

Research outputs: library involvement in institutional approaches to implementing funder requirements – Discussion Session.

Stephen Pinfield opened the discussion by restating the questions from his presentation:

- Can Wellcome Trust institutional funds be used for general BMC (or other OA publisher) pre-payment?
- Who should manage Wellcome funds in the institution?
- Should more clarity be sought from RCUK on the role of FEC?
- How can awareness-raising about these policies be enhanced in institutions? Any examples of good practice?
- Should institutions set up central funds to cover OA fees? If so who should they be for? How should they be advertised? Who administers them?
- What policies can institutions adopt to make the procedures for researchers as easy as possible?

Q. Can Wellcome institutional funds be used for general BMC (or other OA publisher) pre-payment?

Answer from the Wellcome Trust - In short the answer to this question is yes. Institutions will be able to use Wellcome money to pay for having articles placed in PloS or BMC as long as the institution is able to demonstrate value for money. In other words, as long as it can be shown that pre-payment would cost less than paying article by article for the Wellcome material to be included, then it will be possible.

Other information about the Wellcome funds:

- UKPMC will go live on 07 January 2007. Andy Harris has been appointed to the post of UKPMC Project Manager.
- The British Library has now appointed to the post of UKPMC Engagement Manager. This position will be operational from early December, so it is hoped that the advocacy work will be underway by the time the service goes live.
- If a grant holder is not amongst the top 30 institutions, then the grantee should simply contact the Trust requesting that their grant be supplemented. Details available at: http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/doc_WTD018855.html.
- Contingency money is available within the grant scheme
- For the next year or so the block grant will be the method used to disperse funds but this will be reviewed to see whether it might be possible to front-load each grant application (however the response from the floor was that it would be good to retain the current system that keeps the money within the institution for cost effectiveness and to be able to exert leverage).

Q. Who should manage Wellcome funds in the institution?

Several institutions reported their experiences:

Currently 50% of institutions with grant funding who responded to the email query manage the money through their library - is this the right approach in the long-term?

Newcastle

The Research Office received the Wellcome money but passed it over when it realised that the library understood the context and was willing to take it on; the library is now managing the money on the behalf of the Research Office.

Imperial

The situation was similar to Newcastle's, in that the Research Office had been given the money originally. The question for the institution was: could the library be the holder of a research grant? This was eventually formally recognised. In the long-term it's too early to say whether it should sit with libraries or not; however, if the system was one involving a quasi-subscription to a publisher it might make sense to do it this way.

Regarding use of the funds, how many calls have been made on the monies at different institutions?

Bristol: 12 articles published
UCL: 20
Birmingham: 15 (last academic year)
20 (this academic year so far)
Nottingham: 1 (suggesting the availability of the money is not being widely publicised)

Does any of the foregoing indicate that the library is in fact the best long-term manager of these funds?

Cambridge

No. The situation at Cambridge is that bio-medical researchers are putting pressure on the library. It is being argued that since the library will be making savings on its journal subscriptions, money should go from the library to the bio-medical department. If the library were to continue to administer the Wellcome money this pressure would only increase; therefore, it would not be in the library's interest to do so.

Cardiff

In a similar situation to Cambridge. Most of our researchers wanting to publish in BioMed Central or in other OA journals are not funded by the Wellcome, so they have been advised by our Research Support Division to take the costs of author-pays publishing out of FEC. If the Library took on the administration of the Wellcome funding, it could be assumed that we would pay for other open access publishing for which there is no grant income, and for which at the moment we have no budget (unless or until it could be set against the journals budget).

Birmingham

The university has said that it will not make a separate funding stream available to support the author pays model - it will be left to the individual academic to decide and arrange for this money to become available for their research outputs.

Southampton

The question that many are asking is that now we have an institutional repository, why do we need to pay for access?

What would the cost be of supporting the author-pays publication of articles?

Nottingham

If every paper published at Nottingham was to be done through author pays, the cost would be comparable with the cost of our current journal subscriptions. It's clear that the more research-intensive an institution is and the more it publishes the higher the cost the author-pays system will be. For the larger institutions this will outweigh the cost of traditional subscriptions. The majority of institutions, with lower publication rates, will benefit from the author-pays model as they will have access without the need to pay subscriptions.

Imperial

This would be around the same cost as, or even slightly higher than, the journal subscription for Imperial.

CERN are now supporting Open Access publishing as well as Institutional Repository deposition. The strongest academic supporters of repositories have come from within the Physics community, yet these academics have also been the most strong in their support of Open Access journals. The reason? One can obtain better value for money in preserving high quality Open Access journals than through the ordinary subscription model. The basic question for all academics is: "Do you want the quality of journals to be maintained and what are you prepared to pay for such maintenance?".

The market for Open Access journals is yet immature, costs will go down and the variety of options will increase over time as competition for offering such solutions grows. Any costing model needs to take into account that we are in the early stages of an OA publishing market.

Wellcome Trust grantees can also deposit research papers in IR's – but the mandated requirement is for deposition in PMC. Indeed, Wellcome's preferred option is for the publisher to deposit the final version of the article in PMC (where it will then be mirrored to UKPMC), thus ensuring that the final, copy-edited version is freely available to all.

Irrespective of whether a publisher deposits a paper, or the author self-archives it in PMC, all submissions are converted to XML, using the NLM Journal Archiving DTD. The Trust believes that this provides the best way to hold, preserve and curate this data.

PMC and UKPMC both support OAI-PMH, so it should be possible for IR's to harvest data from these repositories and add them to local IR's. Once UKPMC is live this is something the Trust is keen to explore. The cost of UKPMC will be £3m over 5 years.

It was noted that the joint CURL-SCONUL Scholarly Communications Group could collate the responses made to librarians by research committees on the question of payment of OA publication charges.

An outstanding question for the community is identifying exactly what monies are being currently used to pay for Open Access publication. It is known that other funds than the Wellcome money are being used for this, but we do not know precisely which these are and how they are being used.

It was highlighted that the JISC licensing model has been changed recently in order to notify publishers that once Open Access publishing takes off, they will have to start paying subscription money back to institutions. This could mean that libraries may be in a dangerous position: they will be at the centre of efforts to promote Open Access and will be paying for journals subscriptions out of their own budgets, but at the same time will not be the direct recipient, if at all, of compensatory monies.

Institutions will require very strong arguments to be persuaded to use FECs for OA funds – they have other priorities. We need to be able to make the case in language that will be understood by the institution in its decision-making processes when it is in deficit, for example.

However, the cost of publication only amounts to about 1-2% of the total cost of supporting research: this is really only part of the 'noise' of this aspect of institutional investment, especially where we can stress the moves towards making dissemination of research an intrinsic part of the total research process.

Institutions should be persuaded to build publication costs into their research costs, where these are charged out. FEC is about costs. If an institution creates a publication fund which it uses to support dissemination of research this is no different from the way it currently projects and handles journal subscription costs: there is only a cultural and political difference.

Q. Should more clarity be sought from RCUK on the role of FEC?

After consultation with Astrid Wissenberg of the RCUK, it has been agreed that Michael Jubb of the RIN will be producing a draft document of general guidelines on open access publishing.

However, the cost of making the transition from the current subscription basis for journals to the Open Access also needs to be taken into account.

Q. How can awareness-raising about these policies be enhanced in institutions? Any examples of good practice?

Cambridge have a large and growing Institutional Repository but have placed more emphasis on digital objects other than eprints, and are placing emphasis on storage of data. They've found that academics have more interest in this than in eprints.

Q. Should institutions set up central funds to cover OA fees? If so who should they be for? How should they be advertised? Who administers them?

Q. What policies can institutions adopt to make the procedures for researchers as easy as possible? Should this include mediated routing?

To close the session, Stephen summarised the discussion.

Q1. Can Wellcome institutional funds be used for general BMC (or other OA publisher) pre-payment?

Yes.

Q2. Who should manage Wellcome funds in the institution?

Today has provided a number of views on the current situation but we still need to consider the best model for the medium to longer-term.

Q3. Should more clarity be sought from RCUK on the role of FEC?

Michael Jubb will provide guidance with this – we can consider approaching research committees when this is available.

Q4. How can awareness-raising about these policies be enhanced in institutions? Any examples of good practice?

It appears that libraries managing Wellcome Trust funds are doing more in this area. Those not managing the funds could work with their Research Support (or equivalent) offices to encourage them to do more in the way of publicity.

Q5. Should institutions set up central funds to cover OA fees? If so who should they be for? How should they be advertised? Who administers them?

This is more difficult – to be addressed on another occasion. However, please let a member of the Scholarly Communications Group [a list of members is on the CURL and SCONUL Web sites] know if you have found a useful/successful way within their institution to deal with any of these issues – the Group will collate and disseminate.

Q6. What policies can institutions adopt to make the procedures for researchers as easy as possible?

No time to address this today – for another occasion.