ABSTRACT

The OAN financial model is designed to support open scholarly communication infrastructure that is more than specific packages (e.g., journals or books), projects, or platforms — an approach that requires a substantive departure from the current system, from business models based on cost-plus pricing, an article-processing charge (APC) or a book-publishing charge (BPC) to a business model that supports the infrastructure and resources needed to create, present, and preserve scholarly outputs of all kinds. The OAN model proposes that all institutions of higher education contribute to systemic support of the research process itself, including its scholarly output. It is a bold rethinking of the economics of OA by way of partnerships between and among scholarly societies/university presses, institutions and their academic libraries, and campus administrators, that builds the infrastructure based on a student-and-faculty-per-capita sliding scale. Core to the model is its insistence on broad, collective institutional support of the scholarly communication infrastructure itself, not on any particular format (e.g., books, journals, websites).

The idea — originally presented in a 2014 white paper (“A Scalable and Sustainable Approach to Open Access Publishing and Archiving for Humanities and Social Sciences”) by Rebecca Kennison and Lisa Norberg — has now been refined to address feedback from stakeholders in terms of the publication partnership inclusion criteria, the funding formula, and the funding dispersion process; however, the core concepts from that paper remain unchanged.

The centerpiece of the financial model continues to be an annual or multi-year payment that is made by every institution of higher education and that is based on a sliding scale tied to the institution’s Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (in the United States) or the International Standard Classification of Education (outside the United States). Our proposal is to begin with US$50.50 per student per year of study (ranging from US$50.50 per student per year at a community college up to US$85 per student per year at a doctoral-granting institution) and US$5 per full-time faculty. The payment is modest relative to the overall budget of most institutions, but — when spread broadly across all institutions — results in a sum substantial enough to sustain a vibrant and open scholarly communication environment.

Securing funding from the OAN is comparatively easy. Academic institutions and scholarly societies support their participation in the OAN by the annual payment that all institutions that engage in scholarly activities contribute. Each payment goes toward supporting the infrastructure, as well as the development and distribution of new scholarly products and services. The OAN is committed to delivering high-quality, cost-effective services and resources to the scholarly community.

FINANCIAL MODEL

The OAN will not host any projects ourselves. Instead, the monies collected by the OAN will go to support the scholarly communication infrastructure itself, whatever the form, format, platform, product, or project. Each project by each partnership will appear listed on the OAN funding contribution and distribution site, which will look familiar to those who use crowdsourced funding sites already. Funding through the OAN (which will include OA journals, publications, organizations, companies, and individuals) can be designated on a project-by-project basis, on a discipline-by-discipline basis, in support of the level at which an area of study human research or science is organized. Participation from OAN contributors is voluntary; it will be based on the general fund. Because all projects are in certain ways unique, we will not list publicly the amount needed to fund any given individual project.

Transparency between and among the partners as to the annual project-specific costs is a requirement for OAN funding and so these costs are also known within the partnership body. Each project will be budgeted with project-level financial information could prove difficult to explain succinctly in a public forum and might open projects up to unjustified criticism. We do not want to put societies or presses in the position of having to justify why, for example, they employ a managing editor or pay a vendor for XML markup. We have every reason to believe the partnerships, since they will involve stakeholders from different sectors of the scholarly communication system, will strive to keep costs as low as possible.

FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

Sharing, curating, and preserving scholarship are imperative for the advancement of research. The ready availability of scholarly publications is central to teaching and learning and optimizes opportunities for innovation and development across higher education and beyond. Deep fundamental changes to the scholarly communication system are needed not only to respond to the numerous funding crises in higher education and encourage emerging research and new forms and formats of scholarship, but also to foster and deepen the connections between the academy and the wider public. Only an approach to scholarly communication that builds collective and collaborative alliances can lead to new partnerships and that engages a range of stakeholders can provide a fair and equitable path to truly open and sustainable forms of scholarship.

The Open Access Network (OAN) offers a bold new model to support scholarly communication, not by becoming a scholarly publisher ourselves or by developing our own preservation archive, but rather by supporting the work and the infrastructure of others. In adopting this strategy, the OAN can be both incremental and forward-thinking: we propose a phased approach that seeks to open up current forms of scholarship (e.g., journals, monographs) while simultaneously establishing the infrastructure necessary to support, build, and sustain new and emerging modes of communication. We focus in the first instance on publications and platforms in the humanities and social sciences (HSS), disciplines that are most at risk in the current tumultuous cost-per-unit-driven open-access (OA) environment. Even so, our model seeks to develop support mechanisms for infrastructure that could be used in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines as well.

ABOUT THE OAN


Web: http://bit.ly/2Le9by


FOR MORE INFORMATION

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