

Researcher To Reader 2019 #r2rconf

Workshop A – Open Access Books

How do we increase take up for Open Access books and chapters? What are the challenges and opportunities?

Facilitators:

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Abstract:

OA books are starting to gain traction, with more than 12,000 titles now listed in the Directory of Open Access Books, increasing attention from European funders, and a number of new university presses focusing on OA monographs. However, only a very small proportion of scholarly books are published open access, and significant challenges remain, from funding and models to rights, disciplinary, and cultural issues. Participants will be invited to consider some of these challenges and to think broadly to suggest solutions and opportunities for the future.

Summary of discussion:

Over three workshops, groups discussed the current landscape, challenges, and possible solutions to increasing uptake of OA books by authors. Groups considered cultural issues, funding, disciplines and formats. Ultimately there were recommendations for several stakeholder groups:

Cultural issues:

- To increase uptake, funders need to provide more clarity on the value of OA, and provide more credit/incentive for OA publication
- Publishers need to make it easier for authors to choose OA, clear barriers and make options transparent
- Institutions need to provide additional support and education for authors on the options available.

Funding and models:

- Publishers should explore the diversity of models: there is risk in diversity of pilots, since this limits effective communication to authors and readers, but a number of opportunities for OA book models were explored:
 - Mission led
 - Pre-prints
 - University press-led
 - unlatched/on merit
 - Freemium
 - Broken-down services
- Funders should communicate what is available, and authors should increasingly seek other sources of funds e.g. foundations. Funders should also explore provision of OA platforms for long form research

Disciplines and formats:

- Publishers, suppliers and third parties should work together to build better standards: metadata and identifiers, infrastructure, and rights management. It is important to clarify that one size will not fit all.

Session 1: what is the current landscape for OA books?

Cultural issues

The key issues identified relating to culture were:

- Differences by country and by discipline
- Funding: the lack of information, on where to source funds. It can be hard to find out about funding, and there can be a perception of a lack of funding
- Awareness (including incentives for authors)
- The process (or lack of) for publishing OA, including communication challenges, and the complex infrastructure.
- The challenges in there being different perceptions of what is a book, with diversity by discipline. One comment was: is there a place for OA book chapters in every discipline
- Audience: who are the readers of OA books, what are the routes to discovery (i.e. how does the audience find books)
- Business models: the diversity and flexibility of models was raised. Where science and humanities meet to interface with public then the print model seems to work well.
- Understanding: a lack of understanding of license types, transparency of costs, and perceived prestige were all issues raised

Disciplines and Book Formats

Two groups discussed this topic. The key themes raised were:

- Challenges that specific disciplines raise for rights, such as long proofs for mathematics, languages for social sciences/humanities, art and architecture rights issues with pictures.
- Content born digital was considered easier to make OA
- The definition of book was raised here also, with associated considerations on format (e.g. monographs vs edited collections). One comment was “with so much variation between any two books, how do we reach one size fits all models?”
- Metadata: where does the metadata come from for discoverability? How does it work? DOI is uncommon in book publishing, but persistent identifiers are desirable for books over the ISBN.
- Discoverability in library systems was also raised.
- UCL Press was used by the 3rd group as an example to demonstrate scalability can be a problem
- Funding is again an issue
- Reputation concerns - authors prefer established publishers
- Timeframe for books: longer term planning is required for REF if books need to be OA for inclusion

Funding and OA Models

Two groups discussed this topic. The key themes raised were:

- Variety of current approaches:
 - Selling a print copy
 - Free pdf
 - Uni presses funded by uni or part-funded
 - Library publishing different to Uni press
 - Freemium e.g. OECD and Open Edition - may be incompatible with Plan S
 - Subscribe in a crowd funding sort of way

- Knowledge Unlatched - regular funders such as EU
- Formats: one comment questioned whether some formats attract more funding than others
- Funding: as previously raised, the groups discussed there being no or little funding for OA books esp in Arts and Humanities (for the research as well as the publication), although others raised there is no money for closed books either. Another point raised is there are multiple sources of funding, making this complex to support. The cost of the BPC was also raised.
- Hybrid: OA chapters in an otherwise closed book is complex for all stakeholders, being described as “messy”. Again the question of what is a monograph was raised, and the need for delineation between trade/scholarly/textbooks.
- Lead times for books long, from issuing of contract and publication, so at what stage is an APC due?
- What is the value add from OA books, it was discussed that this is more obvious in journal articles
- Funder policies still unclear - waiting for clarity of Plan S and future REF but funding cycles for future books are fast approaching
- Planning and resourcing are difficult, and hard to implement

General discussion

- When book goes out of print, a green copy (with relevant permissions) may be useful - but perhaps print on demand is helping more with this now
- Examples of trials of systems for works in progress - preprints server for books - publishers can take from here and publish. Not closed to one publisher. Useful for teaching and collaboration. Author gets input

and peer review. Indirect business model - the author may well choose the publisher since they have established a link with them.

- Which version would count as OA version? Depends on funder and publisher rules.

Session 2: What are the key challenges for OA books, and the causes?

Funding and OA Models

- Money - is there any, where should it come from? How does researcher access?
- AHSS grants now not include BPC.
- Is it possible to flip from paid to OA? Comment that more money is going to journals.
- Trying to put something we have been doing for 500 years into OA context - maybe this is something different and not an evolution of the existing model
- Could/should the system be cheaper?
- Comment - Plan S does not exist yet. It is a proposal. We should not behave as if it is cast in stone.
- Comment - Plan S not going anywhere in US.
- Comment - Many in Europe seem to be saying US on board.
- What is OA anyway?
 - Comment: is “green” published?
 - Freemium, is this OA?
 - There are many different routes to OA for books right now.

Cultural issues

- Authors and attitudes:
 - Differences by disciplines

- Advocates vs others: the people in the middle
- Schizophrenia, different attitudes depending different hats (i.e. reader or author)
- Openness at chapter level: does this address the issue to some extent?
- Differences within publisher:
 - Distribution channels not set up for OA,
 - Legacy models and revenue
 - Challenge of metadata not sufficient
- Compliance is based around journals - what is OA for books - what do the funders mean - are books an afterthought?
 - Distribution channels
 - Discovery platforms
 - Funder policies
 - PRINT

Discipline and Formats

- Funding remains challenge: different authors, different formats (and complexity of multi authored books)
- More clarity needed on the different types of formats, trade books, scholarly books, each have funding implications
- Print: quality monographs that don't generate revenue but have value are ripe for OA?
- Rights: 3rd party rights are an issue: especially in some subjects e.g. arts. There is an issue of scale, in certain disciplines as these can be complex and costly. Whose responsibility should it be to look after this, the researcher or the publisher?
- Embedding technology in to a book - proprietary software may be necessary for digital book
- Humanities keen on no derivatives licences

- Non commercial licences problematic for institutions with commercial interests
- Comment - too many formats used for the actual text difficult to work with in aggregators - discoverability is hindered
- Support for books different - within publishers different support offered to books from journals

General comments

- A further discussion on views on green OA books and what is the definition of green in this context. Would green be a sustainable model for books? It works for chapters in some instances but often with long embargoes.
- Book publication may be more about making money in some cases - what do authors think about this? (SN have conducted a survey on this, for publication in June)
- One attendee concerned that the green route is sub optimal and recommends Freemium instead.

Session 3: how do we address the challenges?

Cultural Issues

- Funders and government could give authors greater credit for book publishing and more support.
- Publishers could provide more transparency of costs and innovations that might help authors. More help on how to make books open access. Could direct authors to sources of funding.
- Institutions could safeguard some funding for books.

- Institutions could also help with more awareness raising. However issue is that there is no or limited funding. It is not necessarily top of researchers agenda.
- Comments - maybe not resistance but more it is difficult. Books OA is marginal to journal OA.

Disciplines and Book Formats

- Publisher/Suppliers - Try not to fit all publications old boxes of ISSN or ISBN - a DOI will suffice for dissemination regardless of the type of content.
 - Needs to be a solution that works for print and online
 - Question on how granular DOIs are applied: chapter level? Tables, figures?
 - Can be assigned at early stage e.g. preprint and carry forward or link with semantics to preserve version control. CrossREF provides successor DOI's. At present we have different ISBNs for the same book. There are several DOI registries can they pool.
- Try to make sense of the various metadata standards.
 - Publisher metadata would have to get a lot better
 - Rights have a relationship to formats, and are more difficult.
 - CONsider removing copyright from dissemination mechanism: you own the content and publisher owns format - the book itself -
 - With a variety of formats, one size fits all answer may not be possible.
 - Comment - is there a conflict between CC-BY and copyright? Should creative commons models be replaced with something else or updated?

Funding and OA Models

- Explore a diversity of models - viable solutions might be small but realistic rather than revolutionary. Pilot some of these:
 - Publication of some books could be helped with mission driven models to fund and publish. Foundations, donors?
 - Test the market with lightly published works to see if market likes the model. If so could publish more based on the response.
 - Annual subscription model - e.g. institutions 'crowd fund' and when a certain level of commitment is reached
 - Freemium model
 - Institutions could pool resources.
- Self publishing challenge - should there be more sophisticated pre-print type options?
- Funders - more communication on what funding and resources available to help researchers publish books, however funders might be funding an idea not necessarily a book and therefore not willing to fund the book.
- Could more funders explore open research platforms? We should try to engage with funders more.