



IN DEFENSE OF THE BOOK PROCESSING CHARGE

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FIESOLE RETREAT 2023
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Abstract

The book processing charge is often commented upon as "so expensive" compared to the article processing charge. This presentation argues that comparing BPCs to APCs is problematic as it is based on a mistaken equivalency. Our understanding of the economics of scholarly publishing support would be better served by analyzing expenditure per scholar rather than expenditure per publication. This could also mitigate hegemony of STM open access financial models and further the development of funding models more suited to the humanities and other monograph-oriented fields of study.

An APC is a payment made to a publisher to make an article free at point of access.

A BPC is a payment made to a publisher to make a book free at the point of access.

A Few Observations about APCs/BPCs



FREE ACCESS TO AT
LEAST ONE DIGITAL
FORMAT



FREE TO READ



MAY ALSO SECURE
ADDITIONAL RE-USE
RIGHTS FOR READERS



POSSIBLY BUNDLED
WITH AUTHOR
RETENTION OF
COPYRIGHT

What's the Price to Publish?



No comprehensive dataset or analysis

Studies typically do not account for waivers, discounts, transformative agreements, etc.

Plan S price transparency data is not publicly available

APC Fees in Gold OA Journals

Key Facts, Overall

| | Journals | Articles | Art% | \$/Art |
|--------|----------|-----------|------|---------|
| All | 16,620 | 1,275,212 | | \$1,374 |
| Fee | 5,347 | 877,725 | 69% | \$1,997 |
| No-fee | 11,273 | 397,487 | 31% | |
| Biomed | 4,012 | 489,543 | 38% | \$1,784 |
| Fee | 2,151 | 388,039 | 79% | \$2,251 |
| No-fee | 1,861 | 101,504 | 21% | |
| STEM | 4,324 | 521,488 | 41% | \$1,576 |
| Fee | 1,909 | 415,510 | 80% | \$1,978 |
| No-fee | 2,415 | 105,978 | 20% | |
| H&SS | 8,284 | 264,181 | 21% | \$217 |
| Fee | 1,287 | 74,176 | 28% | \$773 |
| No-fee | 6,997 | 190,005 | 72% | |

\$/art is a weighted figure based on multiplying each journal's article count by its fee, ignoring discounts and waivers.

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APC Fees in Gold OA Journals

The Big Eleven publish 17% of the serious OA journals and 55% of 2021 articles in those journals—and account for 89% of potential revenue.

The Big Eleven

| Name | Articles | Revenue | \$/art |
|------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
| MDPI | 234,029 | \$540,834,870 | \$2,310.97 |
| Holtzbrinck | 195,759 | \$502,737,264 | \$2,568.14 |
| Elsevier | 89,011 | \$144,176,092 | \$1,619.76 |
| Wiley | 62,713 | \$140,347,401 | \$2,237.93 |
| PLOS | 23,318 | \$46,275,626 | \$1,984.55 |
| Wolters Kluwer | 23,233 | \$18,288,884 | \$787.19 |
| Taylor & Francis | 22,758 | \$50,536,111 | \$2,220.59 |
| Oxford | 17,857 | \$44,874,217 | \$2,512.98 |
| IEEE | 15,168 | \$25,696,450 | \$1,694.12 |
| SAGE | 14,025 | \$24,476,650 | \$1,745.22 |
| BMJ | 7,851 | \$23,231,625 | \$2,959.07 |
| TOTAL | 705,722 | \$1,561,475,190 | \$2,212.59 |

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Key Facts, Big Eleven

| | Journals | Articles | Art% | Rel% | \$/Art | Rel% |
|--------|----------|----------|------|------|---------|------|
| All | 2,906 | 705,722 | | | \$2,213 | 61% |
| Fee | 2,384 | 666,958 | 95% | 37% | \$2,341 | 17% |
| No-fee | 522 | 38,764 | 5% | -82% | | |
| Biomed | 1,668 | 333,699 | 47% | 23% | \$2,328 | 30% |
| Fee | 1,358 | 311,469 | 93% | 18% | \$2,494 | 11% |
| No-fee | 310 | 22,230 | 7% | -68% | | |
| STEM | 990 | 343,614 | 49% | 19% | \$2,150 | 36% |
| Fee | 856 | 330,556 | 96% | 21% | \$2,235 | 13% |
| No-fee | 134 | 13,058 | 4% | -81% | | |
| H&SS | 248 | 28,409 | 4% | -81% | \$1,608 | 641% |
| Fee | 170 | 24,933 | 88% | 213% | \$1,833 | 137% |
| No-fee | 78 | 3,476 | 12% | -83% | | |

Potential revenue: \$1,561,475,190. (Rel%: compared to all journals.)

OPENAPC

€428.099
Nature Communications

€235.851
Scientific Reports

€124.965
PLOS ONE

€95.877
BMJ Open

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|----------|------------------------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 035.338 | 037.812 | 038.518 | 039.363 | 039.327 | 021.074 | 018.009 | 016.195 | 016.128 | 016.048 | 016.031 | 014.779 | 014.898 | 014.642 | 014.388 | 014.305 | 014.082 | 014.216 | 014.167 | 014.028 | 013.944 | 013.863 | 013.878 | 013.814 | 013.505 | 013.287 |
| Journal of Computational Physics | Nature Asia Research | Analytical Research Letters | Advanced Functional Materials | Chem | Stratigraphy | Frontiers in Microbiology | BMJ Evidence | BMJ Open | Cell Death and Disease | Acta | Microchimica Acta | Journal of Materials | Frontiers in Chemistry | Cell | BMJ | Nature | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Cell | Advanced Materials | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports |
| 035.338 | 037.812 | 038.518 | 039.363 | 039.327 | 021.074 | 018.009 | 016.195 | 016.128 | 016.048 | 016.031 | 014.779 | 014.898 | 014.642 | 014.388 | 014.305 | 014.082 | 014.216 | 014.167 | 014.028 | 013.944 | 013.863 | 013.878 | 013.814 | 013.505 | 013.287 |
| Journal of Computational Physics | Nature Asia Research | Analytical Research Letters | Advanced Functional Materials | Chem | Stratigraphy | Frontiers in Microbiology | BMJ Evidence | BMJ Open | Cell Death and Disease | Acta | Microchimica Acta | Journal of Materials | Frontiers in Chemistry | Cell | BMJ | Nature | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Cell | Advanced Materials | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports | Scientific Reports |

| Measure: | Sum | Number of Articles | Mean Value | Standard Deviation | Download as: | CSV | JSON |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|-----|-------------|
| Imperial College London // Journals (1040 entries*) | | | | | | | |
| Nature Communications | €428.099 | 96 | €4.459 | €336 | | | 5.60% |
| Scientific Reports | €235.851 | 159 | €1.483 | €130 | | | 3.09% |
| PLOS ONE | €124.965 | 93 | €1.344 | €178 | | | 1.63% |
| BMJ Open | €95.877 | 69 | €1.390 | €212 | | | 1.25% |
| + view small values | | | | | | | |
| Total | €7.643.943 | 3124 | €2.447 | €1.073 | | | 100% |

APC Spend

Spend per Publisher

Overall Mean:
€1931

Example:

Imperial College
London
Mean: €2447

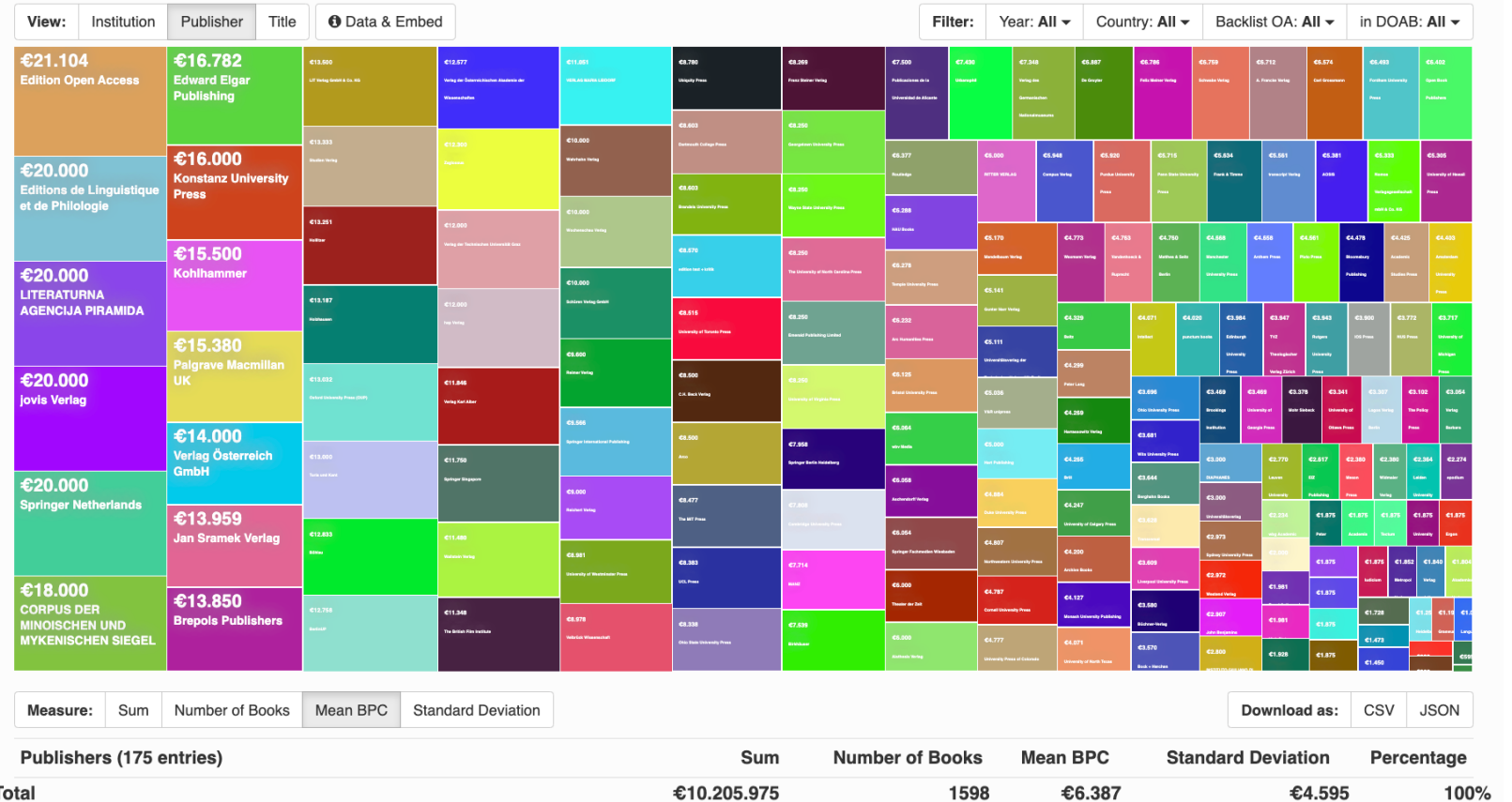
BPC Examples

- Cambridge University Press: “Monograph of up to 120,000 words and up to 85 figures is £9,500 (excluding any applicable VAT or local sales tax) and £55 per additional thousand words”
- University of Illinois Press - \$7,500
- Springer Nature – Monographs and edited collections (up to 400 pages): €13,000/\$15,000/£11,000
- Brill – Monograph or Edited Volume (*For average-size projects up to 250 pages and 100,000 words): €10,000/\$12,200
- Ubiquity Press – Individually priced. Examples given: £3,835-£10,100

BPC Spend

Overall Mean: €6387

OA MONOGRAPH CHARGES (BPCS)



“BPCs are so expensive!”

Yes. And, the considerations are complex.

Considerations – Both Costs and Revenue:

- Author Royalties

- Reviewer Honoraria

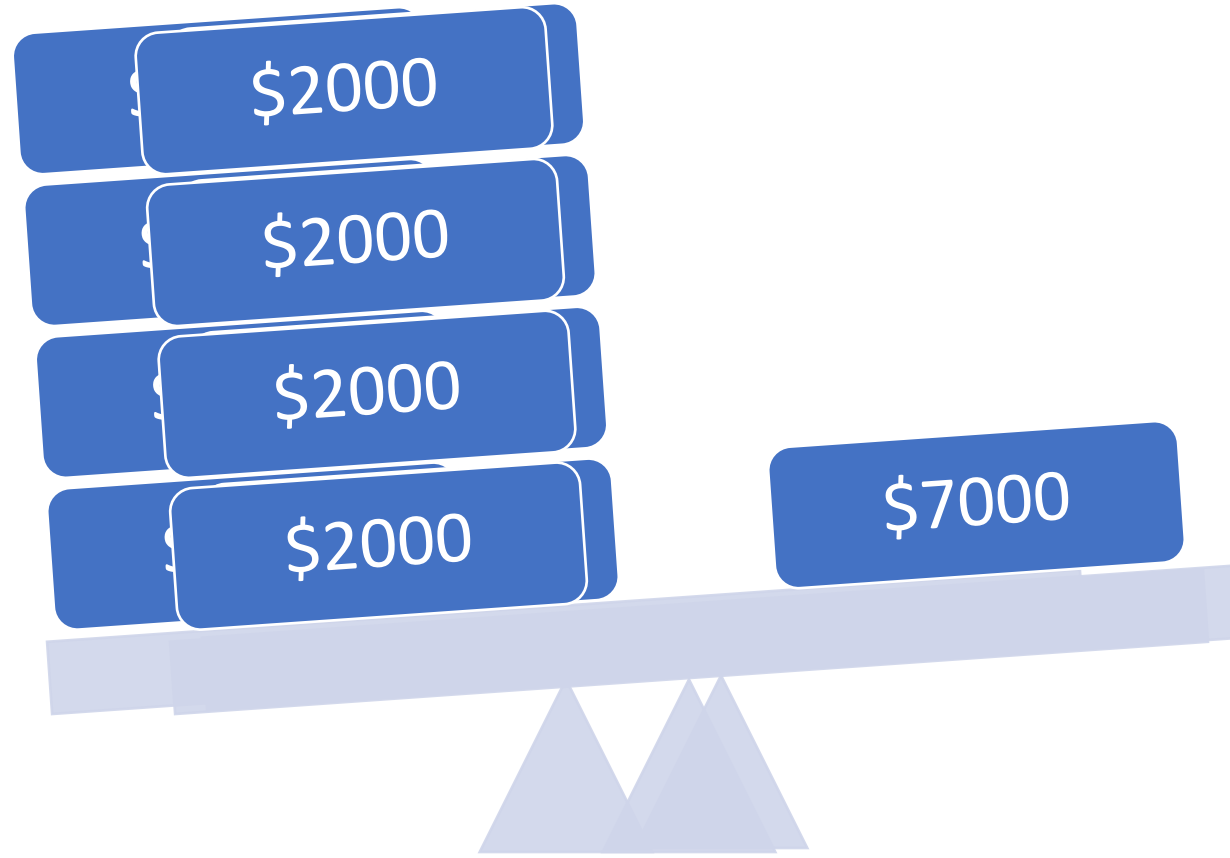
- Print Sales

- Digital Sales

What if we re-frame this as
investment in a scholar
rather than in a publication?

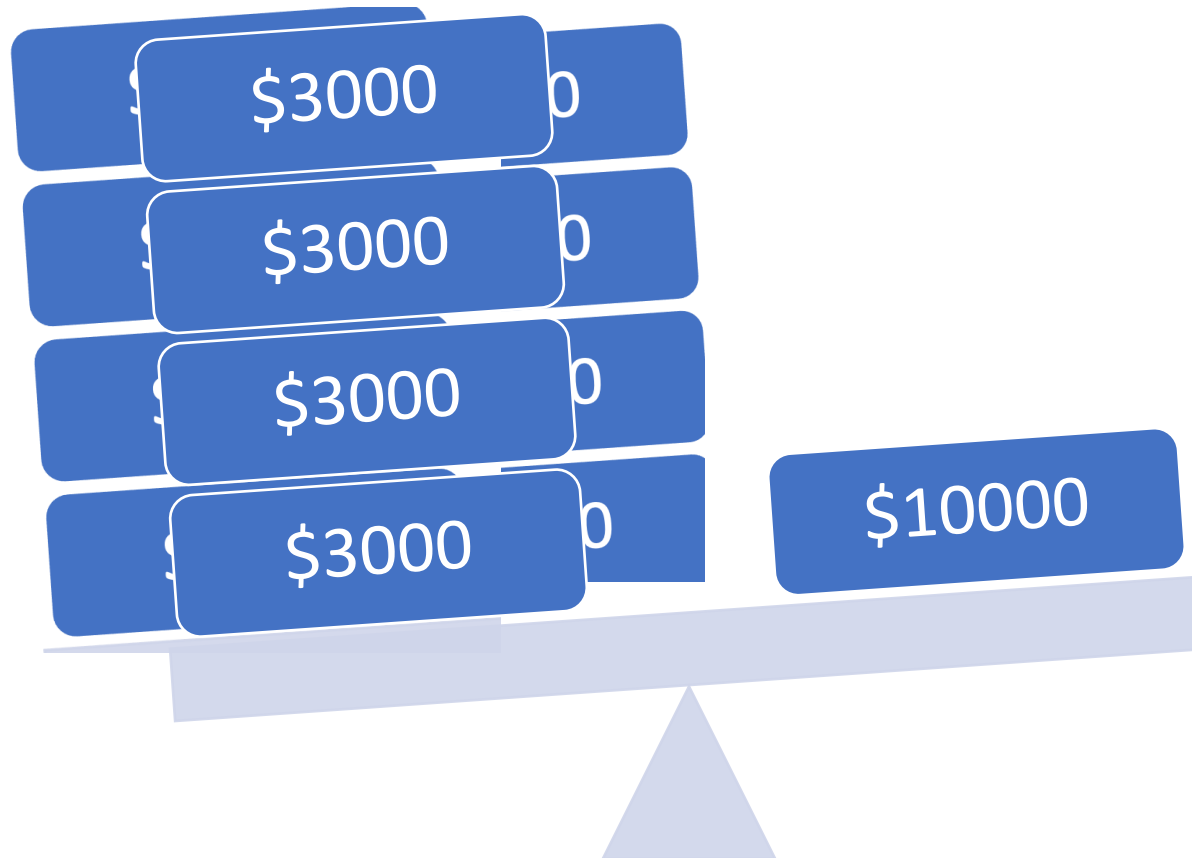
Multiple APCs
per year

One BPC every
few years



Multiple APCs
per year

One BPC every
few years



Tale of Two Faculty Promoted to Associate

Chris

- 1 book
- 4 articles

$$(4*2000) + (1*7000) = \$15,000$$

Riley

- 44 articles

$$44*2000 = \$88,000$$

Caveats and Questions

I'm setting aside all other questions related to paying to publish.

- Does paying to publish incentivize quantity over quality?
- Are scholars interested in open access publishing?
- What about other models of funding open monographs?

It is overly simplified to set this up as STEM vs. H&SS.

Example does not account for co-authorship/corresponding author status.

Which campus unit is best positioned to manage BPC open access funding?

What is the appetite for institutional investment in fields with no or limited grant revenue ROI?



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