Publishing in the Open Access Age

Breakout Discussions

Groups should identify and address the challenges and opportunities of five different international OA scenarios;

Scenario 1: Uptake of OA reaches 30% via existing hybrid journals.

- Double dipping and position of libraries
- Soft statement not tenable
- 30% won't be uniform by title/ content type – will get there in jumps.
- Risk of submissions attrition
- Opportunity to diversity – retain some publications an d expand others
- Mash together info – added value.
- Historic content – archiving – who could support that in the long term?
- Journals still exist and are still valued.

Scenario 2: Gold OA is the standard publishing model.

Challenges:
- Less money in the system.
- Pressure to publish more, quality control must keep up.
- Less income for Learned Societies that are reliant on publishing income, leading to compromised activities.
- Reduced opportunity to publish for:
  - developing countries,
  - independent researchers, and
  - researchers with small grants.

Opportunities:
- Need to develop new products.
- Journals become more creative/ have better communication at the Editorial level.
- More opportunity for collaboration, to drive down costs.
- Creativity and diversification to find new sources of income.
- Closer connections with our customers; the researchers.
- Role for learned Societies to challenge the Impact Factor as the sole measure of value.
- Opportunity to make sciences more broadly accessible. e.g. including lay summaries.

Scenario 3: Green OA is mandated with a short embargo period by funders and institutions. All authors immediately deposit their papers.

The group discussed how this is an unlikely scenario, but that authors would self-archive if it was genuinely necessary. However if institutions and funders are mandating, publishers would have to be helpful and allow auto-archiving.

There would also be significant downward pressure on price of journals, resulting in a few journals charging low prices. The group noted that Learned Societies aren't just publishers, and should aim to make money to support scientific community through other ways - grants, meeting etc.

Challenges:
- There is likely to be a proliferation of different versions of articles.
- Libraries may cease to subscribe.
- Likely to be inertia in system.
- Publishing currently brings economic benefit to the UK - could lose out.

Opportunities:
- Articles would need to be indexed correctly in repositories and be appropriately tagged so that they are findable. There are opportunities for publishers in running a very useable repository.
- The value of tagging and metadata within articles would increase and could be a chargeable service, as voluntarily generated metadata will be of low quality.
- Subscriptions could also be protected by providing value-added HTML version, vs PDFs in repositories.
- Quick, good access would benefit researchers in developing countries.

Scenario 4: A small number of digital 'mega-journals' are dominant, supplanting niche journals.

Opportunities for researchers:
- The dominance of mega journals means they will be broad and large, Impact Factor will be less important; rather article level metrics will be a measure of value.
- Opportunity to encourage interdisciplinary research and wider dissemination of research.

Challenges for researchers:
- Fewer opportunities for publishing research. This could be a challenge if a paper is rejected and there are fewer alternatives.
- Journals are too broad, and it's harder to find relevant content (however this is not a problem with PLOS One)
- Less competition may lead to higher costs
- The need to fight for a restricted pot of funding for OA charges will disadvantage certain disciplines and junior researchers.
- Loss of opportunity for junior researchers to work their way up the publication ladder from lower impact factors to higher ones.
- Opportunity for start-up of "homemade" journals where researchers can self-publish. However, this could lead to lots of "noise" of non-peer reviewed papers.

Opportunities for societies:
- Create opportunities to focus on other roles of Learned Societies, e.g. accreditation, organising meetings etc.
- Developing discoverability tools.
- Stay close to the needs of Society's members.
- Societies could collaborate to publish a mega-journal.

- Repurposing / synthesis of content from OA mega journals for the Societies community, i.e. publish digest versions of publications that focus on their specialist area of knowledge/expertise and highlight the most interesting/relevant publications.

Challenges for societies:
- Mega-journals outcompete Society journals, losing major source of funding and a significant member benefit. They will need to address this and find new methods to engage with the community and attract new members.
- Will Learned Societies survive and what role will they play? They need to be proactive, fleet footed and technologically savvy in this area or someone else will do it first.

Scenario 5: New models of research dissemination; repositories become the new 'journal'

Repositories preserve and categorise data, but they should also assign a measure of quality. Learned societies are well placed to do that; they can provide a quality of grading, and subject specific curation. Repositories must have advanced search-ability to be useful, and there may be cost involved in this, and if there is a need for multiple repositories. The impact of less publishing income will affect learned society publishers, but umbrella organisations have a role here to support societies that suffer more.