While open access journals are free to read, there are still costs involved in publishing them. Open Access journals finance their operations in a number of ways; through subsidies from governments, foundations, or scholarly societies; advertising revenues; article processing fees; or some combination of the above. To date, no single approach has emerged as dominant, although, the majority of Open Access journals (an estimated 67%) do not charge authors fees.

Subscription costs for Toll Access journals should decrease as more of their content becomes Open Access paid for by article-processing fees (see below), freeing some library funds to support Open Access journals. New funding models are being developed that enable libraries to support Open Access journals.

**Article-processing fees:** Fee-based Open Access journals require a payment on behalf of the author to the publisher. These fees are variously referred to as "author fees", "author payments", "open access charges", "article processing fees", or "submission fees" (there are a wide variety of terms). The money may come from the author, the author's institution or the author's funding agency. In cases of economic hardship, many journals will waive all or part of the fee, including instances where the authors come from developing countries. Reputable Open Access journals charging publication fees normally take steps to ensure that editors conducting peer review do not know whether authors have requested, or been granted, fee waivers or to ensure that every paper is approved by an independent editor with no financial stake in the journal. These measures ensure that the peer review process is not biased by the promise of income - or lack of it. The costs of Open Access fees range from about €500 to €3000 ($250-$4000 US), depending on the publisher. Libraries can set up a fund to pay article-processing fees for Open Access journals.

The fee-based model has the advantages of being very transparent and of awakening researchers to the costs of the publishing system. As noted by Stephen Pinfield (reference below), in the subscription-based system there is a disconnect “between researchers and the economic realities of the market”. (pg. 5). With article-processing fees, authors are aware of publication charges and able to draw comparisons between different journals and publishers.

**Institutional memberships:** Another way of supporting Open Access journals is through institutional membership programmes. Some journals that charge article-processing fees offer institutional memberships which then
reduce or eliminate the per article fees they charge. The fee structures for institutional memberships vary from publisher to publisher, but fees are usually tiered based on the size of the institution; with smaller institutions paying less than large ones.

**Hybrid journals:** Some subscription-based journals also offer Open Access options to authors. This generally involves authors paying an Open Access fee, after which the journal will make the article freely available. The SHERPA-ROMEO site maintains a list of such hybrid publishers' paid Open Access options, and the associated pricing.

One of the issues with the hybrid model is that institutions that pay Open Access fees for hybrid journals are also still paying subscription fees for those same journals to the publishers; in essence paying twice for the same content. A few publishers, such as Oxford University Press, do offer discounts on their subscription charges in proportion to the level of income from article-processing fees, but such publishers are in a minority. Mechanisms “need to be identified which will help to ensure that the shift in income levels does occur” (Pinfield pg.4). The University of Calgary, which has set up an authors fund has chosen not to pay Open Access fees for hybrid journals unless publishers agree to reduce subscriptions to reflect payment.

It should also be noted that many of the publishers who offer Open Access options may also allow authors to deposit an article into an Open Access repository without payment of a fee, which may be a better solution for authors.

**Further resources**

