Learned societies and the transition to OA

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Small learned societies

Intended here to refer to small, learned societies that publish up to 5 scholarly peer-reviewed journals or fewer.

MS. Bodl. 264, pt. l. 1338-1344.
https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/d004a58d-1431-4ebd-8c50-763315ed2e9c
The problem

• Drivers
  – Direction of travel
  – Learned society
  – Increasingly funders

• Desire to transition to OA but problems of
  – Risks to primary income stream
  – Resources
  – Membership benefits
Other factors

• Proposal for caps on APCs
  – Although APCs can be low in such journals

• External policies
  – No hybrid
  – Plan S
  – UKRI

• Difficulty in scoring/maintaining IF in highly specialist disciplines

• Cannot afford to launch a fully gold title
Early English Text Society

- Early English Text Society
- Set up in 1864 by a Victorian socialist
- Aim to enable every boy throughout the empire to read early English
- Members receive 2 hardback volumes per annum
- Membership = £30 p.a.
- Back copies available now as POD
- How to make the transition to OA without eliminating the society
- Interested in other people’s solutions and suggestions for transition to fully OA

http://users.ox.ac.uk/~eets/index.html
Key points

• Learned societies are made up of ‘our’ researchers
• Societies’ raison d’etre can be to disseminate scholarly findings
• Societies often comprise a small group of dedicated individuals creating a publication on a shoe-string
• Some societies plough back funds to the academy
• There is little collaboration between societies (to my knowledge)
Aims of today’s event

• Understanding the problem from a society/members perspective
• Where societies want to be wrt OA in 5 years time
• How to handle/react to external policies eg WT/Plan S
• Suggestions for the Bodleian and OUP to support Oxford society authors.
A few ideas
(inspired by discussions with Oxford researchers)

1. Examine lessons learned where a society journal flipped to fully OA
2. Gather evidence to support informed business decisions
3. Encourage and support collaboration eg sharing best practice
4. Broker discussions aiming to synchronize OA policies across societies
5. Run pilot schemes to trial zero embargo green OA to gauge its effect
6. Information about relationships with commercial publishers publishing on behalf of societies
7. Document and examine case studies of experimental modes of research dissemination and scholarly discussion
8. Pilot new open models of publishing and research dissemination eg PCI
9. Lobby funders to promote quality society platinum journals
10. Explore ways in which societies might provide expert filtering or overlay journals
11. Business models and sustainability for library budgets (charging models)
12. Explore a ‘society of societies’ to share good practice
Discussion

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