

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

# Final Report: Move It Forward

*Identifying transitional open access models*

University of California, Davis  
October 22, 2018

## ***Move It Forward Project: Executive Summary***

Recognizing the momentum behind the open access movement and the broad possibilities for transformative change in scholarly communication, the UC Davis Library's *Move It Forward* project asks: what are the impediments to “flipping” scholarly journals to open access models, and how can we best motivate such transitions from publishers interested in adopting or scaling up this activity?

With support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the UC Davis Library and an inter-institutional planning group gathered a small number of scholarly publishers with demonstrated interest in transitioning journals to open access, and diverse ideas on how best to do so, for a one-and-a-half-day workshop. In doing so, the project had several goals:

- To better gauge actionable publisher interest in transitioning to open access, beyond public declarations and activities;
- To hear directly from attendees where friction points and obstacles lie in transition planning;
- To discover, vet, and, where possible and appropriate, advance publisher models for “flipping” journals to open access.

Workshop attendees included the organizers and 15 publishers drawn from commercial, nonprofit, society, and university presses, varying widely in size and history. Each publisher was accepted from a competitive application process, presented their open access histories and visions during the workshop, collaboratively explored transition models, and provided an individual commitment to action. The organizers served as workshop facilitators and the publisher representatives were the active voices in the room. Three particular ideas were examined in-depth: cooperative publishing models, where libraries “subscribe” to open access titles; diversifying publisher revenue streams; and “read and publish” or “offsetting” agreements, where subscribing institutions pay for making their authors’ titles open access.

### **Lessons learned**

Several items from the *Move It Forward* presentations, workshops, and discussions stand out as important for the push for the transition of scholarly journals:

- **There is a significant disconnect between publisher interest in flipping journals and actual movement to date.** The uncertainties involved in changing the fundamental structure of scholarly publishing mean that even those publishers most interested in making the transition are proceeding cautiously. Nevertheless, publisher interest in adapting their business models appears widespread and significant.
- **Among attendees, there was overwhelmingly significant interest in cooperative transition models, moving to open access without charging authors a processing charge.** Relatedly, maintaining and improving today’s already strained publisher-library relationships was widely considered a priority.
- For many models, **trust and transparency** between publishers and institutions is viewed as essential and making progress on this score appears to be a necessary part of implementing many transition plans.

## **Next Steps**

Existing participant efforts are ongoing, and all attendees made individual commitments to further their organizations' explorations of transitional models, including, for some, public and transparent reporting on pilot projects. To create the environment necessary to bring further transitional efforts into being, there was broad consensus that further dialog and exploration with a broader community of library stakeholders will be necessary, and we will be encouraging such a gathering in future, both via the University of California Libraries and among the wider publisher and library community.

## Move It Forward Project Summary

On June 21 and 22, 2018, UC Davis Library, with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and assistance from an inter-institutional planning group, convened fifteen representatives from a variety of publishers at a meeting in Oakland, California to investigate methods for transitioning existing subscription-funded scholarly journals to open access models.

### Motivation and Goals

Experience and study both substantiate that open access models that provide unfettered, worldwide access to the journal scholarship can be financially viable today. Many successful open access journals, preprint repositories, and studies such as *Pay It Forward* provide compelling evidence. This is true for both individual titles (as evidenced by more than a decade of open access journals, supported by a variety of business models) *and* at scale across the system (as demonstrated in high energy physics through the efforts of the Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics, or SCOAP3, and as suggested by modeling performed in the University of California *Pay It Forward* study<sup>1</sup> and the Max Planck whitepaper<sup>2</sup>).

Large-scale open access aspirations are widely held in the library community. Encouragingly, we found that many publishers and scholarly societies share this interest. The organizers'<sup>3</sup> motivation for the *Move It Forward* project was twofold: to develop a more complete understanding of what stands between enthusiastic publishers and the successful transitioning of their journals to open access models; and to encourage publishers to develop pilot projects to test transitional models.

The project sought to advance open access by convening publishers with a demonstrated interest in transitioning titles for a 1.5-day workshop and discussion. The intended outcomes of the workshop were to explore possible options open to publishers for transitioning titles to open access, discuss where the pain points and obstacles are, and formulate plans for next steps for publishers to pursue.

### Attendees and Selection Model

The *Move It Forward* approach arose from the observation that some publishers of scholarly journals share libraries' open access aspirations, and that they have important ideas regarding and insights into the process of transitioning existing titles to open access models.

To realize the goals of the workshop, the project organizers identified several priorities for attendee selection:

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [http://icis.ucdavis.edu/?page\\_id=286](http://icis.ucdavis.edu/?page_id=286).

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.17617/1.3>.

<sup>3</sup> The core organizing team comprised MacKenzie Smith, the University Librarian at UC Davis; Michael Wolfe, the UC Davis Library Scholarly Communication Officer; and Greg Tananbaum, a leading scholarly communications consultant and, with MacKenzie Smith and other members of our inter-institutional planning group, a member of the *Pay It Forward* team. Further supporting the project was a team of leading library-based scholarly communications experts from within and without the University of California: Jeffrey MacKie-Mason (UC Berkeley), Rachael Samberg (UC Berkeley), Ivy Anderson (California Digital Library), Mathew Willmott (California Digital Library), Peter Suber (Harvard), and Michael Roy (Middlebury).

- An open call. Our interest was in hearing voices and ideas we might not have otherwise encountered.
- A small group. We wanted to facilitate participatory conversations and hear from everyone.
- Diversity. We sought to include a wide range of publishers (subject focus, size, business structure) to reflect the heterogeneity of the publishing sector.
- Bona fide interest in transitioning titles to open models. Evidence in the application process that prospective attendees held genuine interest in proceeding was essential for selection.
- Demonstrated thoughtfulness. Ideal participants would have already invested time and energy into thinking creatively about the transition process.

In March 2018, the project organizers distributed an open call for applications, instructing prospective participants to complete the questions attached to this report as Appendix 2. Applications were reviewed in stages by the project team and our inter-institutional volunteer planning group. Of the 27 applicants, 17 received invitations, and 15 were ultimately able to join the workshop. Attendees were:

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Darla Henderson	American Chemical Society
Brooks Hanson	American Geophysical Union (AGU)
Ken Heideman	American Meteorological Society
Richard Gallagher	Annual Reviews
Vivian Berghahn	Berghahn Journals
Mary Yess	ECS (The Electrochemical Society)
Tanja Niemann	Érudit
Michael Regoli	Indiana University Press
Joachim Flickinger	Karger Publishers
Jaclyn Sipovic	Michigan Publishing
David Ross	SAGE Publishing
Donald Mastronarde	Society for Classical Studies
Nick Lindsay	The MIT Press
Dan Morgan	University of California Press
Natalie Williams	University of Wales Press

Also present as facilitators were the three members of the project team and four of six planning group members. They were:

<b>Organizer-Facilitator</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
MacKenzie Smith	Project team	UC Davis Library
Michael Wolfe	Project team	UC Davis Library
Greg Tananbaum	Project team	ScholarNext Consulting
Jeffrey MacKie-Mason	Planning group	UC Berkeley Library
Rachael Samberg	Planning group	UC Berkeley Library
Ivy Anderson	Planning group	California Digital Library
Mathew Willmott	Planning group	California Digital Library

## Structure

On Thursday, June 21, participants gathered to open the workshop. Following short introductions from the organizers, participants each gave a 7-minute “lightning” presentation, cabined to answering three specific topics using three slides, namely:

1. The background of the individual participant and their press, particularly highlighting current open access activities and aspirations.
2. Four lessons learned about the process of transitioning journals to open access from previous investigations or experience.
3. Views on the most promising models for transitioning journals to open access and, then, sustaining open access titles.

To facilitate open and frank conversation, these presentations and the remainder of the workshop were held under the Chatham House Rule — the discussion can be quoted and reported on, provided, however, that reporting does not attribute content to speakers or their organizations.

Discussion continued informally over dinner, and the meeting reconvened on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Using the participant statements previously presented on promising models, the organizers distilled the participant lightning talks into a set of thematically linked approaches to transitioning journals. Presenting these approaches to the whole group led to consensus about pursuing three ideas for deeper discussion over the remaining course of workshop, namely:

1. “Subscribe to open” collective support models;
2. Pursuing a diversity of revenue streams, including from value-added services; and
3. Read and Publish, or “offsetting” agreements

Participants separated into three groups of roughly equal size to discuss the three ideas in depth, with one session in the morning geared to further understanding and explicating the idea into a fuller model, and any obstacles to its implementation. In the afternoon, a session was dedicated to exploring how each model might be piloted. After reporting back to the larger group, individuals reflected on both how potential pilots might be furthered, and on what commitments they might make to advance one or more of the discussed ideas in their home presses.

# Meeting Report

## Participant experiences and areas of interest

As anticipated by the organizing group, participants related a wide variety of attitudes, experiences, and goals regarding open access. First, there was broad consensus that open access availability makes for significant growth in article usage. One participant spoke of their organization's sole experience in flipping a journal as substantially multiplying the usage. Another with a similar experiment reported a 300% increase in usage, others reported being "astonished" with their own experiences. While participants did *not* report similar significant effects on citation counts, at least one reported that their internal investigation found that quality of engagement was also high, as indicated by user-interface data.

One key takeaway, consistent with the expectations and motivations for the workshop, was that flipping existing journals to open access models remains a relative rarity. Even enthusiastic publishers approach the space cautiously. By far the most common reported experience with transitioning journals to open access was to have flipped only a single journal. Even where participants have significant experience creating and running viable born-OA journals, successfully bridging a toll-access title to open access is not seen as familiar or straightforward. However, many participants saw opportunity to experiment; multiple publishers noted that journals that are more modest earners can provide lower-risk avenues for trials, and some have reported pressure from journals' owners (where the owner is distinct from the publisher) as helping force the issue in a productive and successful manner.

In contrast to the observed conservatism in transitioning existing titles, many expressed sweeping open access targets, describing gold open access as an "inevitability," and stating that "the transition is happening." Some reported declining subscriptions and increasing usage of their hybrid offerings, expressing concern that hybrid usage and other open access availability is pressuring their ability to sell subscriptions. Despite the certainty of many participants regarding their own open access futures, there was clear consensus that the process "will be difficult."

While tentative around flipping journals, participants generally had a much greater comfort and longer history with green open access (where authors can share their final manuscripts) and delayed open access availability (where paywalls are removed from articles after a certain period of time has elapsed after publication). Nevertheless, experiences in these areas were seen by some as demonstrating the difficulty of open access transitions. One participant, for instance, reported that delayed open access policies had resulted in a notable drop in subscribers, viewing the result as predicting similar attrition in institutional support for fully open access outlets.

Participants were also largely worried about adopting models that would negatively impact revenues. Some society publishers emphasized the continuing importance of publishing revenue to their broader set of activities and commitments, although there was also some openness to considering other ways of rebalancing society revenue streams.

Article Processing Charges, or APCs, and their role in open access publishing were deeply divisive to participants. For some, "the APC model is a poor fit" given the volume and nature of the published titles. Publishers of humanities and social sciences journals in particular expressed concern that publication volume and availability of funding to pay APCs both made the charges difficult, if not

unworkable—at least as the sole mechanism for funding an open access journal. Others, particularly publishers identifying as “mission-driven,” felt that APCs were inconsistent with their values and would distort the submissions received to over-represent authors with funding. Some worry that APCs might result in a pay-for-play approach to publishing, incentivizing some publishers to lower or ignore quality standards in order to receive payment. In contrast, some saw APC payments as integral to their transition efforts, and realizable with present levels of author funding.

Publishers amenable to APC-based models were particularly interested in pursuing “read and publish,” or “offsetting,” models to make the transition. These models are based around striking agreements with institutions to release works of affiliated authors on open access terms — flipping by *author affiliation* rather than by publication, at least until participation levels are sufficient to support (or even, necessitate) flipping individual titles.

Many participants expressed unhappiness with the adversarial posture between publishers and subscribing institutions and libraries. A substantial group spoke of wanting to see a more cooperative approach to open access flips by “changing subscribers to supporters” or having institutions “subscribe to open.” But participants also noted that expressions of support or affection by the library community are not necessarily determinative of success. While several participants are in the process of working toward community-supported OA transitions, all were very cognizant of the “free-rider” problem the approach creates, that is, whether publishers can ensure enough subscribers continue to pay once the content becomes freely available.

## **Explored Model: Subscribe to Open**

### **Overview**

A plurality of participants expressed strong interest in exploring cooperative approaches to transitioning titles to open access, of the sort advocated by the Public Knowledge Project.<sup>4</sup> Although there are variations in form, this basic model is one where subscribers commit to financially supporting newly-flipped open access publications at a level similar to how they presently support subscriptions. Attendees had a few ways of pithily expressing this idea — “subscribers to supporters” and “subscribe to open” were two memorable formulations.

For many attendees, the cooperative model appeared attractive simply because it seemed like “the right thing to do.” Breakout participants described the attraction as having a “social justice element” and allowing them to do right by authors and readers both, globally. Similar to earlier group discussions, breakout participants were also motivated by the changing publishing landscape, saying “the question isn’t what is scary about this model, it’s what’s scary about *not* moving to it.”

Identified implementations of this approach and closely related initiatives include the Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics (SCOAP3), Open Library of Humanities (OLH), and Knowledge Unlatched (KU). Additional projects are known to be in progress, as with Libraria.

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<sup>4</sup> See *generally*, Willinsky, J. (2017). Modelling A Cooperative Approach to Open Access Scholarly Publishing: A Demonstration in the Canadian Context. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 42(5). doi:<https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2017v4n5a3264>



In fact, two breakout group participants are themselves actively pursuing cooperative models for their journals, which informed the discussion with concrete examples and experiences. A summary of the breakout discussion follows below.

### **Transition Path**

Breakout participants identified the essential prerequisite for transitioning to a cooperative model to be the securing of subscriber commitments. Current subscribers — and others who might support the flip — need both to understand the change and why it is happening, and manifest their commitment to continue subscribing in a manner sufficient to convince the publisher that the flip will not be destabilizing. Breakout participants reported that the education and outreach involved to achieve this step remains substantial and consider this initial process to be a multi-year endeavor. One idea voiced about maintaining subscriber buy-in was to annually secure rolling three year “statements of intent”. Though non-binding, these would give the publisher a clearer view of the horizon and encourage longer-term thinking from subscribers.

To date, most, if not all, existing implementations of the cooperative model rely on intermediaries to aggregate titles and maintain the relationship with supporting libraries. Workshop participants have had a small amount of experience flipping journals using these intermediated methods, however, the breakout group feeling was that an unintermediated pathway will be important for many publishers. Avoiding bureaucratic entanglement and charting a path that worked for individual titles’ and publishers’ idiosyncrasies were important to breakout participants, and handling the transition directly worked to resolve those difficulties.

As a consequence, unintermediated models were the focus of the discussion, although the breakout group consensus was that the intermediated model will continue to be an important part of the ecosystem. In particular, where the intermediary is focusing on a discipline or theme, or where an interested journal does not have the resources to lay the required groundwork to independently secure the necessary demonstration of library support.

### **Model Strengths**

Most important to breakout group members, cooperative models would shift the relationship between publishers and libraries to emphasize shared goals and interests in open access, removing the adversarial framing of the current subscription system.

In the view of most breakout members, cooperative models are also likely the *fastest* way of transitioning to open access, relative especially to offsetting or hybrid models that might depend on hitting open access targets within a given journal before flipping. Moreover, from a practical perspective, the cooperative model would provide open access without substantially upsetting current workflows and expectations under a subscription system. Libraries continue to pay in much the same way they do today, and subscription publishers can use the same sales infrastructures to build and receive subscription payments.

Meanwhile, the actual, technical task of providing access under any open model is more straightforward than under a system dependent on access controls and, to the breakout members, potentially less costly than building and enforcing a paywalled system. However, given the likelihood of having to maintain both access-controlled and open-access systems in parallel, savings along these lines are unlikely to be realized for many, and there might instead be cost increases.

Breakout group members also felt that cooperative models maintain the incentive structures for publishers and libraries to ensure quality in the literature. That is, libraries, in selecting which journals to fund, continue to serve their traditional curatorial function and publishers, in selling to libraries, will similarly be incentivized to select for quality. Breakout participants contrast this model to APC-funded open access, which can incentivize and make easier the publication of low-quality research.

Finally, participants observed that on the author side, little understanding or appreciation of open access is required to effect the flip, which some see as a strength given observed author confusion or indifference about open access in many fields.

### **Model Weaknesses**

Breakout group participants agreed that the model's "free rider" problem is its most substantial weakness. In short: what compels libraries to continue to subscribe when access is otherwise available for free? And, even where libraries *would* subscribe, or can commit to doing so in the short term, how might they justify the budget item to university administrators, particularly in the current climate of austerity and budget cuts? Examining possible means of incentivizing long-term support from subscribers was a central part of the discussion.

Some also noted that the model might limit innovation in scholarly publishing, in part through the administrative overhead required and the potential for the space to be dominated by "big deal" versions of the approach that cut across publishers.

Finally, there remains an open question about how the pricing of the model would evolve over time. Most formulations appear to be based on existing subscription spends, but some participants wonder if such a model might serve to perpetuate inequitable expenditures resulting from adversarial negotiations.

### **Prerequisites and Requirements**

Participants identified the most pressing requirement as the creation of supporter incentives capable of maintaining long-term commitments. Several different ideas were identified and discussed:

- The promise to "backflip" back to toll-access models if funding targets are missed. This was widely seen as both an essential tool and inherently problematic. Essential, because the threat could motivate subscribers in a manner similar to the toll-access system, and problematic because it would be hard and counterproductive to exercise.
- Lowered costs. Most agreed that a slightly lower cost for open access support relative to toll-access subscriptions (for example, a 5% price reduction) could at least motivate the initial flip, and might support a sustained flip, in tandem with the threat of backflipping and increasing the price accordingly.
- Governance. Many recognized that supporters of a cooperative model might reasonably request some measure of governance or input. While this idea was not explored in detail, some breakout participants were amenable to the idea as a reframing of the relationship between publishers and subscribers, and wished to know more about what the library community would see as motivating in this regard.

- Providing additional services or perks. This topic was not discussed in great detail but working group participants recognize that complementary services or materials beyond access could be provided to incentivize participation.

Nevertheless, breakout participants felt that even with a suite of incentives for supporters, some subscriber attrition can be expected. To counter the resulting revenue loss, participants identified several items that would help:

- The creation of safety nets. This could be done internally, through rainy-day funds or cross-subsidization, or externally, through support from interested funders.
- Pursuing additional revenue streams. This idea is more thoroughly discussed by another breakout group, but for the purposes of the cooperative model, the nonprofit members identified simply seeking donations from individual users as an important model they could adopt.
- Improve cost-effectiveness of publishing activities by leveraging open source alternatives to infrastructure and forgoing expenses involved in maintaining toll-access publications.

While some breakout participants *are* actively pursuing this model, for others, waiting to see demonstrated successes was important. Early successes could go a long way to demonstrate the model's effectiveness and test the many possible variants.

## Explored Model: Multiple Revenue Streams

### Model Overview

A breakout group considered an approach to funding open access journals with multiple, diverse revenue streams, in support of both the transition to open and ongoing publication costs. This model requires developing a mixed portfolio approach, drawing from a suite of possible funding sources. These include authors, libraries (individually or in consortia), institutions (e.g., research offices, departments, etc., individually or in consortia), foundations, research funding agencies (typically government), donors, societies/associations, corporations, governments, and the public (e.g. an “NPR model” or “Friends of the Press”). They can also include publisher-side contributions via cost-cutting or cross-subsidy from new revenue streams for related products. Ideally, such a funding model creates an equitable distribution of costs across research stakeholders, commensurate with their interests in the research outputs.

### Model Strengths

Diversified funding models are more sustainable over time and avoid over-reliance on any one stakeholder in a complex activity like scholarly communication. They can also be fairer and more equitable across multiple stakeholders. This model has the advantage of applying to every type of publisher, although the details would vary considerably across them. It can also be tested incrementally, starting with one journal, like the way that publishers are experimenting with APC-funded journals, to mitigate risk.

A successful example of this model in a closely related area is the arXiv at Cornell University. Over the years it has successfully built a funding model that includes a subsidy from its home institution, a robust library membership program, foundation support (long-term and for targeted projects), and public philanthropic support.

There are also many publishers that have some experience with this type of funding model already, for example, charging page fees or attracting advertising revenue, in addition to subscriptions. This gives

confidence that such models can be adopted by current publishers, although not without new effort and investments.

### **Model Weaknesses**

The options available to diversify funding sources will vary by publisher, and even by journal. Some publishers may have access to funding sources that won't work for others. For example, government subsidies may be available for important cultural heritage journals that sustain native languages but not for other journals from that publisher. Some publishers have found little interest from philanthropic foundations to support their journals, while others (e.g. some society publishers) have long-standing relationships with foundations or have a relationship with an institution that can raise significant philanthropic contributions. Yet other publishers may have the capacity to develop new products to cross-subsidize journal costs. Complexity and cost come along with the need to explore and evaluate many options before finding an optimal balance.

The model also requires that publishers invest in new infrastructure, personnel, and relationship management strategies to sustain the new funding sources over time. In particular, it assumes staff with the capacity and necessary skills to acquire and manage multiple sources of funding and to deliver diverse 'extras' that the variety of funders may require as incentives. So this model could be difficult to implement in the short term but with a better long-term payoff potential, if implemented successfully. Another risk with diversified funding is that stakeholders may believe that their funding will buy influence in the publisher or the journal's activities and priorities.

Finally, this model shares the risk with many other open access publishing models that the underlying publishing infrastructure itself requires sustaining, in addition to apparatus of publishing the journal. Open source technology requires a mix of technical, human, and financial resources to both implement and maintain.

### **Transition Considerations**

To develop a mixed portfolio of funding sources, a publisher would first identify its stakeholders and possible funding and revenue sources, for its entire portfolio or for each journal. Current stakeholders (e.g., subscribers) are an obvious starting point, then additional sources can be identified and layered in, to create a hypothetical funding "pie" (akin to a P&L analysis). The goal of the pie is to align funding requirements with multiple funding sources that achieve a balance of stakeholder interests to investment.

In addition to the arXiv example already mentioned, there are a few initiatives that are testing this model, for example, the Electrochemical Society's "Free the Science" (FTS) initiative for open science and platinum OA of its journals, combining collective action, low costs, new revenue, and fundraising – what they view as a high risk, high reward experiment.

To sustain the multiple funding sources once established, defined benefits will need to be developed for each funding source. For example, research funders and foundations might want impact data, while private supporters, might want feedback or reports specific to their interests. Managing those relationships over time will require infrastructure to document impact for each stakeholder/funder.

## **Explored Model: Read and Publish Agreements**

### **Model Overview**

The "Read and Publish" breakout group explored a variation on the well-established "gold open access" model. This approach relies on APCs as the core revenue stream for publishers going forward. Organizations such as research universities or consortia, or governments negotiate flat annual fees

with publishers, expected to be roughly aligned with current subscription expenditures. This fee covers subscription access to the journals for members of that organization, and makes all articles authored by affiliates of that organization available immediately as open access. As more subscribing organizations move to “read and publish” agreements, the expenditures that supported subscriptions to closed access journals become, in effect, APCs to support open access publications and the journal becomes fully open.

### **Model Strengths**

“Read and Publish” agreements are more than a theoretical construct. National negotiating bodies in the Netherlands,<sup>5</sup> Sweden,<sup>6</sup> and Austria,<sup>7</sup> among others, have advanced this model in Europe. In North America, MIT and the Royal Society of Chemistry announced a “Read and Publish” agreement in June, 2018.<sup>8</sup> The University of California’s Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee has recently stated that, “Payments for OA publication should reduce the cost of subscriptions at UC and elsewhere”.<sup>9</sup> The established momentum for this model can serve as the basis for further exploration of the model by a wider range of publishers and subscribers.

Breakout group participants identified several other structural advantages associated with “Read and Publish.” Both subscriptions and APC processing mechanisms are common part of the publishing infrastructure. This means that the operational burden to set up such agreements should be relatively modest for both publishers and customers. Revenues (from the publisher perspective) and expenditures (from the customer perspective) will be roughly aligned with current values, which makes forecasting a straightforward exercise. The model theoretically can be applied across a publisher’s entire portfolio or a subset, which may be an inducement for more risk-averse publishers to explore this transition option.

### **Model Weaknesses**

Over the course of the discussion, the breakout group identified several potential drawbacks to the “Read and Publish” approach. From an accounting standpoint, the deals mix retrospective components — how many articles an institution’s authors published in the deal’s journals last year — with subscription rates meant to cover current and future years. The variability in publishing output may make crediting mechanisms an imperfect calculation for any given subscription period. The “Read and Publish” model may also be more intensive for both parties to negotiate, as it requires a more detailed understanding of publishing outputs and multiyear trends than the current subscription model. For publishers that have eschewed the hybrid model on principle, implementing a read and publish scheme (which, by definition, will result in a mix of open and paywalled content) will require an adjustment in philosophy. Finally, this model may oversimplify value comparisons across publishers. Because publishers offer differing levels of service, price-per-article may vary widely. Nevertheless, by coupling subscription fee reductions directly with the number of articles published, the “Read and Publish” approach may reduce analysis to direct per-unit cost comparisons across publishers.

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<sup>5</sup><https://www.the-scientist.com/news-analysis/dutch-universities-journal-publishers-agree-on-open-access-deals-30860>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.springer.com/gp/about-springer/media/press-releases/corporate/swedish-researchers-to-benefit-from-innovative-open-access-agreement-with-springer/10347200>

<sup>7</sup><http://at2oa.at/home.html>

<sup>8</sup><http://www.rsc.org/news-events/articles/2018/jun/mit-read--publish-deal/>

<sup>9</sup><http://esac-initiative.org/offsetting-under-construction/>

## Transition Considerations

Successful execution of the “Read and Publish” model at scale will have the effect of incrementally transitioning publishers to open access. Breakout group participants indicated that this will require deliberation from all stakeholders. Publishers will need to provide a transparent narrative that articulates its publishing costs, as well as how surpluses will be used to fuel both sustainability and innovation. They must also move their relationship management tactics away from a sales orientation. Institutions that have formerly been customers will be more akin to partners in the “Read and Publish” model, with communication and data sharing adjusted to match this realignment.

Similarly, institutions and other current subscribing bodies must recognize that publishers are taking a risk in moving away from their traditional business models. They, too, must be transparent about their processes and expectations, to further trust among the parties. Because the large commercial publishers have traditionally been the most proactive with respect to subscription and offsetting big deals, institutions should tread carefully to ensure that their “Read and Publish” strategies do not squeeze out smaller presses. Finally, subscribing organizations should be aware of, but not overly obsessed with, APC rates. They must also thread the needle between pushing publishers for operating efficiencies and recognizing that publishing cost structures will not be uniform.

Both parties share an interest in administrative efficiencies. Accounting for credits in a “Read and Publish” system is rendered easier if, for example, publishers and institutions can clearly track author affiliations. The burden for developing these types of operational mechanisms would ideally be shared across stakeholders.

## Outcomes and Next Steps

### Projects and Pilots

The goal of *Move It Forward* is to encourage and assist publishers considering transitional open access problems to take the next steps and to pilot promising models. While the meeting helped clarify what would be needed for participants to conduct pilots, a theme that emerged from the various tracks was simply a need for improving the information flows that inform these kinds of efforts. Accordingly, beyond simply pilots that individual participants might advance, the breakouts also identified three areas where multi-stakeholder information gathering could serve to advance projects widely.

### **For the cooperative model: gauging library commitment, community updates and reporting from ongoing subscribe to open pilots**

Participants interested in the cooperative model identified two streams of information that would be relevant to building and maintaining transition projects.

First, the group voiced interest in finding opportunities to gauge library community interest and reaction to proposed supporter incentives. One possible way to support this need would be to facilitate a conversation at an existing gathering of the library community, perhaps at the upcoming *Pathways to Open Access* meeting exploring these kinds of questions at UC Berkeley this fall.

Next, participants voiced an interest in establishing a community of practice in the space, specifically by creating an outlet for publicly and transparently reporting on transition experiments and their progress. It appeared that participants were surprised to find the broad interest in the model among their peers and were encouraged to make public results and progress pilots currently in development.

### **For the multi-revenue model: a tool to gauge possible revenue streams**

Developing journal funding models involving multiple revenue streams will be complex, given the heterogeneity of funding sources available to a given publisher. Publishers need data to help them choose an optimal funding portfolio and define the funding targets necessary to flip journals. Few publishers have the capability to perform detailed market analyses for each potential revenue contributor.

A tool or system that allows publishers to explore different mixed funding portfolios, backed by reliable data, would allow publishers to begin to experiment with flipping their journals. The group envisions a “dashboard”, sortable by various factors such as scholarly discipline, funder/partner, geography, etc. An example for one data source that might be included is <https://maps.foundationcenter.org/> for applicable philanthropic foundations. The dashboard’s data sources should be updatable by contributing stakeholders.

A dashboard of possible funding options, with supporting data, would help publishers develop informed, realistic goals for diverse funding sources to pursue. The dashboard would be considered a success if a publisher can use it to successfully flip a journal in a short amount of time (e.g., 2 years). The group speculated that after one or two successful flips, the process would become easier and could be repeated periodically for every journal in the publisher’s portfolio.

Designing such a dashboard tool requires market research of current behavior by potential funding sources (perhaps a survey), and mapping example journals to potential data sources based on journal criteria, and on what similar journals that have already diversified their funding are doing to achieve and sustain that diversity. There are useful examples<sup>10</sup> of this process from large publishers who have successfully flipped journals with diversified funding, and how they made their decisions.

Ideally, the development of such a tool would be organized through the publishing community, for example, the Association of University Presses or the Society for Scholarly Publishing, and would have a software development partner from the community (e.g., ITHAKA, the Collaborative Knowledge Foundation, the Center for Open Science). It would have the support of key stakeholders and data suppliers (e.g., the Association of Research Libraries, the Association of American Universities, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, the Confederation of Open Access Repositories) and be viewed as a fair representation of the potential value of a journal to various stakeholders -- not a means to maximize publisher profit, but to support the research enterprise.

### **For the read and publish model: a survey of library community appetite for offsetting**

Participants in this breakout group believed the best way to evaluate its viability at scale is for collaborative analysis between publishers and institutions. This research project would encompass both quantitative and qualitative components to produce a greater understanding of whether the market can and would want to sustain “Read and Publish” as a core business model.

Breakout group participants suggested that libraries and publishers work together to gather the following data:

- Submission volumes by journal and institutional affiliation over 3-5 years
- Publication volumes by journal and institutional affiliation over 3-5 years
- Subscription expenditures by publisher and customer over 3-5 years
- Costs per journal and per article over 3-5 years

This data collection would be supplemented by interviews and surveys to better understand attitudes about a number of core issues, including perceptions of value for money among institutions and authors, and tolerance for per-article APC prices across publishers and journals.

Ideally, this information gathering would provide all parties with greater clarity as to when and how publishers can flip from their current models, first to partially offsetting-funded and partially subscription funded and eventually to full open access.

Successful execution of this pilot would depend on a few factors. Publishers and institutions would need to share data with one another that is traditionally closely held. They would need to ensure that this information could not be “weaponized” in the event that the “Read and Publish” model did not come to fruition. Data collection must be performed in a consistent and professional manner. Data analysis

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, <http://beyondthebookcast.com/transcripts/open-access-and-societies-case-studies-for-success/>.



must be perceived as objective by all parties. Findings must be shared publicly so that other publishers and institutions could apply the results to their own “Read and Publish” activities.

## Individual Commitments to Action

At the end of the meeting, publishers were asked to participate in a “think/pair/share” exercise. This is a collaborative technique that required attendees to think about how they might advance their organization's open access strategies and/or activities, pair up with the person next to them, share their thinking with their partners, and then, upon further discussion and reflection, to share it with the larger group. The intent of this exercise was not to lock in participants to detailed courses of action. Rather, think/pair/share was used to help attendees think about small but tangible ways they might apply what they learned at the workshop to their own organizations. A number of themes emerged from the exercise, broadly summarized as follows:

- **Internal Socialization.** Participants pledged to share what they learned and the models discussed with their colleagues. This included not only decision-makers, but others in the organization who could be called upon to facilitate any transitions (e.g., sales and administrative personnel).
- **Peer Socialization.** Many participants identify with specific publishing sub-groups, such as university presses and learned societies. There was a good deal of enthusiasm for discussing this meeting with publishers perceived to be “peers”, presumably to surface advantages and disadvantages unique to that demographic.
- **Stakeholder Engagement.** Scholarly publishing includes a range of actors beyond publishers and libraries, including funders, agencies, university administration, and individual researchers. A number of workshop participants committed to speaking with some or all of these constituents to get their feedback on one or more of the models discussed. This included, but was not limited to, exploring how discipline-specific consideration may impact stakeholder perspectives.
- **Financial Assessment.** Several participants expressed interest in exploring how their current revenue might map to one or more of the models explored at the workshop. This includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of income by customer type and geographic location.
- **Case Studies.** The “Read and Publish” model has a growing body of data behind it. Some attendees pledged to explore how these deals have fared, either by poring over publicly available data or by speaking with their colleagues at publishers who have experimented with “Read and Publish”. Similarly, projects like Open Library of Humanities and Knowledge Unlatched are sufficiently similar to the “Subscribe to Open” model that they warrant further investigation.
- **Relationship Reorientation.** Mistrust between libraries and publishers has grown over time. Several publishers attending the workshop indicated that this can be reversed on the basis of a shared desire to arrive at a sustainable open access environment. They pledged to engage with librarians with this common end point in mind, and to be transparent about the hurdles they have identified regarding the transition.

## Conclusion

*Move It Forward* participants demonstrated a thoughtful and substantial appetite for moving their subscription titles to open access models, but, for many, the path ahead remains unclear. Large-scale open access reform of the scholarly communications ecosystem depends on charting workable, replicable pathways for the toll-access literature to convert to open access models, and this work is still in its early stages.

Promisingly, some attendees are committed to taking action, and are already making progress in their chosen pathways. Successful execution of open access transitions will create invaluable precedents for learning from and replicating these processes, especially if shared with other publishers. Likewise, the need for transparent sharing of experiences and — for some models — substantial commitments from the Library community means that publishers will need opportunities to critique, explore, and build consensus around transition plans together with librarians. That the library-publisher relationship may need a shift toward a different type of financial partnership was a common theme of the event: finding opportunities to build this collaboration will be an emphasis going forward for participants and organizers, perhaps as an adjunct to slated gatherings like the Charleston Conference or the UC *Pathways* meeting scheduled later this year in Berkeley.

We know from *Pay It Forward* that the financial resources to sustain an open publishing system exist within the academy. And we know from *Move It Forward* that there is substantial interest, creative thinking, and active planning in parts of the publishing community to help bring it into being. Bridging the gaps and building the coalitions across publishers and with libraries for the next steps will take a much wider community, but the goal is closer than ever.

## Appendix 1: Agendas

### Thursday, June 21

- 2:15 – 2:45 pm: Registration
- 2:45 – 3:00 pm: Welcome and Introductions
- 3:00 – 3:15 pm: Goals and ground rules
- 3:15 – 5:30 pm: Participant lightning talks
  - 3 slides each (template provided)
  - 7 minutes to present
- 6:00 – 8:00 pm: Dinner in Downtown Oakland

### Friday, June 22

#### Morning: Envisioning open access models and exploration of obstacles to implementation

- 8:15 – 8:30 am: Recap and introduction to the day
- 8:30 – 9:15 am: Group discussion of attainable models
  - Goal: Surface 2–4 promising, realistic models for long-term open access operations and relevant transitional methods
- 9:15 – 9:30 am: Break
- 9:30 – 11:00 am: Exploring selected models and related approaches to the transition (breakouts)
  - Goal: begin templates for possible transition pilots and answer key questions—
    - Is this approach limited to certain kinds of publishers/titles? Which ones? Why?
    - How does the ideal outcome inform the transition process?
    - Where, if anywhere, has this been achieved? What did the transition look like?
    - For proposed models, what are the perceived roadblocks? Who is positioned to resolve them?
- 11:00 – 11:15 am: Break
- 11:15 – 12:00 pm: Breakout reports and exploration of common themes
- Catered Lunch
- 12:00 – 1:00: Informal Q&A with library community panel

#### Afternoon: Operationalizing the transition: meeting prerequisites and motivating stakeholders

- 1:00 – 1:15 pm: Recap
- 1:15 – 2:00 pm: Pilot projects and tipping points (breakouts)
  - Refine morning proposals to complete pilot project templates
  - Goal: complete transition pilot project templates, answering:
    - How can discussed models be operationalized?
    - When are coalitions needed? What do they look like?
    - What would make for a good pilot or test case?
- 2:00 – 2:15 pm: Breakout reports
- 2:15 – 2:30 pm: Break
- 2:30 – 4:00 pm: Moving It Forward
  - Identify concrete steps that could be taken for each proposed pilot project
  - Commitments to action: what will we do to move a pilot forward?
    - “Think, pair, share” exercise for collective action:
      - How can we collectively take the next steps?
      - When and how do we build the necessary coalitions?
    - What will you do when you get back to your office next week?

## Appendix 2: Application questions

\* Required

1. Publisher Name \*

2. Publisher URL \*

3. Point of Contact First Name \*

4. Point of Contact Last Name \*

5. Point of Contact Email Address \*

6. Number of Journals You Currently Publish \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Fewer than 5
- 5-10
- 11-25
- 26-100
- More than 100

7. What percentage of your journals are fully open access (all articles free to read immediately upon publication, with generous reuse rights)? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- 0% Skip to question 11.
- 1% to 10% Skip to question 8.
- 10-25% Skip to question 8.
- 26-50% Skip to question 8.
- 51%-99% Skip to question 8.
- 100% Skip to question 8.

8. Please describe all of your current business model(s) for the open access journal(s) you publish. \*

9. Within your open access journal portfolio, what approximate percentage of the titles were originally subscription-based (as opposed to launched as open access titles)? \*

10. If you have transitioned any titles from subscription-based to open access, please describe how that process unfolded and what you learned from it.

11. Please describe any internal or external activities you have pursued to explore transitioning some or all of your journals to open access. \*

12. What feedback on these activities have you received from both those within your organization and from your community of authors, editors, and readers?

13. If you have published or presented any of your findings about your open access activities, please provide links to these materials here.

14. What would you hope to gain by participating in this workshop? \*

15. Please describe any transitional models you specifically wish to explore further at the workshop, including any perceived obstacles, roadblocks, or prerequisites. \*

16. Is there anything else you would like the workshop organizers to know that has not been addressed by the above questions?

17. Will you need financial assistance to attend this workshop? Note that this is for planning purposes only, and no applicant will be denied solely on the basis of financial need.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe