

Overview

We understand the signatories of Plan S are frustrated by the pace of transition to Open Access (OA) but we believe that the hybrid option is a crucial element in the transformation, as long as it is underpinned by meaningful local and global offsetting policies and liberal Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) archiving policies. Over the last decade we have been positioning ourselves to provide OA solutions to the market as and when our various stakeholders require them - editors, authors, societies, library customers and funders.

Executive Summary

- We are pleased that there is a commitment to Transformative Agreements. We believe that National level OA sales deals offer a viable transition to OA – particularly for fields with low levels of direct grant funding. SAGE has been actively working with national consortia in Europe to develop these and look forward to discussing with the signatories how these can be implemented. The subscription offsetting policy we developed in 2015 provides a mechanism for journals to fully transition as the proportion of OA articles increases to a critical volume.
- SAGE policy has been to allow authors to deposit AAMs in Institutional Repositories (IRs) with no embargo. Historically we have allowed these to be deposited under a CC BY-NC-ND licence or an equivalent to address concerns that authors have about derivative use, particularly in the Humanities and Social Sciences. We have real concerns around the imposition of CC BY licences and urge the signatories to be more flexible. For example, we are working with Jisc and the Bavarian State University on the Publications Router Project and Project DeepGreen respectively to automate the AAM deposition process but to date the expectation on all sides was that this would be under a standard universal CC BY-NC-ND licence. The process will be greatly simplified by having a consistent licence which all authors would be willing to sign.
- We have developed a portfolio of over 190 pure Gold titles – 54 transitioned from the subscription model – to provide pure Gold options across virtually all of the disciplines we publish in. We are concerned by the requirement to disclose costs and surpluses but look forward to discussing more what this means in practice. We are comfortable with a greater level of transparency in general and have been removing non-disclosure clauses from our consortia agreements as they have come up for renewal in recent years.

SAGE Publishing

Sara Miller McCune founded SAGE Publishing in 1965 to support the dissemination of usable knowledge and educate a global community. SAGE is a leading international provider of innovative, high-quality content, publishing almost 1200 journals and over 900 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. Our growing selection of library products includes archives, data, case studies and video.

SAGE remains majority owned by our founder and after her lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures the company's continued independence. Principal offices are located in Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC and Melbourne.

Our governance structure allows us to take a long term view and not focus on short term profitability. We are here to provide a service to the academic community. Our attitude to OA has always been one of positive engagement. Our first foray into OA was a partnership with Hindawi back in 2007 and we were a founding board member of OASPA in 2008. Since then we have built a portfolio of over 190 pure Gold OA titles. Most of these are in Medical disciplines but we also have titles in Engineering, and the Humanities and Social Sciences – most notably [SAGE Open](#).

SAGE publishes over 500 of our journals on behalf of 446 Learned Societies and are custodians of their content. A large scale shift to an author pays model at a reasonable APC is extremely problematic for many of these Learned Societies but there may be a route to OA for them as part of a larger portfolio that is supported in its transition by agreements with national consortia and with archiving policies, as outlined below. These societies play a crucial role in their communities and helping them negotiate the rapidly changing landscape is a core part of our mission.

National OA Sales Agreements

We firmly believe that the only viable transition to OA in disciplines with low levels of direct funding is via the repurposing of subscription spend to Read and Publish/Publish and Read agreements. In the Humanities and Social Sciences (as well as a large proportion of Engineering, Mathematics and even Clinical Medicine) most research is conducted by researchers with no direct grant funding. The only realistic method of financing the publication of this research output in a Gold OA model is through centralised university funding. Transitioning from a read only subscription model through a Read and Publish model to a Publish and Read model is feasible and SAGE has been actively working with national library consortia to achieve OA at the country level in Europe.

We were the second large publisher to reach an agreement with VSNU on this basis and have been publishing all articles with the corresponding author based in a VSNU affiliated university automatically as hybrid OA, beginning in 2017. This led to the development of a standard offering and in 2019 we are extending this offer to library consortia in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Austria. We have offered the highly discounted £200 hybrid rate to NESLI based authors since the introduction of the RCUK OA Mandate in 2013.

In this way we were fully accepting of, and planning for, the vast majority of European content published by SAGE to be published either Gold or hybrid OA in the next 3 or 4 years.

Offsetting Arrangements

National OA Sales Agreements only offer a meaningful route to full OA if they are accompanied by effective local and global offsetting agreements.

SAGE has had a Subscription Offsetting Policy in place since 2015 and full details can be found on our website [here](#). This policy was [positively received by Jisc](#) at the time and had since been the foundation of the mutually satisfactory national OA sales deals discussed above.

We avoid the need for local offsetting by offering a highly discounted hybrid APC of £200 for authors based at institutions that subscribe to SAGE Premier. On a global level we acknowledge that this material is now free to readers in other countries by discounting the subscription rates of journals that are most affected by an amount commensurate with any revenue received for the hybrid

content. This is detailed on our site and has resulted in the prices of 37 titles being discounted over the last 3 years. The numbers have been relatively small to date because (a) SAGE does not publish a great deal of biomedical literature and, as such, uptake of hybrid has been low compared with some of our competitors and (b) because of the deep hybrid discounts offered. We believe this presents a realistic way to transition to OA as global uptake of the hybrid option increases.

Transitioning to OA

Most importantly, this strategy provides a mechanism to flip subscriptions to OA at a global level. As the uptake of hybrid increases, the discount on the full rate APC decreases and so hybrid revenue received increases, thus driving higher global offset decreases to the subscription rate, hypothetically to zero if the entire world flips to paying to publish.

Green OA Archiving

In recent years SAGE has had a policy of allowing the deposit of AAMs in the relevant IR with a zero embargo. We do not believe in putting barriers in the way of authors sharing their work unless and until we find that any such barriers are required to sustain a viable publishing model. As Green archiving of AAMs relies on the peer review process of the journals that go on to publish the AAM as the Version of Record (VoR), there is a symbiotic relationship in play. We consider it a service to our authors to allow them to share and promote early versions of their work.

This attitude has been reflected recently by our decision to work with Jisc on their Publications Router project and with the Bavarian State University on Project DeepGreen. Both these initiatives involve creating workflows that automatically deposit AAMs in the authors' IRs with discoverable metadata.

This philosophy is also reflected in the stance we have taken toward Scholarly Communication Networks. We do not believe that taking legal action against sharing portals is the most sensible course of action. While we in no way condone the posting of material in breach of copyright, our view is that authors sharing their work on sites such as Research Gate (RG) is a natural extension of established academic behaviour. Legal action is not the best recourse, rather we would like to work with the academic community to help them understand the issues. If they are going to share their work on RG, we strongly encourage authors to publically share their AAM or, if they do want to post the VoR, to share it within their private RG networks only.

Gold OA Publishing Portfolio

Over the last five years we have developed a portfolio of over 190 pure Gold OA titles. Most of these are in Medical disciplines but we also have successful titles in Engineering and the Humanities and Social Sciences – most notably [SAGE Open](#).

Nearly 30% of these pure Gold OA titles have been transitioned from a subscription model and in 2018 we published almost 9,000 pure Gold OA articles. This represented 16% of our total output, up from 1.5% in 2013, and we are expecting this to continue to grow significantly in the coming years.

In 2010 we launched *SAGE Open* – the first fully OA journal to cater to the Humanities and Social Sciences. It has since published almost 2,200 papers, with over 300 in 2017 alone. We have also launched a number of other pure Gold OA titles in HSS disciplines which we continue to support as the OA business model develops.

Transparency

Following requests from our key customers, we have been steadily removing standard non-disclosure clauses from our consortia agreements as they come up for renewal. Our agreements with NESLI, BIBSAM, and VSNU no longer include them and we will be removing such clauses from our agreements with Norway and others as they renew in 2019.

Conclusion

As demand from our customers has increased we have created high quality Gold OA outlets and provided instruments to deliver OA in our subscription journals today through zero embargo archiving and tomorrow through meaningful transition mechanisms. We do not view hybrid OA as an end in itself but do believe hybrid has an important role to play in the transformation of less well funded disciplines. We are not disputing the core principle of Plan S, that in the long term hybrid should not be compliant, but we would encourage the signatories to facilitate a long transition period, as long as a meaningful and transparent transition plan is in place. We are preparing for a fully OA Europe in the short term and have strategies in place to react to moves in that direction in the US market when they are forthcoming.