

APC's – How much should they cost?

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The logo for F1000Research, consisting of the text 'F1000' in white on a teal square background.

F1000

The push for transparency in price



Plan S

Making full and immediate Open Access a reality

05

The Funders support the diversity of business models for Open Access journals and platforms. When Open Access publication fees are applied, they must be commensurate with the publication services delivered and the structure of such fees must be transparent to inform the market and funders potential standardisation and capping of payments of fees.

It's a good thing!

Coming to an industry consensus



informationpower

1. Consult stakeholders to understand publishers concerns and needs
2. Identify high-level categories of services provided in exchange for APCs or transformative arrangements
3. Develop a framework for publishers to communicate the price of services in a way that is transparent, practical to implement, and insightful for users.

We at least started the conversation...!

Calculating is not so simple and not truly comparable from Publisher to Publisher.

The publishing service differs across journal types and academic disciplines

Lots of **variables** across publishers to consider:

- submission numbers
- rejection rates (both desk rejects and rejects after peer review)
- published article numbers
- APC waivers

Quality matters – providing information just on service levels means publishing may become commoditised

Implementation is not a piece of cake...



The Fair Open Access Alliance



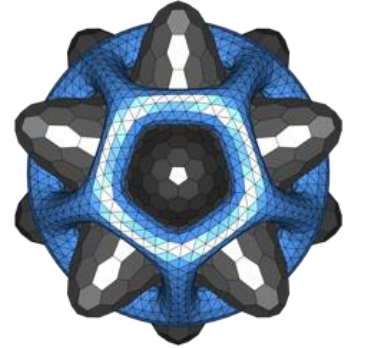
Have created a framework for Breakdown of Publication Services and Fees to focus on transparency of costs/prices and transformative deals:

- Publishers that have already published break-down figures:
Frontiers, Copernicus Publications, Ubiquity Press, MIT Press
- Publishers that are working on providing their break-down figures:
Stockholm University Press, PLoS, F1000, OLH, OpenEdition, MPDI
- Publishers that are looking at providing their break-down figures:
De Gruyter and Cambridge University Press

Service baskets	Components		Specify	%	Price
1. Journal operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journal support and submission system - Platform development and maintenance - Helpdesk & other support staff 		In/out house		
2. Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Triaging → - Organisation peer review → - Other Editorial assistance → - Indexing - Archiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Typesetting - Copy-editing - Language editing - Proofreading 	Rejection rate		
3. Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scientific editors fees - Scholarly societies fees 	<p>Rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baskets 1-7 represent the minimum information required. - These can be extended to a maximum of 10 baskets as publishers see fit for their operations. - For Baskets 1, 2 and 5, several components must be specified. - Components can be joined together or extended. - Non-author-fee publishers will calculate their costs 			
4. Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dissemination - PR & marketing - Community support - Advocacy 				
5. General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management & administration - Other business costs - Taxes 				
6. Surplus		Can be allocated elsewhere Cross-subsidizing?			
7. Discounts & waivers		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Average for all journals of a publisher 2. For one journal 3. For a subset of journals 			
Total publication fee per article	→				

Example: Journal of Open Source Software

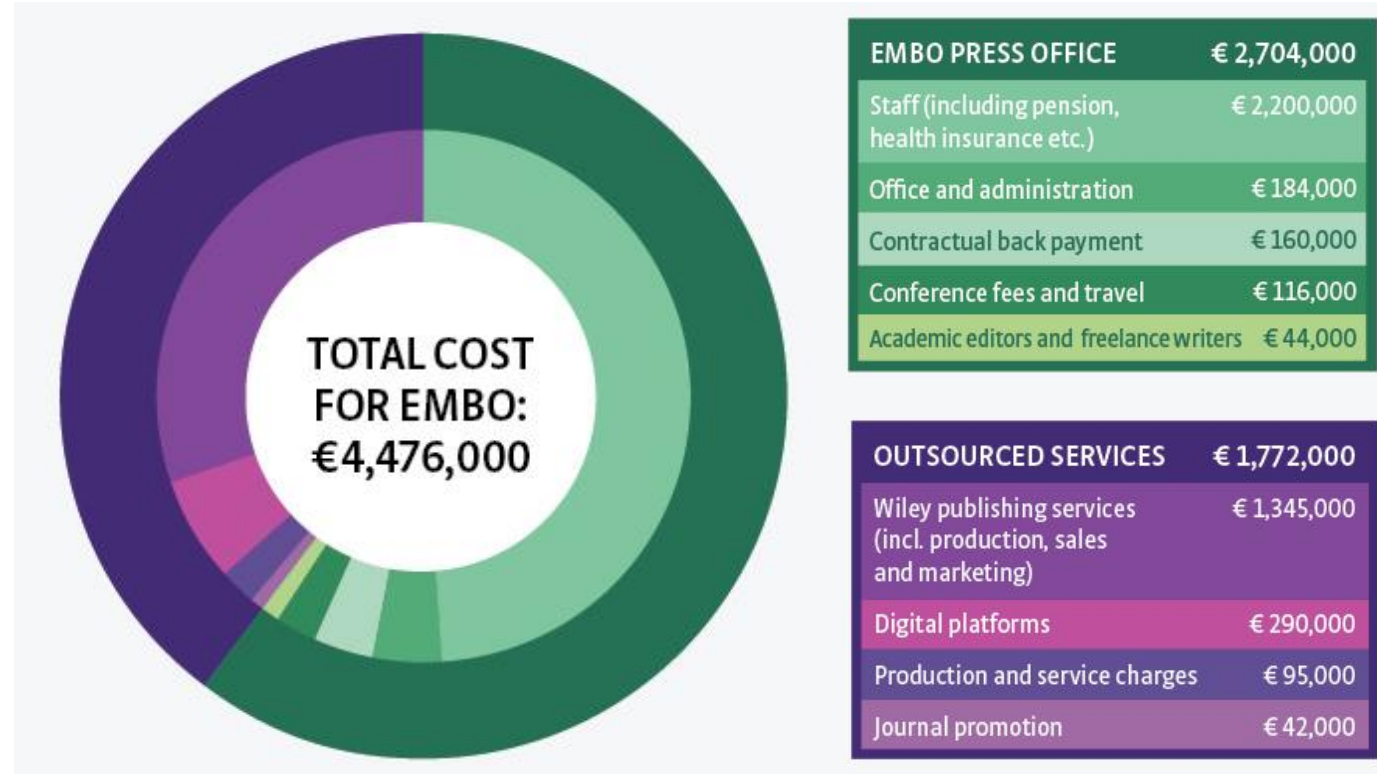
- Free, open-access online journal, with no article processing charge (APC)
- Uses existing infrastructure on GitHub to host and facilitate the editorial process
- No editorial or production costs
- Has a bot called Whedon which automates the editorial services
- Relies on community of volunteers for editorial and peer review services



Based on 300 articles, total annual operating cost of **\$31,413**, around **\$100** per article

Example: EMBO Press

- All 4 EMBO Press journals are selective life science journals (acceptance rate 9-13%)
- In 2017, the total revenue for the four journals was €5.806 Million.
 - Subscriptions €3.912 Million
 - APCs €1.894 Million
- Not for profit organisation so surplus goes on publishing innovations and EMBO programmes



Based on 706 articles, total annual operating cost of **\$4,476,000** around **€9,040** per article (if solely APCs)

F1000 – Open Research Publishing



Speed

Allows research to be disseminated without delay



Transparency

Open, author-led publishing and peer review



Reproducibility

Source data/software published alongside article

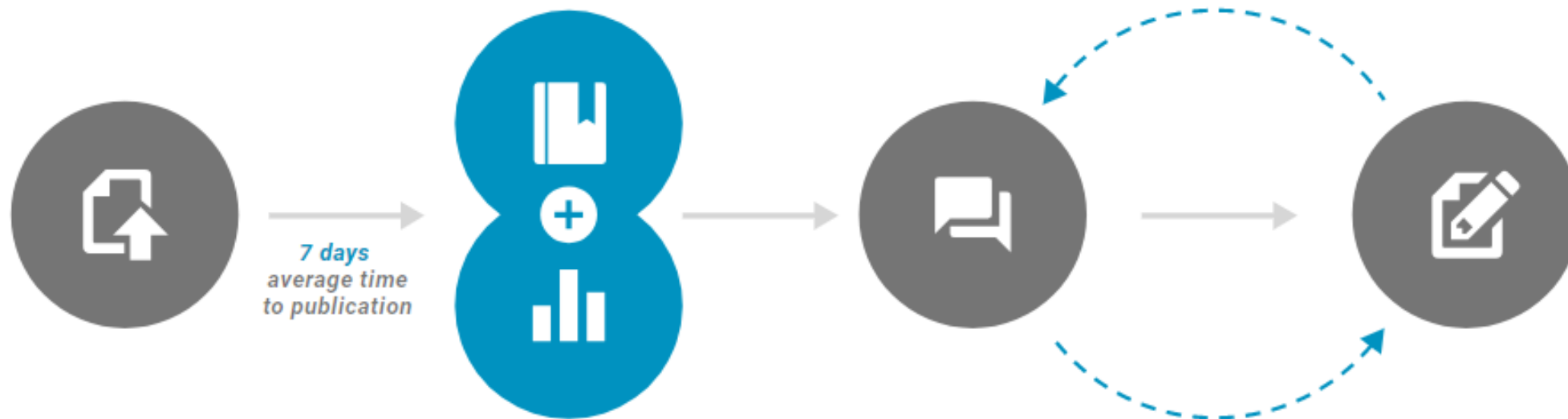







Inclusivity

Reduces research waste and increase efficiency

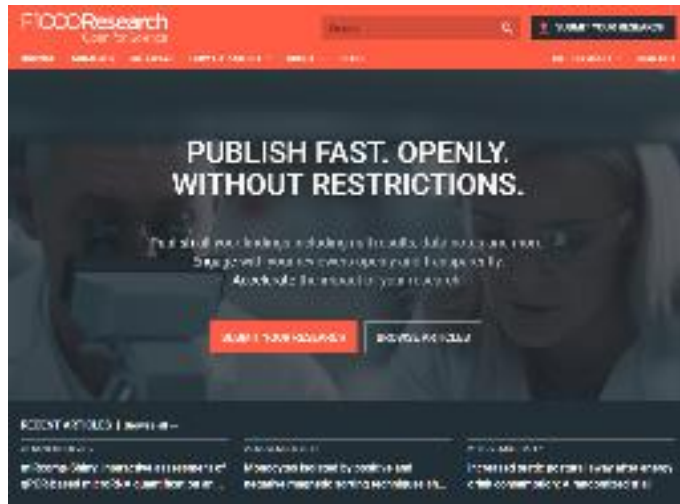
How does it work?

Referee ratings:   



- **Peer review *after* publication** (no 'Editor', in-house pre-pub checks)
- Fully transparent peer review (referee names, report and rating)
- Full Access to underlying data
- **Versioning** for revisions, corrections, updates
- **Indexed** once passed peer review     

Open Research publishing platforms



F1000Research
Open Peer Review

PUBLISH FAST. OPENLY. WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS.

Submit your research

Browse articles

Powered by F1000



Wellcome Open Research

BROWSE GATEWAYS & COLLECTIONS HOW TO PUBLISH ABOUT BLOG MY ACCOUNT SIGN OUT

Rapid & Transparent Publishing

A new way for Wellcome-funded researchers to rapidly publish any results they think are worth sharing

Submit your research

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Gates Open Research

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Gates Open Research is a platform for rapid author-led publication and open peer review of research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

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HRB Open Research

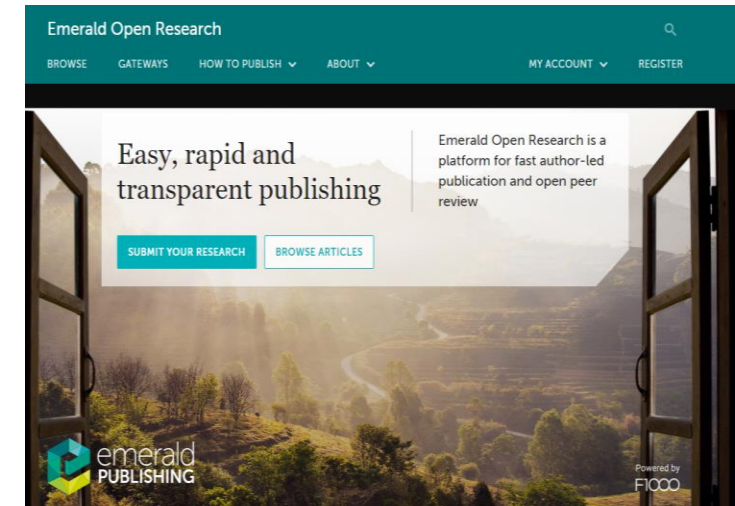
Immediate & Transparent Publishing

HRB Open Research is a platform for HRB funded researchers to rapidly publish their research outputs in an open and accessible way

Submit your research

Browse articles

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Emerald Open Research

BROWSE GATEWAYS HOW TO PUBLISH ABOUT MY ACCOUNT REGISTER

Easy, rapid and transparent publishing

Emerald Open Research is a platform for fast author-led publication and open peer review

Submit your research

Browse articles

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Benefits of an open research platform

- **A service to their researchers** - outlet (complementary) for all research findings that is funded.
- Testing **new approach** to improve funded research & its impact:
 - **Accelerate** access & sharing of findings & data
 - **Efficiency** - to **reduce waste** & support **reproducibility**
 - **Alternative OA model** - access, transparency, cost
- Enable researchers get **credit & recognition for a wider range of research outputs**

How transparent pricing effects F1000

Two different OA models

F1000Research

Gold open access model

(APCs, fees are author facing)

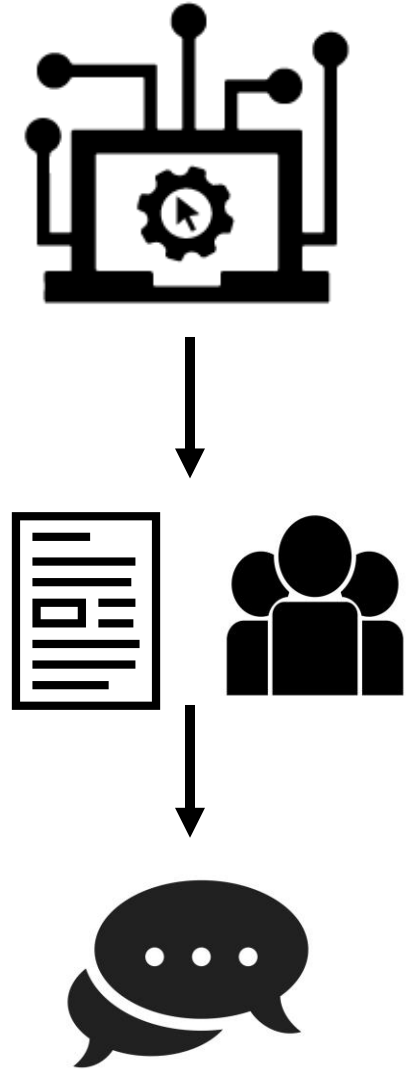
Open Research Platforms

Platinum open access model

(no author facing fees, costs covered centrally by funders/institute/publishers)

“Service Baskets” for our process:

1. **Technology and Infrastructure**
2. **Editorial**
3. **Marketing and Communications**
4. **Waivers and Discounts**
5. **Surplus**



How do they fit into our OA models:

F1000Research

1. Technology and Infrastructure
2. Editorial
3. Marketing and Communications
4. Waivers and Discounts
5. Surplus

Open Research Platforms

1. Technology and Infrastructure
2. Editorial
3. Marketing and Communications
4. Waivers and Discounts
5. Surplus

Open Research Platforms can take some services away (not appropriate or paid separately) so this could in fact lower the APC.

Food for thought...

As a community we should consider:

1. Transformative agreements: are they old ideas being recycled as new ways forward?
2. Do we even need APC's and does universal gold open access hinder inclusivity?
3. Should we be thinking bigger now about a true transformation of scholarly communication?

My personal inclinations:

- Make sure any framework put in place considers all OA models
- Need a more global, equitable and connected approach
- Don't lose sight of other important issues – open science, FAIR data, reproducibility
- Prestige and reward – decouple selectivity from the process