Sustainability in Publishing: An Open Access Publisher’s View

Martyn Rittman, Ph.D.

rittman@mdpi.com
@martynrittman
23 June 2018
Assumptions

- Focused on MDPI.
- No comment on how other publishers operate.
- Many publishers could and do follow the same steps.
- Academic publishing should be financially sustainable.
- Academic publishers should be accountable to the research community.
Molecules 2018, doi:10.3390/molecules23040952
Sustainability

- Sustainable publishing
- Global sustainability
Publication by Subject Area

- Chemistry and Materials Science 24%
- Medicine and Pharmacology 15%
- Environmental and Earth Sciences 13%
- Engineering 12%
- Physical Sciences 12%
- Biology and Life Sciences 11%
- Public Health and Healthcare 5%
- Business and Economics 3%
- Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities 3%
- Computer Science and Mathematics 2%
82.1K submissions received in 2017

25.3 days
from submission to first decision
(median across all journals)

35.9K articles published in 2017

50.0 days
from submission to publication
(median across all journals)

23.5K academic editors
overseeing peer-review as external experts

171K peer-review reports received in 2017

36M PDF downloads
across all MDPI Journals during 2017

2.4K academic events
sponsored by MDPI in 2017, including travel grants to Editor-in-Chiefs and Editorial Board Members

52.5% growth
in 2017 based on papers published

19 new journals
launched in 2017
MDPI timeline

Independent publisher (Basel)

1995

Molecules launched with Springer

1996

2-tier subscriber/author-paid model

2005

Full APC model

2006

MDPI AG formed

2009

Editorial office, Beijing

2010

Editorial offices Barcelona, Belgrade

2016

Knowledge Unlatched for 9 journals

2018

http://www.mdpi.com/about/history
Priority should be given to business models that do not involve any payments, neither for authors to have their texts published nor for readers to access them. Many fair funding models exist and only require to be further developed and extended: institutional support, library contributions or subsidies, premium services, participatory funding or creation of open archives, etc.

Priorité doit être donnée aux modèles économiques de publication qui n’impliquent le paiement ni par les auteurs pour publier, ni par les lecteurs pour accéder aux textes. De nombreux modèles économiques équitables existent, par soutien institutionnel, par implication ou souscription des bibliothèques, par commercialisation de services premium, par financements participatifs, par constitution d’archives ouvertes, qui ne demandent qu’à être étendus et généralisés.
9 MDPI journals funded by KU from January 2018.
TTOA and the European Council

The TTOA Consortium has instead developed a different approach to manage the transition to open access, while embracing all the final features specified in the ORE Call for Tender. Our proposal calls on the expertise and the recognition of existing journals to screen the quality of the articles that are published on the platform. Provisionally called the “Open Publication Platform (OPP)”, this structure consists of two pillars:

▶ The first pillar is a submission portal that serves as a preprint publication channel and funnels articles to the journals preferred by the authors. During submission, authors indicate the journals in which they hope to see their article published. Peer-review reports are portable and are carried along with the paper from one journal to the next, with authors revising their paper as a function of the reviews.

▶ The second pillar consists of a modern platform hosting the journals’ peer-reviewed and published articles. These articles are co-branded with both the journal name and the OPP logo.

Journals and projects

data
challenges
proceedings

Preprints
Conclusions

▶ Publishing costs money: editorial work, production, dissemination, marketing
▶ APCs are helpful, but not the only way to achieve OA at scale
▶ Publishers and authors need the right incentives
▶ Sustainable open access publishing is possible!