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Snapshots of three open access business models

Following on from Eelco Ferwerda's introduction to different OA monograph business models (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1629/2048-7754.46>), Hazel Newton (Palgrave Macmillan), Marin Dacos and Pierre Mounier (OpenEdition Books) and Yrsa Neuman (Åbo Akademi University) explain the different OA business models that they are currently working with.

Palgrave Open: a traditional publisher's OA monograph offer

At Palgrave Macmillan, we regularly survey our authors on their views, needs and attitudes to open access (OA), and our global panel is made up of 1,200 researchers from across the humanities and social sciences (HSS). In our most recent survey, 70% of respondents thought that open access is beneficial to HSS and 55% thought immediate open access publication of monographs would be a good idea. We have offered an OA option for journal articles through Palgrave Open since 2011, and following our research we extended Palgrave Open to monographs in early 2013.

Palgrave Open offers authors the option to publish their research open access immediately on publication, subject to payment of a publication charge. Of course, they are still welcome to publish in the traditional way too.

Focusing on quality

The range of different business models, pilots, embargo periods, green versus gold and the different licensing types can make the OA landscape complex. Our aim was to offer authors choice, to provide a business model that would be sustainable, and to maintain the quality of our publishing service, and to do so as transparently and simply as we could.

Authors are promised the exact same high-quality service, regardless of whether they choose to publish their monograph open access or not. This includes everything from editorial guidance and expertise, to peer review, marketing, production, dissemination and available digital formats, sales support and long-term preservation of the research. For this reason, we assume all titles will be published under the traditional model and it is only once the final manuscript has been accepted for publication, after peer review, that we ask authors to confirm whether they would like the title to be published open access.

Open means open

Palgrave Open publishes monographs under the permissive CC BY licence (alternative licences are available on request), which allows users to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as they credit the authors for the original creation. Authors are able to meet the requirements of funders and take advantage of the opportunities for innovation and wide dissemination.

Unlike many other OA publisher offerings, all our digital formats are made available open access; both the PDF and EPUB e-books are made available via Palgrave Connect (complete with freely available to download MARC records) and other vendors and retailers, including Amazon Kindle.



HAZEL NEWTON
Head of Digital
Publishing
Palgrave Macmillan

40 Of course, print copies are still available. These are printed on demand, and are priced lower than our standard monographs to take into account the fact that the content is open access.

In November 2013, we were pleased to publish our first OA book funded by the Wellcome Trust, *Fungal Disease in Britain and the United States 1850–2000*, (£15 PB; £20 HB) and we hope to publish many more.

The publication charge

The publication charge for monographs is set at £11,000 (or £7,500 for Palgrave Pivot, our mid-form publication), and offering a CC BY licence also means that we do not intend to make any additional revenues beyond this publication charge. The charge reflects a price that we believe is sustainable and supports the costs involved in the publishing service, ensuring the continued future of this important publication format.

“The charge reflects a price that we believe is sustainable and supports the costs ...”

Reference

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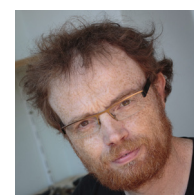
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OpenEdition Books: a licensing-based model which draws from existing library budgets

OpenEdition Books is a web platform enabling humanities and social science (HSS) publishers to disseminate their monograph collections in a choice of three formats: PDF, EPUB and HTML. Publishers can choose whether to offer either paywall access or open access (OA) 'freemium'.

Freemium is an economic model often used in the digital environment, whereby in order to build up a loyal user base, a certain number of services are offered free at the outset. Additional paid-for 'premium' services are then offered to those users. This model should ensure the economic stability of the whole enterprise. In the case of OpenEdition Books, the HTML web version, which can be read using a browser, is available free. The PDF and EPUB versions form the 'premium' part of the model, which are made accessible if the user pays for them in 'electronic bookstores' or, more usually, accesses them through a library which has subscribed to this service. Libraries are also able to make use of additional premium services such as MARC cataloguing records, COUNTER-compliant usage statistics, unlimited user alerts, support and training.



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41 The platform sets aside 33% of its general revenue to pay for the development of new services for libraries, and 66% of the revenue goes back to publishers. Thus 100% of revenue is reinvested in open access publishing. The core idea is simple: it consists of fostering the transition to open access by demonstrating that OA is compatible with the traditional economic models of buying and selling that publishers and libraries are used to, so the principle of open access to information is supported whilst showing that it is still possible to generate sufficient revenue to sustain economic viability.

We began to experiment with freemium on our journals platform Revues.org, which hosts 400 journals in every discipline of HSS. Around 150 of these journals have a moving paywall, lasting from one to three years. The others are disseminated fully open access without delay. In 2012, we made a batch of 100 fully OA journals available in freemium (HTML free; PDF, EPUB and other services premium) to subscribing libraries. Two years later, over 80 research libraries have subscribed to this batch of OpenEdition 'Freemium for Journals', showing that the proposal was understood and welcomed by librarians who could have been confused and put off by an offer inviting them 'buy for free'.

The freemium model was originally intended for journals that were already OA. However, it is now attracting a growing number of traditional journals, such as *Terrain*, a famous French journal on ethnography in Europe, that are abandoning their paywall in order to adopt it.

The OpenEdition Books platform began operating in February 2013, followed in October by the commercial service, OpenEdition Freemium for Books. Around 70% of the books available are Open Access Freemium, and 30% are proposed through a paywall. All the books, whether or not they are OA, are available for purchase or on long-term or annual access licence terms, and can be acquired individually or as part of a package.

"... OA is compatible with the traditional economic models of buying and selling ..."

We were surprised to find that during the first few days of opening the service, several libraries opted to acquire all 1,000 books that were available via the platform, which could be an indication that open access HTML does not prevent libraries purchasing other formats. Of course, more time is needed to gauge the level of success of the freemium model for books over a longer period.

We believe that open access can only be deemed a success for monographs if it does not damage the spirit of co-operation between authors, publishers and libraries in disseminating knowledge. In particular, we need to ensure that the role of libraries is preserved, since they are best placed to understand the needs of their users and to tailor their collections accordingly. It is for this reason that OA should not be funded at the expense of library budgets, because that would mean they would be marginalized in favour of, for example, funding agencies, that do not have the same vision and experience of the needs of the academics they serve.

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Safe baby steps – delayed OA for books in philosophy: an experiment

'Delayed open access' (DOA) is when free access is provided to scholarly publications after an embargo period upon initial publication. For research purposes, 27 closed access printed books from Ontos Verlag were made available DOA on 1 June 2011.¹ This business model, with no open access (OA) fee to the authors, we call 'the AGORA model'.

This study on OA business models was carried out as a sub-project within the international research project, AGORA 2011–13.² The project was funded by the European Union within the framework of competitiveness and innovation and, as three of nine project partners, Ontos, Åbo Akademi University and the University of Bergen contributed to the funding for the OA publication and research tasks.

Ontos is a small international publisher based in Germany, specialized in print books in philosophy, which had experimented a little with OA and was interested in going further.³ The delay to OA publication varied between six months and nine years for the 27 books. Only three books were 'new', i.e. published in print less than 12 months before OA publication (see Figure 1). Sales and access were monitored.



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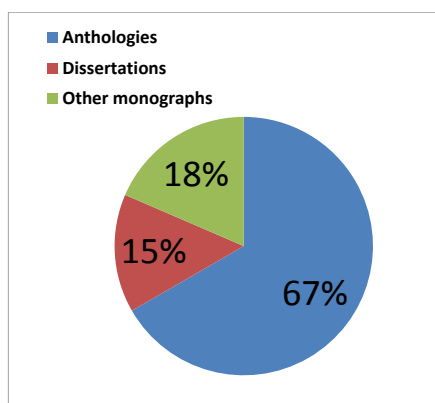


Figure 1a. The AGORA model – book types

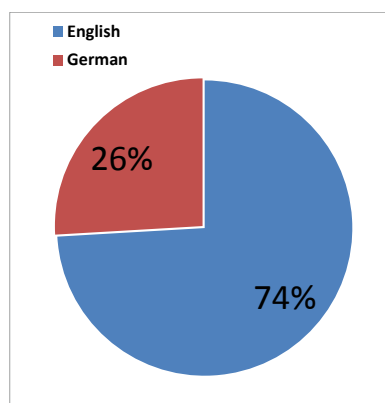


Figure 1b. The AGORA model – book languages

Access was high-threshold: a limited Google Books version was available as a preview in the publisher's webshop, but readers had to register to receive the link to the PDF version by e-mail.

Ontos' main customers are libraries, not individuals. Good hardcopy sales amount to slightly more than 200 copies per title. Our sales follow-up showed that 90% of sales took place during the first 12 months after print publication (see Figure 2).

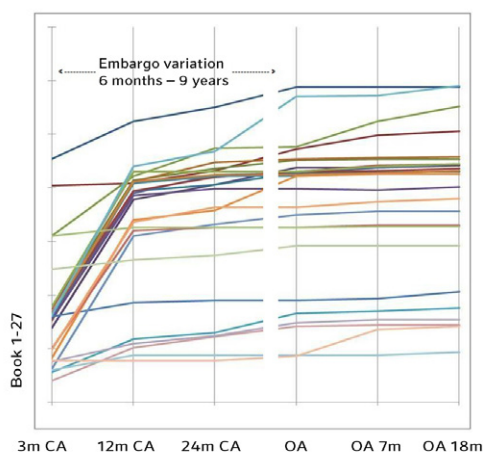


Figure 2. Distribution of sales following print publication

43 We estimated the OA influence on sales by projecting expected sales after OA publication from the average annual sales during the period 24 months after print until OA publication. A comparison of expected sales with the actual sales shows that for most books, the sales of older books after OA publication exceeded the expectation, and for two titles remarkably so. The dissemination advantage of OA, indicated by the number of downloads, showed that the OA version reached on average around 40% additional potential readers.

A clear result of our study is that the risk of revenue loss due to delayed OA is negligible: the effect of OA on sales was either neutral or positive.

“... the OA version reached on average around 40% additional potential readers.”

No to author fees

During 2011-12 Ontos also offered OA as a service at a two-step fee to authors: at the time of print for €1500 or with a 12-month embargo for €750. The uptake was only 4% (see Figure 3).

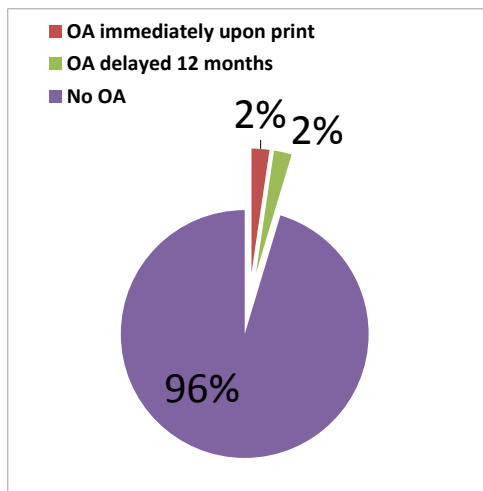


Figure 3. Author fee model: uptake 2011–2013

Our small-scale survey of 116 authors/editors who had either participated in our experiment or had a book accepted for publication at Ontos 2011–13 (response rate 17%), suggests that funding is scarce or its availability unknown to the authors, but also that they tend to dislike OA fees⁴ (see Figure 4).

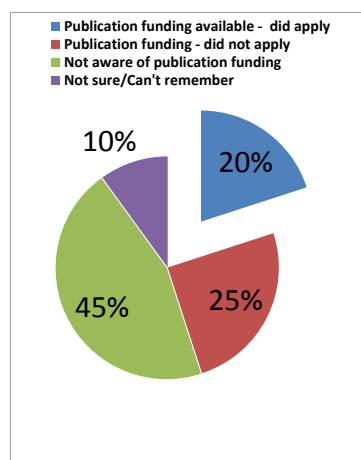


Figure 4. Author survey: publication funding availability and application

Our recommendation

For a small traditional HSS publisher, who would like to take safe baby steps towards OA but is worried about revenue loss, we recommend offering delayed OA 12 months after print, without fees, for all titles.

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