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

Professor Jenny Fry
• Professor of Publishing and Information Science,
  Loughborough University

PLOS ONE and Scientific Reports are now the largest journals in the world. They are known as Open Access Mega-journals. The growing output of some mega-journals suggests that the model is popular with some researchers, yet the proportion of all scholarly output published in mega-journals is still small (2.6%). This presentation will provide insights from the perspective of four disciplinary communities: BioSciences, Physics, Education and History. The data was gathered and analysed as part of the AHRC-funded project entitled ‘Open-access mega-journals and the future of scholarly communication’.

Researcher to Reader 26 & 27 February 2018
Adoption of OAMJ:
Disciplinary community perspectives

Professor Jenny Fry
Loughborough University, UK
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Biosciences</th>
<th>Physics</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, B, C, D</td>
<td>A, D, E</td>
<td>A, D, E</td>
<td>A, C, E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

- Society
- Science system
- Discipline
- Institution
Motivations

- Institution
- Discipline
- Science system
- Society
- Career
- Communicate
- Obtain funding
- Policy & practice
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

- **Institution**
- **Discipline**
- **Science system**

**Society**

- **Career**
- **Communicate**
- **Obtain funding**

- **Policy & practice**
- **Vehicle for social impact**

**Signifies researcher quality**
**Contribution to discourse**
**Signifies expert in the field**

**Vehicle for social impact**

**Policy & practice**

**Obtain funding**

**Communicate**

**Career**

**Signifies researcher quality**
Journal characteristics

- Institution
  - Career
  - Signifies researcher quality
  - Peer review Journal metrics Prestige

- Discipline
  - Communicate
  - Contribution to discourse
  - Peer review Audience/readership Prestige
  - Obtain funding
  - Signifies expert in the field
  - Peer review Journal metrics Prestige

- Science system

- Society
  - Policy & practice
  - Vehicle for social impact
  - Peer review Audience/readership OA status
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.
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

Professor Jenny Fry
• Professor of Publishing and Information Science, Loughborough University

PLOS ONE and Scientific Reports are now the largest journals in the world. They are known as Open Access Mega-journals. The growing output of some mega-journals suggests that the model is popular with some researchers, yet the proportion of all scholarly output published in mega-journals is still small (2.6%). This presentation will provide insights from the perspective of four disciplinary communities: Biosciences, Physics, Education and History. The data was gathered and analysed as part of the AHRC-funded project entitled ‘Open-access mega-journals and the future of scholarly communication’.