges (APCs) in a single negotiation.

• Many flavors, details distinguish all agreements

• Fast changing landscape at most institutions – comes up often prior to time of subscription renewal
Positioning the transitions

• Maintain institutional access to scholarship via subscription
• With goal of achieving open access
• Redirecting subscription costs to cover APCs for articles with affiliated corresponding authors
• Debunking myths
• Evaluating impacts
• Scaling abilities of smaller publishers and scholarly societies to compete in publishing marketplace
What are the myths?

1. TAs will lead to an equitable scholarly publishing ecosystem
2. TAs are a proven way to transition the system from closed to OA
3. TAs move away from an APC model of open access
4. TAs will lead to greater transparency regarding publication costs
5. TAs will lead to competitive pricing
6. TAs better position libraries to negotiate

Are these agreements really transformative?

Remember:

• “Not all transformations are visible.” Anonymous

• “Transformation literally means going beyond your form.” Wayne Dyer

• “Transformation isn’t a future event. It’s a present-day activity.” Jillian Michaels

• "Tradition, after all, is a thing of the spirit, not a recycling of the past.“ Brother Thomas

• “You have to maintain a culture of transformation and stay true to your values.” Jeff Weiner

• “New technologies and approaches are merging the physical, digital, and biological worlds in ways that will fundamentally transform humankind. The extent to which that transformation is positive will depend on how we navigate the risks and opportunities that arise along the way.” Klaus Schwab
And about Open Access

• “The basic idea of Open Access is simple: Make research literature available online without price barriers and without most permission barriers.” Peter Suber

• “Science should not be a luxury and knowledge should not be a commodity, it should be a basic human right.” Jack Andraka

• “My research behind the paywall is of no use.” Prateek Mahalwar

• “Open should be the default, not the exception.” Carl Malamud

• “Open access is not an end in itself; it’s part of our broader commitment to open science.” Philippe Terheggen
Marrying the two

• New relationships form

• Federal governments weigh in – with encouragement & confusion, mandates, support, new guidelines

• Reduces barriers that are artificially created – economic, social, political, geographic, business arrangements

• Conceptually advances equity by allowing access to all

• Creates new global partnerships

• Leads pathway (maybe slow) to full open access

• Introduces potential for changing publishing infrastructures with new models of scholarly communication

• Offers role of library in publishing outcomes
Organizational input

• Remember the history
  • Escalating subscription costs became unsustainable
  • ePublishing offers new format options & reduces delays
  • Uneven global access & challenges with connectivity
  • Challenges to access created by SciHub & other illegal actions
  • Author Payment Charges (APC) slanted towards those with research funding or larger research institutions

• Identifying priorities of how transformative agreements can achieve OA most efficiently:
  • Allows researchers to
    • Access journals’ subscription content
    • Publish in journals via open access
ESAC Tracking of Transformative Agreements: 2014-2022

2014: 2
2015: 2
2016: 5
2017: 13
2018: 12
2019: 55
2020: 118
2021: 202
2022: 176

ESAC Registry collects data including details on:

- Contracting parties
- Agreement terms
- Transitional mechanism of fees
- Publishing rights negotiated
- Workflow assessment
Challenges with Transformative Agreements

- Negotiation is competitive, data intensive and time consuming
  - Priority is with publishers where content is heavily used
  - And where contributing authorship is significant
- Subscription-based – still difficult for non-subscribers
- Power imbalance - favors rich countries & institutions to cover costs
- May consume large payments to few publishers with uneven institutional needs being met
- TAs “do not transform journals to open access but make individual articles available for a fee.” (Shearer, 2022)
- Perceptions of cited versions vary
- Roadmap still undefined for greater interoperability to foster sharing of text, data, code, etc
University of California experience

• 10 campus consortia operating as the California Digital Library (CDL)
• Institutional OA mandate for nearly a decade
• Institutional Repository – [https://eScholarship.org](https://eScholarship.org) – 20th anniversary
• No local Tas at Irvine campus

• Participants & their roles include:
  • Authors – may lead to where to publish
  • Scholarly publishing community – compete for authors & submissions
  • Librarians – educate scholarly community; understand payment options
  • Recipients of external grant funding – new & existing goals & mandates
  • Readers & scholars – everyone committed to open access
Publisher OA Agreements and Discounts

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (10% discount)
- American Chemical Society ($3000/article)
- Association for Computing Machinery
- Biochemical Society/Portland Press
- BioMed Central
- Cambridge University Press
- Company of Biologists
- Electrochemical Society (100% discount)
- Elsevier
- IEEE
- JMIR Publications
- Karger (50% discount)
- National Academy of sciences ($3000/article)
- Oxford University Press / Nucleic Acids Research (50% discount)
- PLoS
- Royal Society of Chemistry (15% discount)
- Sage
- SPIE
- Springer Nature
- Taylor & Francis (75% discount)
- University of California Press
- Wiley

Source: https://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/for-authors/publishing-discounts/ (Accessed October 10, 2022)
Engaging in communication process

Publishers
• Provide details that inform institutions how TAs honor OA
• Keep all publisher’s reps informed of details as they are link to librarians
• Maintain ongoing open communication – Library Advisory Groups are helpful

Libraries/Librarians
• Part of ongoing scholarly communication education
• Personal concierge to scholars
• Promote new Agreements
• Make information widely available via FAQs, webinars, messaging
• Not a 1x effort - ongoing
Library concerns

• Short term – usually 1-3 years; uncertainty ahead as more publishers achieve higher OA rates
• Often consortia-based rather than institutionally framed
• Science or STEM focused
• Scaling to other information resources that seek OA support – books/monographs, data sets
• Often collection budgets offset these commitments
• Overall sustainability
• With more rightsizing expected in academic libraries, future outlook remains unclear
Impact on future role of library collections

- Unpredictable budget forecasting – how many submissions, total costs
- How many Agreements to optimally maintain
- How to evaluate experience with each publisher
- What about switching out agreements
- What if yield is not high and money remains
- How to scale & extend program
- If top-sliced from materials budget what are the consequences for other resources
Lessons learned or to be learned

• Data is still too small to make big conclusions now
• Fear that publishers may rethink costs if yield is either significantly greater or reduced
• Will libraries want to extend TAs – what kind of commitment does that mean?
• Contribution to full transition to Open Access
• Are TAs here to stay?
In summary

• Transformative Agreements are still young & untested
• Is paywall just being shifted
• Library collections have moved to digital preference formats
• Libraries continue to explore new pathways to OA
• Scholarly publishing must continue in a healthy, robust way
• Altruistic controversies about libraries continuing to pay for S20 journals & other OA content – the insurance vs added fee analogy
• Institutional Repositories will be reviewed as holding tanks for OA content as adoptions still stagger
• Relationships between libraries and publishers will deepen
• Budgets & mission will drive future participation
Resources that support evolution of transformative agreements

• Programs & initiatives by publisher & library communities
  • Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR)
  • Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)
  • Society of Scholarly Publishing (SSP)
  • International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC)
  • Association of Research Libraries (ARL)
  • European Research Libraries (LIBER)
  • ESAC Initiative (Max Planck)
  • EIFL Partner countries
  • Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)

• Shared experiences of libraries worldwide
  • Registries