



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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moderation

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Putting open access into practice



ESAC is an open community of information professionals dedicated to putting the vision of open access to research into practice.

Through the framework of transformative agreements, **libraries and consortia are transforming** their workflows, data streams, administrative processes, organizational structures and budget lines, in order to prepare for a fully OA paradigm

The **ESAC Community of Practice** calls are opportunities for library and consortium staff—as well as publishers and other stakeholders—to **exchange experiences in operationalizing OA** on a large scale through transformative and other OA publishing frameworks.

Transformation drivers

HOW TRANSFORMATIVE IS IT?

A spectrum of transformation drivers leading to an open scholarly publishing paradigm



Available for **download** on the ESAC website:

[ESAC Reference Guide to Transformative Agreements – How Transformative Is It? spectrum](#)

Transformation drivers

OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

Empower authors with the means and opportunity to publish 100% of their research articles, accepted for publication in all journals of the relative publisher, open access.

SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENTS	SPECTRUM OF TRANSFORMATION				
<p>Authors are required to relinquish copyright of their articles to publishers, unless they can afford to cover open access publishing fees (APCs) for open access publishing in "hybrid" journals on their own.</p> <p>The vast majority of journal articles are published behind the subscription paywall.</p>	<p>Open access publishing is incentivized with centrally negotiated discounts on APCs, but the agreement does not cover any specific amount of articles, and relies on author-facing hybrid payments without central oversight</p> <p>An indeterminate amount of journal articles may be published open access.</p>	<p>The agreement empowers authors with the means and right to publish their articles under an open license, but this is capped to a degree that only covers a limited percentage of their article outputs, i.e. 50%-70%.</p> <p>A fair amount of journal articles are published open access.</p>	<p>The agreement empowers authors with the means and right to publish their articles under an open license, but this can potentially be limited, mainly because the agreement covers a fixed number of expected articles, agreed and paid in advance, and actual volume of article output can vary.</p> <p>All journal articles could potentially be published open access.</p>	<p>The agreement empowers authors with the means and right to publish articles under an open license without a cap, but OA publishing rights for a certain subset of journals remains excluded from the agreement, for example the publishers' fully open access journals or specific journal imprints.</p> <p>All journal articles in a large portion of the complete publisher portfolio are published open access.</p>	<p>The agreement empowers authors with the means and right to publish an unlimited amount of articles under an open license in the complete journal portfolio of the publisher.</p> <p>All journal articles are published open access.</p>

GOAL

Authors retain copyright and openly license their articles.

Transformation drivers



ORGANIZE INVESTMENTS AROUND OA INSTEAD OF PAYWALLS

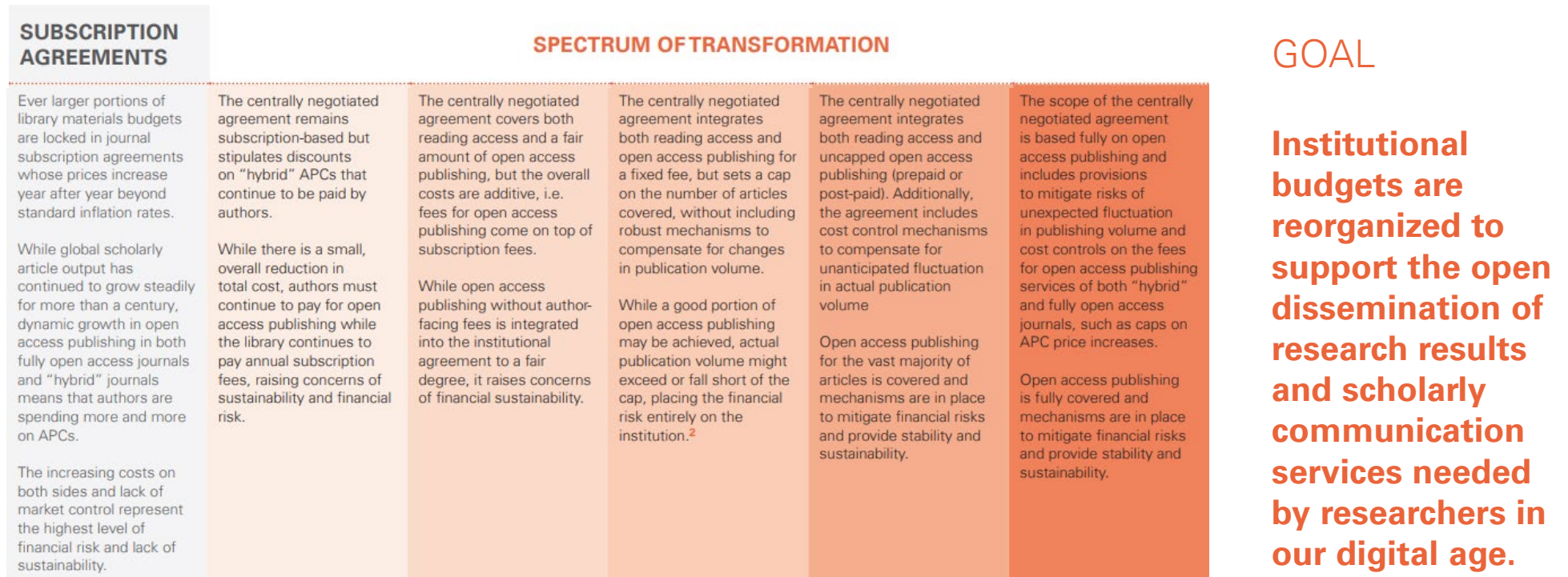
Rein in and re-engineer the parallel financial streams of the subscription-paradigm and orient institutional investments in scholarly publishing around open access.

SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENTS	SPECTRUM OF TRANSFORMATION					GOAL
<p>Institutions pre-pay undisclosed lump sums in annual subscription fees for reading access to closed and “hybrid” journals and journal portfolios.</p> <p>Additionally, and in parallel, authors pay APCs to publish their articles openly in “hybrid” journals without any central representation to negotiate more favorable conditions and bring pricing into check.</p> <p>There is no central oversight or control into the total amount in fees being paid to publishers.</p>	<p>Under one central agreement, institutions pre-pay annual subscription lump sum fees for reading access and a certain quota of open access publishing rights (articles) are included in the price, disbursed, for example, in tokens or vouchers.</p> <p>While institutions cover the costs for a certain amount of open access publishing, the subscription paradigm persists with, largely unchanged and undisclosed, lump sum subscription fees.</p>	<p>Under one central agreement, institutions pre-pay annual, lump-sum fees that cover both open access publishing fees and fees for reading access, for example as in “Read & Publish” models.</p>	<p>Under one central agreement, institutions pre-pay annual, lump sum fees for open access publishing that are calculated based on their publishing output, according to a transparent fee, for example as in certain transformative models adopted by learned societies or tiered models.</p>	<p>Under one central agreement, institutions pay for open access publishing based on fees that are calculated and post-paid or partially post-paid in direct proportion to the services rendered under a transparent pricing framework, for example based on per-articles fees.</p>	<p>Under one central agreement, institutions pay for open access publishing services in direct proportion to the services rendered and based on transparent and differential pricing that responds to market pressure and community expectations for fairness, sustainability and equity.</p>	<p>Researchers everywhere are able to read and publish without financial and administrative burden; fees for open scholarly publishing services are covered by their organizations (institutions, grant funding agencies).</p>

Transformation drivers

A SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION

Establish mechanisms to ensure sustainability and mitigate potential financial risks as the scope of agreements evolves from the static lock-in of subscriptions to the dynamic nature of (open access) publishing.



Transformation drivers



OPTIMIZE PROCESSES FOR OPEN ACCESS

Establish accountability for continued optimization of processes around OA publishing.

SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENTS

Under the subscription paradigm, workflows related to scholarly publishing remain rooted in the print era. Library budgets and processes are organized around providing access to paywalled content. Authors wishing to publish their articles open access are confronted with complicated processes, and libraries are rarely equipped to support them.

Without coordinated demand, there is little motivation for publishers to innovate and improvements are incidental.

Early stage agreements often rely on manual, ad hoc or retrofitted processes to implement and manage the workflows associated with open access publishing; without automated processes, there is significant risk of human error and less than successful fruition of the agreement.

Publishers commit to managing processes such as author identification, verification, and article reporting, but institutions are excluded from the process and quality standards are not met.

For example, while publishers may provide reports on a regular basis, they may not include all relevant data elements. Without library visibility into the publishing pipeline and complete data, processes and workflows are at risk of breaking down and manual intervention will be required.

As publishers and libraries gain more operational capacity for open access publishing, author identification, verification and payments are handled through automatic processes and shared dashboards that ensure visibility every step of the way. Regular reports complete with all relevant data fields help streamline processes.

The community-developed ESAC Workflow Recommendations³ provide the foundation for setting out requirements in many transformative and open access publishing agreements.

Publishers and libraries prepared for open access publishing on a large scale implement automated identification and authentication processes that require minimal manual intervention. Regular reporting based on the ESAC Workflow Recommendations streamlines processes.

Fulfillment of the agreement objectives can be further optimized by agreeing strategies to avoid author opt-outs and to integrate retrospective conversion of closed articles to open access.

Author, library and publisher workflows are oriented around open access and aligned with the ESAC Workflow Recommendations and supported with industry-standard provision of open metadata and APIs⁴ connecting dashboards and other third-party systems.

SPECTRUM OF TRANSFORMATION

GOAL

The process of open dissemination of research is supported and optimized with infrastructure and standards that streamline the work of authors, institutions, funders, publishers and other partners in the scholarly communication ecosystem.

Transformation drivers



PRICE TRANSPARENCY

Articulate the service levels, terms, conditions and pricing of the agreement openly and transparently to enable community benchmarking and cost comparisons.

SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENTS

The rationale for pricing of journal subscription agreements and “big deals” has been opaque since the start of the digital transition. Shielded from market scrutiny by non-disclosure clauses, subscription pricing has increased year after year at rates far beyond those of standard inflation.

Journal-level APC prices are listed publicly, but authors, individually, exert little market pressure to constrain or reduce them and are additionally confronted with print-based fees such as page and color charges.

Agreements still closely aligned with the subscription paradigm often carry non-disclosure clauses requiring complete confidentiality and prohibiting public disclosure of the agreement.

In an initial step toward transparency, some agreements are published openly, but certain terms of the contract, for example, the financial terms, are still subject to confidentiality clauses.

As a service to the broader community, libraries and consortia enter key details of the transformative agreements they sign in the ESAC Registry, an open, community resource aimed at increasing transparency around publisher agreements.

Even if institutions do not publicly disclose their agreements or full terms and conditions, the ESAC Registry enables the community to benchmark key TA characteristics and feeds into the data visualizations of the ESAC Market Watch,⁵ quantifying their impact.

A number of libraries and consortia have already achieved full transparency in their transformative agreement negotiations, securing the right to publicly disclose their agreements (no non-disclosure clauses).

This commitment to fostering a transparent scholarly publishing market is further supported by their entries in the ESAC Registry, complete with links to the agreement full texts.

In the current landscape, the greatest level of transparency around transformative agreements might include public disclosure of the agreement, entry in the ESAC Registry, public reporting on contract performance (e.g. development of opt-out rates, shares of publication volume, etc.), and application of transparency price frameworks⁶ that foster comparability in cost/service assessments.

SPECTRUM OF TRANSFORMATION

GOAL

With transparent articulation of services/prices, scholarly publishing will finally be subject to the force of market competition, which, in turn, creates opportunity for other market players and drives innovation, allowing scholarly communication to evolve.

Transformation drivers

COMMIT TO AN OPEN PARADIGM

Garner publisher commitment to a sustainable, equitable and irreversible transition to open access.

SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENTS

The current subscription paradigm perpetuates barriers for readers whose institutions cannot always afford subscription fees and barriers for authors without institutional support to publish their articles openly.

While negotiations of individual institutions and consortia may have the dual objective of reining in costs and supporting authors to publish their articles openly, transformative agreements, collectively, have the specific function of transitioning the subscription-based journals valued by authors to open access models.

Some early stage agreements do not clearly set out the community objective and expectation of a full transition of publisher portfolios to open access.

SPECTRUM OF TRANSFORMATION

Accountability for transitioning journal portfolios to open access cannot reasonably be placed fully on the shoulders of publishers, until subscribing libraries and consortia globally voice the shared demand for a transition to open access.

Nevertheless, including a statement of intent on the open access transition in the agreement, for example, in a preamble, can be a signal of both the publisher and the negotiating library/consortium's commitment to the open access transition.

To harness the potential of the large swaths of articles being published openly through transformative agreements globally (as well as hybrid OA publishing outside of TAs), some agreements include provisions holding publishers accountable for flipping individual journals to a fully open access model when a certain threshold in the proportion of OA to closed articles published annually is reached.

Libraries and consortia wishing to support the open access transition can prioritize making agreements with those publishers that have formulated and transparently communicated a strategy to transition their journals or portfolios to a sustainable and equitable open access model.⁷

Libraries and consortia wishing to support the open access transition can prioritize making agreements with those publishers that have made a formal commitment to converting journals or portfolios with immediate effect or within a specific timeframe.⁸

Libraries and consortia committed to providing their authors with a variety of open access publishing opportunities also enter agreements with publishers adopting other transitional frameworks⁹ and with fully open access publishers, as well as supporting community-based platforms and local/local-language publishing venues.

GOAL

Open access as the default in scholarly communication.



COMMUNITY
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How are transformative agreements actually transforming the subscription system and enabling an open paradigm?

with

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Coming up next

How are transformative agreements transforming the subscription system and enabling an open paradigm?

- Open access transformation drivers
- **Submission process and author engagement**
- Publishing workflow and library processing workflow
- Business models and institutional investment streams
- Price transparency and cost assessment
- Open metadata and data delivery and OA monitoring