

# Submission Fees in Open Access Journals

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Open-Access-Tage, Göttingen 5 October 2010

# Project objectives & sponsors

- Objective: to examine how submission fees might contribute to a move towards Open Access
- Project sponsor: Knowledge Exchange (JISC, SURF, DFG, DEFF)

# Methodology

- literature survey
- initial interviews (mostly journal editors and publishers)
- develop/refine possible models
- semi-structured interviews (publishers, librarians, research funders, research institutions, and individual researchers)
- some 40 interviews in total

# Submission fee models

Model	Description
Wellcome Trust	submission fee + larger article processing charge
“Leslie”	as WT, plus payments to referees (meeting standards), refunds for accepted articles
bepress	submission fee payment “in kind” by refereeing
Submission fee only	i.e. no article processing charge

# Some journals using submission fees

Journal	Publisher	OA?	SubFee	IF
Am Physiol Soc journals x14	Am Physiol Society	N	50	varies
Cancer Research	AACR	N	75	7.5
FASEB Journal	FASEB	N	50	6.8
Hereditas	Wiley	Y	150	1.2
Ideas in Ecology & Evolution	Queens U	Y	400	-
J Bone Mineral Research	Wiley	N	50	6.4
J Clinical Investigation	ASCI	N	70	16.6
J Immunology	Am Assoc Immunol	N	50 / 0	6
J Investigative Dermatology	NPG	N	50	5.3
American Economic Review	AER	N	200 / 100	2.2
BE J Theoretical Economics	bepress	N	75/350/175	-
J Finance	Wiley/AFA	N	140 / 70	4
J Political Economy	Chicago UP	N	125 / 75	3.7

# Advantages cited / I

- deters frivolous, premature, unrealistic or "long-shot" submissions
- reduces total load on all reviewers and editors
- improves journal quality
- greater fairness (i.e. all authors contribute to reviewing costs)
- better allocation of scarce resources
- better scalability with growth of research output

# Advantages cited /2

- a viable economic model for OA journals with very high rejection rates
- article processing charge can be set independently of the rejection rate
- article processing charge can be set as low as possible

# Disadvantages cited

- it might deter authors
- lack of clarity on whether funders would allow the charges to be reimbursed
- possible impacts on authors without research funds or from poorer economies etc.
- need for systems to collect and administer the payments and their reimbursement



# A “better” business model?

- high rejection rate journals
- increase OA journal revenues
- reduce risk
- impact on submissions
- strategic fit

# Modelling: some examples

- different kinds of OA journal
- APCs
- submission fees
- rejection without peer review
- rejection rates
- deterrence effect on authors (fixed + variable)
- transaction costs

# Example: Journal A

- Prestigious, high rejection-rate OA journal
  - APC = \$2500
  - 4000 submissions, 390 accepted (~10%)
- With submission fees (constant revenue):
  - APC = \$1150, SF = \$150 (all submissions charged)
  - APC = \$1550, SF = \$150 (peer-reviewed submissions charged)

# Example: Journal B

- Good quality second-tier journal
  - APC = \$2000
  - 1000 submissions, 280 accepted (28%)
- With submission fees
  - APC = \$1550, SF = \$150 (all submissions charged)
  - APC = \$1650, SF = \$150 (peer-reviewed submissions charged)

# Example: Journal C

- Journal closer to average for STM journals
  - APC = \$1500
  - 300 submissions, 140 accepted (46%)
- With submission fees
  - APC = \$1400, SF = \$100 (all submissions charged)
  - APC = \$1450, SF = \$100 (peer-reviewed submissions charged)

# Support for submission fees

- mixed views
- lack of buy-in from publishers
- risks outweighed benefits for OA publishers
- alternative approaches preferred

# Conclusions

- more journals already using than many publishers realise
- real business advantages (in principle?)
- provided journal rejection rate is  $\geq 70\%$
- authors may be more willing than publishers assume
- but advantages may not be sufficient to outweigh risks?

# Practical issues for adoption

- how to make palatable to authors
- easiest to introduce in fields where already familiar
- payment collection mechanisms
- testing author acceptance



# Further information

- Report will be published by Knowledge Exchange shortly – watch for press release!
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