

European libraries combine large journals licensing agreements with open access publishing – Springer’s off-setting model Springer Compact as an example –

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1. Introduction

1.1 European Union asks for open access publication of publicly funded research under Horizon 2020 and demands the promotion of open access and its implementation

The Europe 2020 strategy for economic growth underlines the central role of knowledge and innovation. It believes that wider access to scientific publications and data leads to better quality of results and greater efficiency through more collaboration, therefore speeding up innovation which results in faster economic growth. This is why the European Union strives to improve access to scientific information and to boost the benefits of public

investment in research funded under the 2014-2020 EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020.¹⁾ The European Commission (EC) aims to make publicly funded scientific information available online, at no extra cost, to European researchers, innovative industries and the public.

Asked to define and implement clear policies for the dissemination of and open access to scientific publications resulting from publicly

1) Official Journal of the European Union, L 347/104; December 2013; Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC Text with EEA relevance; <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1291/oj>

funded research, its member states and their research institutions have started to develop their policies. While the EC takes a balanced approach and supports both ‘Green Open Access’ (immediate or delayed open access through self-archiving of either the Author Accepted Manuscript or the final published version of the article in a repository via self-archiving) or ‘Gold Open Access’ (immediate open access through an open access publication), there are clear recommendations on the timeframe²⁾: Publicly funded research should be accessible as soon as possible, preferably immediately, and in any case no later than six months after the date of publication, and twelve months for social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, the EC explicitly recommends conducting joint negotiations with publishers to obtain the best possible terms for access to publications, including use and re-use.

1.2 The Finch Group Report laid ground for a Gold Open Access Policy in the UK and influenced the policy discussion Europe wide

One of the earliest and most influential

2) European Commission, Commission Recommendation of 17.7.2012 on access to and preservation of scientific information (SWD (2012) 221 final), Brussels, 17.07.2012, C82012) 4890 final; Brussels, July 2012 https://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/recommendation-access-and-preservation-scientific-information_en.pdf

national OA guidelines was developed in the UK, where already in 2012 the government announced its acceptance of the proposals made in the report *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications*³⁾ by The Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings, chaired by Professor Dame Janet Finch. This report was in favor of the UK moving towards the “Gold Route,” where authors or their funders pay Article Processing Charges (APCs) to have their research published, and accessing journal articles is free. The hope would be to expand overall use and access of existing research.⁴⁾

After the UK, The Netherlands, Austria, and The Max Planck Institute were among the first to take the decision to support Gold Open Access. They subsequently sought dialogue with publishers to find a solution to the new financial challenges.

3) Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings led by Dame Janet Finch: *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications*; June 2012, <https://www.acu.ac.uk/research-information-network/finch-report-final>

4) Government Response to the Finch Group Report: “Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications”; Department for Business Innovation and Skills, UK Government, BIS 12/975; July 2012; https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32493/12-975-letter-government-response-to-finch-report-research-publications.pdf

2. Springer Compact

2.1 Aims of the new business model

Springer, part of Springer Nature, is a leading open access publisher and a trusted partner for research librarians and library consortia. It has a history of early pilots with OA business models, and therefore was interested in engaging in dialogue with the Max Planck Institute, The Netherlands, UK and Austria to develop a solution addressing the apparent need for a new business model. The goal was to establish a business model and a robust workflow and infrastructure which have the potential to be rolled out beyond the four initial pilot partners.

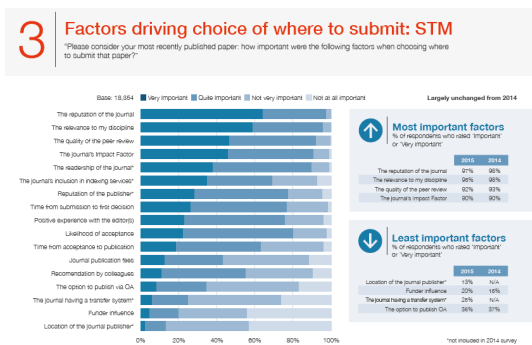
Springer Compact, as the business model was subsequently called, aims for a solution for those customers who support Gold OA and face a significant financial challenge. The challenges result from additional costs due to national OA publishing mandates and funder requirements to publish OA on the one hand and maintain journal subscriptions on the other. This group is recognized as especially unique in that the organizations are in a sector which produces and publishes high volumes of research yet is bound by open access policies. This presents them with significantly higher costs.

This radically new business model needs to be financially attractive for our partners and sustainable for Springer. The challenge was to be able to proactively support the transition to

Gold Open Access in a specific country without neglecting the needs of different customer requirements in various parts of the world. Whilst some countries are seeing a trend towards adopting Gold Open Access, other countries don't have the same mandate or budgets to want to pursue this to the same degree. Of key importance was that Springer's journals remain equally attractive for authors around the world.

Transitioning to a fully open access model will take time and will require a robust infrastructure to support it. Crucial for success is the need to develop scalable workflows driven by technology that reduce administration for all parties involved and guarantee authors a fast and efficient publishing process. A key task was to develop to a high degree automated author identification and verification process, which ensures that all eligible authors are recognized and approved by their institution; last but not least tailored reporting needed to be delivered.

We acknowledge that many national and institutional OA guidelines and mandates favour publications in pure open access journals. Some explicitly do not fund APCs in hybrid journals. At the same time, we recognize that authors like to publish in high-quality and high-impact journals, and that open access per-se plays a minor role when selecting a journal for their publication. In a survey of 18,354 authors, the reputation of the journal, its relevance to the discipline, the quality of peer review and its impact factor



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Source: *Author Insights Survey conducted by Nature Publishing Group/Palgrave Macmillan; August 2015.*⁵⁾

were mentioned as the four most important decision criteria for choosing a journal.

By offering the complete portfolio of close to 1,700 hybrid journals, authors who are mandated to publish OA can select from a wide range of journals. They are, at the same time, able to comply with open access mandates.

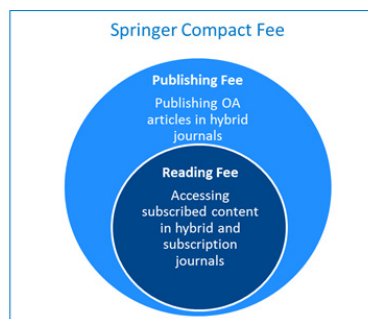
2.2 Principles of the business model

Springer Compact offers a combination of open access publishing in Springer’s hybrid journals with full access to subscription-based licensed journals on SpringerLink. This business model off-sets the publishing costs against the licensing costs. (Hybrid journals are subscription journals that also include open access articles that are financed through an APC paid by the author’s funder or the author.)

The Springer Compact Fee takes the ratio

between costs of access and costs and volume of publishing into account and offers high-content producers a significant concession on the current license fee. A high-producer is a customer whose publishing costs are high in comparison to the access costs.

The **Springer Compact Fee** is one single annual fee covering and balancing the costs of publishing OA and the costs of accessing subscription content.



The **Publishing Fee** is based on the anticipated number of articles published by corresponding authors affiliated to institutes who participate in the agreement. The APCs are fixed at **€2,200**. The total amount corresponds to the value of the expected article output and enables authors to publish all their articles OA. By basing the total Publishing Fee on the non-discounted APC, sustainability of the business model in a full OA scenario is ensured.

- Eligible are corresponding authors affiliated with a participating institution.
- Articles included within the scope of the

5) (NPG), Nature Publishing Group (2015): Author Insights 2015 Survey; August 2015; <https://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.1425362.v7>

agreement are peer-reviewed original research articles and review articles; optional article types are short communications and continuing education.

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2.3 Current Pilot Partners

The first pilot agreement was with the

Association of Dutch Universities (VSNU) and the Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen and started in January 2015. This was followed by an agreement with JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) and SHEDL - The Scottish Library Consortium in the UK in October 2015. Following were the Max Planck Institute in November 2015, the Austrian Academic Library Consortium (KEMÖ) and the Austrian Science Fund starting in January 2016, and the Swedish Library Consortium (bibsam) as of July 2016. Currently over 200 institutes/universities participate in the pilot.

3. First Results

3.1 Implementation of an automated author identification and verification workflow

For authors, fast publication is key. For participating institutions, a reliable and efficient identification and verification process is key. The initial manual- and labor-intensive process was replaced by a partially automated workflow supported by a web-based dashboard. Authors are identified using three parameters: selection of their affiliation, automatic IP recognition, and automatic e-mail domain recognition. A dashboard has been developed where institutions find author-, article- and funding-related metadata, enabling quick and educated verification. The average turnaround time needed for verification was reduced

initially from 5 to 10 days to 1 to 3 days, whereby the actual verification process takes on average only a few minutes.

3.2 Article output and article usage

As expected, the number of open access articles has increased significantly, as has the article usage. Based on first download analysis of the Dutch-authored articles, 61 percent of total usage from January 2016 to May 2016 stems from users who have no access to the content on SpringerLink through a license, supporting the argument that open access articles have a wider reach.

4. Other Points to Consider

By adding a publishing component to a licensing agreement, a new contractual framework is needed. Enough time needs to be dedicated to this process.

Even in countries with OA mandates, by far not all authors are well informed about open access. Detailed and repeated information is needed.

Communication and training of institutional staff about the content and mechanics of the agreements are essential for smooth operation.

Depending on the structure of the consortium and the agreement with funding bodies, a cost allocation key needs to be developed.

5. Next Steps

Springer is planning to expand the pilots beyond Europe and to include additional hybrid journal brands published by Springer Nature.

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