Open Access publishing means providing content free online to readers while supporting operations by financial models that permit this free electronic distribution. So far, most advances in Open Access publishing have been made in the area of journal publishing, but there are increasing numbers of ventures into Open Access monograph publishing too.

Open Access is a means of delivering content to users, not a business model. A variety of business models are employed by publishers who have adopted Open Access as a delivery form.

**Open Access journals**

In the case of Open Access journals, one business model option is to charge a front-end fee, that is, levy a charge (article-processing charge: APC) when an article has undergone peer review and has been accepted for publication. This charge covers the publisher's costs and is paid by the author or, most usually - by the author's research funder or sometimes by the author's institution.

Other Open Access journal publishers charge nothing at all at the front end of the publication process. Instead, they support their operations through sponsorship, advertising, by running their journals using voluntary labour or by selling subscriptions to the printed form of the journal. More than half of Open Access journal publishers work in one of these ways and do not charge an APC. Only a minority make a front-end charge. See the case studies for real-life examples of publishers operating in these ways.

Open Access is a good option for smaller journal publishers to consider, especially now that library budgets are set to contract markedly due to the global economic downturn. With the largest publishers garnering vast proportions of library journal budgets through their journal bundle deals (so-called Big Deals), and with most Big Deals tying libraries into multi-year contracts, there will be less and less money left for publishers that have small lists, or publish only one title, and who cannot offer such deals. Of course, most scholarly society publishers fall into this category.

Some kind of Open Access model therefore has considerable appeal to journal publishers who
fear that the fallout from the global recession will destroy their businesses. One worry that arises, if the publisher decides to adopt a business model where an APC is charged, is whether authors will have access to the funds to pay the charge. In some disciplines this is a real concern. In the arts and humanities large research grants are much more rare than they are in the natural sciences, and where an author is not in possession of a research grant the only other source of funding for APCs is the author's institution. Nonetheless, Open Access publishing is becoming established in the humanities and the social sciences as suitable business models are worked out.

As yet, only a few institutions have made a commitment to pay APCs but there is considerable interest from both institutions and funders in viewing this issue sympathetically. This is discussed in more detail in the sections on funder policies on Open Access publishing and institutions and Open Access publishing.

Open Access monographs and textbooks

Some publishers are experimenting with Open Access for book publishing. The most common model is for the online version of the book to be made Open Access while the hard copy, bound version is sold through bookstores (either online book retailers, such as Amazon, or in shops on the street).

Although it might be feared to endanger hard copy sales, this process appears often to have the opposite effect, boosting sales of the hard copy volume. The availability of the free online version provides potential readers with an insight into what the book contains in a manner analogous to Amazon's 'Search inside this book' service. Most people who see that the book is of interest will then order a printed copy. Not many people find printing out a whole book on their computer's printer a satisfactory alternative to having the hard copy.

Open Access monograph publishing is a natural development for university press publishers, whose mission should be aligned with that of the university itself in seeking to maximise the dissemination of research. Some extensive explorations of new publishing models are being undertaken by university presses.

The benefits of Open Access to publishers

Open Access benefits publishers in the same ways as it benefits authors and institutions. It brings increased readership and, with that, increased citations. It means that Google and
Google Scholar index a journal's articles, providing a worldwide academic (and wider public) audience. It means that the maximum visibility and impact are achieved for a journal's contents. And it means that the best possible dissemination service is being provided for research.

**Publisher concerns about copyright**

Publishers may have concerns about copyright. Traditionally, copyright has been transferred from the author to the publisher when a journal article is ready for publication. The arguments for this are that the publisher needs the right to publish the work and that the publisher is equipped to take action against infringement of copyright if instances are found, thus protecting the author. In the case of academic journal articles, however, an author's interests are best served by the widest possible dissemination of the work, not by business models that are based on restricting access. In addition, copyright is a bundle of rights, and publishers need only some of these to carry out their business effectively. The rest can safely remain with the author, who thus retains much more control over what is done with his or her work.

See also:

- The benefits of Open Access publishing
- Copyright and author rights
- Publishing policies on Open Access
- Open Access journals
- Open Access research monographs and textbooks
- Scholarly societies and Open Access publishing
University presses and Open Access publishing

Open Access publishing in the humanities

Open Access publishing in the social sciences