

# Dimensions and Society Publishers' Coalition Members Report

Society Publishers' Coalition:  
a shared commitment to  
open scholarship

January 2023

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## About the Society Publishers' Coalition

**The Society Publishers' Coalition (SocPC)** is a group of likeminded, not-for-profit, learned societies, community publishers and charities who publish as part of their charitable objectives. These groups re-invest the surplus from their publishing endeavours into the disciplinary communities they serve. Visit: [www.socpc.org](https://www.socpc.org)

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# Foreword

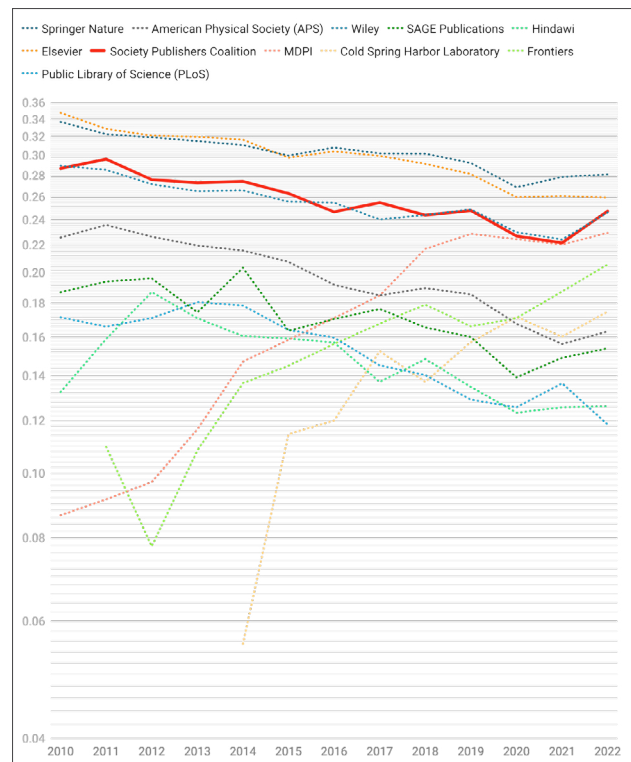
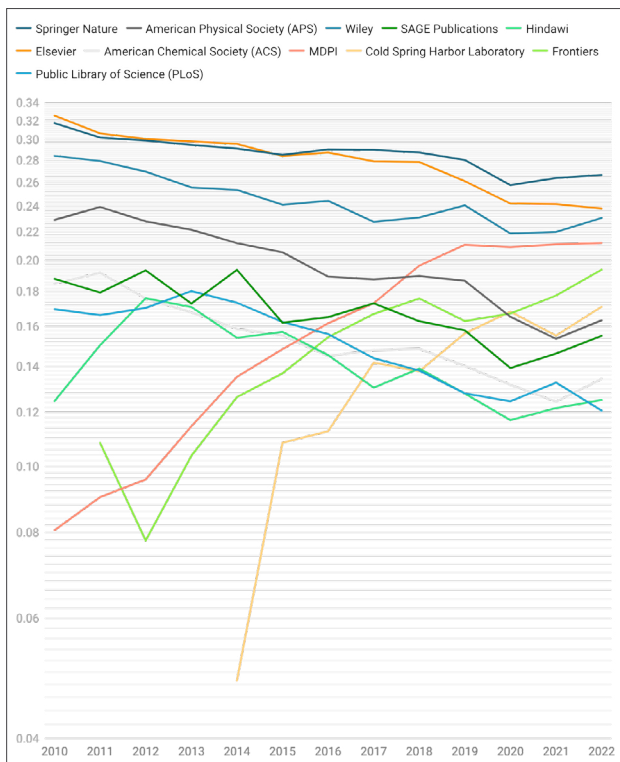
*Digital Science CEO Daniel Hook*

Globalisation reached its peak around 2012. Since then there has been at first a slowing of globalist policies and latterly a reversal of globalisation as the effects of the financial crisis of 2008 have inspired the adoption of nationalist and protectionist policies around the world. Despite the attempts of some governments to politicise research as times have become increasingly turbulent, the scholarly community has retained a broadly global outlook. The ties that bind the global research community are deeper than national or political affiliation - fundamental values of openness and collaboration continue to support global scholarly discourse.

Scholarly communication is at the heart of the research community - supporting and nurturing rich conversations that support the continued development and renewal of international links. Although publishers, the organisations that have historically provided the infrastructure for scholarly communications range from for-profit companies to institution-owned presses and mission-driven societies, there is an underlying ethos of collegiality and collaboration.

Given its role in supporting research, it is important that the world of academic publishing shouldn't become fragmented and parallel the policies that we have seen emerge in the political sphere. Critical to maintaining this ethos are collaborations such as the Society Publishers' Coalition.

A simple analysis using Dimensions gives a sense of the importance of the Society Publishers' Coalition. In Figure 1 (left pane), we see the change in relative importance of publishers in the international scholarly community using a measure of international research influence recently developed by Digital Science. The measure used is relative rather than absolute and uses a network-based approach to understand which publishers are most influential in publishing international publications. High-volume publishers have an advantage in this picture but only if they support a significant proportion of international collaboration in their journals. A publisher with small publication volume but with a high proportion of cross-border publications will outscore a large publisher with low internationally collaborative volume. The right pane shows the same publishers as the left pane except where those publishers are substantially subsumed by the Society Publishers' Coalition.



In the absence of the Society Publishers' Coalition, Elsevier, Springer Nature and Wiley have clearly been the most influential international publishers over the last decade or so. MDPI has recently risen to prominence but plateaued since the pandemic; Frontiers continues to progress; Cold Spring Harbour Press has seen a meteoric rise due to the take up of bioRxiv.

With the Society Publishers' Coalition treated as a single entity, it goes from having diffuse and unfocused influence to being the third most influential publisher (significantly correlated with Wiley, which is unsurprising given Wiley's large level of participation in the society publisher space). As this is a relative measure, you can also see the effect of the Coalition on other publishers, relatively decreasing their influence.

There are those who think in terms of content supercontinents. While this is an important line of thinking, I argue that it is helpful to contrast this with the potential fragmentation that could result from taking this analogy too literally. The picture shown here is that collaboration and coalition is a powerful route to gaining influence in a community who will ultimately determine the lot of humanity through the technologies, insights and sociological structures that they inspire through their work.

*Figure 1: Level of influence of publishers on scholarly communication using the network statistic of eigenvector centrality calculated over the global co-authorship graph by year. Left panel shows the relative influence of a selection of key publishers without any aggregation. Right panel shows the relative influence of a selection of key publishers with the Society Publishers' Coalition aggregated into a single entity (heavy red line). The metric is intrinsically balanced - so the entry of new megajournal publishers in recent years have led to traditional journal publishers generally losing relative market share.*

"Higher impact through increased usage and citations."

"Librarians may no longer feel they need to subscribe to particular journals."

"RSC highlighted its commitment to inclusion and diversity."

# Introduction and background

Members of the **Society Publishers' Coalition (SocPC)** are making steady and deliberate progress towards open access (OA) publishing, in terms of both individual articles and entire journals. Published research is being more widely disseminated, and higher impact levels are being reached through increased usage and citations.

Mandates from funders are becoming more demanding. Plan S was introduced in Europe in 2018 and, more recently, the Biden-Harris administration announced that United States research agencies should make the results of federally-funded research – both articles and data – freely available without embargo by the end of 2025 or sooner. As a result of these developments, society publishers and other players in the scholarly communications system have been embracing open access publishing as part of a move towards open research.

While the White House is not mandating that papers are published in open access journals, its insistence that research must be posted in open repositories means that librarians may no longer feel they need to subscribe to particular journals. Publishing organisations may therefore, by necessity, be pushed towards open access models.

In October, **Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)**, a SocPC member, announced that it aims to make all fully RSC-owned journals open access within five years, making it the first chemistry publisher and one of the first society publishers to commit to a fully open access future. When announcing its decision, the RSC highlighted its commitment to inclusion and diversity – partnering with institutions around the world to develop new open access models that do not rely solely on authors paying processing or publication charges. These charges can present significant barriers for researchers, especially in the least developed countries where funds, even to conduct research, are limited. Another SocPC member, the **Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)**, made a five-year commitment to transition to full and sustainable open access back in 2020, with a target date set at the end of 2025. This was heavily reliant on its non-APC unlimited OA publication model, ACM Open.

Furthermore, six member societies of the SocPC have flipped their journal portfolios since 2018 through various different approaches to open access, including diamond, collective action and APCs.

This includes: **The IET – Institute of Engineering Technology**, the **American Astronomical Society**, the **American Geophysical Union** (all using APCs); **IWA Publishing** and **EMS Press** (subscribe to open); and the **Association of Cyber Forensics and Threat Investigators** (ACFTI) (diamond OA).

This white paper, compiled using data from the **Dimensions** database and interviews with SocPC members, aims to show that society publishers are not only keeping up with the general trend towards open access publishing, but are actually leading the way in many respects. SocPC members have had to adjust their working practices and, in some cases, their financial models to adjust to new mandates and ambitions. However, many positive outcomes have emerged as a result of this trend, and it is widely hoped that progress will continue to be strong. That said, there are many challenges to consider.

"Six member societies of the SocPC have flipped their journal portfolios since 2018 using various routes to OA."



"An orderly and sustainable transition to open scholarship."

"SocPC now has 126 members publishing more than 300,000 articles per year."

"A diverse range of challenges in making this transition."

"SocPC's author base is global."

Table 1: SocPC now has 126 members publishing more than 300,000 articles per year and spends nearly £1.5 billion on charitable and mission-driven activities to support the communities and disciplines it serves. Financial data is based on published accounts from 2018.

\*Figures in Table 1 are reported over 126 separate members and are intended to provide an indication of the overall size and makeup of SocPC. The per-publication figures (revenue, cost and surplus) are medians of a dataset with a very large spread and significant omissions, such as costs borne by publishing partners. Unlike the other figures in the table (which are cumulative sums), the per-publication figures are entirely notional and unrepresentative.

# What is the Society Publishers' Coalition?

SocPC members share the common ambition to see an orderly and sustainable transition to open scholarship, and to improve the efficiency of the scholarly communication ecosystem fairly and sustainably, for the benefit of researchers and society at large. In order to achieve this, SocPC works closely with funders, institutions, and other stakeholders.

Learned societies use their publishing surpluses to fund their mission-related activities and to support their disciplinary communities. It is therefore vital that they navigate their transition to open access using business models that do not jeopardise their long-term sustainability or that of their publications.

SocPC was founded in 2018 and its members represent a diverse range of academic disciplines that face a similarly diverse range of challenges when making this transition. Some of those challenges are shared by all, and others are more specific to individual disciplinary areas. Some members have commercial publishing partners and others are self-publishing. SocPC's author base is global, and it holds a policy that ensures that authors are able to publish with the Society regardless of their funding status or ability to pay.

SocPC in numbers	
Number of members	126
Total publications	318,320
Total income	£1,903,920,546
Total expenditure	£1,766,447,602
Charitable activities expenditure	£1,482,468,961
Publishing income	£501,446,118
Publishing expenditure	£232,296,003
Charitable expenditure as % of total	84%
Net surplus	£137,472,944
Publishing surplus	£269,150,115
Revenue per publication*	£1,575
Cost per publication*	£730
Surplus per publication*	£846
Proportion of members who are self-published	28%
Proportion of members in SSAH	23%
Proportion of members in STM	77%
Proportion of membership publishing books	42%
Proportion of members with > 50% income from publishing	48%



# Crunching the numbers

The SocPC data, supplied and analysed for this white paper by **Dimensions**, clearly show the progress made over the last 10 years. The number of open access journals published by SocPC members has grown steadily and the proportion of paywalled content published in SocPC journals dropped from 95.1% to 78.1% between 2012 and 2022. The chart below reveals that, among SocPC members, journals publishing exclusively paywalled content have been in sharp decline. Over the last decade, the number of open access journals (defined as member journals publishing between 90% and 100% of their articles as OA) has multiplied nearly five-fold since 2012. The yellow line on the chart shows that the percentage of OA articles published in member journals has grown from less than 5% to nearly 22% in the same period. At the time of going to press, the data for 2022 were still being finalised.

While clear progress has been made towards open access, there are several layers of nuance to be taken into account. SocPC members have been adopting different routes to open access (including diamond, Subscribe to Open, and APCs). Each member started their journey towards OA at a different time, meaning that all are currently at varying stages along their individual routes. It should be noted that this dataset looks only at journal ISSN (no books are included in the data), and only 'gold OA' articles are examined, defined as the final version of a record published with immediate open access and an open licence. Other publications, such as conference proceedings (which some members publish more frequently than journals), have not been included.

"Journals publishing exclusively paywalled content have been in sharp decline."

"Several layers of nuance need to be taken into account."

"Members are at varying stages along their individual routes."

"This dataset looks only at journals."

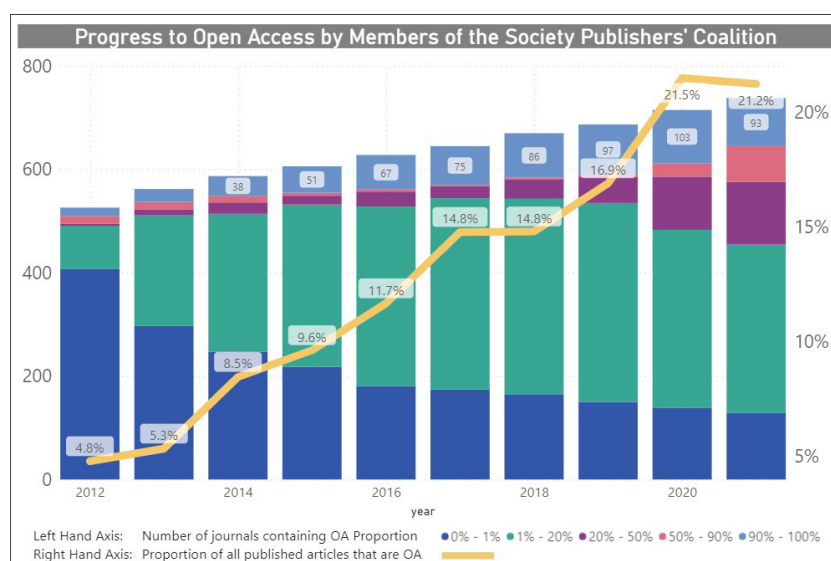


Figure 2: From 2012 to 2021, the number of open access journals published by SocPC members, and the proportion of all their articles published with immediate open access, increased by a factor of more than four. At the time of going to press, the data for 2022 were still being finalised.

"A mission-led ambition to realise open access."

"Increasing our standards around FAIR data."

"A consistent move towards open access."

"Progress towards open access has not always been straightforward."

"For some, recent progress has been rapid."

# Members' musings

Six society members have reflected on their journey towards open access for this white paper. Here is a summary of their reports:

## Key drivers for moving towards open access

Once all six societies had been questioned, a key theme emerged in that there was already a mission-led ambition to realise open access in terms of ethos, fairness of access, and equality of opportunity. These stated intentions and, in some cases, explicit mission statements, predate any funder requirements or government mandates. For example, **The Company of Biologists** has been offering open access options on its hybrid journals since 2004, and the **American Astronomical Society** reports that it has "always leaned more toward open access". The **American Geophysical Union (AGU)** made a commitment to supporting open science more than 25 years ago, and the **AGU's** Matt Giampoala, Vice President, Publications, said: "We've been steadily increasing our standards around FAIR data and opening as much of our article content as we can since that time. We've had to balance these principles with maintaining sustainable operations, but we've made a consistent move to open access over that time, and we have recently announced efforts to accelerate the transition to open access."

## Recent progress

As should be expected, SocPC members' progress towards open access has not always been straightforward. This no doubt depends on resources. **The IET**, for example, made the decision to move towards open access as part of a strategy review in 2018, and the transition was completed at the start of 2021. The **American Astronomical Society** is now eight months into an open access program after commencing discussions in 2019, while the **American Physiological Society**, after offering hybrid options "for many years", said: "We really started to open our doors to OA more seriously in 2019 by increasing awareness of our OA options and expanding options with our library customers". The AGU published its first open access journal in 2009 and, 13 years later, 10 of its 23 journals are open access.

For some, recent progress has been rapid. For example, **The Company of Biologists** reported that its initiative is "continuing to go from strength to strength, with the number of participating institutions more than doubling from June 2021 to June 2022". For some members, progress has been facilitated largely through transitional or transformational agreements between publishers and libraries.

The **British Sociological Association** journals were seeing steady but slow take up in open access prior to the emergence of agreements between its publisher and many library consortia. These agreements removed the practical barriers to opening up the version of record. This meant that the model was made available to more authors working in disciplines with lower levels of funding.

The **Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)** launched its TA model, ACM Open, back in 2020 with a five-year commitment to transitioning towards sustainable full open access by the end of 2025. This promise was made just as the pandemic was starting to shut down universities and publishers around the world. Since then, significant progress has been made.

ACM's Director of Publications, Scott Delman, states that "nearly 1/3 of ACMs journal and conference articles are now published on an open access basis as a result of the 300+ institutional TAs we've signed to date, with many more on the way. One of the major challenges we face is that, while ACM is one of the leading journal publishers in computer science, with ~70 journals, the majority of articles we publish annually actually come from the hundreds of technical conferences and workshops we run around the world each year, not our journals. Certain fields, like computer science and electrical engineering, are very conference-centric."

"For OA, this is a particular challenge, since most funders do not explicitly include conferences in their open access mandates and, at the same time, authors - who also pay registration fees to attend conferences have growing expectations that these registration fees will cover open access publications as well, even though the costs of publication are largely separate from the costs of running these conferences. This makes the sustainability issue more challenging for us, and one that needs to be addressed as part of the TA negotiation process and awareness campaigns with our membership and the computing community at large. That said, we are very much on track to meet our 2025 transition deadline, and the institutional market has been very receptive and supportive of ACM's unique unlimited OA publication model."

## Benefits to authors and readers

There is a common acceptance that both authors and readers benefit when paywalls are removed. Matt Giampoala at the **AGU** spoke for many when he said: "Readership goes up and authors can see that their work is getting more attention and making more impact. We feel that the greatest benefit comes from practising truly open science. Expanding early communication through preprints, open and transparent processes, FAIR data, and code can all increase collaboration, ensure reproducibility, and accelerate the scientific endeavour."

**The Company of Biologists** stated: "Readers get immediate access to content that would have been, for some of them, behind

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"Authors get more eyeballs on their articles."

"Usage... is up by the order of 250 per cent."

"Looking at new launches over the next year or two."

a subscription barrier for six months. They can engage with the conversation about the latest research while it's still fresh. Authors get more eyeballs on their articles, so more awareness and visibility for them and their work. They are delighted that their publications can be accessed by a wider set of readers worldwide, and that this leads to the democratization of science."

Kruna Vukumirovic, from the **The IET**, added: "Benefits include wide dissemination of published research, achieving higher impact through increased usage and citations, and compliance with funder mandates. Our authors also benefit from being included in Wiley's transitional deals, as well as Research4Life." The **American Astronomical Society's** Julie Steffen talks of "a huge increase in access to content across all publications and the associated increase in usage and citation. Usage, as measured in downloads, is up by the order of 250 per cent."

Alison Danforth from the **British Sociological Association** said that the widespread availability of research is hugely important to all disciplines looking to tackle the major challenges posed by society. This knowledge can influence policy and practice through sound data and evidence. This is particularly important when challenging assumptions and 'accepted' truths to drive politicised decision-making, and when empowering those traditionally excluded from sites of power.

## Predictions of progress

SocPC members are representative of the wider landscape in that every member is at a different stage on their respective journey. **The IET** has stated that it will be examining new launches over the next year or two, while the **AAS** has told us that it will carefully consider APC rates and tiers every year, while trying to reduce "confusion for authors". **The Company of Biologists** said: "Our growth targets in terms of journal output (% open access research content) are based on the Transformative Journal path up until 2025 (the open access flip point proposed by Plan S for Transformative Journals). But we are more ambitious for the reach of our Read & Publish agreements and the benefits these bring to our authors and readers."

Other organizations are unsure as to what the future holds in terms of progress. "What does transformation look like for journals and societies that publish low levels of funded research?" asked Alison Danforth of the **British Sociological Association**. "A significant proportion of published research in our journals has no or only small levels of funding, meaning that a full journal transition to open access, with a sustainable model, still looks unlikely. Models such as Subscribe to Open are appealing from a mission and ethical perspective, but the risks of adopting them before they are proven long-term are too great for any Association that depends on its publishing income to subsidise mission-critical activities."

The **European Mathematical Society** said: "As library budgets are increasingly squeezed, we fully expect to see a backlash against some of the more high-profile transformative agreements, which will hopefully result in a re-examination of the most appropriate and cost-effective use of funds directed towards research publications."

Matt Giampoala of the **AGU** added: "Within a year, we should be at two thirds of our articles publishing gold open access. Over the next several years, we'll transition several more journals with large publishing volumes, but will likely keep a number of hybrid journals to ensure we are still able to serve our entire community. Hopefully, we'll be able to experiment with more types of open access models or funding partnerships for journals, books, and new publishing products. We'll certainly learn more about how researchers are meeting open access requirements from their funders and institutions. Hopefully, we'll develop a better regional pricing strategy. After five years, we hope that we'll be at a point where we may be able to transition the rest of our journals to full open access."

The **American Physiological Society's** Colette Bean was similarly bullish: "With the changes we have made already, open access increased in our journals by 108% in 2021 and we have sustained this growth in 2022. We expect this growth to continue over the next few years as we increase the number of transformative agreements. We anticipate that we may need to fully change our business model in the not-so-distant future."open and transparent processes, FAIR data, and code can all increase collaboration, ensure reproducibility, and accelerate the scientific endeavour."

"A backlash against some of the more high-profile transformative agreements."

"Hopefully, we'll develop a better regional pricing strategy."

"We anticipate the need for a full change in business model."

## CASE STUDY:

# The Royal Society continues to make significant progress on its OA journey

In May 2021 **The Royal Society**, the UK's national academy of science, announced the next phase of its open access journey following a review of its publications by the Society's Council. A public commitment was made, and the society pledged to switch its four hybrid research journals, *Proceedings A*, *Proceedings B*, *Interface*, and *Biology Letters*, to fully open access formats when their proportion of open access articles reached 75 per cent. They would then join the Society's two existing open access journals: *Open Biology* and *Royal Society Open Science*.

"An ambitious program of developing transitional 'Read & Publish' agreements."

Following on from, and in response to, the cOAlition S initiative Plan S announced in 2018, the Royal Society has also announced an initiative to drive the transition of its hybrid research journals to full open access by embarking on an ambitious program of developing transitional 'Read & Publish' agreements with institutional libraries and consortia around the world. More than 170 of these agreements were put in place in the first year (2021), with more than 300 agreed upon in 2022, and over 400 projected for 2023.

"The society reached a significant landmark."

Stuart Taylor, Publishing Director at the Royal Society, said: "Our aim was to make open access publishing in our hybrid journals easier for researchers by having their open access charges covered centrally by their institution, rather than having to meet them individually or through their project grants. In so doing, we expected the proportion of open access articles in the journals to increase more rapidly than the steady, incremental increases we had seen since we started offering open access in 2006."

"All the Society's hybrid journals increased the proportion of open access articles in 2022."

During the first full year of these transitional agreements, the society reached a significant landmark, with more than half of all its published articles open access (53 per cent). These articles were free to access and held liberal re-use rights under the Creative Commons CC-BY licence. All the Society's hybrid journals increased the proportion of open access articles in 2022, in most cases by a significant amount.

	2020	2021	2022
Proceedings A	16.5%	27.3%	40.4%
Proceedings B	28.2%	41.9%	51.1%
Interface	27.7%	48.7%	56.6%
Biology Letters	24.3%	24.9%	48.4%
Interface Focus	27.9%	59.7%	61.4%
Notes and Records	13.5%	10.3%	30.2%
Philosophical Transactions A	18.9%	28.2%	39.2%
Philosophical Transactions B	24.8%	33.9%	52.8%

Taylor continued: “These impressive increases in open access have been achieved despite the fact that we have a liberal ‘green’ open access policy which allows authors to deposit their accepted manuscript in a repository with a CC-BY licence and no embargo. We initially had some concerns (along with many other publishers) that such a liberal green policy might undermine the effectiveness of our Read & Publish deals to deliver open access growth in our hybrid journals.”



# Challenges and stumbling blocks to progress

"It can be hard to gain attention from librarians when you're a small not-for-profit publisher."

Unequal access to open access publishing opportunities has been deemed a key challenge by many members. This lack of access is generally caused by a lack of funding, and it can also arise as a result of the operative systems commonly in use. This lack of access intersects with specific geographies and research communities – that is, practitioners, non-academic research organisations, and early or late career stage researchers. As open access models develop, these communities are being unintentionally excluded from the benefits of open science, and SocPC members are seeking creative ways to ensure that these important voices are still heard.

SocPC members have reported many other challenges along the way. These have included the need to expand sales teams (with associated costs), the requirement to improve visibility to attract the attention of the library community, and the need to engage authors and convince them that open access should be their preferred model.

As Julie Steffen at the **AAS** explained: "Authors don't pay as much attention to publishing, even when business models change." The **European Mathematical Society** reported on an "uphill battle to educate decision makers on how the Subscribe to Open (S2O) model works and its benefits". The **American Physiological Society's** Colette Bean discusses the need to "adjust our APC pricing to cover the costs of producing an article". Some members have also mentioned the need for complex discussions with publishing partners with regards to the implementation of new practices and, of course, the need to overhaul IT systems and publishing platforms to take account of these changes. However, these stumbling blocks were generally seen as matters to be overcome in the drive towards a better outcome for members and authors.

**The Company of Biologists** stated: "The main challenge has been expanding our sales team to handle the extra work. Moving from subscriptions to Read & Publish agreements introduced lots of additional – manual – workload and meant us growing our sales team four-fold. Obviously this represents an extra cost to the organisation. It can be hard to gain attention from librarians when you're a small, not-for-profit publisher, so we've worked hard at growing visibility too and making the transition to Read & Publish as easy as possible for our subscribers."

For societies working with a publishing partner, open access changes have presented a practical and strategic challenge. Keeping up to date and abreast of developments is vital to good decision-making practices for societies' publications, authors, and members, as well as for sustainability and the societies' overall mission. Alison

"An uphill battle to educate decision makers."

"This represents an extra cost to the organisation."

Danforth of the **British Sociological Association** commented that “many societies with few staff and small resources, like ours, depend on their publishing partner and the Society Publisher’s Coalition to navigate the constantly changing landscape. Any society with a publishing partner is tied to the partner’s open access approach, which may suit the larger, diverse portfolio of the publisher, but not the smaller, more vulnerable portfolio of any individual society. The risks of changing partner or deviating from the partner’s open access model are often too great in the context of charity risk management. Many associations are left feeling powerless. A collective and collaborative ethos has been, and will continue to be, vital to surviving these changes.”

Matt Giampoala of the **AGU** reported that not all of its authors are able to find funding for article publication charges: “While we have waivers for authors without funding, some authors are reluctant to request a waiver and would rather go to a different journal. For several of the journals we’ve transitioned, we’ve had an issue where we end up waiving fees due to the timing of placing requirements on authors to agree to article publication charges. Transformational agreements have helped with the transition, but there can be confusion because some deals cover only hybrid journals, while others cover both hybrid and fully open access journals.”

## Mission imperative versus loss of income

It’s fair to say that societies have seen a variety of implications arise from their decision to move towards open access, and much of this has been driven by their individual financial situations. **The IET**, for example, did not see the need to develop any new models to create extra income (but did not rule this out in the future), while the **AAS** talked of the need to “tweak” its financial models, as its key driver was to “continue attracting and keeping authors and providing as hassle-free a publishing process as possible”.

**The Company of Biologists** said it was enthusiastic about the move towards open access and the benefits that OA could bring to the community. However, it was also resistant to cost savings that could affect its focus on quality publishing, and it has been considering alternative revenue streams for some time, although these changes have not yet been implemented. The European Mathematical Society said: “We aren’t currently considering any income diversification beyond supporting society-driven membership initiatives, although we would hope to act quickly if our S2O revenue became destabilised.” The AGU reported that it does expect some income loss. However, the AGU also said: “We’re still exploring how we might expand revenues, mainly outside of our existing journal’s program. We already have a career centre, as well as advertising in our news magazine, Eos. New author services are certainly under consideration. Ultimately, AGU will continue its publishing program in a sustainable manner, whether or not there are excess funds available for other AGU programs. The main reason for a slow

"Not all authors are able to find funding for article publication charges."

"Continue attracting and keeping authors."

"We're still exploring how we might expand revenues."

"Maintain the quality on which we pride ourselves."

transition is so that we can plan for future sustainability and reduce barriers to authorship."

Colette Bean, at the **APS**, said: "The push to full open access must be done in a sustainable manner to continue to provide the membership and author value and to maintain the quality on which we pride ourselves. In our first webinar we interviewed a variety of leaders, including our editorial board members, on their sentiment and knowledge regarding publishing open access. In the past few years, in preparation for an OA future, we have been focused on making operational changes for our self-published journals in an attempt to reduce our costs, introduce new revenue streams, and improve the services we provide. These considerations will be necessary in an open access future. Examples of these changes include: launching new products and services (such as our Read, Publish, and Join program for institutional customers and our Spotlight Cover Program for authors); streamlining operational payment processes to allow for an increase in open access purchases (such as required fields in the submission system to capture funder data); outsourcing certain functions (e.g., copyediting); renegotiating key agreements with our vendors; and building in-house capacity to provide our editorial teams with managing editors and strategic development support."

Moving to an open access model can lead to a reduction in income for societies. Some will be in a better position to withstand this than others. For others, this loss of income may be significant enough to lead to drastic change or even threaten their continued existence in their current form. As a result, SocPC recently held a session for members to explore and share strategies for income diversification. Similar meetings are expected to be arranged for members in future.

The range of SocPC members, and the generosity of spirit within the group, means that members are in the fortunate position of being able to assess strategies and initiatives that others are trying out. They can then learn from those experiences. Where resources are tight, this can be an invaluable support network.

"For some, this loss of income may be significant."

# Conclusions

Amid a rapidly-changing scholarly communications landscape, SocPC members are collaborating to solve shared challenges and are making good progress. The number of journals published by SocPC members is showing steady growth, and the percentage of articles published as open access is growing fast.

Many challenges will arise for members along the way – particularly those publishing in the humanities and social sciences – with myriad implications surrounding funding, workloads, and the implicit need to adopt new models and working practices. Progress towards full open access may not be linear but rather includes steps forwards and backwards as challenges are identified and worked through. A sustainable, fully open access future is still difficult to envision for many societies, disciplines and authors.

However, the collaborative nature of SocPC means that members have the opportunity to learn lessons from each other, to iterate on experimental approaches, to sculpt methods of transitioning to open access that work for their communities, and, importantly, to make their voices and experiences heard. SocPC members agree that progress towards open access needs to be made sustainably, while reducing barriers to authorship and keeping the publishing process simple, effective, and financially viable for all concerned.

United by a common ambition to embrace open access in the interests of scholarship, SocPC members have come together in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration to explore challenges and develop solutions. The SocPC is looking to expand membership to any like-minded society publisher whose values align with the mission statement, and is also keen to make connections with other groups with shared aims.

For more information about the SocPC, visit <https://www.socpc.org/>, email [info@socpc.org](mailto:info@socpc.org), or follow us on Twitter at [@SocPubC](https://twitter.com/SocPubC).

To find out more about Dimensions, visit <https://www.dimensions.ai/>, email [info@dimensions.ai](mailto:info@dimensions.ai), or follow us on Twitter at [@DSDimensions](https://twitter.com/DSDimensions).

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