

White Rose Libraries feedback on Plan S

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White Rose Libraries have a long history of working to provide open access to research, from early adoption of open research repositories to the recent launch of the not-for-profit White Rose University Press- the UK's first fully Open Access collaborative university press. As such, we fully support the ethos behind Plan S, and the move to make funded research open, and openly licensed, at the point of publication.

However, we are very concerned with some of the detail of Plan S, particularly around the technical requirements and functionality needed for compliance. These seem to go beyond what is necessary to make the funded research output openly available to people to access and build on. This extra level of functionality to make the content machine readable is desirable and may be a priority for certain academic sectors. Including it as a requirement within the Plan S specification from the start forces this on all areas of research in a "one size fits all" approach that is too prescriptive. Ironically, these technical requirements, with the associated costs, are likely to place compliance beyond the reach of those (institutional repositories and small Open Access publishers) who have already been progressing the Open Access agenda. It will also drive up the costs of open publishing with those who already charge only for production services and nothing more. These are unfortunate consequences of a plan that aims to support the move to an Open Access culture.

Institutional repositories that make content open as soon as the publisher allows, that provide high-quality metadata around their content to aid discoverability, and that embrace sector standards to ensure content is surfaced through a range of aggregation services are key players in the Open Access ecosystem. They are put at risk by the Plan S model that places a higher technical burden on often already stretched repository services, but would potentially deliver lower quality in key areas, such as publisher-created metadata, and so make this content less discoverable. Not-for-profit Open Access publishers are also key players. They see Open Access as a goal to be achieved and not a difficulty to be overcome. Plan S, as it stands, puts technical compliance out of reach for many of those who support the ethos behind it. The focus on mandating solutions rather than on setting aims to achieve may create unexpected barriers. For these reasons, while we wholeheartedly support the Open Access principles that drive Plan S, we struggle to support areas of the detailed implementation of Plan S as currently drafted.