



# Executive summary: Towards a Roadmap for Open Access Monographs

A Knowledge Exchange Report

Authored by: Janneke Adema  
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Authored by: Janneke Adema

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This is an Executive Summary of the full report 'Towards a Roadmap for Open Access Monographs: A Knowledge Exchange Report' DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2644997

The full report outlines the key findings and recommendations coming out of the *Knowledge Exchange Stakeholder Workshop on Open Access and Monographs*, which took place in Brussels in November 2018. Thanks are due to the Knowledge Exchange OA Monographs Task and Finish group who contributed their time and expertise to the event:

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# Executive summary and recommendations

This report outlines the key findings and recommendations coming out of the Knowledge Exchange (KE) *Stakeholder Workshop on Open Access and Monographs*, which took place in Brussels in November 2018.

This two-day event consisted of introductory talks on the current open access (OA) monographs landscape, followed by funder and publisher panels and a selection of in-depth workshops that explored how we can support OA monographs through *Author Engagement, Policies, Technical infrastructure, and Monitoring*. The aim of this workshop was to emphasise the importance of monographs as a format in the OA landscape, and to encourage further collaboration and the sharing of best practices. Based on the outcomes of the workshop this report includes a set of best practices and recommendations for various stakeholders in order to outline next steps towards a European roadmap for OA monographs.

The introductory talks highlighted how there remains a lack of consistency at a European level for the support of OA books, with respect to funding, recognition, infrastructure, and awareness. The work KE does has been important in this context, most importantly through its *Landscape Study on Open Access and Monographs* and its 2018 stakeholder survey which identified next steps for OA monographs. Simon Tanner's (King's College, London) keynote focused on the importance of citizens in the debate of who OA for monographs is for (especially where it concerns the value and potential impact of Open Access for monographs).

*The funder panel* with Steven Hill (Research England/UKRI) and Jean-Claude Kita (FNRS) outlined how OA policies for books are taking shape in the UK and Belgium, highlighting the importance of finding a balance between mandating and incentivising. Olaf Siegert, (Leibniz Association) looked at the policy development for OA monographs in Germany, reporting back from a national workshop on "The Future of the research monograph",

organised by the Alliance of German Science Organisations. In *the publishers panel*, Margo Bargheer (Gottingen University Press/AEUP), Sarah Kember (Goldsmiths Press), Myriam Poort (Springer Nature) and Leena Kaakinen (Helsinki University Press), reflected on whether OA can counter the alleged 'death of the book' in the HSS, reflecting on the importance of the monograph for the humanities and both the format and the field's future sustainability in an OA context.

*The author engagement workshop*, led by Sebastian Nordhoff (Language Science Press) explored some of the tactics that can be used to encourage author take-up of OA monographs. *The policies workshop*, led by Alain Beretz (Université de Strasbourg), focused on the policies of OA monographs and explored what, on a policy level, needs to be done to improve stakeholder alignment and make sure OA policies (funding, mandates, quality and discoverability) are practical, feasible and aligned with researchers needs. *The technical infrastructure workshop*, led by Pierre Mounier (OpenEdition), focused on defining the specific efforts that could be made to improve the integration of monographs in the scientific information system by providing adapted technical infrastructures. *The monitoring workshop*, led by Eelco Ferwerda (OAPEN) looked at how to establish a permanent Open Access Book Watch to monitor progress, identify good practices, examples, and business cases, and to provide a tool for funders and policy makers.

Each of these workshops formulated recommendations and action plans, which together form first steps towards a European roadmap for OA monographs. Based on these outcomes, specific stakeholder recommendations were formulated:

# Recommendations for stakeholders

## Funders

- ▶ Policy intervention is crucial in the space of OA monographs to move things forward. This includes a focus on how we implement policy, ie defining standards whilst ensuring diversity, prioritising actions, and monitoring impact. However, new ideas are missing in this area. Instead of continuing business as usual, policies or mandates should aim to change the costs or financial structures of OA book publishing.
- ▶ What is needed most are sustainable policies. Mandates without sustainable underlying business models will not succeed. If we want to take away academics' fears around OA monographs we need a) clear paths for them to apply for funding (if we mandate a BPC model) and b) to explore other forms of (institutional) funding. Sparse access to BPCs creates new inequalities, limiting publishing options. We need more publishing options that are less competitive and less selective.
- ▶ Funders should fund infrastructures and platforms for OA monographs to provide the necessary services for monographs academics need, ie those that will be operated more according to the public interest instead of commercial interests (outsourced to commercial publishers). What is key here is interoperability and funding for the organisational costs around setting up and running infrastructures.
- ▶ More shared experiences and networked action between funders is needed (for example in the form of a policy guide), especially now quite a few universities are setting up dedicated funds for OA monographs. There also remains a lack of consistency at a European level for the support of OA books, with respect to funding, recognition, infrastructure, and awareness.

- ▶ An OA Bookwatch could help us monitor OA for books. Measuring progress and monitoring policies could provide evidence for the impact of OA. For funders it might assist in implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies, compliance, and impact, and whether their policies are effective.

## Academics and Universities

- ▶ The book is regarded as a vital format for humanities scholarship. We need to continue investment in the traditional printed format, highlighting its importance for the humanities. At the same time, we need to promote more fluid and experimental digital humanities scholarship too, as these are essential formats for an evolving humanities.
- ▶ Academics and the concerns they have around OA monographs should be taken seriously and we should engage with them on these issues. Concerns should be mitigated where possible by debate, by countering misconceptions, and by training (where appropriate), but we also need to acknowledge the concerns that exist within communities by being pragmatic (ie by offering various licensing options or various (open) review options).
- ▶ A balance needs to be found between mandating and incentivising author behaviour around OA monographs. Academics are unhappy if too much responsibility is put on their shoulders. Highlighting the quality and prestige of OA (in hiring, assessment etc) is equally important to support academics in publishing OA. Where it concerns mandates we need to be aware that additional requirements on academic institutions often go largely unfunded.
- ▶ Engagement involves identifying research communities. It needs to include support for early-career researchers (especially where it concerns BPC models). We should emphasise success stories, but academics should tell these stories themselves, to each other.

- ▶ Different stakeholders need to be engaged to find out what motivates them to take part in a monitoring process for OA books, such as an OA Book Watch. For example, academics feel monitoring is something that is done to them (eg by funders) rather than with them (ie metrics are not the same as impact). A collective effort is required to establish who is or will be doing the monitoring and what their interests are in that.

## Publishers

- ▶ More openness and transparency about the real costs of publishing an OA monograph is essential, outlining what is being paid towards BPCs and what services are included in this for example.
- ▶ To promote alternatives to BPCs, other (platform) funding models should be explored. This would also have to include how OA books that don't require BPCs are currently being financed (eg diamond OA). Alternative funding models, which treat global authors alike, based on their merits and on not on what they can afford, are crucial to prevent further and new inequalities in scholarly communication.

## Technology platforms and providers

- ▶ Although diversity remains important, common technical requirements for monographs are required so that they can be fully integrated into technical infrastructures (including EOSC and OpenAIRE). This also includes standards concerning what a platform is (ie does it allow interactions of protocols and metadata to enable the creation of websites that align (ie APIs)) and how platforms relate to a unifying structure which we can call 'infrastructure' (which helps deliver services and establish protocols etc).
- ▶ Facilitate a dialogue between stakeholders to define technical standards and evaluate them from there (where do users experience problems?). What is important here is to work on common implementation practices of these standards, where their flexibility usually allows for differences in terms of implementation, which hinders real interoperability.

- ▶ When developing technical infrastructures, issues of governance are important to determine how we can have a collectively managed infrastructure. This includes the technical governance between stakeholders, based on community ownership. When developing technical infrastructures, the governance side should come first.
- ▶ At the moment there exists no clear system to monitor data around OA books, such as an OA Book Watch. However, there are many systems already out there collecting the information required. This should be monitored now rather than waiting for data to become available and more interoperable. The data used in the past can be used as a baseline.

## Libraries

- ▶ Libraries play multiple roles (not just funding OA monographs, but also archiving, metadata management, inclusion in discovery systems and library-led publishing). Using acquisition budgets for new financing models (eg crowdfunding or membership models) could become more important. Libraries could play a more active and visible role between authors and publishers in an OA setting.
- ▶ The long-term sustainability of OA books needs to be on our agendas. New embedded UPs should make use of their connections with institutional libraries. There are also deposit services such as the OAPEN Library, which distribute the responsibility for a task that smaller publishers shouldn't do themselves.
- ▶ Similar to the OpenAPC initiative, libraries could host a community-run resource or platform outlining what fees different publishers are charging, which would help authors, universities and funders make a balanced choice around what a sensible BPC is.

## Citizens

- ▶ Policy needs to address the societal impact and the value of OA monographs for those outside of academia, eg citizens, teachers. Citizens are key stakeholders in this debate, we should place them at the centre of the conversation. We must look for impact with citizens.



Knowledge Exchange Office  
C/O Jisc,  
One Castlepark,  
Tower Hill,  
Bristol, BS2 0JA

t: 0203 697 5804  
e: [office@knowledge-exchange.info](mailto:office@knowledge-exchange.info)