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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Age of APCs: Corresponding Author Approaches to Article Processing Charges and Open Access

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: As open access and APCs reshape scholarly publishing, and with the University of Kentucky Libraries opting out of large transformative agreements (TA), this study explores how affiliated corresponding authors navigate APCs in relation to their personal, disciplinary, and institutional values.

Literature Review: The literature shows that faculty have mixed feelings about open access (OA) publishing, shaped by things like discipline, age, and concerns about quality and cost; but many are motivated by increased visibility and funder requirements, using a range of methods to cover APCs, from grants and institutional support to personal funds, with big differences across disciplines.

Methods: This study investigated how University of Kentucky-affiliated corresponding authors manage Article Processing Charges (APCs) and their perspectives on OA publishing through surveys and eight semistructured interviews with 383 unique authors identified from Scopus data for 2023–2024 OA publications.

Findings: Using Scopus to identify 383 University of Kentucky-affiliated corresponding authors of 2023–2024 OA publications, this study explored how they manage APCs and view OA publishing through a survey and eight follow-up semistructured interviews.

Discussion: The discussion highlights key aspects of APC-driven OA, including authors' experiences with paying for APCs, journals flipping to Gold OA, and difficulty with peer review, while also showing that the University of Kentucky is already spending significant funds on APCs.

Conclusion: This study reveals corresponding authors' conflicting views on transformative agreements, valued for easing APC burdens but seen as exploitative, while exposing funding inequities at the University of Kentucky and underscoring the need for a more coordinated OA strategy.

Keywords: article processing charges, APCs, open access, author practices

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IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study offers several practical takeaways for libraries and scholarly communication professionals seeking to support authors and manage open access (OA) publishing more strategically.

1. Track and coordinate APC spending across campus. Even when libraries choose not to pursue large transformative agreements, researchers and departments may still be spending significant institutional funds on APCs. Understanding the full financial picture is essential for making informed decisions and creating a more equitable and efficient OA strategy.
2. Acknowledge authors' mixed feelings about APCs. Many authors view APCs as exploitative but feel pressured to pay them to stay competitive. Libraries should recognize this tension and work to develop institutional support systems that reduce financial barriers and support equitable publishing opportunities across disciplines.
3. Help authors navigate complex publishing models. Journal “flips” to Gold OA and cascade “transfer offers” often lead to confusion and stress for authors, especially those without APC funding. Libraries can play a key role by educating authors, supporting waiver requests, and guiding them through these publishing decisions.
4. Treat OA as a strategic opportunity. Authors see value in OA not just for sharing research, but for enhancing the university's reputation and appeal to prospective faculty and students. A coordinated institutional approach to OA can promote equity, boost visibility, and strengthen recruitment efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, the scholarly publishing landscape has been shaped by the growth of open access (OA) publishing. At the heart of this shift—and the profitability of many commercial publishers involved in OA publishing—has been the Article Processing Charge (APC), a fee paid by the corresponding author to the journal to publish an article OA. Funding mechanisms for APCs are diverse, offering authors several options to support the open dissemination of their research. These include grant funding, waivers or discounts offered by publishers, centralized library or institutional funds, negotiated discounts, and discretionary budgets allocated by institutions. More recently, an author's APC can also be covered through their institutional library's Subscribe to Open agreements or, more commonly, Read and Publish agreements, collectively referred to as Transformative Agreements (TAs).

As transformative agreements (TAs) have gained traction across US academic libraries, the University of Kentucky Libraries (UK Libraries) has opted not to actively pursue these agreements, particularly with large publishers. This decision reflects philosophical concerns about the long-term sustainability of both TAs and APCs, and how both may perpetuate the ongoing serials crisis that libraries have grappled with for decades. Instead, UK Libraries has opted to only sign OA agreements that minimally increased or did not increase library expenditures. This conservative approach has limited the number of agreements UK Libraries participate in and, therefore, limits the options for University of Kentucky (UK) authors on how to approach APCs. Furthermore, discussions at the administrative level—including with the Provost’s Office, academic deans, associate deans of research, the Office of the Vice President of Research, and a selection of faculty—revealed inconsistent and inconclusive views on how the Libraries should approach should be for OA publishing and APCs. Some administrators and faculty believed that grant funding adequately covered APCs, while others identified a gap in funding support for authors, particularly those in the humanities and social sciences. Others expressed concern that reallocating resources toward OA initiatives might lead to cuts in traditional library services and resources, making such investments undesirable and unwarranted. Still others felt that entering into these agreements would put undue pressure on faculty to publish their research with these publishers if the UK Libraries and, by extension, the university would have invested a considerable amount of resources. They argue that this could be perceived as undermining academic freedom.

Although these high-level discussions provided valuable insights, UK Libraries recognized the need for direct input from UK-affiliated corresponding authors who had recently paid APCs. By engaging with these authors, the Libraries aimed to challenge prevailing assumptions, explore the motivations behind authors’ decisions to pay APCs, and uncover the specific pain points associated with APC-driven OA publishing—especially in the context of an institution with limited TA agreements to offset these costs. In this paper, the authors investigate four research questions about how UK corresponding authors financially and strategically manage APCs and how APCs intersect with personal, disciplinary, and institutional values:

- RQ1: How are UK-affiliated authors paying APCs?
- RQ2: What strategies have UK-affiliated authors developed for managing APC payments, and how are APCs affecting your publications and research?
- RQ3: What motivates UK-affiliated authors to publish OA, and who do they think should fund OA publishing?
- RQ4: How do UK-affiliated authors feel about UK Libraries supporting OA?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Faculty perceptions of OA

Faculty perceptions of OA publishing are mixed and influenced by a variety of factors, including discipline, age, and concerns about quality and cost. Although awareness of OA has increased, initial studies revealed a lack of understanding and misconceptions about OA models, including concerns about peer review and journal quality (Harley et al. 2006). More recent studies suggest growing familiarity and appreciation for OA's potential benefits, but concerns about journal quality, career advancement, and APCs remain and persist (Gaines, 2015; Togia & Korobili, 2014; Warlick & Vaughan, 2007; Rowley et al., 2017; Bryant & Thomas, 2024).

Despite the growing awareness and recognition of the potential benefits of OA, disciplinary differences exist. Several studies have shown that faculty and researchers in the humanities and social sciences often express greater hesitancy toward OA publishing, citing the centrality of monograph publishing, limited availability of APC funding, and longstanding disciplinary publishing norms as key factors (Gaines, 2015; Harley et al., 2006; Severin et al., 2020; Togia & Korobili, 2014). On the other hand, STEM fields, where OA publishing is more prevalent and has more funder support, tend to have more positive faculty perceptions (Harley et al., 2007).

Specific concerns include the quality and prestige of OA journals, particularly in humanities and social sciences, where traditional publishing norms are strong (Harley et al. 2006; Togia & Korobili, 2014). The high cost of APCs is a major deterrent, especially for those without grant funding or in disciplines with limited resources (Cantrell & Swanson, 2020; Gaines, 2015; Rowley et al., 2017). Concerns about predatory publishing practices also contribute to skepticism (Narayan et al., 2018). Despite these concerns, many faculty support OA principles and see its potential for scholarly communication. The desire for greater dissemination and impact, faster publication, and growing funding and institutional support are contributing to a gradual shift in attitudes.

Faculty motivations for publishing OA

Faculty and researchers are motivated to publish OA for a variety of reasons, with the most prevalent among them being increased visibility and impact and compliance with funder mandates. One of the primary motivations for OA publishing is the desire for increased visibility and impact of their research. Several studies indicate that authors frequently associate OA publishing with expanded reach and readership, anticipating that this increased exposure

will yield citation advantages and elevate the overall impact and visibility of their research (Tenopir et al., 2017; Togia & Korobili, 2014; Warlick & Vaughan, 2007). Some studies support this belief and have found a citation advantage for OA articles (Gargouri et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2015; Hubbard, 2017; Borrego, 2023). These studies suggest a potential open access citation advantage (OACA), particularly for articles published in OA journals with higher impact factors. Conversely, a systematic review of OACA studies found 64 studies (47.8%) confirmed the existence of OACA, while 37 (27.6%) found that it did not exist, 32 (23.9%) found OACA only in subsets of their sample, and one study (0.8%) was inconclusive (Langham-Putrow, 2021). It is important to note that correlation does not equal causation, however, and other factors, such as the quality of the research and author selectivity, may also contribute to this advantage, particularly as the generalized existence of OACA still remains the subject of ongoing debate.

Compliance with funder mandates is another motivating factor. Studies consistently show that compliance with funding-agency requirements has become a major driver of open access publishing, often outweighing researchers' intrinsic motivations or preferences for OA (Togia & Korobili, 2014; Dalton et al., 2020; AAAS, 2022; Segado-Boj et al., 2022). For instance, the European Commission and the US National Science Foundation require OA publication for funded projects (Segado-Boj et al., 2022). Similarly, the Canadian Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications (TAOAPP) mandates OA for research funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (et al., 2022). These policies incentivize researchers to choose OA venues to meet these requirements. Funding agencies have also increased the availability of funding for APCs, further motivating authors to publish OA. Funders like the Wellcome Trust and the NIH have policies that either cover APCs or allow grantees to use grant funds for OA publication (Butler, 2023). This financial support removes a major barrier for researchers, particularly those in fields with limited funding. Mandates that rely on APCs can create unintended consequences and potentially hinder OA motivation for some researchers. The reliance on APCs can create financial barriers, especially for researchers in low-income countries or underfunded disciplines (AAAS, 2022; Butler et al., 2022; Borrego, 2023). This can lead to inequalities in publishing opportunities, contradicting the democratizing aims of OA (Olejniczak and Wilson, 2020; Alonso-Álvarez et al., 2024). Additionally, the focus on APCs might overshadow the original motivations for OA, such as wider dissemination and societal benefit (Bryant and Thomas, 2024; Sutton, 2024).

Additional motivations for publishing OA are the speed of publication, topical fit, and journal quality: OA journals are often perceived as offering faster publication times compared to traditional subscription-based journals (Tenopir et al., 2017). This can be a motivating factor for researchers working in rapidly evolving fields or those seeking to disseminate their findings

quickly. Just as with traditional publishing, authors carefully consider the relevance of a journal's scope and focus to their research, seeking journals that align with their specific area of study. They also prioritize publishing in high-quality, reputable journals, regardless of OA status, taking into account factors such as peer review rigor and journal reputation (Rowley et al., 2017).

Despite the motivating commonalities, the cultural and institutional contexts within which faculty and researchers operate can significantly influence their motivations for OA publishing. In some disciplines, there is a strong culture of collaboration and sharing, which aligns well with the principles of OA (Severin et al., 2020). In contrast, other fields may have more competitive environments where the focus on individual achievement can deter researchers from adopting OA practices (Tenopir et al., 2016). Additionally, institutional support, such as the availability of funds to cover APCs, can also impact faculty motivations. Institutions that actively promote OA through funding and policy support tend to see higher rates of OA publishing among their faculty (Jahn & Tullney, 2016; Björk, 2017). Conversely, in the humanities, where traditional publishing practices are more entrenched, faculty may be more hesitant to embrace OA due to concerns about the perceived prestige of OA journals compared to established subscription journals (Rattray et al., 2013). This hesitation can stem from a belief that publishing in high-impact traditional journals is essential for career advancement, particularly for early-career researchers who may be more risk-averse (Wical & Kocken, 2017).

Paying for APCs

Faculty and researchers utilize several different mechanisms for obtaining funding to pay for APCs associated with OA publishing, which can vary significantly across disciplines. The primary sources of funding for APCs include institutional support, grants, and, to a lesser extent, personal finances.

Institutional support may take the form of dedicated OA funds provided by universities to help faculty cover publication costs or through transformative agreements (TAs) negotiated by the library. For example, some institutions provide central funds specifically for this purpose, allowing researchers to apply for financial assistance to pay APCs (Pinfield and Middleton, 2016; Beaubien et al., 2016). This approach has been adopted as a means to facilitate OA publishing, especially in research-intensive environments where the demand for OA is high (Solomon & Björk, 2016). Another approach has been the emergence of TAs. These agreements are contracts between libraries and publishers that allow faculty and researchers to publish their work in OA journals without incurring direct APCs at the time of publication. Instead, the costs are covered through institutional subscriptions, effectively shifting the

financial burden from individual authors to libraries (Yoh et al., 2024). TAs help to alleviate the financial pressure on faculty and researchers and encourage wider participation in OA publishing, particularly among those who may lack access to grant funding or personal resources to cover APCs (Baldwin and Cavanagh, 2024). Critics argue that TAs reinforce existing inequities within academic publishing; however, as institutions that can afford to negotiate favorable TAs may gain a competitive advantage in publishing, leaving researchers at less affluent institutions at a disadvantage (Bakker, 2024; Rawlins, 2024; Yoh et al., 2024).

In addition to institutional support, researchers frequently utilize grant funding, when available, to cover APCs. Many funding agencies include provisions for APCs that enable faculty and researchers to include these in their grant budgets (Björk, 2017). A challenge for faculty and researchers in utilizing grant funding is that the availability and accessibility of grant funding vary widely across disciplines. In disciplines such as the health sciences, researchers often have better access to funding for APCs due to the presence of grants from governmental and non-governmental organizations that specifically allocate resources for publication costs. For instance, Ellingson et al. (2021) highlighted that medical researchers frequently incur significant expenses related to OA publishing, with many relying on research grants to cover these costs. Conversely, in the humanities and social sciences, funding for APCs is less common, and faculty members may rely more on personal funds or departmental budgets, which can be limited (Cantrell & Swanson, 2020). This disparity can create inequalities in publishing opportunities, as researchers in less well-funded disciplines may struggle to afford the costs associated with high-impact OA journals (Nabyonga-Orem et al., 2020). This disparity can also lead to significant differences in OA publishing practices across fields, with STEM and health sciences disciplines generally exhibiting higher rates of OA publication compared to the humanities (O'Hanlon et al., 2020).

Personal funding is another avenue that faculty and researchers utilize to pay for APCs, although this is less common. A study by Halevi & Walsh (2021) indicated that less than 20% of faculty members report using personal funds to cover these charges, reflecting the financial burden that APCs can impose, particularly on early-career researchers who may lack access to funding from grants or institutional support. The high costs associated with APCs can deter researchers from publishing OA, especially in disciplines where funding is scarce (Cantrell & Swanson, 2020).

Although faculty and researchers have several avenues for funding APCs, including institutional funds, grants, and personal finances, the availability and effectiveness of these funding sources vary significantly across disciplines. This variability can impact the extent to which researchers engage with OA publishing, highlighting the need for continued advocacy and support for OA initiatives, particularly in underfunded fields.

METHODS

This study presents findings from a survey and interviews conducted with UK-affiliated corresponding authors who published an OA article in 2023 or 2024. The authors were identified from Scopus publication data filtered for an author with a UK affiliation, a publication year of 2023 or 2024, and a document type of article. Once extracted, the data were further filtered for articles that were designated “Gold Open Access” or “Hybrid Open Access” within the Scopus OA data column. These results were then filtered for articles with a UK corresponding author. For this study, the corresponding author was defined as an author with a UK affiliation and/or a UK email address located in the corresponding author field of the Scopus data. The authors reviewed all corresponding authors to verify current UK affiliation and, in some cases, identify their UK email address. The final sample included 522 articles with 383 unique UK-affiliated corresponding authors. Corresponding authors are responsible for submitting manuscripts to journals, communicating with editors, and, upon publication, making decisions about whether to publish OA, and if publishing OA, how to pay the APC. Therefore, these authors had recent and direct experience managing an OA publication and the APC payment required for OA.

This study was approved by the UK Institutional Review Board as exempt, and the complete survey and interview instruments are provided in Appendices 1 and 2, respectively. The authors distributed a Qualtrics survey via direct email to the corresponding authors. The survey ran from August 12 through September 2, 2024. Respondents interested in participating in an interview were invited to submit their email address in a separate form. All participants who expressed interest were invited to an interview.

The authors conducted eight semistructured interviews with UK-affiliated corresponding authors who published one or more articles OA in 2023 or 2024. The interviews, which lasted from thirty to sixty minutes, were conducted via Zoom in October and November 2024 and recorded with participant consent. Each participant was offered the choice of a pre-selected interview incentive item that was later purchased by UK Libraries. During the interview, both authors took notes and later reconciled them. The authors confirmed quotations by referring to the interview transcripts. During the interviews, the authors employed naturalistic inquiry; participant responses guided the interviews and shaped future interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The authors triangulated interview transcripts with their notes and developed applicable themes associated with the study’s research questions. The authors invited interview participants and professionals external to the project to provide feedback and input on a draft and incorporated that feedback into the final manuscript (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Instead of focusing this research on faculty perceptions and sensitivities toward APC-driven OA—which elicited many strong feelings—the authors concentrated on how the UK

corresponding paid and managed APCs. Survey respondents who left open-ended comments, along with interviewees discussing the current state of APC funding, often reported conflicted feelings. One was that APCs were “immoral” or “exploitative,” with individual APC costs in some fields reaching “sickening” levels. The second was an acknowledgement that, despite these concerns, APC-driven OA had expanded opportunities for OA, and as researchers at a research-intensive institution, they were participants in a competitive publishing, funding, and promotion marketplace. In some instances, they described OA as essential for visible, shareable, and impactful research that was necessary to position them competitively for funding proposals valued at their institution. The findings from the survey and interviews focus on the inescapability of APC-driven OA and how and why UK corresponding authors pay APCs for OA.

FINDINGS

After distribution to 383 unique UK-affiliated corresponding authors, the survey received 73 responses, of which 65 were included as valid, a participation rate of 17%. Not all questions were required, however, and some questions have fewer than 65 responses. Survey respondents represented a cross-section of UK Colleges.

UK Colleges	Unique Responses	% of Responses
College of Medicine	18	27.69
College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment	10	15.38
College of Arts and Sciences	7	10.77
College of Engineering	6	9.23
UK Healthcare	5	7.69
College of Pharmacy	5	7.69
College of Health Sciences	3	4.62
Center For Applied Energy Research	3	4.62
College of Education	1	1.54
College of Public Health	2	3.08
College of Health Sciences	1	1.54
College of Communication & Information	1	1.54
Health Development Institute	1	1.54
College of Social Work	1	1.54
College of Nursing	1	1.54
Grand Total	65	100.00

Table 1. Survey Respondents by UK College

The interview participants included representatives from eight of the 16 UK Colleges. These include the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Communication and Information, the College of Engineering, the College of Health Sciences, the College of Medicine, the College of Nursing, and Lewis Honors College.

In terms of UK faculty or staff position ranks, the survey and interviews also had representation from across the UK position categories and ranks.

University Rank	Unique Responses	% of Responses
Tenured Faculty	34	52.31
Tenure Track Faculty	13	20.00
Non-tenure Track (Incl. Researcher, Lecturer, Staff, Adjunct, Postdoctoral Researcher, Etc.)	9	13.85
Student, Professional, and PhD or Doctoral Programs	4	6.15
Emerita Tenured Faculty	3	4.62
Not Given	1	1.54
Physician Fellow	1	1.54
Grand Total	65	100.00

Table 2. Survey Responses by University Rank

The interview respondents included three tenured faculty members, three untenured faculty members, one research faculty member, and one senior lecturer.

RQ1: How are APCs being paid by UK-affiliated authors?

In discussions with administration within certain disciplines, one common perception was that grant funding largely covered the cost for APCs. Discovering the role of grant funding in paying APCs was therefore at the forefront of our questions around how APCs were paid. As seen in Table 3, 42 of the 65 survey responses (65%) received grant funding for the research that produced an OA article in 2023/2024. Not surprisingly, nearly a third of these were awarded to UK College of Medicine-affiliated corresponding authors.

As seen in Table 4, of the 42 corresponding authors who produced an article that received grant funding, nearly 60% (25) were tenured faculty. Interviewees offered context to this disparity, pointing out that tenured faculty often have more experience writing grants, winning

UK Colleges	Unique Responses	% of Responses
College of Medicine	13	30.95
College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment	8	19.05
College of Pharmacy	5	11.90
College of Arts and Sciences	4	9.52
College of Engineering	4	9.52
Center for Applied Energy Research	2	4.76
College of Public Health	2	4.76
College of Education	1	2.38
College of Nursing	1	2.38
UK HealthCare	1	2.38
College of Health Sciences	1	2.38
Grand Total	42	100.00

Table 3. Grant-Funded OA Publications by College

University Rank	Unique Responses	% of Responses
Tenured Faculty	25	59.52
Tenure Track Faculty	9	21.43
Non-tenure Track (Incl. Researcher, Lecturer, Staff, Adjunct, Postdoctoral Researcher, Etc.)	3	7.14
Student, Professional, and PhD or Doctoral Programs	3	7.14
Emerita Tenured Faculty	2	4.76
Grand Total	42	100.00

Table 4. Grant-Funded OA Publications by Author Rank

grants, have established relationships with funders, and a longer track record of research output, all of which they felt contributed to the winning of future funding. In effect, interviewees are characterizing the “Matthew Effect,” proposed by sociologist Robert Merton. The Matthew Effect describes the “culminative advantage that operates in many systems of social stratification to produce the same result” or “the rich get richer at a rate that makes the poor become relatively poorer” (Merton, 1968).

In terms of whether the awarded grant funding was used to pay the APC for an article to be published OA, as seen in Table 5, only 57% of the corresponding authors who had been awarded grants reported using grant funding to pay for the APC.

Did Your Funding Pay for the APC to Make the Article OA?	Unique Responses	% of Responses
No	18	42.86
Yes	24	57.14
Grand Total	42	100.00

Table 5. Grant Funding and APC Cost

Much like successfully awarded grants, whether grant funding was used for APC payments also skewed more heavily toward tenured faculty. As seen in Table 6, of the 24 articles that used grant funding to pay an APC, 71% were authored by tenured or emerita faculty, and only 4 (17%) were by untenured faculty.

Interviewees responded that while ideally grant funding would pay for APCs, the reality, as Table 5 demonstrates, is that that is not always the case, and when and how APCs are budgeted within grant funding is quite nuanced. Participants take into consideration the amount of the awarded grant after indirect costs and the cost of an APC. The ability to prioritize an APC depends on the amount of the grant. Multiple authors talked about how quickly the awarded grant money is “eaten up” or “evaporates” after personnel and equipment are budgeted. One author noted that if they have “\$50,000 after indirect costs from the UK. It’s not even enough money for me to pay one year of graduate student support...the reality is that it’s challenging to put anything else in there when the top priority is really paying for the personnel.” Interviewees indicated that grants within the \$20,000 to \$70,000 range were not enough to sustain the costs of operationalizing a research project and paying an APC. For smaller grants or internal grants, interviewees commented that personnel or other research necessities took priority. When there is not enough money to cover an APC, it is not even a consideration. When APCs were covered by grants, interviewees attributed that to \$300,000 awards or more. Although no exact level of grant funding to APC ratio was mentioned, it is clear that the grant size in relation to APC cost is closely evaluated.

Within the context of funding, the length of the awarded grant was also mentioned as a consideration when determining if an APC can be paid with grant funding. For small, one-year grants, conducting the research and producing a publication within the one-year timeframe may not be feasible, and therefore, the cost of an APC would not be considered when developing a grant budget. For multi-year grants, researchers were more likely to budget for APCs if they anticipated having publications ready within the grant period. One interviewee who was a part of a research team that won a multi-year, National Science Foundation grant commented that they “definitely included page charges [APC] because in year two or year three, you will likely have publishable research ready to go.”

Did Your Funding Pay for the APC to Make the Article OA?	Emerita Tenured Faculty	Non-Tenure Track (Incl. Researcher, Lecturer, Staff, Adjunct, Postdoctoral Researcher, Etc.)	Student, Professional, and PhD or Doctoral Programs	Tenure Track Faculty	Tenured Faculty	Grand Total
No	1	2	1	5	9	18
Yes	1	1	2	4	16	24
Grand Total	2	3	3	9	25	42

Table 6. Grant-Funded APC by University Status

Another commonly held perception is that grant funding is used to cover APCs because funders require research to be made immediately and freely available. As a result, authors may feel obligated to either pay an APC for OA or to be aware of self-archiving policies to comply via Green OA to meet funder mandates. As seen in Table 7, the UK data, however, does not support this perception. Although funder mandates play a role in motivating authors to pay APCs, UK corresponding authors seem to be prioritizing OA for other or additional reasons.

Did Your Funder Mandate That the Output of the Research Be Made Available OA?				
Did Your Funding Pay for the APC to Make the Article OA?	No Funder Mandate	Unsure of Mandate	Funder Mandate	Grand Total
No	15	3		18
Yes	12	5	6	23
Grand Total	27	8	6	41

Table 7. Funder Mandate and Funded APC

Only 26% of the corresponding authors who used grant funding to pay for an APC reported that an OA funder mandate existed. A nearly equal amount (22%) that received grant funding were unsure whether their funder required the scholarly output to be OA, and 52% reported making an article OA despite not being required by a funder. If grant funding was not used, then alternate funding sources were used by UK corresponding authors to pay for the APC to make their article OA. Survey responses indicated that APCs were largely funded by institutional monies, but where and how those monies were available to corresponding authors varied.

How Did You Pay the APC?	Unique Responses	% of Responses
UK College or Department Funds	4	22.22
Personal Research Funds	4	22.22
Publisher OA Waiver	3	16.67
Personal Research Funds, UK College, or Department Funds	3	16.67
No APC Required	2	11.11
Professional Development Funds	1	5.56
Personal Funds	1	5.56
Grand Total	18	100.00

Table 8. Grant-Funded, but APC Paid Without Funding

Of the 18 that received grant funding but did not use grant funding to pay the APC, 10 (55%) used a single instance or some combination of institutional funds (personal research funds, UK College or Department funds, or professional development funds) to pay the APC, 3 (17%) received a publisher waiver, 2 (11%) reported not paying an APC, and 1 (6%) used personal funds to pay the APC. Since Scopus data largely excludes diamond OA journals, the two responses indicating that no APC was paid could suggest that the authors received some form of waiver that was not explicitly identified as a “publisher waiver” (Simard et al., 2024).

For those who did not receive grant funding and paid an APC, it is a similar funding picture, although one less straightforward.

How Did You Pay the APC?	Unique Responses	% of Responses
UK College or Department Funds	6	28.57
Personal Research Funds	4	19.05
Publisher OA Waiver	3	14.29
Personal Funds	2	9.52
Research Initiative Funds	1	4.76
Personal Research Funds, Publisher OA Waiver	1	4.76
Endowed Money	1	4.76
Other University	1	4.76
Coauthor Funded	1	4.76
Personal Funds, Personal Research Funds, UK College or Department Funds, Publisher OA Waiver, Other (Please Describe)	1	4.76
Grand Total	21	100.00

Table 9. No Grant Funding to Pay APC

For these authors, 62% relied solely on institutional funds or some combination of institutional funding (UK College or Department funds, Personal research, research initiative funds) to fund the APC for their OA article.

RQ2: What strategies have UK-affiliated authors developed for managing APC payments, and how are APCs affecting your publications and research?

In terms of strategies developed for managing APC costs associated with OA publishing, UK authors have varied approaches. When possible, most seek grant funding or funding agencies to pay the APC cost of any article resulting from the funded research. Of those that were awarded grant funding that produced an OA article, nearly 75% reported that they always or most of the time write APC costs into the budget of their grant proposals.

When Applying For Research Funding, How Often Do You Write the APC Cost for Open Access Into Your Funding Proposal?	Unique Responses	% Of Responses
Always	20	44.44
Most of the Time	13	28.89
Sometimes	8	17.78
About Half the Time	2	4.44
Never	2	4.44
Grand Total	45	100.00

Table 10. How Often Do You Write APC Costs Into Grant Funding?

APC strategies at UK

Survey respondents who paid an APC for research that was not grant-funded also reported a similar strategy for leveraging funding budgets to support APC payments. 67% of these authors reported having sought funding for APCs in grant budget proposals. Seeking is not winning, however, and interviewees reiterated that research funding is difficult to win, especially for untenured faculty. One such interviewee noted that “I have written the cost of the APC into funding proposals. It is just that the funding success rate on proposals is about 10%. And so actually, none of the ones that I’ve written it in to the budget have been accepted so far.” Due to the small size of what one author was often awarded in grant funding and the cost of APCs, this author admitted to ending the practice of writing APCs into proposals. They commented that “when I first came out of grad school...I was like, oh yeah, every grant should include charges [APCs]... But then, a few small grants later, I never actually was taking these projects to publication in the timeframe, so I just stopped doing that.”

Multiple untenured faculty members commented on the use of personal startup funds or research funds to pay APCs. These startup funds are negotiated during the job offer and contract negotiations. As a result, interviewees pointed out that the amount of startup funds available to faculty varies across departments, with some faculty receiving larger sums than others. Startup funds have traditionally been used for equipment costs and graduate students to support research, but largely these monies are “completely open and could be spent on whatever.” Faculty using startup funds also faced the same prioritization dilemma characterized by those receiving grant funding, in that using these funds for APCs means that less can be used for equipment, graduate students, other research infrastructure, or professional development.

Despite the zero-sum game played with directing startup funds toward APCs, when available, startup funds seem to be one way faculty can control for APCs to produce OA research. One researcher commented, “I have made it a priority in terms of that startup package to use that funding for making my articles open access.” When asked whether they thought that prioritizing startup funds for APCs is common amongst untenured faculty, interviewees resisted generalizing for all untenured faculty with access to these funds, but did comment that, personally, they have placed a premium on making their research as accessible and readable as possible. This reliance on startup funding for APCs also has an inverse effect for faculty who receive tenure and lose access to those funds. As one interviewee stated, “as I’m transitioning away from startup supply and now to grants...you start losing access [to funds for APCs].”

Discretionary departmental funds are also an APC source for some corresponding authors. Having an administration willing to use allocated funds in this way, however, is not pervasive across all UK Colleges, and interviewees reported an inconsistent mix of available institutional funding that depended on UK College or academic department availability and administrative discretion. Those who did have departmental or academic funds available noted that these funds were both limited and coveted. Even when awarded, they noted that sometimes this money alone was often not enough to cover the full cost of the APC. Strategically, many interviewees reported that administration had been trying to find more ways to assist faculty, and especially untenured faculty, in their scholarship; supporting APCs for OA articles seems to be more widespread and potentially more impactful for the researcher than using this money for more traditional research overhead or professional development activities. Some UK administrators seem to be acknowledging the importance of OA to research readership, that it may result in increased citations, and that it creates an impactful scholarly record for promotion and tenure.

Interviewees also illuminated how these departmental discretionary funds, when available, were often combined with personal research funds to pay APCs. Another variance seems

to be in the knowledge about when this funding might be available or potential sources of other institutional avenues for APC funding. One interviewee commented that the UK Markey Cancer Center offers APC support for publications “within high impact journals” with an impact factor of “at least 10” and “that pertain to the Markey Cancer Center.” Where other potential pockets of funding to cover APCs and what requirements exist to gain access to those funds were commented on by the interviewees, with most indicating that it would be beneficial to researchers and the institution to regularly collate, update, and disseminate this information.

Other strategies were to seek publishers’ APC waivers when available. UK authors reported overall positive experiences in receiving APC discounts and waivers for reviewing articles from Gold OA publishers. Unfortunately, none of the major Hybrid publishers offer similar waiver programs, despite interest from researchers. What major publishers sometimes offer and were commented on by corresponding authors was “desk rejections” from leading paywalled journals that recommend publishing with an APC waiver in a “sister” Gold OA journals within the publisher’s portfolio. These sister journals, also known as “cascade journals,” receive referrals from “supporter journals,” giving authors the option to accept a transfer for consideration for publication (Wood, 2018). Research has also referred to these as “offered transfers” (van den Berg et al, 2023). One corresponding author commented that they will always ask for an APC discount or for a complete waiver on the basis that in doing so the journal would be supporting an untenured faculty to extend their research and that this gambit will “sometimes get you a partial waiver or a complete waiver.”

To understand any potential impact of TA agreements on scholarly communication practices, interviewees were asked if they had ever designated corresponding author status to take advantage of that author’s institutional OA publishing support. Multiple faculty members that acknowledged that this practice has come up at professional conferences, but they had not done this, nor were they aware of any colleagues who had done this. All interviewees admitted that this practice would be something they would consider in the future; however, its application would need to be nuanced. One interviewee saw this practice as “really strategic,” an inevitable response to the importance of OA to researchers, and the direct effect of the high APC cost to achieve OA. Another consideration was the value many researchers, especially untenured faculty, place on the coveted position of corresponding author. Anyone slotted into that position due to an OA deal would need to “do the work of the corresponding author”; participants could see this practice potentially creating “pressure” to include collaborators from institutions that have these agreements. For those who collaborated with colleagues on large, multi-institutional grants that could potentially produce multiple articles, they thought this practice could also potentially have application in those instances. Tenured faculty also acknowledge that, since they are less concerned about author position, this practice of

“TA trading” could potentially be used for their publications that are collaborations with colleagues at other institutions.

Effect of APCs on research

When UK authors evaluate where to publish their work, the cost of the APC is certainly one consideration, but it is secondary to other, more motivating factors. Untenured authors and authors concerned about scholarly metrics like H-Indexes, citation metrics, and publishing in higher prestige journals. Most valued OA and operated under the sentiment that if they could afford to pay every APC, they would. Although they desired funder monies for APCs and showed resourcefulness and adaptability in navigating the funder and institutional landscape of acquiring APC funding, the financial burden of APCs was always discussed as restrictive and exploitative. Many highlighted the inherent conflict between their desire to publish OA and their dissatisfaction with the APC model as the primary means of achieving it.

Several interviewees pointed out that their primary considerations are journal quality, reputation, and alignment with the topic of their manuscript. Quality was defined as a journal showcasing high-caliber work, offering a rigorous peer review process, and that had the desired readership audience. Once these boxes had been checked and a journal selected, if and how they would pay the APC became the next question. For subscription Hybrid journals, if they had one of the funding sources outlined, then the APC could be paid, but if the funding did not exist, then for most, publishing with this journal trumped any desire to make the article OA. If their selection criteria led to a Gold OA journal that required an APC to publish, this could potentially create complications.

In terms of Gold OA journals, several authors noted an increase in traditional subscription journals transitioning to Gold OA models. For these authors, journals shifting to an APC-based model, Gold OA, created complications for the authors, since previously these journals could be a source for publication with or without funds to cover an APC. When subscription or Hybrid journals “flip” to a Gold OA model, however, prospective authors are forced to remove these journals from consideration when they lack APC funding. One interviewee commented on this situation, stating in a journal, “Last year they decided that they were fully open access. So, I don’t have money for that. Let’s find another journal.” Another aspect of the Gold OA model affecting authors is the rejection of a manuscript from a subscription or Hybrid OA journal, and editors wanting to “put you in an open access journal.” This “offered transfer” can create stress and complications for authors who had chosen a publishing path with no APC obligation and are then “encouraged” to publish in a “sister” or new Gold OA journal within the publisher’s portfolio that charges an APC. Although we heard comments that these rejection redirects to OA may come with an APC waiver, participants commented

that this can create additional “stress” around accepting an editor’s comments and encouragement.

RQ3: What motivates UK-affiliated authors to publish OA, and who do they think should fund OA publishing?

Survey respondents were asked to rank their motivations for publishing OA. As can be seen in Table 7, and was previously discussed, funder and funder mandates are not the primary motivating factor. Instead, equitable access or the altruism of OA or open science is the main motivator for UK authors, followed by funder mandates and potential OACA.

OA Ranking Questions. Rank From 1 (Highest Priority) to 6 (Lowest Priority)	, Total Score (Lowest in Best)	#1 Rankings	#2 Rankings	Total Answers
Altruism of Open Access or Equitable Access to Research	124	15	26	57
Funder Mandates	135	21	7	57
Potential Open Access Citation Advantage	174	8	24	57
Ability to Share More Widely via Social Networks and Social Media	209	3	9	57
Copyright Retention	230	1	3	57
Other (Speed, Journal Impact Factor, and OA)	395	9	0	9

Table 11. Motivations for publishing OA (rankings)

UK author motivations for OA

As seen in other research, the meaning of OA altruism and equitable access to research varied among individual authors (Heaton, Burns, and Thoms, 2019). While many survey respondents and interviewees identified it as a primary motivator, their comments directly link it to many of the other motivating factors of OA. Most viewed OA’s equitable access as a means of sharing their work more widely, increasing its dissemination, and leveraging the potential of OACA, all of which could directly impact career advancement.

Many interviewees focused on OA’s role in creating equitable access and increasing the visibility and availability of their research. A corresponding author within the field of public health commented that sometimes rapidly disseminating research is a necessity, citing COVID-19 as an example. Another author, whose research is community-based and focuses

on underrepresented groups, discussed the challenges paywalled research creates for industries or communities without access to academic literature. Similarly, a corresponding author who had attended a small liberal arts college recalled the frustration of being unable to access relevant articles as an undergraduate and expressed a desire not to perpetuate this problem as a producer of research. For many authors, this altruism of OA intersected directly with what they considered necessary for their own and their research teams' career advancement.

Many authors, especially those in untenured positions, believed that OA's equitable access created benefits that correlated directly to their needs for career advancement. One untenured author who prioritized startup funding to pay APCs stated, "I need people to know my work, and I need them to be able to find it as easily as possible, and for me to share it as readily as possible. Open Access is the way to do that." This author also noted that paywalls limited the reach of their articles, explaining that some of their high-quality work behind paywalls had become "extremely difficult for anybody in the 21st century to find," resulting in "almost no citations on some of those works—even papers that have won awards or been selected by journal editors for professional society awards have one or two citations because they are difficult to find."

Regarding OACA and other research metrics, most interviewees associated OA with increased citations, viewing the cost of APCs as an investment in that potential. As one interviewee put it, "visibility means citations." Another interviewee pointed out how OA could enhance broader research impact, measured by metrics such as citations, H-index, and article downloads. These metrics were often seen as critical in quantifying the impact of funding and increasing the likelihood of securing future grants. One interviewee noted that this connection between visibility, metrics, and funding made OA an essential strategy for advancing their research careers.

An interesting aspect of the discussion around career advancement was the recognition that OA's benefits extended beyond the primary authors to include graduate students and student researchers involved in the research and resulting publications. The wider readership and increased citation potential of a research group or lab's output also positively impacted students, particularly those pursuing careers in academia or research industries. One author emphasized that this was especially significant for international students, who often return to countries in which higher education institutions and industries lack access to the research they had helped produce. They remarked that paying APCs was not solely self-serving but also benefited the "whole community."

APCs Should Be Paid by Funders	Unique Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	11	17.74
Somewhat Agree	17	27.42
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	12	19.35
Somewhat Disagree	18	29.03
Strongly Disagree	4	6.45
Grand Total	62	100.00

Table 12. APCs should be paid by funders

Opinions on who should bear the cost of OA publishing varied among survey respondents and interviewees.

As shown in Table 12, only 24% of respondents strongly agreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while 76% expressed some level of ambivalence or uncertainty. Many interviewees noted that although funder support for OA would be ideal, they did not see funders having the ability to completely assume this role due to the unpredictability of funder budgets and the competitiveness for limited funds. They described the current system as one of “haves and have-nots,” doubting that funders would have the financial capacity or willingness to fully support OA publishing. Others believed the onus should fall completely on funders, arguing that OA mandates and the existing role of funders in supporting OA research position them as natural candidates to shoulder these costs.

Interviewees and survey respondents consistently expressed that the burden of APCs should not fall on them, suggesting that institutions should take the lead in funding APCs and supporting OA research. The survey did not clearly define “institution,” leaving respondents to interpret it as either the institution as a whole or as institutional funding specifically allocated to libraries and library budgets. While some may have evaluated the statement with the latter interpretation, interviewees and open-ended survey responses indicate that most viewed

APCs should be paid by institutions	Unique responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	20	32.26
Somewhat Agree	26	41.94
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	12	19.35
Somewhat Disagree	3	4.84
Strongly Disagree	1	1.61
Grand Total	62	100.00

Table 13. APCs Should Be Paid by Institutions

“institution” as distinct from the library. As shown in Table 13, survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that institutions should bear the responsibility for covering APCs.

Once again interviewees provide more nuance, and opinions on funding sources, for the role institutions should play in funding APCs for OA. Many believed that the university has funds that could be dedicated to support OA publishing, specifically calling out opportunities to fund OA publishing via the offices of University Marketing and Communications, University Advancement and Development, and University Research, indirect grant funds, department of the publishing author, or by prioritizing institutional funding for articles that lack external funding support. One survey respondent emphasized the institutional benefits of funding OA, stating, “It makes our university stand out more in the eyes of our peers, incoming faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students! Sharing the great research we are doing in medicine, science, engineering, and education would highlight our university very strongly. On most recruiting events, we brag about our research, but being able to say, ‘you can read about this,’ would make it so much stronger.” Many also emphasized that to prevent inequities, strategies for funding APCs should be institutionalized and centralized, rather than relying on individual departments.

RQ4: How do UK-affiliated authors feel about UK Libraries supporting OA?

One of the authors’ most pressing questions for affiliated authors was whether they believed that UK Libraries should pursue TAs to potentially remove some of the burden of APCs from UK authors. The authors acknowledge that the question posed to faculty in the survey and in the interview pitted TAs against existing resources and created a scenario in the question that did not allow for their coexistence, which resulted in potentially offering a biased question. The authors feel that this is an honest depiction of the scenario in the UK; however, in that TAs with the UK’s biggest publishers could not be pursued or signed without additional funding added to the library budget. As such, the authors wanted to gauge responses to this potential scenario to see how corresponding authors would respond to this binary choice.

As seen in Table 14, 45% of the respondents answered in the affirmative to this question and either strongly agreed (17.74%) or somewhat agreed (27.42%) that the library should pursue these OA deals even if they jeopardized the library’s ability to keep all existing resources. 35% answered in the negative and either strongly disagreed (6.45%) or somewhat disagreed (29.03%) with the library sacrificing existing resources for the sake of these deals.

The interviewees shed a more nuanced light on the value respondents placed on removing APCs from OA publishing and how and when they would prioritize existing library resources over TAs.

The Library Should Pursue OA Deals That Cover APCs	Unique Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	11	17.74
Somewhat Agree	17	27.42
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	12	19.35
Somewhat Disagree	18	29.03
Strongly Disagree	4	6.45
Grand Total	62	100.00

Table 14. Library OA Deals That Cover APCs

Some interviewees had familiarity with the TA landscape in the US, either as beneficiaries of such deals at previous institutions or as researchers envious of colleagues at institutions with negotiated OA agreements. They expressed that the absence of such deals at UK put them at a personal “competitive disadvantage” and placed the UK at an institutional “competitive disadvantage.” On a personal level, some interviewees felt that researchers at institutions with OA agreements were better positioned for readership, citations, and competitiveness in securing future funding. Institutionally, they noted that the UK benefits when its researchers and their work are elevated, which contributes to improved institutional rankings and reputations through many of the same metrics that researchers also personally value. One interviewee remarked, “We’re competing with, you know, University of Iowa, the University of Washington, the University of Minnesota—all of the Big Ten Universities that have [...] these arrangements with the major publishers for APC likely to be covered.” Similarly, a respondent in the open-ended survey comments highlighted this potential disparity, stating that access to TAs at a previous institution provided a “huge advantage for me and my colleagues over faculty at institutions that don’t have such deals, like UK. I fear that my current faculty at the UK will be left in the dust by those at other institutions if we don’t pursue such deals.”

Affiliated authors had mixed opinions about reallocating existing resources to fund TAs, ranging from supportive to conflicted to outright opposed. Many acknowledged that research articles are more accessible than ever, and losing subscriptions would not necessarily mean losing access—a message UK Libraries has emphasized for years. Interviewees noted the ease of obtaining full-text articles through peer networks, contacting authors directly, black OA platforms (Gdańsk University of Technology, n.d.; Bohannon, 2016), or library services like Article Galaxy Scholar and Interlibrary Loan. Some respondents were conflicted, expressing concerns that losing essential resources would certainly make their “job more difficult.” They felt that UK Libraries already did not provide all the resources needed and would “hate to lose more access.” Others, however, were willing to accept the trade-off, choosing TAs and their potential relief of APCs over retaining existing library resources. Others were more

strategically overt in their assessment and believed TAs were the right approach, provided that the resources canceled to prioritize these agreements were not those they valued most.

The authors also used the interviews to explore the potential for UK Libraries to develop a Green OA archiving service for UK-affiliated authors. This proposed service would involve the library contacting recent authors to obtain the author-accepted manuscript (AAM) version of an article, determining publisher restrictions and embargoes, and then depositing the AAM in UKnowledge, the Libraries' institutional repository, on behalf of the author. Upon hearing a description of this service, many interviewees acknowledged the roadblocks to self-archiving and agreed that this service would be valuable for UK authors. Concerns were raised, however, about the discoverability of these OA versions—specifically, whether they would be indexed and discoverable via platforms commonly used by researchers and how accessible they would be. Some authors worried that the AAM might be read and, more concerning to them, cited over the version of record when both were available. One interviewee expressed concern that citing the AAM could result in lost citations and a diminished impact on metrics like the H-index. Another interviewee described the service as a sort of “band-aid” approach, arguing that a more effective solution would be to embed this into the author workflow during the publishing process, rather than treating it as an external or post-publication task.

DISCUSSION

The survey data and interviews provide valuable context for scholarly communications broadly and the UK specifically. This study highlights several underexplored aspects of APC-driven OA. First, it introduces the concept of “TA trading” as a potential strategy for securing APC funding, particularly for authors at institutions without comprehensive TAs. Secondly, it reveals—from the perspective of authors—the impact of journals “flipping” from subscription or Hybrid models to Gold OA. Study participants pointed out that these shifts can sometimes leave authors, who may have previously contributed to these journals, unable to do so due to new APC requirements. Finally, UK authors offered new firsthand perspectives on “cascade” journals and how they experience “transfer” offers from “supporter” journals. The process has been described and detailed from the perspective of publishers, but not necessarily from authors who face a decision of whether to accept a “transfer” and likely the APC required for publication (Davis, 2018). UK authors indicated that this referral process can create uncertainty and stress for authors as they weigh whether to accept these referrals from respected editors and colleagues. If they do, they must then navigate the challenge of securing APC funding to publish in these journals. Research on this editorial process for journals *Transplantation* and its cascade journal *Transplantation Direct* seems to indicate that many authors shift course when faced with an unplanned APC. Of articles offered for transfer,

only 17.5% proceeded to publication within the sibling journal. Among the remaining 83.5%, the majority (75%) were published in subscription journals with no APC requirement, and 25% in other OA journals (van den Berg et al, 2023).

To contextualize the local takeaways for UK Libraries, it is important to note what is missing from this study. First, this study focused on UK corresponding authors who either paid an APC to publish in a Hybrid or Gold OA journal or received a waiver to do so. This sample excluded a significant percentage of UK-affiliated corresponding authors who published in Hybrid journals without paying an APC for OA. Second, most survey respondents and interviewees were in Medical, Health Sciences, or STEM-related fields. As a result, this study largely underrepresents social science and humanities authors, fields that traditionally do not benefit from extensive grant funding, funder mandates, or strong disciplinary or institutional support for publishing OA. Recent research, however, suggests that disciplinary disparities in OA publishing do not reflect significant disciplinary differences in OA preferences (Scott and Dubnjakovic, 2025). Therefore, much of the conversation within this study centers on authors who are both highly motivated to publish OA and are privileged to have more opportunities to obtain financial support, whether through grants or discretionary institutional funds. As a result, they experience the impact of APC-driven OA more directly and are more likely to support strategic efforts to remove the burden of APCs from their publishing.

A significant local revelation from this study is that although the UK Libraries are not actively pursuing or investing in TAs, a significant amount of institutional funding is nonetheless being spent on APCs. This primarily occurs in two ways: first, individual researchers with access to startup funds choose to allocate these institutionally granted personal resources toward APCs; second, UK Department or College-level administrators dedicate funds to support faculty by making their research OA. In both cases, researchers and administrators have independently determined that supporting OA is both worthwhile and strategically valuable—for the institution, their department or college, and their own scholarship. The total institutional investment in APCs remains unclear, however, and the Libraries are gathering this data to inform conversations with campus stakeholders about OA. Interviews also revealed the existence of a specific institutional fund code dedicated to “publication charges,” which offers another promising avenue for investigation. By combining the findings of this study with data on institutional APC spending, UK Libraries hope to spark meaningful institutional discussions about OA, APC funding, and strategic directions for the role the library can play in supporting scholarly publishing and OA.

CONCLUSION

One major takeaway from this research is the tension it has revealed within the authors. Although they remain fundamentally opposed to TAs, mechanisms for publishers to exploit

OA while perpetuating the serials crisis, they also recognize that TAs relieve authors of APC costs—a trade-off that many study participants value. For the UK, this research has shed new light on the inequities of APC-driven OA, the personal and professional benefits authors associate with making their work OA, and the inefficiency and inequities of current APC funding approaches. It has also highlighted a growing desire for a more coordinated institutional strategy. As TAs continue to expand in the United States, the authors believe this same tension exists for librarians at other institutions. They hope this research will help foster institutional discussions around OA, APCs, and the university's role in funding open scholarship.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

- Which department represents your primary affiliation with UK? [List UK departments]
- What is your status at UK? Please choose one: - Selected Choice
- Was the research that produced the Open Access article published in 23/24 funded?
- How did you pay the APC (article processing charge) to make the article Open Access? Select all that apply.
- When applying for research funding, have you ever written the cost of the APC into a research funding proposal?
- Did your funder mandate that the scholarly output of the research be made available Open Access?
- Did your funding pay for the APC (article processing charge) to make the article Open Access?
- How did you pay the APC (article processing charge) to make the article Open Access? Select all that apply.
- When applying for research funding, have you ever written the cost of the APC into a research funding proposal?
- When applying for research funding, how often do you write the APC cost for Open Access into your funding proposal?
- What factors influence you when writing APCs for Open Access into your funding proposals? Select all that apply.
- If not mandated by your funder, how important would making your article Open Access be to you?
- If the APC is not paid by the funder, how likely are you to pay the APC to make an article Open Access?
- If the APC is not paid by the funder, how would you pay the APC to make the article Open Access? Select all that apply.
- When deciding to publish Open Access what factors contribute to your decision making? Please rank in order of importance.
- Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement. APCs should be paid by funders.
- Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement. APCs should be paid by institutions.

- Publishers now sell packages that cover subscription and publishing costs—allowing institutional authors to publish Open Access without an APC charged to the authors. These APC charges are negotiated into the cost of the packages for the Library and often result in substantial increases in costs and additional strains on the Library budget.
- Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement. UK Libraries should pursue these Open Access deals even if it means cancelling resources (journal subscriptions, databases, eBooks, etc.) to fund them?
- Please share any additional thoughts or feedback about Open Access article publishing, APCs, funding sources, and funder mandates.

APPENDIX B

Interview Instrument

- What UK college and department are you in? What is your status (tenured faculty, pre-tenured faculty, researcher, staff, etc.)?
- Can you summarize your research for us? Do you work solo, have a research lab, collaborate with UK students, or with other institutions? Or all of these?
- Did you pay an APC to make your article Open Access? How did you pay that APC?
 - If funding paid: Can you describe in which cases and how often you write the cost of an APC in your funding proposals? Any comments on the implications of having to use funding to pay for OA publishing?
 - Does how the APC is paid vary by project or do you always try and write the costs of Open Access into your funding proposal? If not, what factors into your decision to include APC costs in funding proposals?
 - If funding does not pay: Did you pay the APC with UK research, departmental, or personal research funds? Where and how do you have access to this money at UK? What influenced you to use this money for an APC?
 - Have you ever received a publisher waiver for an APC? If publisher waiver, can you talk about the process of applying? Do you always apply? Why apply for this article? Have you ever used UK research, departmental, or personal research funds to pay for APCs?
 - Have you ever paid out of your own pocket to cover an APC? When and why would you do this?
- Is the cost of the APC a consideration when deciding about where to publish Open Access? What else do you consider when deciding where to publish your work?
- What were your motivations for paying an APC to publish Open Access?
- Can you talk about any strategy or considerations that you make about when and how to pay an APC? For example, if you only have enough funding for one APC within a calendar year, which article would you apply that to?
- Have you ever selected the corresponding author to take advantage of a co-author's institutional open access program? I.E., For an article with Elsevier, the APC is waived for a corresponding author from the University of California.
- Who do you think should pay for APCs or Open Access? Funders, institutions, libraries, or authors?
- What is the greatest barrier you face when publishing your research?

- Libraries are playing multiple roles in assisting authors in making their work open access. UK is considering developing a service to deposit a publisher allowed version of a UK author's article in UKnowledge (known as Green OA) and potentially negotiating with publishers to waive certain APC costs for UK corresponding authors. The second comes with considerable increases in UK library costs and could drastically affect UK Libraries budget for library resources? What is your reaction to hearing about either of these library services?
- Are there any other ways you feel the UK Libraries can better support you as a researcher and author?