

# Programme

## • *Open Access Books & Journals*

### **Open Access Books in the Wild**

*How Open Access affects usage and reception of scholarly books*

#### **Ros Pyne**

- *Head of Policy and Development – Open Research, Springer Nature*



*Open Access publishing options have been available for scholarly books for several years, but as yet there has been little research into the effects of making books free to access and re-use. Drawing on data from a Springer Nature study, benchmarking the performance of OA books against equivalent non-OA titles, this session will provide some early insights into how Open Access changes the impact of scholarly books, exploring how the usage, citations, and reception of books are affected by Open Access publication.*

### **Adoption of Open Access Mega-journals**

*The disciplinary community perspective*

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**Researcher  
to Reader** 26 & 27  
February  
2018



# Adoption of OAMJ: Disciplinary community perspectives

Professor Jenny Fry

Loughborough University, UK



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.



Loughborough  
University



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



# Open-Access Mega-Journals Project Team

## University of Sheffield

- Stephen Pinfield (PI)
- Simon Wakeling (RA)
- Peter Willett (Co-I)

## Loughborough University

- Claire Creaser (Co-I)
- Jenny Fry (Co-I)
- Valérie Spezi (RA)

<http://oamj.org/>

@OAMJ\_Project

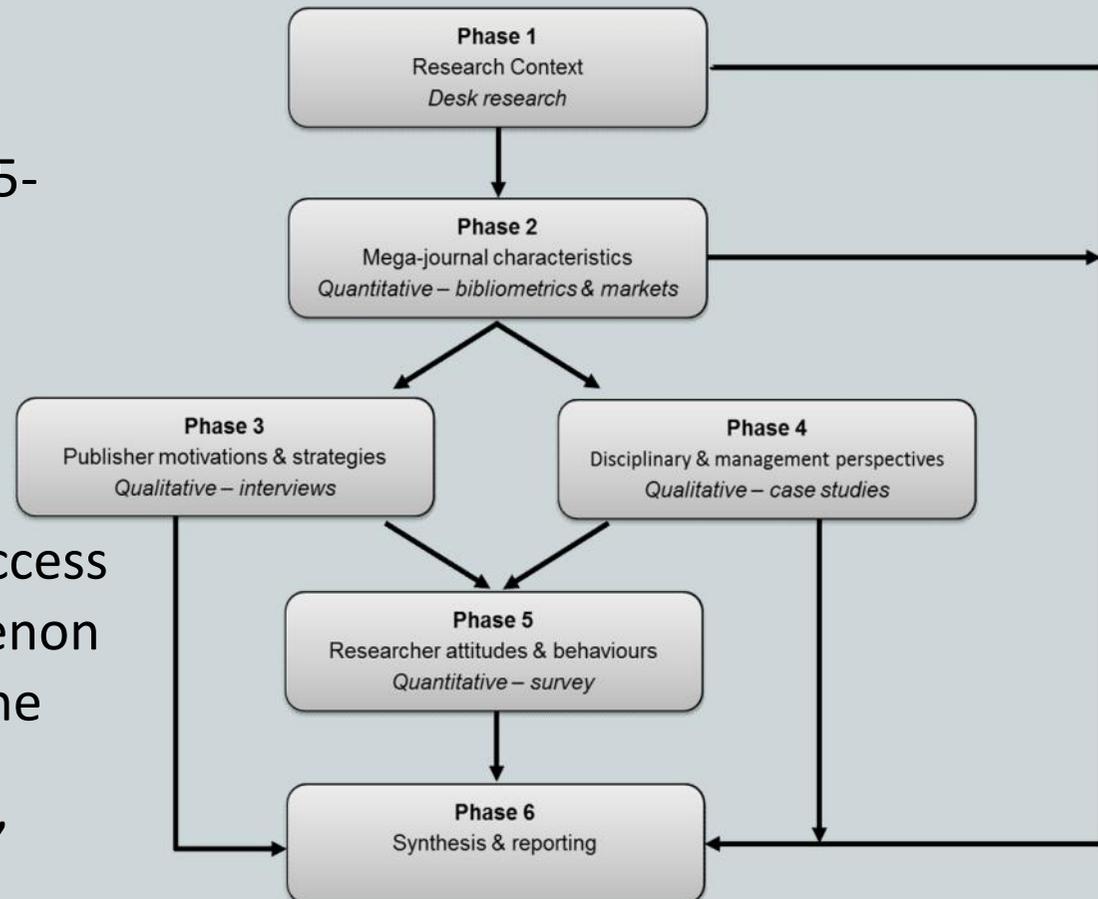


# Defining 'Mega-Journals'

- Fully-open access
- Large scale (or aiming for it)
- Broad disciplinary scope
- New approach to peer review

# Open-Access Mega-Journals Project

- 26-month collaboration between Sheffield and Loughborough (Nov 2015- Dec 2017)
- Funded by AHRC
- Investigating: “The principal characteristics of the emergent open-access ‘mega-journal’ phenomenon and its significance for the academic research community and beyond”
- Using mixed methods



<http://oamj.org/>

# Purpose of Phase 4

- To develop an understanding of current publication practices;
- Explore significance of OAMJ in a disciplinary context

# Method

- Four disciplinary case studies across five institutions
  - Astronomy & Physics, Biosciences, Education and History (and related fields);
  - Focus groups with researchers and;
  - Interviews with PVC-Rs

	Biosciences	Physics	Education	History
Institutions	A, B, C, D	A, D, E	A, D, E	A, C, E
Number of participants	24	15	17	4

# Journal choice

- Target audience and readership
- Career and research quality assessment requirements [REF/JIF]
- Tensions

# Notion of community

*“Journals represent a community of people working on issues, driven to address certain inequalities...if you take that out and treat it as a medium to put text into the world, I think you’re really losing something important about how disciplines evolve and how you get movements of scholars”*

(Institution A, Education)

# Discourse communities

1. a set of shared goals
2. a forum for communication between members e.g. meetings, correspondence, email etc.
3. on-going 'conversations' through active participation in providing information and feedback
4. recognized genres for communication
5. a specialised vocabulary or language
6. a critical mass of members, with an evolving membership – survival depends on a reasonable ratio between 'experts' and 'novices'

(Swales, 1990)

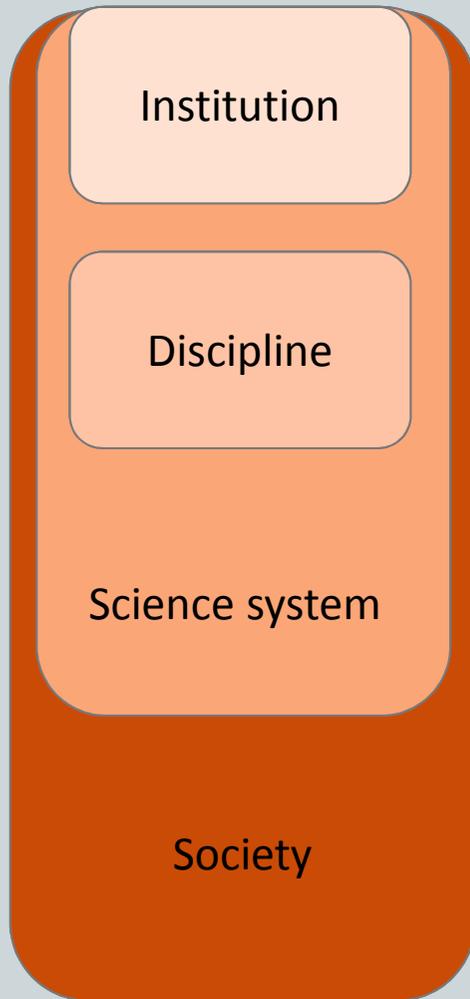
# Understanding the journal landscape

- Mentoring by institutional colleagues, conversations with disciplinary peers and 'formal' lists and journal hierarchies generated at School/Institutional level;
- Difference between 'community view' of prestige and journal rankings based on metrics

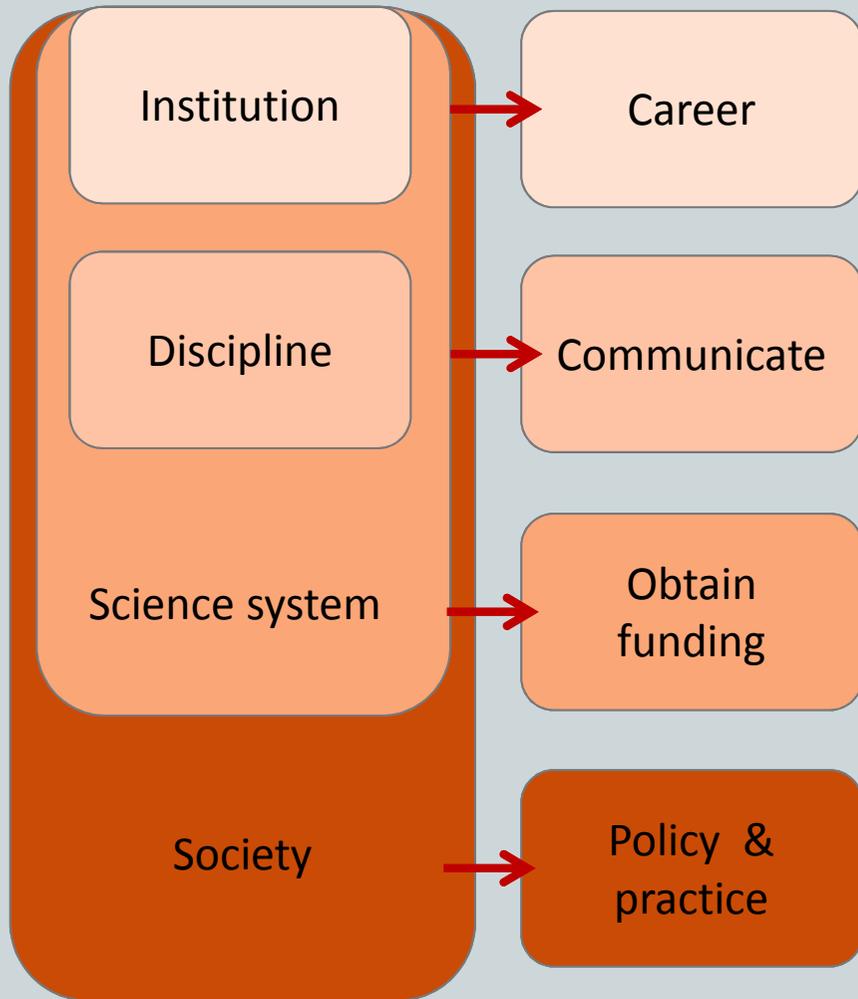
# Readership and audience

- Publishing in the “highest impact” or “most prestigious” journal an important *driver*; but,
- Reaching and engaging with a particular community was also inextricably linked to journal choice

# Levels of community



# Motivations



# Awareness of OAMJs

- Term 'mega-journal' unfamiliar, although model familiar with bioscientists and astronomers/physicists
- *“big online journals that just churn out hundreds of thousands of articles”* (Institution C, Bioscientist)”

# Perceptions of OAMJs

- Concerns about visibility of articles
- *“if you publish in a mega-journal the chance that your paper goes above the noise ... if a journal publishes 100-200 papers a day, the chance that your paper will be read by anyone ...”* (Institution D, Astronomer/Physicist)

# Perceptions of OAMJs

- Seen as facilitators of OA publishing and “pioneers” of access to supplementary and supporting data;
- As a positive challenge to an increasingly impact and metric-driven publishing system

# Perceptions of OAMJs

- From an institutional viewpoint:
- *“if someone had published in a [mega-journal] that is neither a positive or a negative - what counts is the content of the paper and our judgement on the quality of that work” (PVC-R, Institution A)*

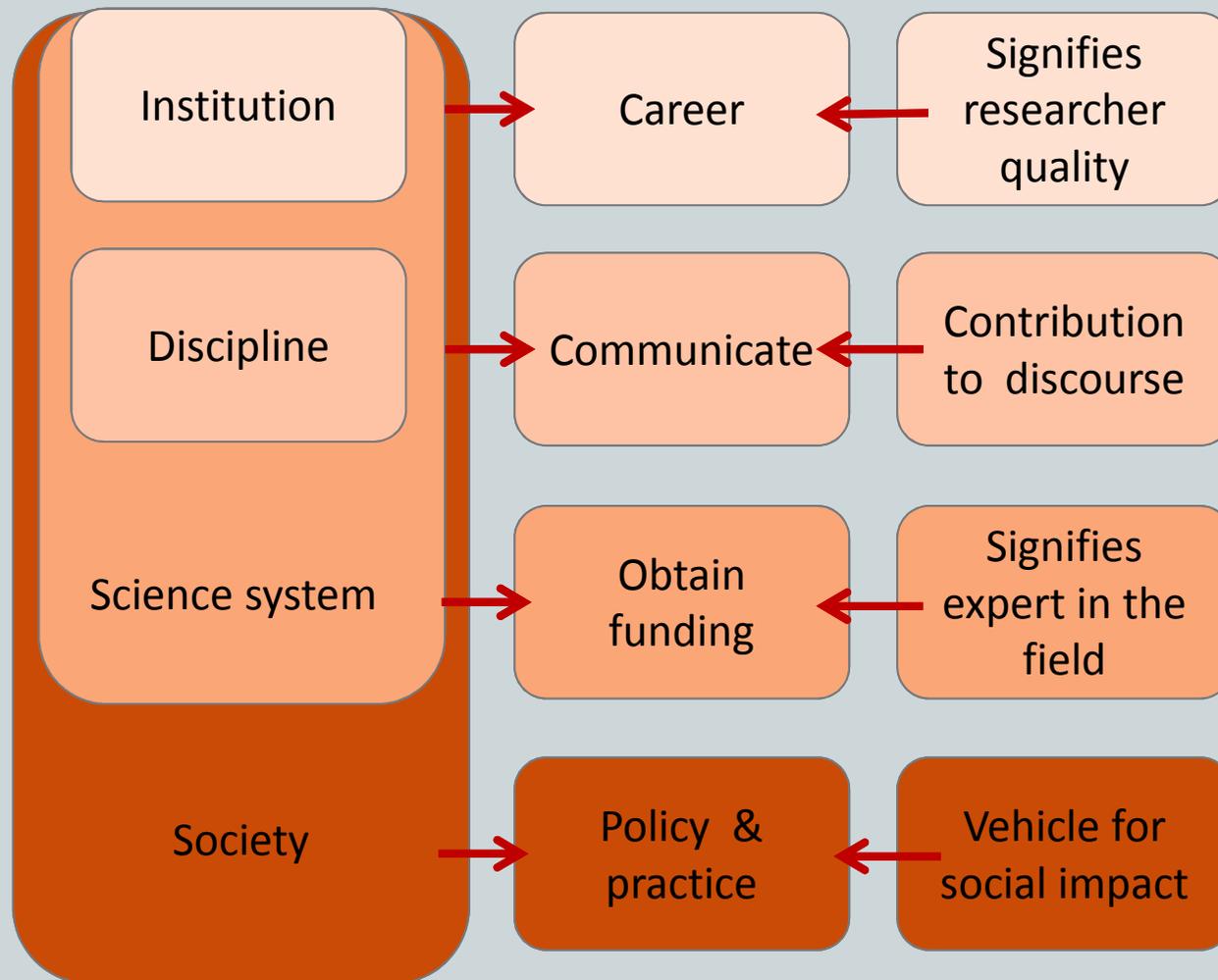
# Views on soundness-only peer review

- Evoked discussion around problems in current peer review system (particularly for highly prestigious journals in the biosciences);
- Bioscientists and astronomers/physicists supportive of soundness-only peer review in principle

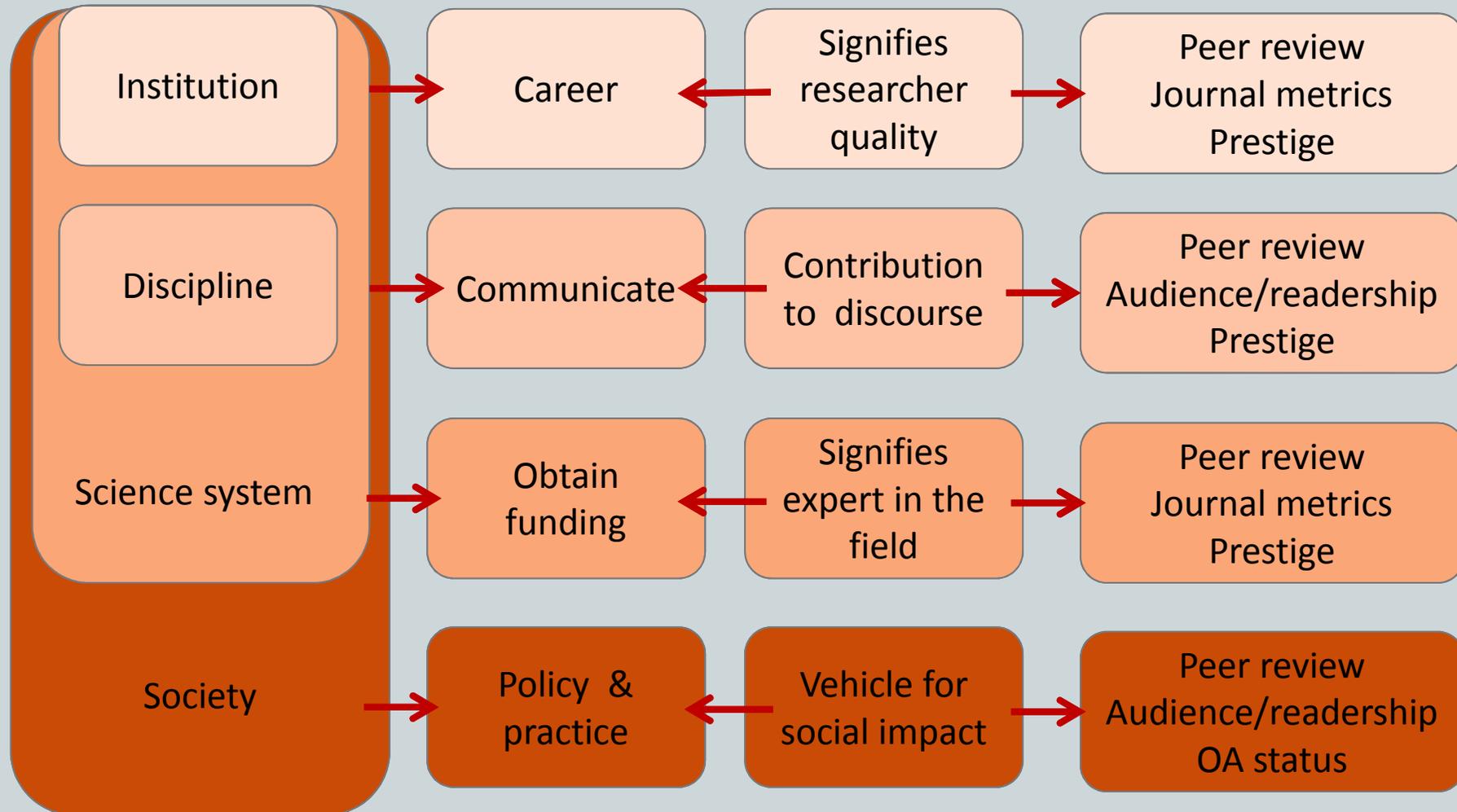
## Views on soundness-only peer review

- Concern amongst history and education researchers about large volumes of unfiltered content being published:
- *“A potential problem is just the proliferation of lots of studies that do really very little. There’s so much out there already it seems important to do some of that sifting.”* (Institution E, Education)

# Role of article



# Journal characteristics



# Conclusions

- Journals play a central role within disciplinary communities; they shape and are shaped by those communities.
- Different level of community place different values on journal characteristics; academic authors need to balance these competing factors

# Conclusions

- Where there are negative perceptions of the OAMJ model these may stem from a belief that it fails to adequately meet the needs of the various levels of community

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