Open Access: the tipping point for universities?

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Overview

• The challenge
• Unpacking that challenge
• Diffusion of innovations → tipping point
• The response
The challenge to all universities

- How to comply with the RCUK’s directive from 1 April 2013 all RCUK funded research must be published in an OA compliant journal - now we need to be compliant by 1 April 2018
- For REF2020 HEFCE will apply similar definitions and criteria for compliance as RCUK – consultation ongoing
- RCUK have also said that research data is also to be made publicly available in future, raising other issues of storage, metadata, access, copyright, etc.
Unpacking the challenge

- Green or Gold Access?

- Gold OA means that a fee or article processing charge (APC) is normally paid for publication and the article is then available to users immediately and free of charge.

- Green OA means work is deposited in a repository with no direct cost. Repositories (including e-space) nevertheless often hold pre-print or post-print articles.

- With green OA there may be a temporary embargo period of, e.g. up to 12 months, when an article is being published in a non-OA journal in parallel.
Unpacking the challenge

- Who pays?
- The Finch report acknowledges that

‘there will be additional costs during a period of transition which may last for several years. The best estimate....would require an additional £50m-£60m a year in expenditure from the HE sector: £38m on publishing in open access journals; £10m on extensions to licences for the HE and health sectors and £3m-£5m on repositories, plus one-off transition costs of £5m.’
Unpacking the challenge

• How can we be fair and transparent to colleagues and ensure that access to publication is distributed equally, in an era of financial stringency?

• If resources are limited, on what basis do we decide if someone should be able to publish in a Gold OA publication?

• How do we ensure that academic freedom to publish is maintained in such circumstances?

• Choice of publication outlet, if restricted, might be career limiting for an academic

• Positive correlation between citations and open access is well documented

• Empowering academics to take ownership of their publications
Encouraging transition to OA

- Diffusion of innovations
- Tipping Point
- 5 key factors
Diffusion of innovations

Based on Everett Rogers

5 key factors – 1. the innovation itself

• **Is it better?** We think OA is better, but does everyone else agree?

• **Is it easy to understand?** Not as easy as it might be. We need to explain benefits and how it works.

• **Is it easy to try out?** Not as easy as it might be. Unfriendly interfaces. Lack of join-up. Anxieties about IP.

• **Is it easily available?** Green is. Gold may not be available to everyone due to funding restrictions.

• **If one person tries it, and assuming it works, will other people notice?** Yes, but it might take a bit of time to see positive impact on citations and career.
5 key factors – 2. the decision-making process

• Does it take a long time to decide whether to adopt the innovation or not?
• SmartPhones were adopted relatively quickly because people replace phones every year or two.
• Lead-in time for research publications can be several years – does an ‘author-final’ copy still exist? Is it worth paying APCs retrospectively?
5 key factors – 3. what are the communication channels within the community?

- How do ideas, information and inspiration pass through the community?
- Do researchers share ideas about how best to publish and share their research?
- Hyper-connected world of mobile internet and social media – but how do ideas penetrate through the noise?
5 key factors – 4. how innovative is the culture?

- How open are people to change?
- Do people just spend time with the same people who hold the same views that they do?
- How much interaction do people have with people from different cultures with different ideas?
- Are people willing to change their habits and their workflows?
5 key factors – 5. are there any ‘change agents’ involved?

- Are there any powerful people or organizations which might actively try to diffuse the innovation?
- Yes there are funders (RCUK, Wellcome) and government BIS
- ‘Change agents’ within research communities and HEIs could be even more powerful
Some things that seemed to work at Loughborough University

• VC, PVC(R), Associate Deans (R) and other senior academic leaders talking about why OA is high priority
• Academic involvement in OA Policy and implementation
• Discussing OA pre- and post-award and as part of Personal Research Planning
• Advocacy by the Library
• Leveraging the competitive spirit
  – “Civil Engineering has more papers on the IR than your department”
  – Top 10 downloaded items on the IR
• Now more than 13,700 items (mostly full text) on IR
MMU - Responding to the challenge

• Green Access and leveraging our repository
  – Implications for academics, resourcing our repository, enabling academics
• Setting up and managing an APC fund
  – Mechanisms for managing such a fund fairly
Green Access

• Preferred route
• More cost efficient
• Academics self archive pre-publication version in institutional repository
Setting up an APC fund

• Some issues here
• Library needs to administer because they manage subscriptions
• Preventing academics picking up on ‘offers’ of one time gold access fees by publishers, when in fact we may already have a) subscription b) collective ability to negotiate a better deal
• Huge disparity of funding - in year 1 £1,151,812 for Cambridge (covering APCs for an estimated 695 papers via Gold route) to Manchester Met received £11442 (covering APCs for an estimated seven papers via Gold route).
What are the benefits to academics of OA?

- Varies from discipline to discipline (e.g. ArXiv in high energy physics to physical artifacts in Art and Design, to published monographs in the humanities (UCL university press to make OA monographs))
- Importance of a digital profile to the academic and the fact that impact is served well by OA
- Role of other outlets eg ResearchGate & Academia.edu
- What role will citations play in any future REF?
- Will ‘Green OA’ institutions disadvantage their academics and reify the divide between research and teaching institutions?
Costs

- Clearly, the costs of APCs have to be met out of QR (our research output approx 300 per year)
- Other costs of OA; in making our REF 2014 outputs open access, we have librarian costs, cost of an API to link Symplectic with the repository, web costs, and staff training/education costs
- Monitoring equal opportunity of access to APCs is potentially another cost
- Intangible costs? Lost opportunities in the form of citations in top journals?
Implementing OA at MMU

- OA policy – Green with exceptions
- Take up by academics
- Altmetrics
- Self archiving
- Guidance on publication
- Avoiding predatory publishers
- Selling the benefits
- Critical role of the library