



Volume 12, 2 (2025)

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Raju, R., & Maharaj, S. (2025). The African Platform for Open Scholarship Advancing Diamond Open Access and Inclusivity. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 12(2), eP18278. <https://doi.org/10.31274/jlsc.18278>

This article underwent semi-anonymous peer review in accordance with JLSC's peer review policy.



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PRACTICE ARTICLE

The African Platform for Open Scholarship Advancing Diamond Open Access and Inclusivity

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ABSTRACT

Geographic, language, peer review, and editorial biases have to be navigated by Global South authors to get published. Initially, the open access movement was praised for bridging the information access divide. However, commercial publishers have hijacked the philanthropic ethos, turning it into a business model. Publishing charges add to the aforementioned biases, consolidating the exclusion of Global South scholarship. The African Platform for Open Scholarship developed by the University of Cape Town (UCT) counters these biases by offering free publishing infrastructure to advance the publishing of African scholarship without compromising academic rigor. The platform adopts the diamond open access model to demarginalize Global South scholarship. Further, there is a discussion on the challenges and opportunities associated with creating an inclusive and equitable scholarly communication ecosystem. This paper focuses on UCT's use of the platform to transition its commercial publishing arm (UCT Press) and to grow UCT Libraries Press. The paper will use exemplars to demonstrate the positive impact of these initiatives on the growth of diamond open access.

Keywords: open access, diamond open access, library publishing, African Platform for Open Scholarship, tenant model, social justice

Received: 07/24/2024 Accepted: 01/08/2025



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INTRODUCTION

In an era in which knowledge drives social progress and economic growth, open access is hailed as a critical enabler for global development and social justice. Improved accessibility to knowledge through open access is seen as essential for addressing the pressing challenges outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This accessibility aligns with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) declaration that access to information and knowledge is a human right. Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ([United Nations, 1948](#), p. 7) states, "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."

However, the rollout of open access activities contradicts this philanthropic underpinning. This contradiction is evident in the literature, which highlights the biases that authors from the Global South must overcome to get published, contributing to the information divide ([Kowal et al, 2022](#); [Raju et al., 2023](#)). Further evidence shows that the open access movement has been hijacked by commercial publishers who have converted its noble intent into a business model. The levying of article processing charges (APCs) and book processing charges adds another layer of bias, consolidating the exclusion and marginalization of Global South scholarship ([Postma, 2016](#); [Babini & Becerril-García, 2020](#); [Okune et al., 2021](#); [Kwon, 2022](#)).

Transformative agreements, while aiming to transition subscription-based publishing to open access, consolidate exclusionary practices, as many authors and institutions, especially in the Global South, cannot afford the APCs. This shift of barriers from access to dissemination hinders equitable participation and exacerbates global inequalities in knowledge production and access ([Farley et al., 2021](#); [Kwon, 2022](#); [Raju & Claassen, 2022](#)).

These interventions have forced Africa to search for relevance within the movement and seek a transformative worldview of open access that supports inclusion, demarginalization, and denorthernization of the publishing ecosystem. The desired direction is diamond open access: an option centered on social justice principles.

This social justice-driven option must reinstate the philanthropic ethos of the open access movement. One intervention that supports this option is the African Platform for Open Scholarship (APOS). This pan-African publishing platform is committed to countering biases that hinder the growth of Global South scholarship and addresses the perennial problems of skill shortages and poor information technology (IT) infrastructure. Other examples of pan-African platforms committed to advancing African scholarship include the

African Open Science Platform (AOSP), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), and African Journals Online (AJOL).

The free infrastructure of APOS offers African institutions the opportunity to publish books and journals without compromising academic rigor. The platform addresses geographic, language, peer review, and editor bias, all of which are factors contributing to the marginalization of scholarship from the Global South. By offering a pan-African publishing platform, APOS enables African academic and research institutions to publish and disseminate their work independently, free from reliance on Global North-controlled systems. This fosters equitable access to publishing resources, elevates the visibility and impact of African scholarship, and strengthens the continent's academic autonomy.

The authors assert that APOS is a transformative initiative aligned with the SDG to drive sustainable development through enhanced access to knowledge and research. By fostering a culture of open access, APOS empowers African researchers, educators, and policymakers, contributing to the continent's social, economic, and environmental progress.

This paper will present, albeit very briefly, the prevailing systemic biases that African authors and institutions need to navigate to get published. To overcome these challenges and others such as skills shortage and poor IT infrastructure, the University of Cape Town (UCT) developed an alternate publication forum (APOS) for the improved dissemination of African scholarship. The case study of UCT will be used as a basis to demonstrate the efficacy of the intervention and outline the next steps for the greater adoption of APOS by African academic and research institutions.

THE CHALLENGES

Research indicates that several African institutions have experimented with publishing journals using the Open Journals System (OJS) software developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) (Abdu, 2023; Mwantimwa & Wema, 2022). Numerous training sessions have been conducted on how to use this software, and there have been many efforts to launch journal titles. Organizations such as Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium (KLISC), Training Centre in Communication (TCC Africa), Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), and UCT have conducted training on the use of OJS in various countries on the continent. These initiatives are attempts to empower Africa to take control of its scholarly publications, reduce dependency on external publishing entities, and address the prevailing systemic biases.

Despite these efforts, the attempts to establish an alternative publishing stream using OJS have not achieved the desired success. Challenges such as limited technical expertise, insufficient

funding, and inadequate infrastructure have hindered the mainstream adoption of these alternative models.

In response to these challenges, UCT has implemented an intervention aimed at creating a sustainable alternative. This intervention leverages the inherent services provided by libraries, which are well-positioned to support the technical and administrative aspects of journal publishing. By integrating these library services with the OJS platform, UCT aims to support commensurate attempts to find sustainable solutions for scholarly publishing in Africa. As part of the empowerment of African scholars and institutions to disseminate their research more effectively and take greater control over the publication process, i.e., to take complete control of the publication process from inviting submissions of manuscripts, to the review of the manuscript to publication of the issue/volume, and finally to the dissemination of the issue/volume.

Prevailing systemic bias

The golden philanthropic thread woven through the Berlin, Bethesda, and Budapest Declarations is the removal of financial barriers to access to information. However, the introduction of APCs to advance open access adds another layer of discrimination against the dissemination of African scholarship. Even more damaging in the current publishing ecosystem are the prevailing systemic conscious and unconscious biases. These biases directly contradict the philanthropic ethos of the Declarations as they continue to marginalize African scholarship and perpetuate “knowledge colonization.”

Systemic inequalities within the current publishing ecosystem exacerbate the information divide and marginalization of research voices from Africa. The dominance of Global North perspectives in publishing perpetuates hierarchical structures in which Global North research predominates, relegating Global South contributions to the periphery of the world’s knowledge production. This inequality is affirmed by Kwasi Boahene (as cited in [Kokutse, 2021](#)), who asserts that current scientific publishing still reflects colonial legacies. Corroborating this assertion, Inefuku and Roh ([2016](#)) share that editorial boards default to selecting reviewers who conform to established norms, perpetuating these biases within the current knowledge ecosystem.

Geographic, language, peer review, and other biases significantly contribute to the one-directional flow of information, contradicting the principles of open access ([Raju et al, 2023](#); [Skopec et al., 2020](#)). As long as conscious and unconscious biases persist, achieving diversity, equity, and inclusive knowledge dissemination remains elusive. Diamond open access is a model that addresses this issue of conscious and unconscious bias, and Redalyc

is an excellent example of diamond open access in action, especially in addressing language bias (SPARC, 2024). The 2024 Toluca-Cape Town Declaration¹ showcases the characteristics of diamond open access that could be adopted in addressing conscious and unconscious bias.

These biases have become so ingrained in the system that they have now become the norm. Global South critics of these biases are showing signs of helplessness and fight fatigue. It is against this backdrop that UCT conceptualized, developed, and rolled out a pan-African platform, giving academics, editors, journal editorial boards, and librarians control over one part of the publishing ecosystem.

Technical and infrastructural challenges

There are numerous technical challenges that beset the efficient utilization of the relevant software for a sustainable alternative publishing forum. One of the primary challenges is poor or unreliable internet access, which can severely disrupt the ability to upload, download, and access digital publications. This challenge is particularly pronounced in remote or under-served areas, where internet infrastructure is often lacking or outdated.

Another significant challenge is the lack of skilled personnel who can install, maintain, and troubleshoot the systems necessary for an alternative publishing forum. This skill gap can lead to prolonged downtimes and inefficient system performance, as there may not be enough qualified individuals to address technical problems promptly. Moreover, even when personnel are available, they often lack ongoing training and professional development opportunities to keep up with technological advancements.

Inconsistent power supply is another critical issue that affects the operation of servers hosting the publishing software. Frequent power outages can result in data loss, corrupted files, and interrupted access to the platform. This inconsistency can undermine the reliability and

¹ 2024 Toluca-Cape Town Declaration of Diamond Open Access

Following the 2023 Toluca Global Summit, we, the 2024 Cape Town Global Summit participants, affirm that sharing knowledge is a human right.

As such, scholarly knowledge must be a public good. It must be accessible to all communities, including readers and authors, without barriers and paywalls. Participation in knowledge production and communication must be free of prejudice and bias.

In line with the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, Diamond Open Access is community-owned, community-led, and non-commercial.

Social justice, equity, and inclusivity are fundamental to Diamond Open Access, enabling it to be a driver of decolonization and demarginalization.

We commit to regional and language diversity in scholarly communication. Diamond Open Access needs to be tailored to address both local and global challenges and supported by systems of research assessment.

trustworthiness of the publishing forum, as users may find it difficult to access the system when needed.

Limited access to reliable hardware further complicates effective implementation. In many regions, there is a shortage of high-quality servers, computers, and other essential hardware. This is evident in the Ethiopia scenario, which hosts 35 odd journals. The low capacity of the hardware results in poor performance of the publishing platform leading to slow loading times, crashes, and a poor user experience.

It is acknowledged that APOS will not be able to address issues with unreliable internet infrastructure and allied challenges; however, it does provide alternatives that reduce content degradation and support the veracity of the content.

THE INTERVENTION

The intervention that has been conceptualized, developed, tested, and deployed to address the aforementioned challenges is APOS. The conceptualization of the platform is situated within a progressive UCT (2020) open access policy. The policy states that the library provides “a platform and support for the publication of open monographs and open textbooks. This diamond open access journals and monograph option will complement current publishing processes to meet the need for more local and decolonised content: such content will be accessible globally.” The goal of the policy is to reclaim the fundamental purpose of open access in Africa. Further, the policy gave the library the confidence to pursue a resolution to address the mentioned challenges.

Tenant model

Cognizant of the need to address issues of conscious and unconscious bias that beset the current publishing ecosystem, to advance social justice principles, and to address the technical challenges, UCT Libraries (UCTL) actively sought a model to deliver a resolution. The model sought would have to facilitate the integration of social justice principles, ensuring that the model is inclusive and equitable, supporting diverse voices and perspectives within African scholarship. Hence, the tenant model for APOS was adopted.

The tenant model adopted mimics the university’s practice that allows different departments, research groups, or administrative units within the university to use shared IT resources (such as servers, databases, or software platforms) while maintaining data isolation and security. Each “tenant” within UCT could represent a distinct organizational unit or department that operates independently within the overarching university infrastructure.

In rolling out this model for the platform, multiple African institutions and research communities share a single software instance, which includes shared databases and hardware. The software used is from the PKP for the publication of books and journals. The platform, referred to as APOS, addresses capacity, infrastructure, affordability, and sustainability while adhering to the PKP's technical publishing standards. Some of the PKP's technical standards include the following:

- **OpenURL:** A standardized format that enables seamless linking between different resources, facilitating navigation between citations and full-text content;
- **Metadata Standards (e.g., Dublin Core):** A structured way to describe and organize scholarly content. This ensures consistency and interoperability across different systems, aiding in the discoverability, indexing, and harvesting of publications;
- **Peer Review Standards:** This supports the peer review process, adhering to established peer review standards. These standards encompass guidelines for blind or double-blind peer review, reviewer confidentiality and transparency in the review process; and
- **Preservation Standards:** These incorporate preservation features, integrating with digital preservation systems such as CLOCKSS or LOCKSS (PKP, 2024).

In the quest to be as inclusive as possible and to remove as many barriers as possible, APOS adopted the diamond open access publishing model, i.e., providing free access to readers and devoid of publishing charges to authors.

APOS

As much as the tenant model provided participating institutions the opportunity to address the biases and technical challenges, it is intended to instill a sense of pride and ownership. Participating institutions publish their books and journals under their own branding while benefiting from the centralized support and infrastructure provided by UCTL.

Further, APOS enables individual institutions to showcase their scholarship, at the least, to the continent and then globally. Each institution's publication website is uniquely branded, instilling institutional pride through displaying their researchers' scholarly works. Further, the platform elevates institutional prestige by highlighting their role as knowledge publishers, increasing research impact through greater visibility, and integrating institutions into a wider network of African scholarship.

Departing from irrational behavior

The adoption of APOS as a platform for sharing scholarship necessitates a shift in mindset and a move away from irrational practices. Over recent decades, librarians have inadvertently perpetuated irrational behaviors within the academic publishing ecosystem. Collection development is an age-old library practice that is in desperate need of revisiting. Corral (2018) posits that traditional collection development practices need to be revisited alluding to the academy taking back ownership of their research output, ensuring its wider dissemination.

Researchers, funded by universities, conduct studies and submit their findings for publication. This process includes peer review, also supported by university salaries. Authors revise their work based on reviewer feedback, which underscores the claim that the academy finances the intellectual output. In this cycle, as presented in Figure 1, the publisher finalizes the process by handling language and layout editing.

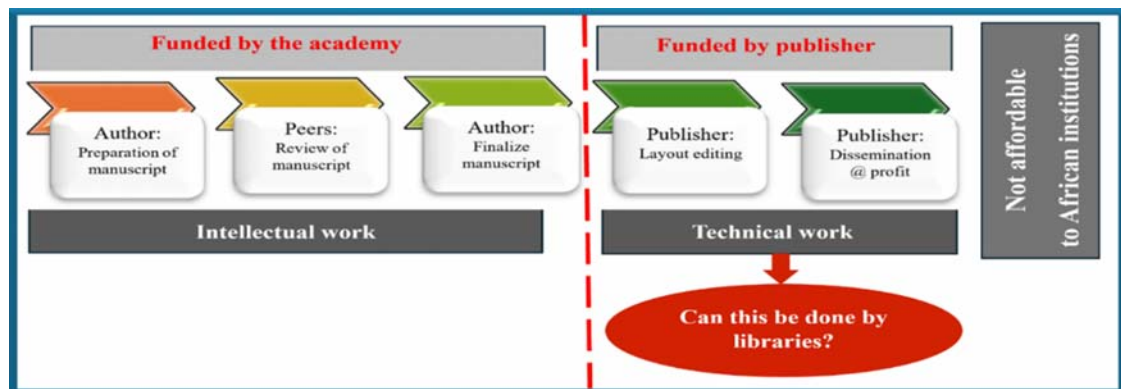


Figure 1. Funded components of the production process of manuscripts.

The research is then published and sold back to the same institutions that financed its creation through salaries and research infrastructure. This creates a paradox in which universities must pay for access to research they essentially funded. This irrationality is further highlighted by the fact that many institutions in Africa cannot afford these subscriptions, including the authors' own institutions. Alarming, authors often cannot use their own work for teaching or sharing with peers because they have signed away their copyright.

Adopting this platform allows libraries to manage the technical aspects, completing the publication process from manuscript preparation to the dissemination of the final research output.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

UCTL Press has already published 26 books on the platform and publishes six journals. Two of the six journals (<https://journals.uct.ac.za/>) are included in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): the *Journal of Construction Business and Management* and the *Journal of African Real Estate Research*. The other South African institutions that are publishing on the platform are the Durban University of Technology and Nelson Mandela University staff who have been trained on using the platform. The first non-South African university to adopt the platform is the University of Namibia, and two other Namibian institutions are utilizing the platform to publish their journals. Three universities in Zimbabwe and one in Cameroon are already publishing on the platform. One institution from Nigeria is publishing on the platform with the Kwara State University College of Education due to publish its first journal title in the coming months. Training sessions have been done for institutions in Ghana and Nigeria.

The focus of this case study is the book publishing program at UCT. Given the complexities associated with publishing books, the authors have chosen this publication type to showcase how libraries can complete the publication process, including coordinating language editing and layout editing. Furthermore, this growing role of the academic library acts as a disruptor of the commercial model and a proponent of diamond open access. These librarians envision that diamond open access has positive implications for authors, institutions, and society at large. For authors, there is a dramatic increase in visibility, leading to a range of opportunities. For the institution, there is enhanced visibility and greater opportunities for improved ranking. For society, there is free access to quality scholarship.

Presses mainstreamed at UCT

There are two presses that are mainstreamed at UCTL. The first is the “library as a publisher service,” which has been formalized into UCTL Press. The second is UCT Press. The imprint of this press was leased to a commercial company. The imprint has been returned to UCT as of December 2021, and the press has been relocated to the library with the express goal of becoming a fully open access publisher.

Press mandates are as follows:

- UCT Press publishes research books that conform to legislated guidelines. In terms of the South African higher education system, these publications by default earn research subsidies from the national government. The language and layout editing is outsourced.

- UCTL Press is less formal but still upholds academic rigor. UCTL Press focuses on publishing textbooks, conference proceedings, and journals. Authors may also want to publish research-based books without following the protracted processes associated with UCT Press. The books published under the auspices of UCTL Press have their layout done by library staff but without the bells and whistles that UCT Press offers.

UCT Press

This press has published 67 back titles on APOS starting in 2020. These titles were removed from bookstore shelves due to extremely low sales. Since these titles have been made available open access, there has been a relatively large number of downloads. These download figures must be viewed in the context that a typical print run in South Africa is around 200 books.

The authors have randomly chosen 10 of the 67 back titles to demonstrate, via downloads, the impact of being freely available (see [Table 1](#)). The most downloaded book is *Dictionary of South African Indian English*, which was downloaded 7,926 times in a single year ([Figure 2](#)). [Figure 3](#) shows the download distribution of this book since it was published on APOS in June 2022.

UCTL Press

The authors randomly selected 10 of the 26 (see [Table 2](#)) books published on the platform to demonstrate increased accessibility, discoverability, and visibility of books openly published. Twenty-five of these books are in English and one is in Sesotho, which is one of 12 official languages of South Africa. These books, for all intents and purposes, are considered textbooks and are used to support a teaching program.

Two of the most downloaded books published under the banner of UCTL were *Marketing to South African Consumers* and *Constitutional Law for Students*. It must be noted that there was no marketing strategy for any of the books published with UCTL Press. Be that as it may, in a single year the two books have been downloaded 69,185 and 69,685 times, respectively. The *Constitutional Law for Students*, since its publication in March 2020, has been downloaded 245,601 times from more than 150 countries.

Who gets in and why	Beyond impunity	Land, power & custom	Anatomy of a South African genocide	Upgrading informal settlement	Traditional African religion	Nature divide	South Africa pushed to its limits	Stewards leadership	Mainstream climate change	
Aug	45	46	20	48	93	70	28	8	34	18
Sept	48	34	21	45	99	98	21	15	17	14
Oct	39	30	37	55	109	79	14	32	25	45
Nov	35	60	16	64	49	40	10	36	27	26
Dec	16	47	14	79	55	40	5	11	11	20
Jan	48	34	26	357	96	66	14	14	30	33
Feb	38	54	27	138	88	72	19	14	21	50
Mar	56	80	26	103	127	159	20	26	18	30
April	46	83	31	303	281	225	43	46	24	56
May	95	64	28	53	126	259	52	13	49	44
June	101	10	15	27	15	194	5	9	31	9
Totals	567	542	261	1272	1138	1302	231	224	287	345

Table 1. Back titles freely available.

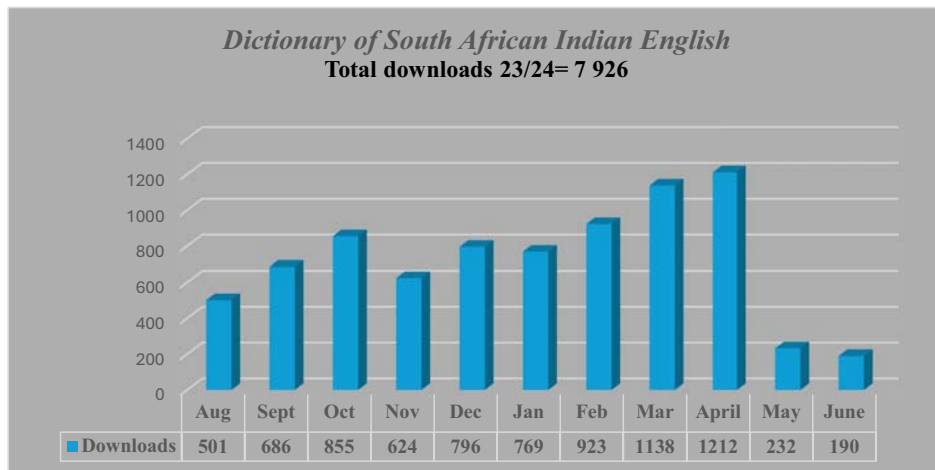


Figure 2. Most downloaded back title for the period August 2023–June 2024.

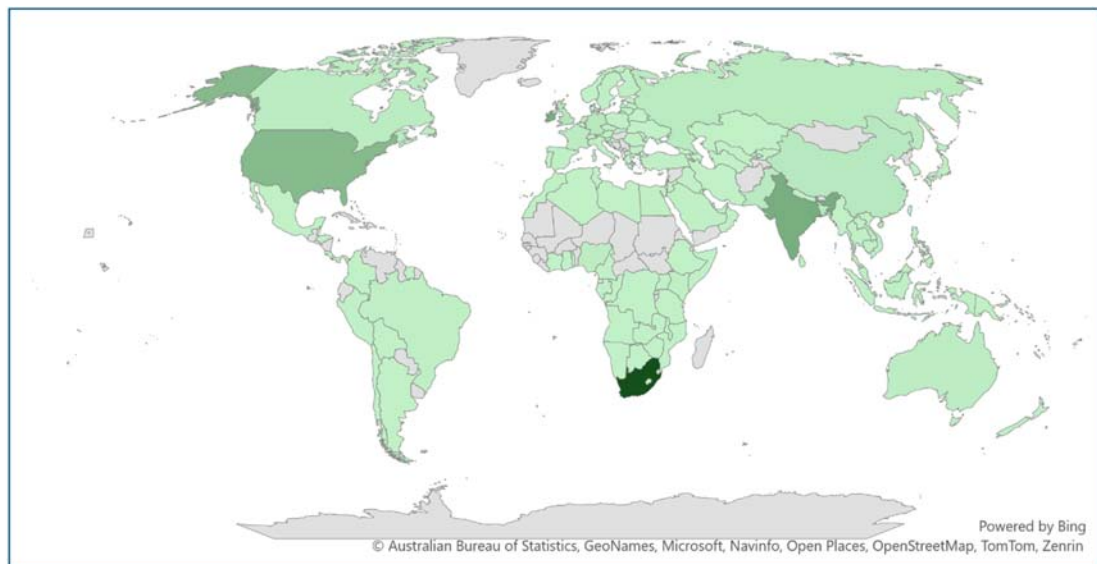


Figure 3. Country distribution of downloads of the most downloaded back title.

	Disability studies in inclusive education	Creativity explained	Paeds in a pinch:	Orthopaedics for primary health care	Marketing to SA consumers	Constitutional law for students	Biomedical engineering for Africa	Atlas of paediatric HIV infection	Open access atlas of	UCT authdate
Aug		131	300	537	6003	5021	303	512	796	79
Sept		67	273	358	5201	5651	189	338	354	68
Oct		156	450	487	4847	8175	253	469	691	29
Nov		91	442	415	4855	4078	239	397	551	23
Dec		158	421	647	3402	1476	250	412	687	21
Jan		141	534	580	4613	2806	202	423	630	21
Feb	9	379	558	629	5776	5641	254	351	651	46
Mar	461	326	550	918	9089	11138	412	421	850	54
April	404	267	667	729	10358	10857	389	429	1061	112
May	558	264	865	1017	9001	9437	337	1039	775	122
June	655	183	675	782	5489	5153	345	484	1129	37
July	130	14	103	128	551	252	45	61	85	11
Totals	2217	2177	5838	7227	69185	69685	3218	5336	8260	623

Table 2. Downloads of UCTL Press publications for the period August 2023–June 2024.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM PARTICIPATION

There have been significant positive outcomes from participating in this community-based intervention. Participation in the platform has brought increased visibility and accessibility as well as broader exposure and networking. Some of the positive outcomes include the following:

- **Collaboration and Network Building:** APOS is part of the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) Trusted Platform Network, which enhances the visibility and accessibility of open access books.
- **Capacity Building and Development:** APOS collaborates with various organizations and projects to host workshops and events aimed at building a sustainable future for open access book publishing in Africa. These initiatives focus on training authors, editors, and infrastructure providers to overcome barriers and enhance the dissemination of African scholarship. As an example, in March 2023, UCTL, in collaboration with SPARC Africa, the Association of African Universities (AAU), and African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA), hosted a post-conference workshop on library publishing, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Twenty-four delegates from West Africa, East Africa, and Central Africa attended the workshop.
- **International Consortia:** Through projects like the Open Book Futures initiative, APOS works with international stakeholders to develop a sustainable, equitable, and diverse future for open access books. This project aims to engage with fellow consortia, universities, and infrastructure providers for an inclusive publishing ecosystem.

NEXT STEPS

The creation of the platform was driven by the desire to accelerate the dissemination of African scholarship and, by default, the improved accessibility of such scholarship. Within this broad aspiration are three goals: eradicating bias, addressing the IT challenges, and developing related skills.

In terms of eradicating bias, there is a deliberate strategy to eliminate systemic inequalities and prejudices that often hinder the recognition and representation of African scholarship on global platforms. The platform provides African researchers with a medium to present their work on an equal footing with their global counterparts, ensuring that their voices and perspectives are valued and heard. African researchers and institutions can utilize the platform to

create their own journals and manage the entire publication process without being dependent on Global North support.

The authors hold the view that IT has been addressed (within reason, as uninterrupted access to electricity is totally outside the capacity of the project). There is a need to have a concerted drive to get more institutions to adopt the platform. Further, there has to be a structured program for skills development.

Increased adoption

The authors are cognizant that South Africa carries a “big brother” stigma that has a negative influence on the adoption of the platform by many institutions on the continent. The AAU was deemed to be an ideal partner to grow diamond open access on the continent.

This pan-African organization represents nearly 400 universities across 46 countries and has the mandate to promote collaboration and knowledge exchange among higher education institutions. It serves as a key voice, advocating for policies that strengthen higher education and fostering initiatives to improve the quality, relevance, and accessibility of education on the continent. The AAU supports capacity building, research, and open access initiatives, helping to address challenges such as funding, innovation, and equitable knowledge dissemination in African higher education. APOS’s association with the AAU will, hopefully, advance its adoption. In September 2021, the AAU co-hosted a webinar with UCT to consolidate their endorsement of the platform.

The relationship between the AAU and UCT was further consolidated with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. In terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, the AAU committed to facilitating the relocation of the platform to a “neutral” organization as well as to support and facilitate skills development.

There have been several discussions with one of the three major regional networks on the continent, that is, UbuntuNet Alliance. There is a principal agreement for the relocation of APOS from UCT to UbuntuNet Alliance.

The intention is to work closely with Redalyc (Latin America based) to develop technological capabilities. Redalyc has significantly more experience and has demonstrated the capabilities to develop the necessary innovations to make the technical processes for the publication of journals and books easier.

Skills development

The strategy that is harnessed to address the technical skills deficit is “train-the-trainer.” There have been numerous training sessions that have been conducted to bridge this skills deficit. Training sessions, both virtual and in person, have been conducted with editors of journals, IT experts, and library staff.

The IT infrastructure, as well as the deficits in IT skills, is addressed via the platform; the focus now is on developing the technical skills associated with the publishing process. UCT has engaged in the training of library staff as well as content developers, that is, the researchers. However, poor internet infrastructure makes virtual training extremely difficult. Be that as it may, a number of institutions have been trained on the technical processes. In May 2023, UCT and AfLIA hosted a workshop, funded by the Hewlett Foundation, in Ghana. Those who have been trained at this workshop are in the process of accumulating content to publish on the platform. Some have already started to publish on the platform (<https://apos.uct.ac.za>).

In February 2024, in collaboration with the Open Book Collective (which is United Kingdom based) and the AAU, UCT hosted another skills development workshop on open book publishing. There were delegates from Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi.

There will be a follow-up workshop at the 2nd Global Summit on Diamond Open Access. This workshop will be expanded to include directors of academic libraries and IT directors of the same institutions. The Global Summit will have a second workshop to be co-delivered by Redalyc and the PKP.

It is anticipated that these projects will generate greater interest in using the platform to publish diamond open access. Further, it is hoped that there will be consolidation of communities of practice and hopefully regional hubs of expertise.

CONCLUSION

Despite efforts by African institutions to use OJS for the publishing of journals, challenges such as limited technical expertise, insufficient funding, and inadequate infrastructure have hindered sustainable success. These barriers perpetuate the systemic biases that marginalize African scholarship. In response, UCT launched the diamond open access APOS to leverage library services to support technical and administrative aspects of journal publishing.

The tenant model, core to APOS, is predicated on instilling institutional pride and prestige through displaying their researchers' scholarly works. The aspiration is to also increase research impact through greater visibility and integrating institutions into a wider network of African scholarship.

The exemplars discussed demonstrate the phenomenal increase in visibility and accessibility of African scholarship. Using these exemplars as benchmarks, there is optimism for the improved dissemination of African research and concomitant increase in visibility and accessibility.

APOS represents one option for reclaiming the fundamental purpose of open access in Africa. By addressing biases and technical challenges, African researchers and institutions are empowered with the tools, resources, and opportunities to adopt a Global South perspective in managing and shaping the scholarly publishing process. Hence, they can now take control of the production and dissemination of their research. African researchers now have the autonomy and resources to engage in scholarly communication without relying on external, and potentially biased, systems. This encourages self-sufficiency and fosters a more inclusive and equitable scholarly communication ecosystem.

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