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Factors influencing the adoption of open access to longform publications in regional and national contexts

By Lorraine Estelle, Nadiya Greaser, Gali Halevi,
Dave Jago, Alicia Wise, and Mikael Laakso

March 2026

An independent report commissioned by the Knowledge Equity Network and the University of Leeds, in collaboration with Ateneo de Manila University, University of Auckland, Copim, Universität Hamburg, Universidad Nacional del Sur, University of Nairobi, University of Pretoria, University of Salford, Singapore Management University, Université de Sousse, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and White Rose University Press.

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Thank you to the project partners:





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Executive summary

This report, commissioned by the University of Leeds and the Knowledge Equity Network, examines the factors influencing adoption of open access (OA) for longform scholarly publications (books, edited collections, and chapters) across different regional and national contexts. The work draws on a unique partnership of institutions spanning multiple continents, united by a shared interest in multilateral approaches to open scholarship and more equitable knowledge exchange.

Purpose and approach

The project set out to: (1) establish a snapshot of longform OA production and trends; (2) capture stakeholder aspirations, constraints, and perceptions across diverse contexts; and (3) identify what would be required for a successful and sustainable shift toward open longform scholarship.

Evidence was gathered through a literature review, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups, plus data gathering and modelling. A notable finding is the consistency of themes across methods and regions, despite major local differences in policy environments, infrastructure maturity, and resource availability. The report also makes explicit an important imbalance in the

evidence base: Europe is substantially over-represented in published literature due to longer-standing policy activity and documentation.

Current position

Academic book production increased between 2017 and 2023 followed by a dip in 2024 that is likely pandemic-related given long book production cycles. Even allowing for uncertainty, the data suggest that longform OA remains a minority share of the overall system: fewer than one in five academic books are currently available OA, and under present conditions growth is projected to remain incremental rather than transformative.

Key findings

Taken together, the modelling, literature, and country case studies point to a consistent pattern: longform OA is widely endorsed in principle, but structurally marginal in practice. Progress is uneven, slow, and shaped less by disciplinary or academic “demand” and more by library vision, policy, and funding.



Across regions these patterns recur:

- Data sources are weak. There is no central source for how many books are published overall, how many of these are academic titles, how many of those are OA, and least of all what particular type of OA is being assigned. The large bibliographic services focus on journal articles, and although they may also include books, larger international publishers tend to be over-represented. Many nationally or regionally focused and non-English language publishers do not routinely assign DOIs to books, meaning that many titles are not surfaced in datasets. This lack of measurement is itself a barrier to coordinated action.
- Definitions and priorities vary internationally. While the project began with a working definition focused on monographs, edited collections, and chapters, stakeholder understandings often extend to dissertations, to shortform book-like outputs, and especially to textbooks and educational resources. This matters because scholarly books and textbooks operate with very different economics, policy logic, and incentives. Both are important, but different interventions and stakeholders are needed to progress.
- Longform OA is valued, but rarely prioritised. Support for OA as a public good does not reliably translate into practice because OA books are typically deprioritised in funding allocations, purchasing practices, and academic evaluation and promotion systems.
- Funding is the dominant constraint everywhere, but is experienced differently. In better-resourced systems, funding exists but is capped, fragmented, and misaligned with real costs and workflows. In middle-income contexts, longform OA is generally unaffordable without external support. In lower-income contexts, there is a fascinating divergence: either OA for books is viewed as entirely unaffordable and unfeasible, or it is viewed as the only possible way of implementing open policies given the funding constraints.
- Policy matters, but is partial and uneven. OA policies for books lag those for articles. Policy inconsistency increases complexity. Mandates misaligned with incentives and options that inspire academics have limited impact.



- Prestige and reward systems remain decisive. Evaluation cultures and perceptions of prestige shape publishing choices and, by extension, the feasibility of policy and funding interventions. Mistrust of OA book quality and strong attachment to traditional publishers, especially among senior academics and disciplinary gatekeepers, repeatedly surface as limiting factors.
- Affordable and sustainable open publishing options and infrastructure show promise. The evidence points to credible pathways forward: collaboration across institutions and borders; collective and consortial funding models; support for Diamond OA presses; and practical investment in the “invisible” open infrastructure systems - metadata, discovery, preservation, workflows, and skills - that determine whether open books can be produced and used at scale. Librarians, emerging university presses, and early-career researchers already act as key pathfinders and change agents. The challenge now is to identify the levers required to scale and sustain longform OA so that it can move from early-adoption or marginal add-on status to become a core component of an inclusive and sustainable scholarly communication ecosystem.

Conclusions

The report concludes that longform OA will not scale through isolated pilots, short-term funding, or by applying journal-centric models to books. Nor will it succeed by collapsing distinctions between different book types or by asserting quality and prestige without building trust. Processing charge models risk reinforcing existing disparities.

Sustainable progress requires approaches that recognise the distinct economics and cultures of scholarly books alongside coordinated stakeholder engagement. Collaboration, collective funding models, and innovative publishing initiatives offer credible pathways forward but need to operate at scale and be sustained. The costs for Diamond OA^[1] are likely to be more controllable within the library community and through the use of shared infrastructure. Scale and sustainability are likely to be more achievable in partnership with a broader range of mission-aligned society and university press publishers.

With deliberate strategic alignment and sustained collective investment, longform OA can move from the margins to become a central component of a more inclusive and sustainable scholarly communication ecosystem.

^[1] A scholarly publishing model where journals are free to read for users and free to publish in for authors, with no article processing charges. These journals are typically funded by universities, libraries, or academic societies rather than commercial publishers.



Recommendations

Library stakeholders in Knowledge Equity Network partner countries can:

- 1. Lobby to establish coordinated international leadership for longform OA:** an international coordinating capability focused specifically on longform scholarship is needed to align policy development, influence academic cultures, share evidence, and reduce duplication.
- 2. Make the case to funders to develop explicit approaches to OA for scholarly books:** while open domains can helpfully reinforce one another, journals are different from books, and scholarly books are different from textbooks. There are good reasons to have a clear and explicit policy for longform OA. Open research can lower barriers to incorporating current scholarship into teaching; for example, allowing students to gain exposure to primary research materials rather than secondary summaries. A fully open ecosystem shortens the distance between knowledge production and knowledge transmission.
- 3. Pivot your spend to support sustainable collective funding models and open infrastructure for scholarly books:** OA books fail without invisible labour and systems that need to be sustained. Book processing charge (BPC)-dominant models are inequitable and fragile. Traditional book acquisition practices perpetuate the system you seek to change.
- 4. Academics, libraries, and institutional leaders must work together to build a shared vision and clear objectives to reform academic reward and evaluation systems to include longform OA.** Evidence-based advocacy explaining how affordable longform OA benefits both researchers and research institutions is more likely to gain support than simple calls to action.



Introduction

The University of Leeds Libraries and the Knowledge Equity Network, in partnership with Ateneo de Manila University, University of Auckland, Copim, Universität Hamburg, Universidad Nacional del Sur, University of Nairobi, University of Pretoria, University of Salford, Singapore Management University, Université de Sousse, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and White Rose University Press, sought to better understand the factors influencing the adoption of OA for longform publications in regional and national contexts.

This constellation of organisations provides a unique perspective, led by the Knowledge Equity Network and the University of Leeds Libraries, and involving a broad array of international partners. Together, they are focused on developing multilateral partnerships to tackle global challenges through opening access to ground-breaking, challenge-based research and research-led education. Together, they seek to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals and influence global policy development.

This project provides a timely opportunity to take a snapshot of the current levels of longform outputs and to engage with key international stakeholders - including researchers, libraries, new university and library presses, funders, associations, and advocates - about their aspirations, challenges, and perceptions. The aim is to produce case studies, insights, and recommendations to increase the amount of longform scholarship available OA. The

project outputs also include a model of the current and projected future pace and scale of change and analysis of what would be required for a successful and sustainable shift.

Why is this important? The creation of longform publications provides scholars with a means to explore specific methods of learning and knowledge in-depth, enriched by the reflective practice of thinking through writing. As a result, longform publications are crucial for the development, refinement, and communication of knowledge. This significance is particularly evident in the fields of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, although it extends beyond these areas as well. While journals are typically focused on specific subjects and have quicker publishing cycles, longform works have the potential for greater longevity, impact, and engagement because of their in-depth content and ability to connect across different academic disciplines.



The transition to OA for longform publications involves many challenges already recognised at the outset of the project, and confirmed throughout:

- Current reward and recognition systems, including citation metrics, continue to favour traditional publishing practices. In parallel, global university rankings rely heavily on citation metrics and tend to privilege wealthier, longer established institutions.
- There are risks of deepening existing disparities between disciplines, particularly between the Sciences and the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, both across countries and institutions and within individual institutions.
- Systemic biases risk reinforcing existing hierarchies in academic publishing and may create barriers to equitable participation in emerging OA models, particularly for early-career researchers, under-resourced institutions, those in the Global South, and Humanities and Social Science scholars.
- Institutions in the Global North, although not universally, tend to be more established, better resourced, and research-intensive, placing them in a stronger position to absorb the costs associated with implementing the full spectrum of OA models. This creates the potential for further marginalisation of less financially resilient institutions, both in the Global South and within underfunded institutions in the Global North.
- While OA aims to reduce inequality, relying solely on a processing charge-based model for longform publications - without accounting for global and institutional disparities - risks reinforcing the very inequities stakeholders seek to overcome.
- In addition to ambitious aims to expand publishing opportunities and address historical inequities, there are significant challenges for all actors around affordability, implementation, readiness and sustainability of the creation, dissemination, and preservation of access to longform OA publications.



Approach

This project involved a literature review, interviews, focus groups, data gathering, and modelling. The repetition of themes across desk research, interviews, and focus groups is itself a finding. It reflects a high degree of convergence across stakeholders and regions around the barriers to OA for longform outputs, even where local conditions differ markedly. We reached out to a wide array of stakeholders (e.g., funders, libraries, new university and library presses, and researchers) and had a higher response from libraries and a lower response from funders.

At the same time, the evidence base is uneven, with Europe substantially over-represented in the literature due to longer-standing policy activity and more systematic documentation. Rather than treating this as a limitation to be hidden, this report aims to make the imbalance explicit.

To produce a readable report we summarise our findings in the body, and provide detailed source material in Annexes:

- Semi-structured interviews with at least one stakeholder at each partner institution (Annexe A).
- Focus groups to delve into specific themes and stakeholder groups (Annexe B).
- Background study and literature review (Annexe C).



Current and future trends in OA book publishing

Surprisingly, there is no central source for data about how many books are published each year, let alone how many of them are academic books and how many of those are published OA. This in itself is a key challenge worth addressing.

We used Dimensions AI^[2] from digital science to look at the volume of academic books being published and the proportions of these books that are made available through various OA pathways. Dimensions uses a variety of sources, including Crossref, PubMed, Europe PubMed Central, arXiv, and direct contacts with over 130 publishers to provide publications data. These are typically international publishers. Although it is focused primarily on articles rather than longform, it provides a large enough data sample to be able to investigate trends. Dimensions relies primarily on the Unpaywall^[3] data set for its OA information and definitions.

In this report we follow those definitions. Unpaywall defines OA types by accessibility and licensing:

- Gold is a publication in a fully OA platform with an open licence;
- Green is a toll-access publication available in a free repository (such as arXiv or institutional archives);
- Hybrid longform publications contain a mixture of OA and non-OA chapters; and
- Bronze is free to read on the publisher's site without an open licence, meaning rights remain with the publisher and availability is not guaranteed.

^[2] <https://www.dimensions.ai/>. Data accessed on 15 December 2025.

^[3] <https://unpaywall.org/>



Current book production

The total number of academic books (regardless of OA status) published increased between 2017 and 2023, from 84,000 to 116,000 (Figure 1). This was followed by a dip in 2024. The 2025 data are incomplete at the time of writing and represent a partial year, but the indications are that 2024 was an outlier and 2025 may resume the patterns seen previously.

The 2024 data are likely to be a COVID-19 effect. Given the long gestation times for longform publications, which can take years to write, revise, and publish, it is quite plausible that an excess of books started (or resumed) during the pandemic in 2020 would see publication in 2021–2023. 2024 may represent a return to some sort of steady state after books written during the pandemic have passed through the publishing system.

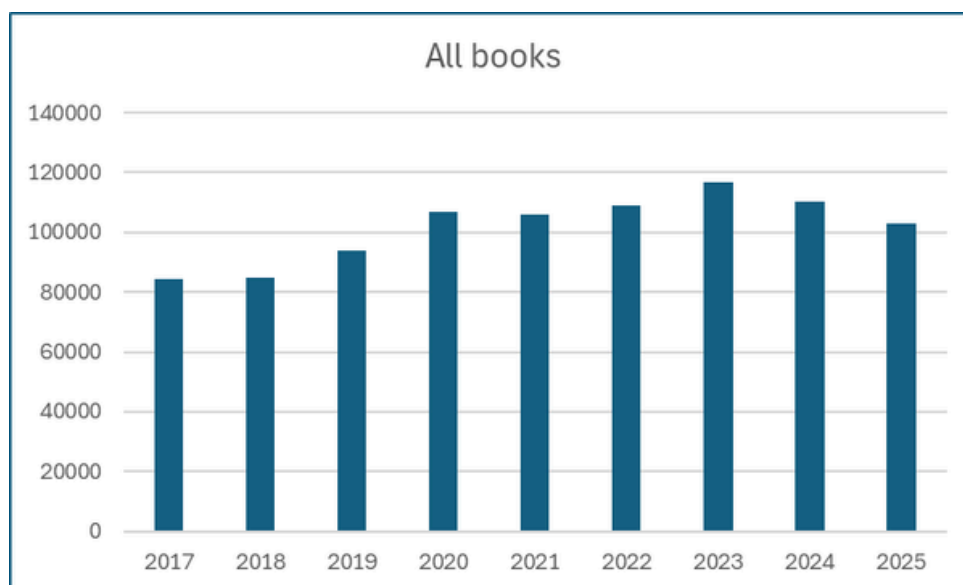


Figure 1: Total numbers of books published by year.

Dimensions distinguishes between monographs (“Book on a single subject or an aspect of a subject, often by a single author”) and edited books (“Edited book or volume comprised of chapters usually written by different authors and harmonised by one or more editors”). The proportion of monographs decreased from 58% in 2017 to 45% in 2024. Most of this change was seen in 2017–2019, when the number of monographs remained roughly stable while the number of edited books increased.



Current longform OA production

Figure 2 shows all titles by access type, with Figure 3 showing the proportion of access type by year. It can be seen that the proportion of OA increased steadily up to 2023. In absolute terms, the number of titles published OA (or flipped after publication—Dimensions does not distinguish between the two) increased from 10,350 in 2017 to 25,530 in 2023. The drop in OA numbers to 16,467 in 2024 is again likely to be due to the COVID-19 effect.

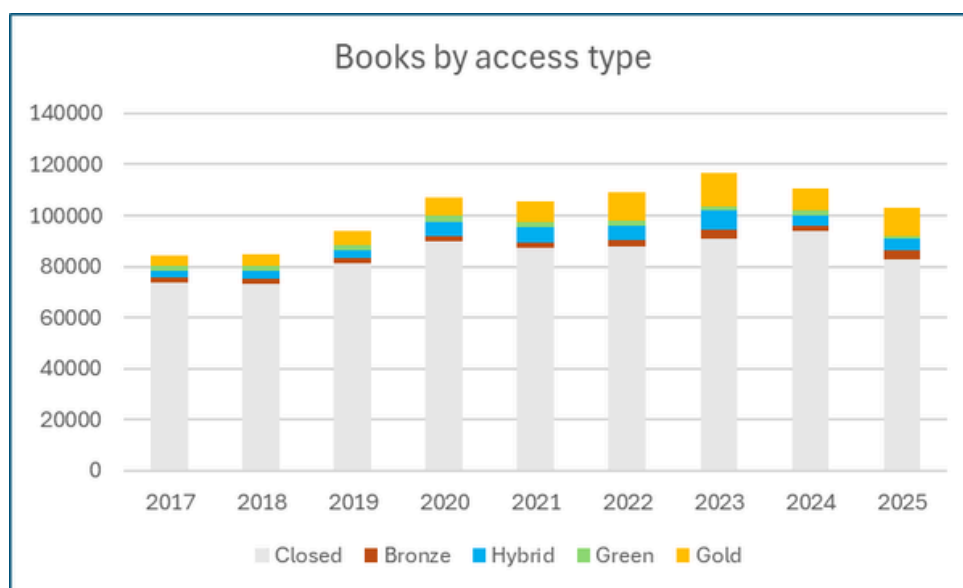


Figure 2: All books by access type (see ‘Current and future trends in OA book publishing’ section for definitions).

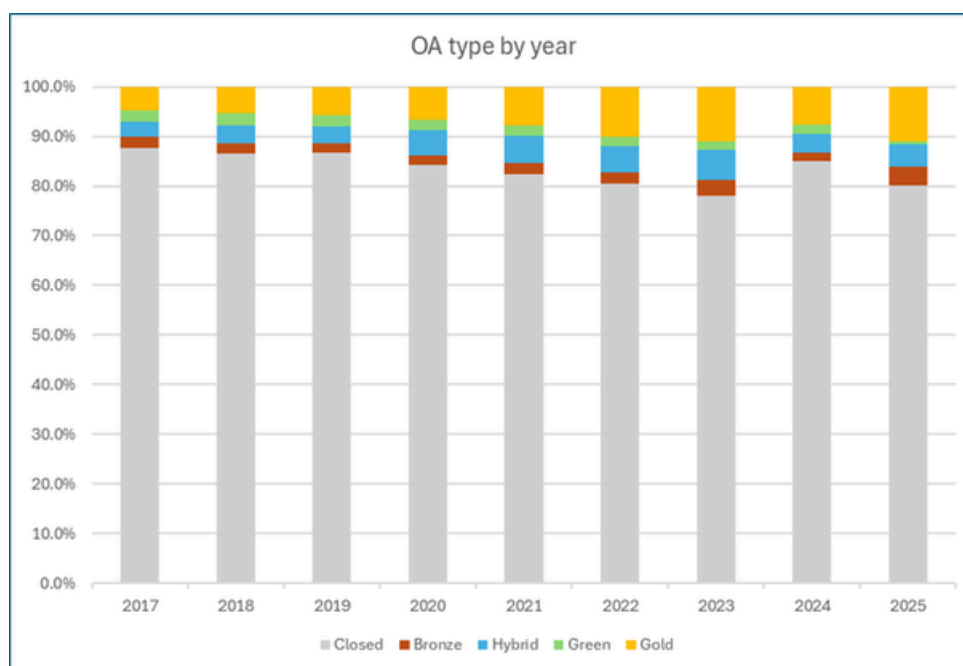


Figure 3: Proportions of access types by year.



Factors driving the increase in OA could include the growth of OA book publishing funded by BPCs (e.g., through publishers such as Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan, De Gruyter, and Routledge) and increasing experimentation with library collective funding models (e.g., Knowledge Unlatched and Open Book Collective).

Looking more closely at the different OA types (Figure 4), we can see that the numbers of Green OA titles remains pretty much constant (the dip in 2025 is no doubt due to timing; more books will be added to the Green OA category as their embargo periods expire). The numbers of Gold and hybrid titles have increased significantly, with the dip in 2024 as noted previously. The reason for the variations in the number of Bronze titles is unclear, but it may simply reflect the difficulty in accurately categorising book OA types, with books being flagged as Bronze if a licence statement is not easily found. A random sampling of “Bronze” books showed that more than half do in fact have CC licences attached. If such discrepancies are noticed and corrected over time, this would explain the apparent increase in recent years.

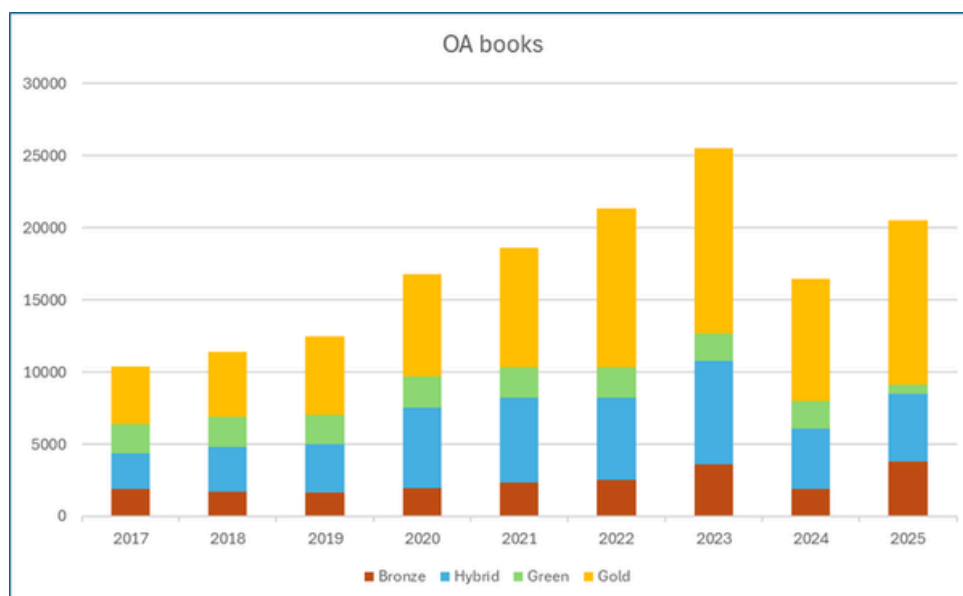


Figure 4: OA titles by OA type.



Future growth projections

Projections of future OA growth are complicated by the 2024 dip. However, if our hypothesis that this is a COVID-19 effect is correct, we can allow for this in our projections. Other factors that could have an impact on future numbers and proportions of OA titles include the following:

- The overall numbers of books and longform publications;
- Limits on university and library funding broadly;
- Limits on OA funding availability explicitly (e.g., for BPCs);
- Structural limits on collective funding models (e.g., where funds for opening titles are based on income derived from paywalled books);
- Implementation of new funding models;
- Development of national OA mandates for longform outputs;
- Increased library demand for OA;
- Development of collective infrastructures for funding, producing, distributing, and promoting OA titles;
- Cultural change among researchers.

Some of these factors would work to increase the numbers and proportions of OA for longform, and some would have the opposite effect.

Extrapolating the data for all books in Figure 1 (excluding the incomplete 2025 data) would give a total book production of approximately 145,000 titles in 2030.

The number of Green OA titles published each year has consistently been around 2,000 per annum from 2017 to 2024. In the absence of major policy or infrastructure changes specifically aimed at Green OA for longform, it seems likely that this figure will hold for the next few years.

For hybrid titles (i.e., edited books in which only some chapters are OA), the numbers have increased over time. There was a marked jump for 2020–2022 and regression analysis gives an R^2 of 0.347; in other words, the trend line is a poor fit. Disregarding the data points for those years (i.e., considering only 2017–19 and 2024–25) gives an R^2 of 0.960, a much better fit. Extrapolating on this basis would predict approximately 6,000 hybrid titles for 2030, in comparison with the 4,687 published to date in 2025.

We will consider Gold and Bronze OA titles together, as it seems likely that many “Bronze” titles are in fact Gold (see above). Extrapolating to 2030, the combined Gold and Bronze OA numbers would be 21,489. There is an argument for dropping the 2023 and 2024 data points as COVID-19-generated outliers; this does not greatly affect the outcome, giving a predicted figure of 22,575.



Comparing these figures with those for 2024 (Table 1), we see that the overall numbers of OA titles would increase from 18,800 in 2024 to 29,500 in 2030, and the proportion of OA would increase from 17.0% to 20.3%. It should be emphasised that these projections are indicative only; as already noted, the Dimensions data are incomplete, and these projections could easily be affected by any of the factors listed above. However, given the relatively long timescales for book production, it may be that such factors would take a while to kick in.

	2024		2030	
	No.	%	No.	%
All books	110,445		145,000	
Green	1,942	1.8%	2,000	1.4%
Hybrid	4,189	3.8%	6,000	4.1%
Gold+Bronze	12,657	11.5%	21,500	14.8%
All OA	18,788	17.0%	29,500	20.3%

Table 1: OA projections for 2030.

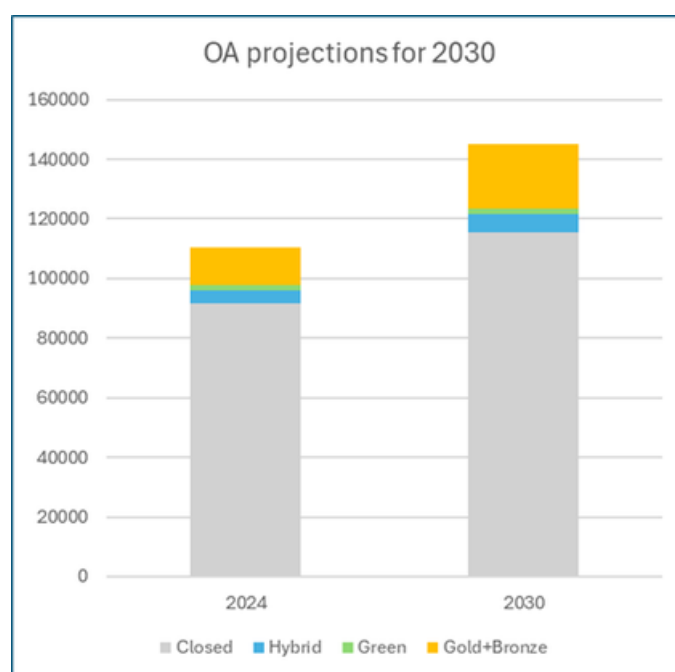


Figure 5: Projections for OA longform in 2030.



Literature review

Our literature review can be found in Annexe C and draws from academic studies as well as diverse grey literature such as reports and policy documents. As will become apparent, there has been a lot of diverse activity in this space during the last decade, with relevant knowledge coming from a broad mix of sources such as academic studies, science policy initiatives, publisher pilots and evaluations, and commissioned reports.

The literature review includes:

- Current global trends and models in OA longform publishing, with particular attention to monographs in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS);
- Regional and national policy developments, including funder mandates and institutional OA strategies;
- Known barriers to adoption such as financial models, reward and recognition structures, infrastructure limitations, and cultural or disciplinary norms;
- Equity and inclusion in OA publishing, especially in relation to alternatives to article-processing charge (APC)-based models;

- Innovative approaches and emerging alternatives to traditional publishing, including collaborative, non-APC, and community-led models.

This review of themes relevant to the adoption of OA for longform publications formed a foundational grounding of the project, serving to inform both further data collection strategies and interpretation of collected data in the project.

The aim has been to be globally inclusive in sourcing materials; however, there is much more information coming from Europe and, to a lesser degree, the United States, than other parts of the world. This is partly due to the strong weight that OA has had within science policy and scholarly publishing within these areas, with a similar pattern also seen concerning publications related to OA for journal articles.

For the literature review we considered academic scholarly peer-reviewed work including monographs, edited collections, critical editions, and other longform scholarly outputs. We did not gather data on textbooks, learning materials, or dissertations. In terms of terminology, 'longform' and 'books' are used interchangeably in this report, referring to the same type of academic output.



Before reviewing individual topic areas, it is beneficial to highlight the current ongoing trends that relate to the overall context of OA books:

- Sustained interest in advancing the adoption of OA books. As evidenced by this current project, there is a sustained interest by different stakeholders to better understand the circumstances for OA book publishing, with a wealth of different reports and studies that have materialised as a result.
- OA models and lessons learned about from the journal publishing space are not directly applicable. There are many aspects that fundamentally differ between the practices of OA in journal publishing and OA in book publishing (e.g., cost structure, content selection, ongoing versus one-off topics and projects) that necessitate the development of other approaches and solutions than those that have worked for journals.
- Policies ahead of widespread adoption. Research organisations and research funders, particularly in Europe, have increasingly started to launch OA policies that cover how the budding practices of OA for books should be choreographed.
- Tensions between centralisation and diversity. There is a need for collective action to support emerging models, but creating centralisation in a diverse landscape presents challenges.
- OA books might be the first foray into digital publishing for many publishers. Solving digital production and technical hosting features while dealing with the added challenges of OA is a lot to take on simultaneously.
- Scholarly publishing is an active area of mergers and acquisitions. OA book publishers and related infrastructures are not insulated from the effects of commercial interests, unless they are set up to be resilient to such changes early on.
- It is not a question of print or OA - they can co-exist. Studies give strong support for print editions being made available for OA works. They help subsidise the cost of production, sometimes being very profitable, and many readers prefer them.



- Pioneering university presses. New university presses and other institutional publishing services have been a key driver for the growth of OA books, often based in or supported by the institution's university library. It has been over a decade since this new wave of university presses started to crop up, most of which were founded as OA presses (Lockett & Speicher, 2016). Based on a landscape study of this new generation of university presses in the UK, the primary drivers for establishing them were reported to be developing OA publishing, as well as demand from/for early-career researchers and academics (including encouraging first-time publishing) (Adema & Stone, 2017). The majority of the presses receive financial support from their institutions and make use of existing staff and resources within the library, which means that they are not required to be entirely financially self-sustaining.



Case studies

We used insights gathered from the literature review, interviews, and focus groups to compile a case study for the country of each project participant. Very few of the countries from which the participants come have an explicit policy framework for OA books. We therefore wanted to illustrate how international paths and contexts for OA differ and converge. The intention here is not particularly to say much about OA for books specifically, but more to convey that movement toward OA has been happening even in countries missing from Euro-centric databases or without longform policies and resources. This movement can provide insight into what foundations might be available to build upon for advancing OA to books.

We utilised data from the Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative (COKI^[4]) to visualise the OA share of publications in the different countries. The COKI data provides a useful basis for a consistent international approach because it assigns publications to countries based on the addresses of organisations the authors are affiliated with. If there are one or more authors with an affiliation to an organisation in a specific country, that publication is counted towards that

country's statistics proportionally to the share of authors co-authoring a publication. So, for example, if there are four authors affiliated with organisations in four different countries, then the publication counts for a weight of 1/4 for each of the four countries. This approach is beneficial in showing the influence of national OA policies, as international publishers are registered all around the world and their locations or OA practices do not give as much insight into local conditions in specific countries.

The COKI dataset is very comprehensive and detailed, integrating data from sources such as Crossref^[5] and Unpaywall^[6], but it only includes outputs with a DOI and crucially is not limited to books but instead includes journal articles, proceedings articles, reports, preprints, edited books, books, book chapters, book parts, book sections, reference books, monographs, reference entries, and others. It is also important to note that the COKI data show the number of current OA publications, but it does not tell us when a publication became open or if there was an embargo period.

^[4] <https://open.coki.ac/how/>

^[5] <https://www.crossref.org/>

^[6] <https://unpaywall.org/>



With the preceding methodological notes we can proceed. Figure 6 presents the Knowledge Equity Network partner countries in descending order of OA percentage for all of the publications covered by COKI data spanning the years 2000–2024. It is interesting to see the global diversity of the top three countries, and particularly that no European country appears in this top group.


















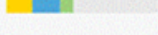


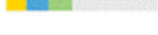





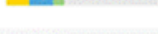


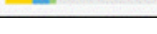
COUNTRY	OPEN ↓	BREAKDOWN PUBLISHER OPEN BOTH OTHER PLATFORM OPEN CLOSED	TOTAL PUBLICATIONS	OPEN PUBLICATIONS
 KENYA	74% 		96,773	71,200
 ARGENTINA	64% 		351,296	225,115
 PHILIPPINES	62% 		103,228	63,579
 NETHERLANDS	55% 		1,451,186	803,318
 SOUTH AFRICA	53% 		505,180	268,598
 UNITED KINGDOM	46% 		5,347,501	2,439,390
 SINGAPORE	45% 		458,178	205,789
 NEW ZEALAND	40% 		351,833	141,937
 GERMANY	40% 		4,583,238	1,819,779
 TUNISIA	33% 		154,759	51,823

Figure 6: OA by country of author affiliation/s. Showing output counts, number, and percentage of accessible outputs published between 2000 and 2024 (<https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



Figure 7 presents the same data for Knowledge Equity Network partner countries in a different way. Here you can more clearly see the total number of publications from the country and the proportion of these that are OA. This illustrates that while countries such as Kenya, Argentina, and the Philippines may have a higher total proportion of publications that are open, this accounts for a very small proportion of the scholarly record.

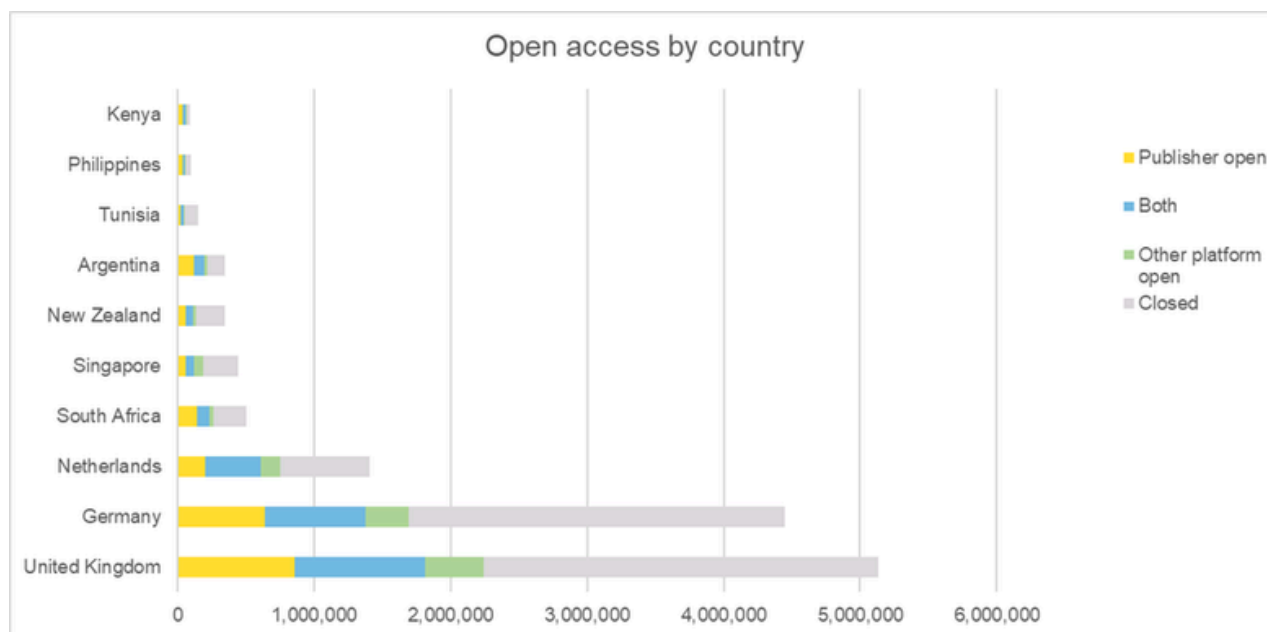


Figure 7: Open access by country of author affiliation/s, scaled according to the overall number of publications (<https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



Argentina

Overview

In 2013, a national law 26.899 was enacted that requires that all research outputs funded from public sources must be made available via Green OA through a national network of institutional repositories. A resolution by the then Ministry of Education of the Nation promoted the creation of institutional distance education systems within higher education institutions, fostering interaction among distance education management units, content development teams, and university libraries. Several public universities have developed digital collections of OER and there is an expectation of creating a National OER Portal through collaboration between the library network (RedIAB) and the distance education network (RUEDA).

Some funding for OA publishing is available as part of research grants awarded and administered by organisations such as the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, FONCyT, and Agencia I+D+i. Universities also contribute through their existing budgets and are largely government funded. Commercial OA publishing services from international publishers are prohibitively expensive and countering publisher monopolies is an explicit strategy.

Diamond OA and posting to repositories play a significant role in OA in Argentina.

- There is an important level of cooperation between libraries, distance education systems within higher education institutions, and university presses, together with the widespread use of interoperable repository systems and related infrastructure.
- Almost all public universities have their own university press, and some of the newer public universities publish their entire output in OA. At the end of 2024 the DOAJ had 377 active OA journals registered from Argentina, 97% of which were Diamond OA, with a modest average APC for the rest of \$2 USD (Crawford, 2025).
- Digital theses, dissertations, and some books published by university presses are disseminated via the network of institutional repositories.
- Longform OA materials are also created within institutions and shared via repositories to support specific objectives. Examples include short OA books to capture and communicate workshop proceedings, to provide guidance for teacher training, and to support the development of distance or blended education, or to provide learning materials to students.

There are also creative international collaborations and partnerships. For example, 100 OA titles from the respected Argentine publisher, Prometeo Editorial, are globally accessible via JSTOR.

Many academics are said to lack knowledge about OA, licensing, and the practical steps to publish OA books. In



particular, there can be a sense of tradition among older faculty members, who don't always see the benefits of publishing OA given the current evaluation systems.

National context

- National mandate for Green OA;
- Some OA funding available via government and institutions;
- Network of interoperable institutional services.

Drivers for OA

- National laws designed to ensure broad access and counter publisher monopolies;
- Funding constraints mean that collaboration is required.

Barriers

- Academic incentives and evaluation criteria;

- Lack of usage and impact data for materials in repositories.

Outlook

- Argentina has OA skills and momentum;
- Librarians express confidence that ongoing training, collaboration, and persistence will continue to expand open science and OA to books, journals, data, and other materials.

Argentina literature review

Figure 8 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to Argentina, from 2001 up to 2024. At the start, the volume of OA outputs was markedly higher than any other country at almost 40%. Around 2015, progress stalled and there appeared to be changes in the nature of OA in Argentina. At this time there is a decline in unique repository-supported OA, as well as growth in OA publishing.

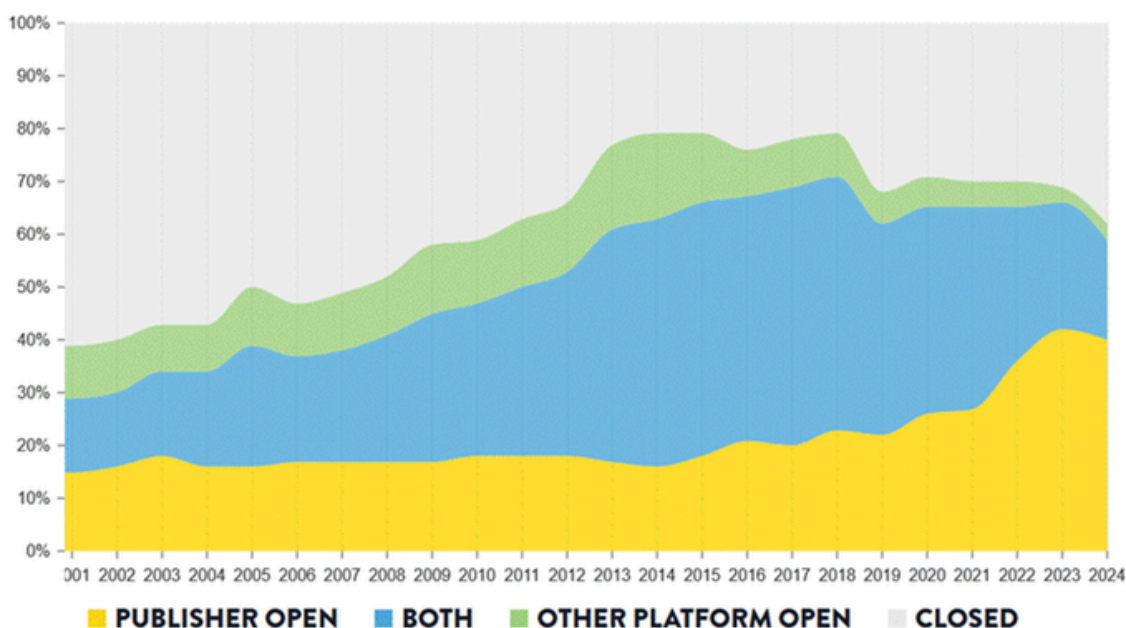


Figure 8: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Argentina-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



Germany

Overview

The DFG and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research both support OA (including funding for infrastructure, software development, and public-private transformation initiatives). The federated structure of Germany means that each of the 16 constituent states have the power to set their own policies.

Influential organisations have policies and funds in place for OA book publishing. This includes the German Research Foundation (DFG), major research institutions such as the Leibniz Association and the Max Planck Institutes, and private funders such as the Volkswagen Foundation. Many universities have OA publishing funds created from existing budgets and/or DFG funding for libraries specifically to support OA publishing.

Germany has a long-established history of publishing that includes institutional and scholar-led publishing, as well as a strong commercial publishing industry. The two largest publishers of OA books in the country are non-commercial institutional presses: KIT Scientific Publishing and Goettingen University Press (Morka & Gatti, 2021). Springer Nature is also based in Germany and is the largest publisher of academic books in the world and a significant OA book publisher.

DFG and a coalition of German research and library organisations fund Diamond OA and library publishing initiatives, particularly through national collaborations such as SeDOA^[7]. The Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Universitätsverlage is a coalition of university-based book publishers in German-speaking countries.

While cultural barriers persist, generational change and growing infrastructure networks are expected to support gradual expansion of OA monograph publishing.

National context

- Longform OA is uneven across the country due to its federal structure; the 16 states operate independently, resulting in fragmented funding and complex legal environments that slow coordination;
- Traditional publishers have considerable influence, and German legal interpretations of EU data protection rules add administrative burden to OA operations.

Drivers for OA

- Research, funder, and university policies;
- Increasing interest in data-rich methods and digital scholarship;
- Recognition of the value of OA for global visibility;

^[7] <https://diamond-open-access.de/en/sedoa/>



- OA aligns with German concerns about user tracking and data exploitation;
- Younger researchers and digital humanities communities are more willing to consider OA models, as are scholars in niche fields underserved by large commercial publishers.

Barriers to OA

- Funding is insufficient and varies by state;
- Entrenched prestige cultures;
- Strong ties between scholars and traditional publishers;

- Perceptions that OA lacks rigorous quality assurance;
- Complex procurement and taxation rules complicate OA transitions.

Germany literature review

Figure 9 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to Germany, from 2001 up to 2024. There was consistent growth between 2001 and 2019, and then rapid acceleration. Around 60% of outputs are now OA.

Repositories have played a consistent minor part in providing OA, and the recent growth appears to be primarily fuelled by publisher-provided OA options (e.g., the OA2020 initiative and DEAL agreements with publishers).

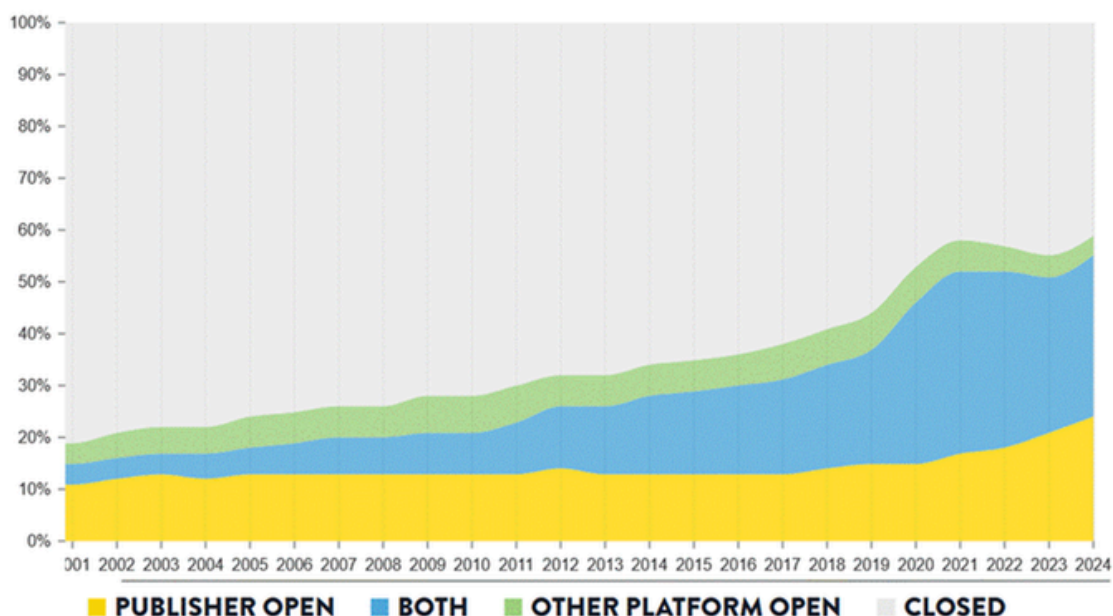


Figure 9: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Germany-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



Kenya

Overview

Academic books and scholarly publishing are important in Kenyan universities for postgraduate students, faculty promotion, and tenure. They are also important for institutional credibility, driven by institutional requirements for research outputs by the Commission for University Education.

Participants described a landscape in which there is no national policy or government funding for OA, and promotion and tenure policies appear to favour publication in journals over books. Published research is necessary for promotion to professor, but professors are able to stop publishing altogether after this. Although professors are not rewarded for writing and some stop publishing, many continue to publish as part of international collaborations or for personal interest.

There are funding challenges for higher education generally, and no deliberate funding for OA publishing. Some researchers co-publish with colleagues from better-funded international institutions. Personal payments for APCs is also widespread (Onaolapo, Ayeni, & Mncube, 2025).

Participants in this project were positive about the potential of OA. They suggested that with OA, policy-makers could access research outputs, which could inform policy. They highlighted a persistent equity issue: Research funded

by international agencies or donors is published abroad, which makes it less accessible to people in Kenya.

From a library perspective, the Kenya Library and Information Services Consortium (KLISC) has played an important leadership role. Many libraries have developed and implemented OA policies, and OJS-based OA journal publishing has happened (Kuchma & Ševkušić, 2024: p. 76). Funding can be a challenge, support from senior university leaders can be weak, and these journals and library presses are fragile. At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 6 active OA journals registered from Kenya, 50% which were Diamond OA, with an average APC for the rest of \$536 USD (Crawford, 2025a).

National context

- Kenya has no national OA policy or funding for books or journals;
- Formal OA book publishing is rare;
- Digitisation is partial and uneven;
- Scholars often rely on external institutions for publication opportunities and waivers.

Drivers

- There can be a strong desire for visibility, citation, and international engagement;
- OA is seen as essential for national development, policymaking, and addressing local challenges.



Barriers

- Funding is the single largest barrier;
- Infrastructure is limited, digitisation capacity is low, and local publishing options are scarce;

Quote from interviewee: “Unless we co-publish with someone from a well-resourced institution like Stanford... we don’t get waivers. So we end up publishing without real access to our own work.”

- Scholars face inequitable access: Kenyan work published abroad becomes inaccessible locally;
- Academics rely on ResearchGate and similar platforms.

Outlook

- Kenya currently has no national policy or incentive for shortform OA, and longform OA is even rarer.

Kenya literature review

Figure 10 illustrates that from 2001 to 2004 Kenya was the overall leader in terms of total OA. Growth has been steady despite the absence of national policies and funding, and around 80% of outputs are now OA. Growth has happened by publishing OA rather than via repositories.

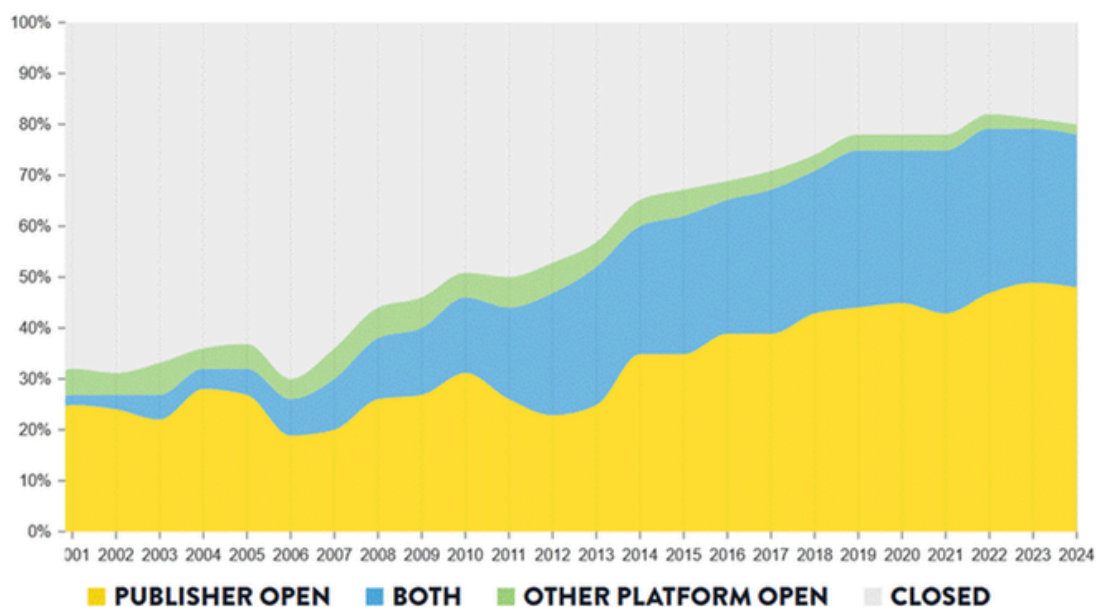


Figure 10: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Kenya-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



The Netherlands

Overview

The Netherlands is internationally regarded as a leader in open science motivated by values such as equity, academic sovereignty, and societal impact. It has achieved exceptionally high levels of OA for journal articles, and there is growing focus on longform OA. NWO, the Dutch Research Council, offers €10,000 for OA books to be published by its grant recipients; however, this often falls short of actual costs. Support for OA monographs remains limited and uneven across institutions. Only a few institutions maintain OA book funds, and these are insufficient to meet demand. There is growing interest in funding collective funding models such as the Open Book Collective.

Some Dutch Universities have new university and library presses that publish Diamond OA books. These presses have formed a consortium for collaboration (<https://nups.nl/>) and benefit from centrally funded shared publishing infrastructure (<https://openjournals.nl/en/>).

As elsewhere, scholars continue to gravitate toward publishing with established commercial publishers, driven by career incentives and perceptions of prestige.

Participants noted that opaque BPC pricing and inconsistent support for OA across disciplines particularly disadvantage the humanities, where books remain central to scholarly communication. They spoke positively of Diamond OA models and collective funding initiatives, which align with the Netherlands' emphasis on fair and transparent scholarly communication. They suggested that national coordination and infrastructure would be needed before OA books could scale meaningfully.

National context

- NWO mandate now requires OA for monographs arising from funded research;
- The NWO provides €10,000 for OA books, but this often does not cover full publication costs;
- A national strategy is emerging that will include longform Diamond OA and shared OA infrastructure;
- A small number of Dutch institutions have funds dedicated to OA monographs;
- There is growing interest in collective funding models.

Drivers

- Values-based motivations - equity, sovereignty, and public knowledge - play a major role. There is growing interest in less commercial, more collective publishing models.



Barriers

Funding for monographs remains insufficient, even in a comparatively well-resourced system:

- Prestige pressures continue to steer scholars toward established commercial presses;
- Disciplines that rely heavily on books (especially humanities) do not receive as much OA funding as others.

Outlook

- The Netherlands is philosophically aligned with OA, and with stronger national coordination and investment, OA monographs can scale.

The Netherlands literature review

Figure 11 illustrates consistent growth in OA outputs between 2001 and 2024, followed by substantial jumps upward in OA, driven by focused policies and consistent practices. Repositories have provided a consistent unique OA share of just under 10% of publications. Unique to the pattern of the Netherlands is a dip in publisher-provided OA in tandem with overall OA growth between 2019 and 2022, which suggests that unlicensed self-archiving may have compensated when the availability of publisher-provided access temporarily decreased.

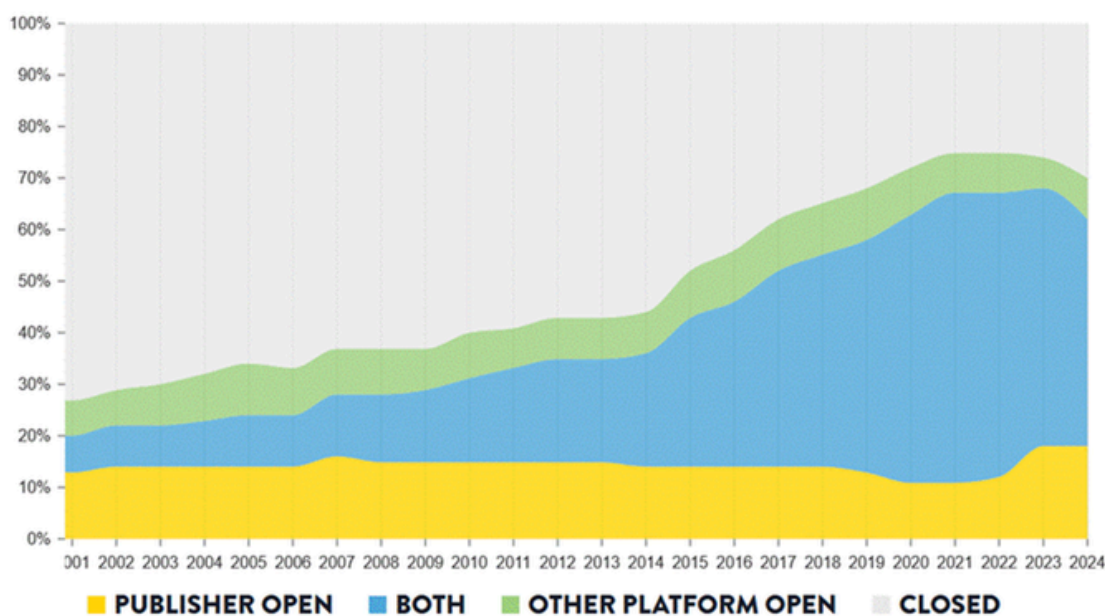


Figure 11: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one author with the Netherlands; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



New Zealand

Overview

From the early 2000s onwards, key advocacy groups and communities of practice have driven significant progress in the promotion and understanding of OA in the country (Catterall, Barbour, & Tairi, 2025). International university rankings remain a key driver for publishing practices, and citations are viewed as important.

New Zealand has been heavily influenced by international OA initiatives. Following trends from Europe, the share of Green OA has been declining during the last 5 years, while the share of payment-enabled OA models such as hybrid and APC-driven journals has grown. At the end of 2024 the DOAJ had 19 active OA journals registered from New Zealand, 18 of which were Diamond OA, with a modest APC for the single remaining journal of \$80 USD (Crawford, 2025a).

The sense is that OA monographs are seen as desirable, but not currently feasible. Interviewees noted that while New Zealand institutions strongly encourage OA to theses, and while researchers often value public engagement, the systems needed to support OA monographs do not exist.

The country lacks a national policy or funding programme for OA books, and universities are still recovering from financial strain after COVID-19, which has tightened budget allocations across the sector. BPCs are prohibitively high, and so researchers seldom pursue longform OA. Researchers were said to struggle with navigating rights-retention and Green OA pathways for books, with many academics said to be unaware that full books or chapters can sometimes be self-archived. Library staff are stretched and do not have the time or structures to support complex OA monograph workflows.

Increasing policy momentum from government and universities could lead to stronger expectations that publicly funded research should be OA. Future changes to the country's research performance framework could also drive change.

National context

- A successful track record in OA, particularly for journal articles;
- No national focus or funding for driving growth in longform OA.

Drivers

- Visibility and reach: OA materials are heavily downloaded internationally;
- Values-driven motivations: contributing knowledge and societal impact.



Barriers

- Funding limitations: no BPC support; OA not part of the national funding culture;
- Infrastructure and administrative systems are not prepared to manage OA book funding;
- Staffing shortages: libraries lack capacity to manage or publish OA books;
- Intellectual property concerns: scholars worry about exposing thesis work before turning it into a book.

Literature review

Figure 12 illustrates that among authors affiliated to New Zealand, approximately 55% of outputs are now OA. Growth has been consistent since 2010 and is driven by OA publishing rather than repository posting.

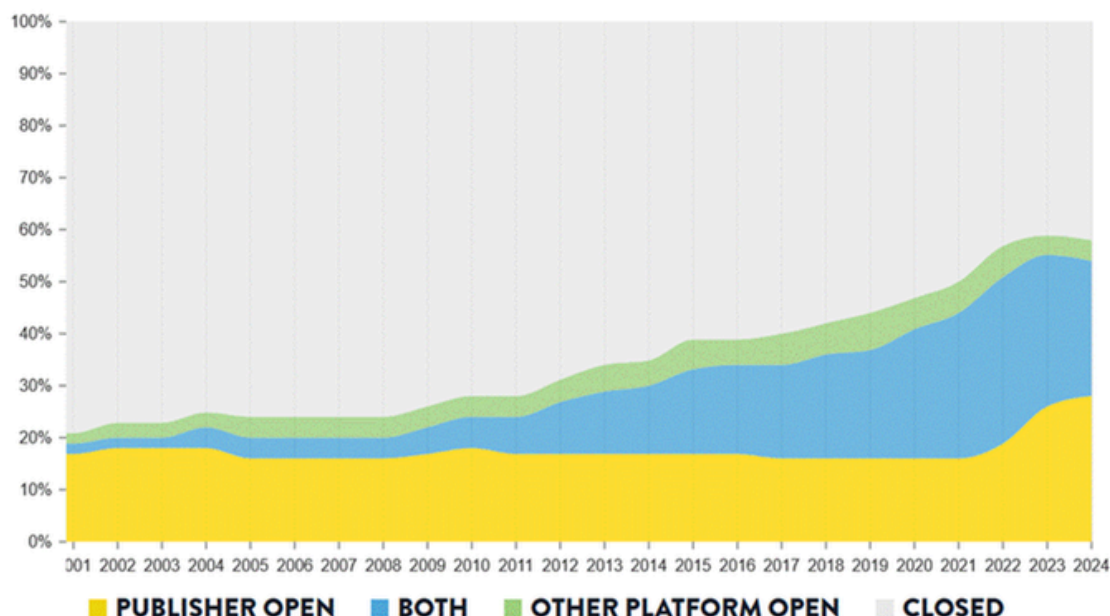


Figure 12: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one New Zealand-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



The Philippines

Overview

In speaking with the interviewees, it became clear that the Philippines' publishing landscape shapes how longform OA is understood and practiced. Participants explained that local books are usually printed in small runs, often selling out quickly and disappearing from circulation. Because of this, they see OA as a way to give Filipino scholarship a "second life" and to reach readers beyond the Philippines. However, the term "longform open access" is not widely used locally; OA in general is familiar, but its application to books is limited.

They described significant financial barriers for both authors and institutions. Even modest OA fees are substantial in the Philippine context^[8], meaning that researchers rarely consider OA publishing unless it is heavily subsidised. Authors also tend to value the physical book and traditional publishing pathways, in part because publishing contracts seldom address OA rights, and in part due to a cultural expectation of royalties, even if modest.

Interviewees noted widespread concerns about copyright infringement, plagiarism, and the possibility of OA works being reused or scraped by AI technologies without consent. These anxieties co-exist with enthusiasm for broader readership, resulting in a cautious but hopeful attitude toward OA.

They stressed that translation support would have a transformative impact: while Filipino scholarship is rich, language barriers limit its global reach. OA could address this, but only if paired with investment in translation and dissemination.

Despite the barriers, they see OA as an opportunity for Filipino authors to reach international audiences and revive out-of-print books. With clearer policy frameworks and sustainable financial models, they believe that longform OA could play a meaningful role in making scholarship from the Philippines more visible and more widely used.

National context

- The Philippines has no national OA policy for books or journals;
- Digitisation is partial and uneven - authors value print runs from traditional publishers.

^[8] At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 31 active OA journals registered from the Philippines, 79% which were Diamond OA, with a modest average APC for the rest of \$16 USD (Crawford, 2025a).



Institutional context

- Very small print runs create limited access to books; OA is seen as a way to give publications a “second life.”

Drivers

- OA extends reach far beyond the Philippines;
- Out-of-print books could be revitalised through OA;
- There is a strong national appetite for technology more generally, even if academic tech lags.

Barriers

- Economic constraints: BPCs are prohibitive, even when “small” by global standards;
- Cultural expectations around royalties, even though real earnings are low;
- Technological and infrastructural gaps in academic contexts;
- Low national funding for OA.

Literature review

Figure 13 illustrates that among authors affiliated to the Philippines, and after a fitful start, there has been consistent growth in OA since 2008. Around 70% of outputs were OA in 2023, with OA predominantly enabled by publishers directly and not through archiving in repositories.

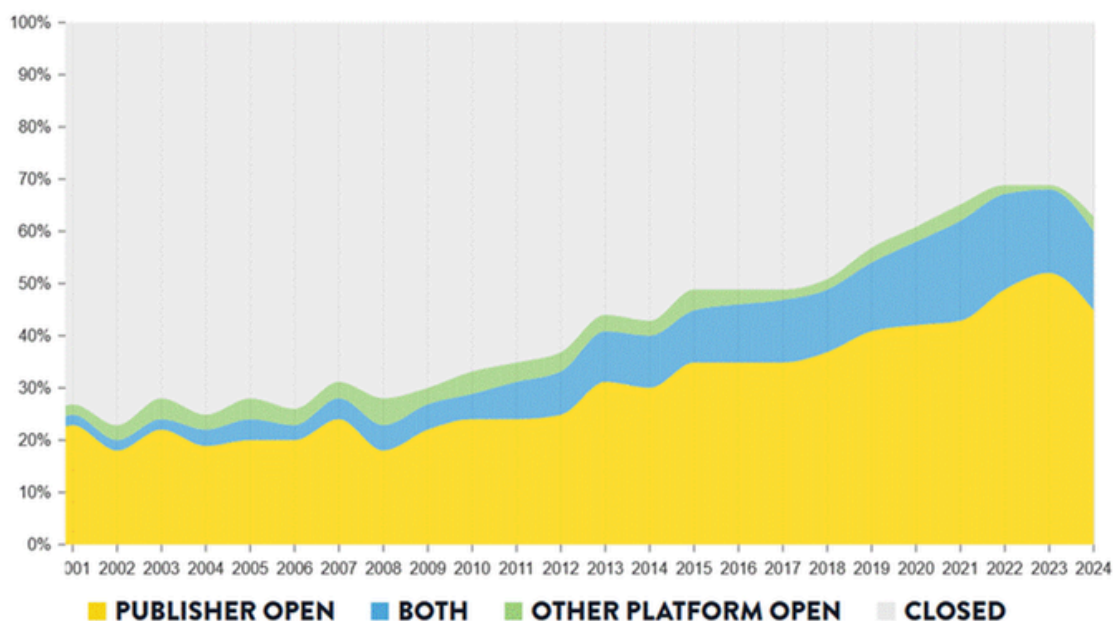


Figure 13: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Philippines-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



Singapore

Overview

Despite its relatively small size, Singapore ranks high on many international measures for research intensity and quality.

Singapore's research environment is shaped primarily by funder requirements and performance metrics, both of which prioritise journal articles over monographs. National grants typically require outputs to be completed and made OA within 12 months, which is an especially challenging timescale for longform research. As a result, there is no funding to support longform OA, and OA monographs are rare.

Promotion and evaluation criteria further discourage longform publishing. Books carry a citation disadvantage compared with journal articles, and journal metrics are deeply embedded in local research culture. Younger faculty members may be more open to OA and to experimenting with nontraditional formats, but structural incentives still push them toward shortform outputs.

Where faculty support OA, they prefer Gold OA because they want their content to be found on publisher websites. Researchers rely on commercial publishers whose contracts often restrict repository access, making it difficult for the university to host OA books even when authors want to share them. Informal self-publishing practices fill some gaps - for instance, internally produced volumes that are shared

digitally - but these are stopgaps rather than structured OA solutions.

Despite these challenges, participants noted examples of successful OA longform work through international collaborations, particularly in law and education.

There is also some evidence of new university and library press publishing, at least for journals. At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 61 active OA journals registered from Singapore, 34% of which were Diamond OA, with an average APC for the rest of \$1,172 USD (Crawford, 2025a). The National University of Singapore, for example, publishes three journals indexed in DOAJ (Liu, 2025).

National context

- Singapore's policy environment prioritises journal outputs;
- There is no national support for OA monographs and no BPC funding;
- Researchers often self-publish volumes, and OA longform materials emerge mainly through international collaborations.

Drivers for OA

- Institutional policies encourage broad dissemination of scholarship;
- Some faculty, especially younger scholars, are said to be increasingly aware of the value of OA;
- Collaborative international projects have produced OA textbooks and OER.



Barriers to OA

- Monographs are deprioritised due to short research cycles, evaluation metrics, and promotion criteria;
- Books carry a citation disadvantage, which reduces career incentives;
- There is no funding for BPCs;
- Repositories cannot host full books due to copyright restrictions.

Outlook

- Singapore's structural incentives favour journal publishing, limiting the feasibility of longform OA. Cultural change would depend on shifts in national policy, funding, and evaluation frameworks.

Literature review

Figure 14 illustrates that among authors affiliated to Singapore, OA outputs have grown consistently since 2008. Among the countries included in this analysis, Singapore has a relatively high share of outputs made available OA through repositories only (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has been supported by archiving in repositories; however, that share is still less than 10% of all publications for any given year and has been declining.

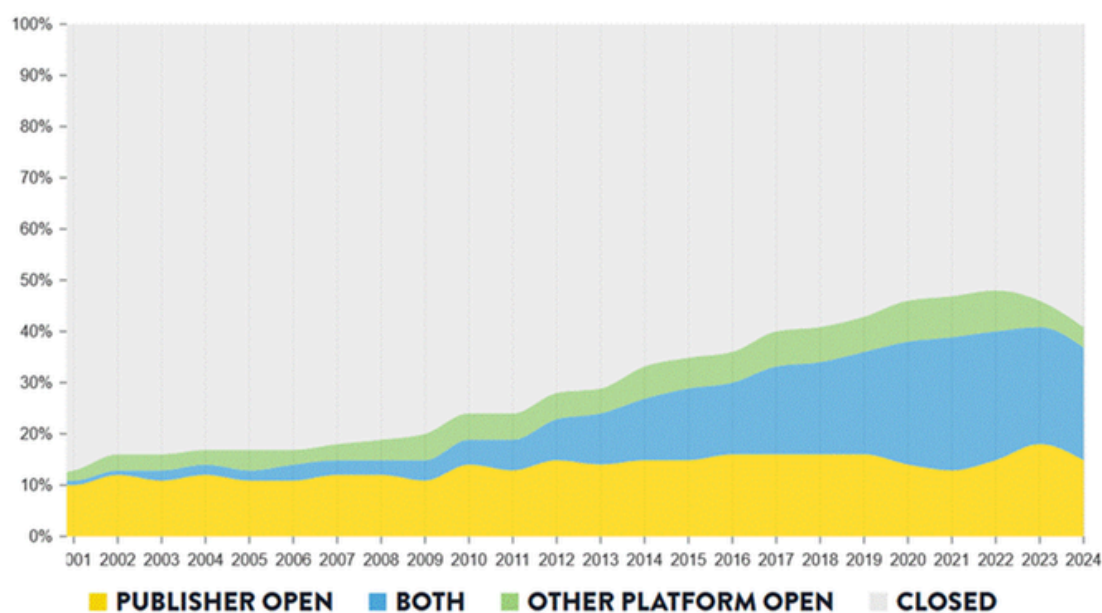


Figure 14: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Singapore-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



South Africa

Overview

Several key organisations in South Africa signed the Berlin Declaration of Open Access between 2011 and 2014. In 2015, South Africa's National Research Foundation required that all publicly funded peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings be made available in repositories within 12 months of publication. So, while South Africa has some high-level guidance encouraging open science, there are no mandates or dedicated funding.

Under these conditions, OA generally and longform OA particularly, is perceived as desirable but unrealistic and shaped by resource constraints, institutional pressures, and concerns about research quality. Institutions are left to interpret guidance and implement OA independently, and still struggle with the costs and implications of OA for journals, research data management, and open infrastructure. Libraries and research offices struggle to build the staffing, workflows, and publishing expertise needed to sustain OA practices. Concerns about predatory publishing continue to influence academic committees, leading many researchers - especially senior staff - to favour traditional publishers and perceived "safe" publication routes.

Humanities and social sciences researchers lack the grant funding to publish OA monographs even if they wish to do so. Faculty therefore rarely consider OA for books, unless supported by external grants or international collaborators.

Interviewees expressed optimism about the potential of OA to increase the reach and relevance of South African scholarship. They highlighted growing interest among early-career researchers and among disciplines where the societal impact of research is particularly important and visible, such as health sciences and education. They also pointed to strengthening regional and international collaborations, which they view as essential for building capacity, learning from other OA ecosystems, and advocating for more robust national frameworks.

National context

- South Africa has a national OA framework for journal articles, but not for longform OA;
- Funding is limited.

Drivers for OA

- Researcher commitment and growing interest in equitable access;
- The experience of developing OA resources during the pandemic strengthened institutional awareness of open models;
- STEM researchers demonstrate comparatively higher interest in OA.



Barriers to OA

- High publishing costs;
- Concerns about predatory publishing continue to undermine trust in OA venues;
- Open monographs are not integrated into promotion frameworks;
- Limited skills, staffing, and internal publishing infrastructures within libraries.

Outlook

- Longform OA is expected to progress slowly without focused national policy and more funding.

Literature review

Figure 15 illustrates that, since 2001, authors affiliated to South Africa have consistently increased their OA outputs to around 65%. The environment for facilitating OA has similarities with some of the most advanced countries in Europe when it comes to OA journal article output and the models used to achieve it. Transformative agreements with publishers had a marked effect on making articles originating from South African researchers available OA (USaF, 2023). A small share of outputs are only made available through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has particularly happened through publishing OA. At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 155 active OA journals registered from South Africa, 20% which were Diamond OA, with an average APC for the rest of \$428 USD (Crawford, 2025a).

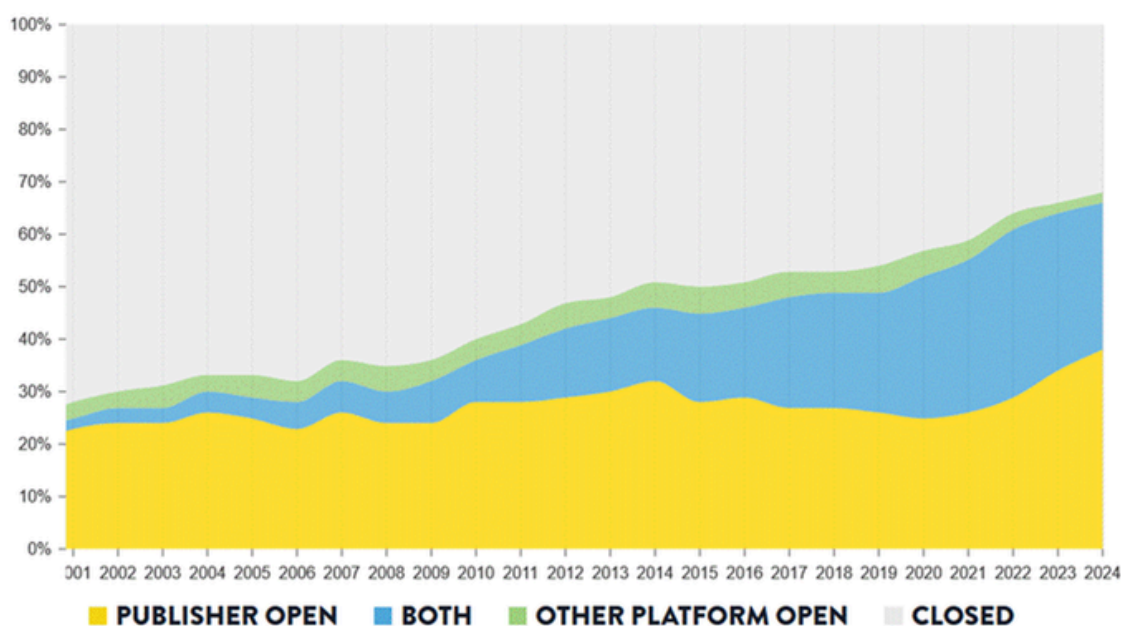


Figure 15: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one South Africa-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



Tunisia

Overview

Traditional publishing routes are still favoured for academic hiring and promotion decisions. OA in Tunisia is still in an early developmental stage and longform OA is not a priority, and there is no national policy framework. Institutions are still grappling with basic issues around OA journals, research data, and educational research. Concerns about predatory publishing mean that publication in hybrid journals and traditional publishing routes is still favoured for academic hiring and promotion decisions. OA publishing fees are prohibitively high relative to local salaries, meaning researchers often cannot afford to publish OA. Younger scholars and those in medical fields are showing more interest in OA, suggesting that cultural change may come through generational shifts.

Despite the constraints, participants expressed optimism about the potential of OA to broaden the impact of Tunisian research. They are keen to engage in international collaborations, and see dialogue with colleagues abroad as essential for building capacity and developing national frameworks. Their reflections suggest that while longform OA is not imminent, foundational work in OA journals and infrastructure could eventually enable broader adoption.

National context

- OA is in early development;
- Longform OA is not currently on the national agenda. Efforts focus on OA journals, open data, and OER;
- Distrust of OA journals due to predatory publishing and retractions.

Drivers for OA

- Pandemic-driven development of OER has strengthened interest in open approaches broadly;
- Younger academics and medical researchers show growing interest in OA;
- Some early projects focus on Diamond OA publishing and ORCID adoption.

Barriers to OA

- No national OA policy;
- Affordability of OA publishing and services;
- Cultural mistrust of OA journals and fear of predatory publishers;
- Lack of expertise, capacity, and infrastructure.



Outlook

- Foundational OA structures for journals and data are still being built. International collaboration is seen as essential for capacity building.

Literature review

Figure 16 illustrates two distinct and sustained bursts of OA activities by authors affiliated to universities in Tunisia - one in 2010 and the other in 2019. Only a small share of outputs are only made available through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has been driven by OA publishing, often in collaboration with international peers such as those in Saudi Arabia. At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had five active OA journals registered from Tunisia, all of which were Diamond OA (Crawford, 2025a). The slight decrease during 2023 and 2024 is only due to a time lag between publication and the date the publication becomes OA.

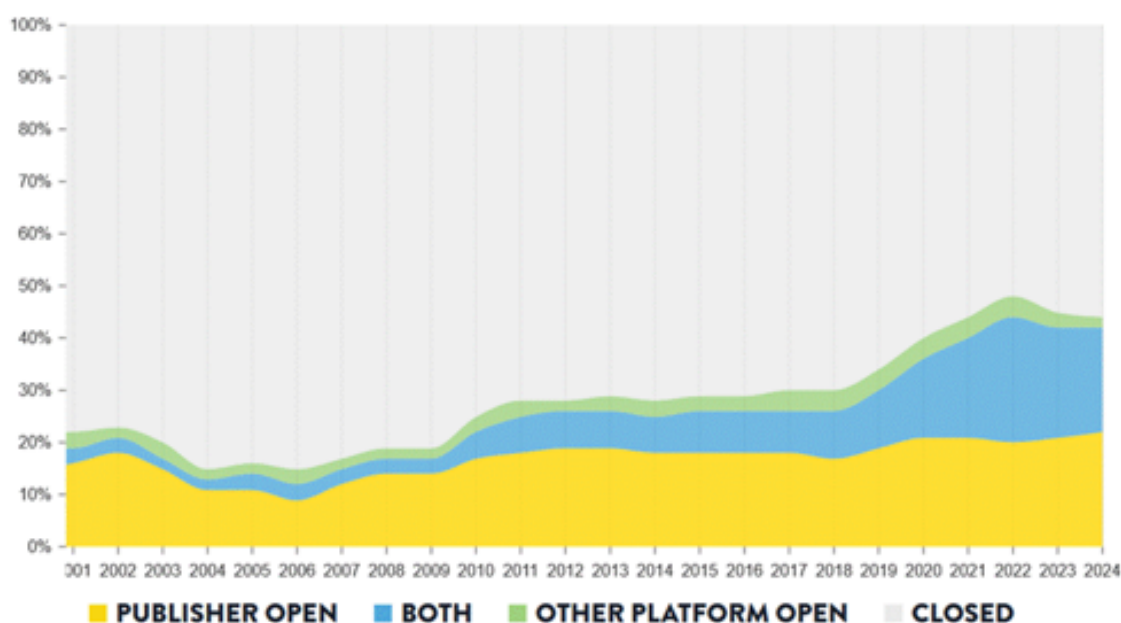


Figure 16: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Tunisia-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025). NB: The dip in 2023 and 2024 only reflects a time lag between publication and the time some publications become available OA.



United Kingdom

Overview

Recognised as a leader in OA and open science, and well advanced in OA for journals, longform OA is in development. The UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) mandate for OA books is a primary driver of change.

The UK has been home to some of the most impactful advancements in furthering practices for OA books. After a decade of high-level science policy preparation and debate in the UK (Crossick, 2015; Universities UK Open Access Monographs Group, 2019), the UKRI introduced an OA mandate for monographs, book chapters, or edited collections for works published after 1 January 2024. The UK debate is now around the details of how to enable more OA book publishing by authors and how other actors and processes in the UK landscape could facilitate OA for books; for example, through its inclusion as a requirement of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). REF is the UK's system for assessing the excellence of research in UK. The COPIM (Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs) project that ran from 2019 to 2023, and then continued as the Open Book Futures project, has spawned a lot of new knowledge as well as real-world products and services specifically for OA books, such as Thoth Open Metadata, Open Book Collective, and Opening the Future.

Most longform OA works are published by commercial presses, with BPCs often greater than £10,000. New university and library presses, and other Diamond OA publishing presses, are growing but remain limited. While presses such as Open Book Publishers and Punctum provide non-BPC alternatives, there are not enough to guarantee authors OA pathways from the outset. Longform publication remains central for hiring, promotion, and tenure in the humanities and social sciences.

Librarians described strong interest in supporting longform OA and active participation in collective funding models such as the Open Book Collective. However, even the best resourced institutions struggle with funding, and research-intensive universities are significantly better resourced than teaching-intensive institutions. Interviewees highlighted author behaviour as a barrier: Many scholars think about OA late in the publication process, often after signing contracts. Senior academics, in particular, continue to view traditional publishers as more prestigious. Discovery challenges, the lack of national procurement agreements for OA books, and the long lead time between payment and publication all add further obstacles.

Despite these challenges, interviewees were optimistic about collective approaches. They expressed interest in learning from international contexts, especially Diamond OA models common in Latin America. They stressed that mandates, infrastructure investment, and experimentation with new publishing models will be essential for the UK to transition toward a more equitable longform OA ecosystem.



National context

- The UKRI mandate now requires OA for monographs arising from funded research;
- Universities can apply for reimbursement of BPCs for in-scope, UKRI-funded research outputs through a dedicated, centrally held fund.

Drivers for OA

- Funder requirements;
- Scholarly values of accessibility and societal impact;
- Library-based publishing models;
- Collective funding initiatives (e.g., Open Book Collective);
- Innovative library–publisher projects (e.g., Trailblazers programme for early-career researchers).

Barriers to OA

- Significant structural changes and funding pressures for UK universities;
- Uncertainty around REF policy for books;
- Costs;
- Author perceptions of quality and service from OA publishers can lag behind reality;
- Authors are concerned, rightly or wrongly, that OA publishers are viewed as less prestigious by colleagues;
- Uneven resources and support;
- Insufficient Diamond OA capacity to guarantee authors a publishing OA venue;
- Concerns about AI and lack of attribution.

Outlook

- The UK is ahead structurally, but still constrained by economic challenges and academic choices of where to publish.



Literature review

Figure 17 illustrates consistent growth in OA by authors affiliated to the UK, with around 65% of outputs now OA. Among the countries included in this analysis, the UK has a relatively high share of outputs only made available OA through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph). There has been a noticeable jump in the “Publisher open” category in the last 3 years, driven by national agreements via Jisc.

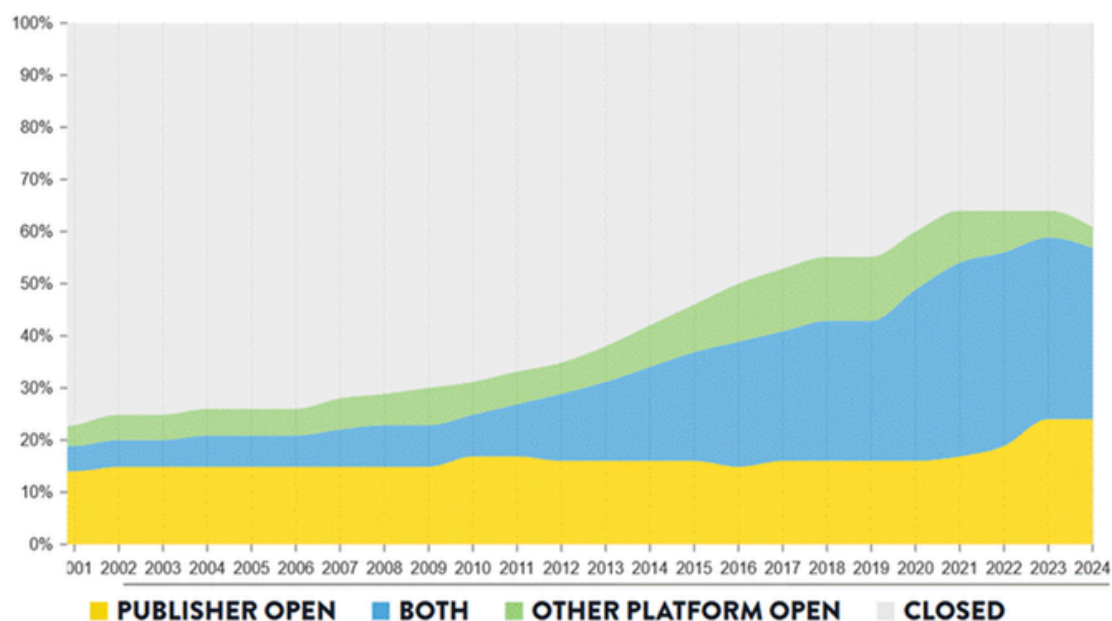


Figure 17: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one UK-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



Key findings

Taken together, the modelling, literature, and case studies point to a common pattern: longform OA is widely endorsed in principle, but structurally marginal in practice. Progress is uneven and slow, and shaped less by disciplinary needs or academic demand and more by library vision, policies, and funding.

Data sources are weak

There is no central source for how many books are published overall, how many of these are academic titles, how many of those are OA, and least of all what particular type of OA is being assigned. The large bibliographic services focus on journal articles, and although they may include books in addition, coverage tends to be based in large part on direct contact with publishers, so the larger international publishers are over-represented. These databases may also import data from sources such as Crossref, and the presence of a DOI is taken as indicative of an academic book. However, we have found that many national publishing environments do not yet routinely assign DOIs to books, meaning that many titles are not surfaced by these means.

The definition of, and need for, open books differs around the world

The project team started with a shared definition that longform outputs were monographs, edited collections, or book chapters. During the project itself it emerged that this definition is appropriate for many, although not all, scholarly outputs. However, it misses the strong interest among some stakeholders for open textbooks and other educational resources.

Our participants had varying personal definitions of longform OA. For most, the definition included any whole book or book-length work produced by scholars. For some, relevant longform materials included dissertations, learning materials, and textbooks. Others had broader definitions still:

“We produced open access proceedings. I believe this can be considered an example of a short open access book.”

“We have also created short books - guides for developing distance or blended education at our university.”

“As a composer and musicologist, “long form” applies to both written and musical works in my field.”



Longform OA is widely valued, but rarely prioritised

Across all regions, participants articulated strong in-principle support for longform OA as a public good. However, this support rarely translates into publishing decisions, because OA books are not prioritised for funding or purchase or within academic evaluation and promotion systems.

Despite more than a decade of experimentation, longform OA remains at an early stage of adoption. Global data suggest that fewer than one in five academic books are currently available OA, with growth projected to remain incremental rather than transformative under current conditions.

OA adoption levels vary by region and nature

In Europe, there is a wide range of practices from countries with clear longform OA policies, and some funding to countries that are at a much earlier stage in their OA journey. Funding for OA exists in small pockets, but it varies widely across countries and institutions, and generally does not cover the costs of longform publishing. Institutional policy environments are inconsistent: some universities encourage depositing publications in repositories, but few have any formal guidelines around monographs, funding mechanisms, or rights-retention policies. Many librarians lack full insight into how publishers and publishing operate, or how to support authors through the book-production cycle. While in some countries there is an ecosystem of new university and library presses, this is far from universal, and even where these presses exist they are beyond the financial reach of many institutions.

In other places (e.g., Kenya and Tunisia), there appeared to be no longform OA and it was not thought of as feasible in the short to medium term, and so we used our time with colleagues to learn more about how OA for journal articles is developing. In these regions, widening access to books was an important focus, and initiatives are underway to broaden access in a variety of ways. For example, in many countries there are initiatives to broaden access to published printed books through digitisation programmes to make them available online.



Funding is the dominant constraint everywhere, but experienced differently

For all participants, cost was named as the biggest barrier to participating in longform OA.

While funding is cited as the dominant constraint everywhere, its effects differ markedly: from affordability and prioritisation challenges in well-resourced systems, to either the key driver or the insurmountable barrier in resource-constrained contexts:

- Well-resourced contexts (e.g., Germany, the Netherlands, the UK) where OA for journals is well advanced and OA for books is in clear focus. Funding for longform OA exists but it is capped, fragmented, insufficient, or misaligned with costs and working practices;
- Middle-income contexts (e.g., the Philippines, South Africa), where OA for journals is advancing but still a work-in-progress but longform OA is prohibitively expensive without external support;
- Low-income contexts (e.g., Kenya, Tunisia), where OA for journals is advancing but remains challenging, and where OA for books is prohibitively expensive;
- Low-income contexts (e.g., Argentina), where OA is mandated by law and there is little funding, which forces collaboration.

OA policies for books lag article policies

OA has become a strong emphasis area within science policy in many parts of the world over the last 20 years, shaping and creating demand for specific OA mechanisms in a time when there have been many competing paths available to reach the ultimate end goal of content being available OA on the web.

The complexity around scholarly books is profound without the additional complication of bundling in OA for textbooks and learning materials (let alone other resources), which have very different dynamics and require different policy contexts.

Books are extraordinarily important for scholarship in arts, humanities, and social science disciplines in particular, and there are many different types of relevant books. Setting policies that are compatible with these dynamics is a challenge.

Participants in interviews and focus groups also repeatedly emphasised that policy inconsistency is itself a barrier, in terms of complexity and because authors will not change their publishing behaviour without stable mandates or incentives.



Prestige and reward systems remain decisive

Prestige and reward systems are not a secondary barrier to longform OA but a structuring force shaping all other constraints, including author behaviour, funding, and policy development.

A recurring theme amongst library project participants was the systemic rewards for traditional publication and the status marker of having a purchasable, traditionally published book. Several participants mentioned that there is general mistrust of the quality of OA book publishing among academics. One interviewee called explicitly for a cultural shift in the way academics view publishing, from prestige building to dissemination and access, if longform OA is to succeed.

Taken together, these findings suggest that longform OA will not scale through isolated interventions or library will alone. Progress depends on aligned change across funding models, policy design, infrastructure, and academic reward systems, supported by international collaboration and sensitivity to regional context.

Affordable, sustainable publishing options and infrastructure is crucial

The evidence points to credible pathways forward: collaboration across institutions and borders; collective and consortial funding models; support for Diamond OA presses; and practical investment in the

“invisible” open infrastructure systems - metadata, discovery, preservation, workflows, and skills - that determine whether open books can be produced and used at scale. Librarians, emerging university presses, and early-career researchers already act as key pathfinders and change agents. The challenge now is to find the levers required to scale and sustain more so that longform OA can move from an early-adoption or marginal add-on stage to become a core component of an inclusive and sustainable scholarly communication ecosystem.

The costs for Diamond OA are likely to be more controllable within the library community and through the use of shared infrastructure. Scale and sustainability are likely to be more achievable in partnership with a broader range of mission-aligned society and university press publishers.

A resilient OA ecosystem depends on shared, community-owned infrastructure that is transparent, sustainable, and globally inclusive. Three complementary initiatives - POSI, SCOSS, and IOI - provide mutually reinforcing frameworks for identifying which such infrastructures to support:

- POSI (<https://openscholarlyinfrastructure.org/>) defines the governance, transparency, and sustainability principles that make infrastructures trustworthy;
- SCOSS (<https://scoss.org/>) coordinates collective, multi-year funding for open infrastructure services that cannot raise adequate funds independently;



- IOI (<https://investinopen.org/>) analyses the health of the open infrastructure ecosystem, promotes equitable global participation, and advises on strategic, data-driven investment.

Supporting infrastructures that align with at least two of these frameworks strengthens the wider system on which small and mission-driven publishers depend. Contributions to these initiatives help ensure that essential services remain community-owned, transparent, and technically sound.

Function	Infrastructure	Alignment
Metadata and identifiers	Crossref DataCite ORCID ROR OpenCitations Thoth	POSI / SCOSS
Discovery	DOAJ DOAB OAPEN OpenAlex OPERAS OpenCitations	POSI / SCOSS POSI / IOI
Hosting platforms	PKP Janeway Fulcrum OPERAS Scielo Redalyc / AmeliCA AJOL	POSI / SCOSS IOI
Preservation	CLOCKSS PKP-PN	POSI / SCOSS
Usage metrics	COUNTER	POSI / IOI
Messaging	OA Switchboard	POSI / IOI



Conclusion

This study demonstrates that longform OA is widely valued across regions, disciplines, and stakeholder groups, yet it remains structurally marginal within contemporary scholarly communication systems. Despite sustained policy attention, experimentation with funding models, and strong normative support, fewer than one in five academic books are currently available OA. Under present conditions, growth is likely to remain incremental at best.

The evidence suggests that this stagnation is not the result of limited goodwill or insufficient innovation. Rather, it reflects a systemic misalignment between incentives, funding mechanisms, and academic reward structures. Until those structural conditions change, progress will remain constrained.

The findings also clarify what is unlikely to succeed. Longform OA will not scale through isolated pilots or short-term funding interventions. It will not scale by simply extending journal-centric models to books nor by conflating distinct categories of books such as scholarly monographs and textbooks, which operate within different stakeholder ecosystems and incentive structures. It will not scale by more loudly asserting the quality or prestige of OA presses and publications; credibility and trust cannot be declared and must be earned over time.

Processing charge-based approaches, particularly when implemented without sensitivity to global disparities, risk entrenching existing inequities. Without deliberate intervention, the transition to OA for scholarly books risks deepening existing inequities. Well-resourced institutions and internationally oriented publishers are best positioned to comply with emerging OA policies while scholars in under-resourced contexts, national and regional publishers - and disciplines reliant on books - face rising barriers to participation. In this sense, openness alone is not a guarantee of equity.

Longform OA requires approaches that recognise the distinct economics, cultures, and audiences of scholarly books. Sustainable progress will depend on systemic alignment and stakeholder engagement tailored to the specific dynamics of longform scholarship.

At the same time, the project identifies significant opportunities. Collaboration (both national and international; between academics and libraries; and between libraries and at least some publishers), collective funding models, and new innovative approaches to OA publishing offer credible pathways to more equitable longform OA. Librarians, new university presses and publishing services, and early-career researchers are already driving change. With coordinated action, longform OA can evolve not as a marginal add-on, but as a core component of an inclusive and sustainable scholarly communication ecosystem.



Recommendations

Knowledge Equity Network partners should consider how the following recommendations can be applied to their contexts to enable progress in the adoption of OA longform:

1. Lobby to establish coordinated international leadership for longform

OA: An international coordinating capability focused specifically on longform scholarship is needed to align policy development, influence academic cultures, share evidence, and reduce duplication. **Actions:**

- Work to develop national and regional recommendations for longform OA priorities and practice;
- Convene funders, libraries, publishers, and scholars around longform OA specifically (distinct from journals or textbooks);
- Act as a clearing house for policies, models, cost data, and policy guidance;
- Ensure meaningful participation from Global South institutions and national/regional publishers.

2. Make the case to funders to develop explicit approaches to OA for scholarly

books: While open domains can helpfully reinforce one another, journals are different from books, and scholarly books are different from textbooks. There are good reasons to have a clear and explicit policy for longform OA. Open research can lower barriers to incorporating current scholarship into teaching; for example, allowing students to gain exposure to primary research materials rather than secondary summaries. A fully open ecosystem shortens the distance between knowledge production and knowledge transmission. **Actions:**

- Research funders should develop explicit OA policies for scholarly books that are distinct from journal policies or textbook/learning material policies;
- Mandates should be paired with realistic funding and implementation guidance, not aspirational statements alone;
- Defend bibliodiversity by addressing inequities of scale facing smaller publishers.



3. Pivot your spend to support sustainable collective funding models and open infrastructure for scholarly books: OA books fail without invisible labour and systems that need to be sustained. BPC-dominant models are inequitable and fragile. Traditional book acquisition practices perpetuate a broken system.

Actions:

- Scale collective and consortial models (e.g., Direct to Open, Fund to Mission, Open Book Collective, Opening the Future);
- Support Diamond OA capacity building and infrastructure at national or consortial levels;
- Invest in shared services aligned with the Principles of Open Scholarly Infrastructure (POSI), the Global Sustainability Coalition for Open Science Services (SCOSS), and Invest in Open Infrastructure (IOI), which provide mutually reinforcing frameworks.

4. Academics, libraries, and institutional leaders must work together to build a shared vision and clear objectives to reform academic reward and evaluation systems to include longform OA. Evidence-based advocacy explaining how affordable longform OA benefits both researchers and research institutions is more likely to gain support than simple calls to action. **Actions:**

- Leverage initiatives to evolve research and organisational cultures. Align advocacy for affordable longform OA with wider efforts on how research is managed and undertaken, how research ensures value, and how people are supported;
- Campaign for and procure improved bibliographic datasets and services. Open data are needed to track the number of books published, how many are academic, what proportion are OA, and which OA models authors choose;
- Use persistent identifiers. Add DOIs and other unique identifiers to publications, and encourage academics and funders to do the same;
- Invest in metadata and usage-tracking infrastructure and metrics for books. Usage and impact metrics for longform OA publications exist - for example, through COUNTER - but they differ from traditional metrics because they reflect global use rather than access limited to specific institutions. Institutions should embrace these global metrics;



- Collect and share evidence of impact. Gather data and success stories about the reach and influence of OA books, and use this to influence academic publishing choices;
- Convene stakeholders. Bring together academics and librarians to address this shared challenge. Recognise that reputations for academics, publishers, and universities develop gradually. Consider how this affects the growth of OA longform publishing, and how barriers might be addressed;
- Advocate at a national level for OA monographs to be recognised in evaluation frameworks;
- Recognise OA monographs in institutional assessment. Institutions should explicitly value OA monographs in promotion and evaluation processes;
- Promote informed publishing choices. Academics and their assessors should be equipped to carry out due diligence checks to evaluate for quality and good practices when selecting OA book publishers (e.g., using <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/books-and-chapters/>).



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Interviews

1. Dr Nibert Basweti - Lecturer at the Department of Linguistics and Languages at the University of Nairobi
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4. Lilia Cheniti - Associate Professor and Researcher in Computer Science at the Université de Sousse
5. Rachel Chidlow - Research Services, University of Auckland
6. Victor Ferracutti - Central Library Director, Universidad Nacional del Sur
7. Tom Grady - Copim/Birkbeck College, University of London
8. Nancy Ferracutti Kincaide - Director of Distance and Continuing Education at Universidad Nacional del Sur in Bahía Blanca, Argentina
9. Ouajdi Korbaa - Professor at the Institute of Computer Science and Communication Techniques, University of Sousse
10. Allison Levy - Director of Brown University Digital Publications, based in the University Library at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island
11. Anne van den Maagdenberg - Open Access Librarian at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
12. Isabella Meinecke - Head of the Electronic Publishing department and the library-based Hamburg University Press at the Hamburg State and University Library
13. Kate Peterbridge - Press Manager at White Rose Press
14. Khawulile Radebe - Manager for Scholarly Communications in the Department of Library Services, University of Pretoria
15. Dr Rica Santos - Professor at Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines
16. Rashmi Shetty - Interact University Library as the Open Access Adviser
17. Lindiwe Soyizwapi - Director of Library Services, University of Pretoria
18. Wendy Taylor - Open Research Coordinator (Publishing) at the University of Salford
19. Matthew Treherne - Pro-Dean for Research and Innovation in the Faculty of Arts, humanities and Cultures at the University of Leeds
20. Isak van der Walt - Acting Deputy Director for Digital Scholarship, Scholarly Communications and Special Collections, University of Pretoria
21. Tania Williamson - Academic Support Manager (Research) at the University of Salford
22. Pin Pin Yeo - Head of Research Services at Singapore Management University
23. Robert Zepf - Managing Director of the Hamburg State and University Library



Focus groups

Publishers:

- John Atkinson - Manager, University of Westminster Press
- Başak Buyukcelen - Pressbooks
- Emily Choynowski - KnowledgeE
- Tom Clark - CEO, Boydell & Brewer
- Sue Hodgson - Scylla
- Kate Petherbridge - Press Manager, White Rose University Press; Chair, Open Institutional Publishing Association

Humanities and Social Science Scholars:

- Qudsia Akhtar - University of Salford
- Emily Choynowski - KnowledgeE
- Stan Erraught - Professor, University of Leeds, in the School of Music
- Gordon Fletcher - Information System Business School, University of Salford
- Despoina Gkogkou - Librarian, University of Patras
- Martin Iddon - Professor, University of Leeds in the School of Music
- Donna Maree - Social Work, University of Salford
- Maurice Wanyonyi - Research Assistant, University of Embu

Librarians:

- Rachel Chidlow - University of Auckland in New Zealand
- Kirstine McDermid - Open Education Resources Manager at the University of Leeds
- Kate Petherbridge - White Rose Libraries Executive Manager
- Fleur Praal - Librarian at Leiden University
- Jane Saunders - Associate Director for Content and Discovery at the University of Leeds
- Pete Smith - Librarian at Sheffield Hallam University
- Regine Tobias - Head of the Library at the University of Tübingen
- Wendy Taylor - Open Research Coordinator for Publishing at the University of Salford



Annexe A: Interviews

We interviewed 23 people from Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America. Interviews were conducted either one to one or in small groups. The participants in this study came from academic libraries, publishing organisations, and universities where a significant proportion held leadership positions. Their perspectives provide insight into institutional priorities, governance structures, and the practical constraints that shape policy implementation.

Role Category	Number of People
Directors / Deputy Directors	6
Heads of Departments / Services	3
Managers	2
Academic Faculty	6
OA / Library Specialists	3
Research Services Staff	1
Publishing / Infrastructure	2
Total	23

Participants shared the barriers and opportunities that academics face when seeking to - or encouraged to—publish longform or shortform OA. The readiness for longform OA differs significantly by region and by institutional and governmental context.



Key points drawn from our analysis of these interviews are summarised here.

Across interviews, people shared the feeling that longform OA remains aspirational, valued in principle but structurally difficult or unsupported. Interviewees expressed personal commitments to OA and recognised its potential to transform scholarly communication. They also described ecosystems that are under-resourced and shaped by academic cultures that do not yet fully support longform (and in some cases shortform) OA.

Across the regions, participants described the financial, cultural, and policy-related constraints on longform OA. A core theme that interviewees mentioned was the **high cost of OA publishing**. Even in well-resourced environments, funding is scarce and inconsistently distributed. In resource-constrained regions, interviews described researchers self-funding their publications, partnering with colleagues in wealthier institutions, or else foregoing OA publishing.

Many interviewees described **academic reward structures that incentivise traditional publishing**. In several contexts, OA monographs were described as “nice to have,” but not a priority for promotion panels, hiring committees, or institutional metrics. In the UK, South Africa and the Netherlands, prestige concerns were mentioned and authors felt that OA presses may be seen as less reputable places to publish or to offer weaker marketing and distribution. In the Philippines, New Zealand, Tunisia, and Kenya, OA was understood to be valuable in principle, but not necessarily rewarded in career progression systems in practice.

Another widespread challenge was the **absence or weakness of national policy frameworks**. Interviewees from Kenya, Tunisia, the Philippines, New Zealand, and Singapore all noted that without government mandates or dedicated funding, OA publishing is not accessible to most researchers. In these contexts, OA is rare and limited to those that can afford to self-fund or who can partner with colleagues in wealthier institutions. Even in countries with stronger policy frameworks such as the UK, there was acknowledgement that mandates have primarily covered journal articles, and that monograph policies remain fragmented and are expensive to implement.

The interviews also revealed significant **capacity and infrastructure gaps**, regardless of national wealth. Libraries in almost all locations described insufficient staffing as well as funding. Institutions without university presses reported particular challenges: they lack publishing waivers, must self-fund, and are less supported in exploring OA options.

Technology and rights concerns were also mentioned by many interviewees. Participants from the Philippines, Tunisia, and New Zealand discussed fears of plagiarism, copyright misuse, and AI scraping of books. Many researchers were unsure about copyright and licensing, and the lack of clarity around rights was often linked to limited institutional training and the absence of legal guidance for authors publishing OA.

Despite these barriers, the participants interviewed had strong beliefs in the possibility of longform OA. Interviewees emphasised the potential of OA to democratise access and connect



researchers across borders. They highlighted the benefits of global readership data, increased visibility, and the potential for policy impact, particularly in countries where research could directly shape local or national development priorities. Early-career researchers, in particular, were seen as more open-minded about OA and more willing to embrace new publishing models.

Interviewees in the UK, the Netherlands, and New Zealand described growing interest in **collective and Diamond models**, which spread OA publishing costs across institutions and reduce or remove requirements for author fees. Others referenced the potential for shared national repositories and a few pointed to OER success during the pandemic as evidence that open models can scale quickly when incentives and infrastructure are established.

Across all locations, the interviewees suggested that **longform OA is valued but structurally unsupported**. Financial pressures, prestige cultures, and policy gaps form the core barriers, while the drivers - equity, visibility, societal impact, and public good - remain powerful but under-leveraged. The global picture that emerges is not one of uniformity, but of convergence around similar challenges and aspirations.



Annexe B: Focus groups

We conducted six focus groups, dedicating two sessions each to publishers, humanities scholars, and librarians. For each group, we prepared a set of guiding questions in advance to ensure consistency across sessions and to address core themes relevant to e-book publishing, access, and preservation. At the same time, the format was deliberately flexible, allowing conversations to develop organically in response to participants' experiences and priorities. This balance between structured prompts and open discussion enabled participants to raise unanticipated issues, challenge assumptions, and engage directly with one another, producing richer and more nuanced insights than a strictly scripted approach would have allowed.

We also attempted, unsuccessfully, to organise a seventh focus group for funders. While it was relatively straightforward to identify relevant people with longform OA policy responsibility at funding bodies in Europe, this proved difficult in other parts of the world, where the lack of written policies meant we would have especially welcomed insight. We tried approaching various funders via the generic contact addresses on their websites, but with little luck. We did receive some polite generic replies to indicate that our request would be shared with relevant colleagues, but nothing came of these contacts.

The publisher focus groups brought together a diverse, international set of participants representing commercial, university-based, and open infrastructure publishing models. Participants included senior leaders and managers from Pressbooks, KnowledgeE, Scylla, University of Westminster Press, White Rose University Press, and Boydell and Brewer, with roles ranging from CEOs and press managers to discovery and platform specialists. Collectively, they brought perspectives from North America, Europe, and the Middle East, as well as experience across independent humanities publishing, OA initiatives, institutional presses, and publishing technology providers. This diversity enabled in-depth discussion of business models, sustainability, metadata and discovery challenges, and the practical implications of preservation from the publisher's point of view.

The humanities and librarian focus groups similarly reflected significant international and role diversity. Humanities participants included professors, lecturers, research assistants, and academic programme leads from institutions in the UK, Greece, Kenya, Australia, and the United Arab Emirates, spanning disciplines such as music, social work, information systems, and higher education administration. Their contributions foregrounded authorial practices, disciplinary norms, and the lived experience of producing and using scholarly books. The librarian focus groups



brought together senior library leaders and specialist practitioners from universities in New Zealand, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, including Associate Directors, heads of libraries, research services leaders, and open research and education managers. Together, these groups provided complementary perspectives on collection development, discovery, OA support, and preservation responsibilities, highlighting both shared concerns and differing priorities across roles, regions, and institutional contexts.

Key points drawn from our analysis of these interviews are summarised here.

Librarian focus groups

The librarian focus groups brought together participants from the UK, the Netherlands, Greece, New Zealand, South Africa, and Germany. Across these discussions, librarians described the structural, cultural, and financial conditions shaping longform OA within their institutions and countries. Their perspectives reinforced barriers highlighted in the individual interviews, while also illuminating the day-to-day operational realities of those who support researchers directly.

Librarians described a global landscape where **national policy for longform OA ranges from well-developed to non-existent**:

- Countries such as the UK and the Netherlands have funder mandates for OA books, but funding caps, VAT complications, and shifting mandates (e.g., the uncertainty around REF monograph policy) undermine clarity and confidence;
- Germany has DFG support for OA books, but funding amounts are low relative to actual publishing costs;
- Greece, by contrast, has no national mandate, leaving researchers and institutions to navigate OA on an ad hoc basis.

Most librarians with whom we engaged described their **institutions as supportive in principle but resource-constrained in practice**:

- Many libraries have small, under-resourced OA teams, and some operate or support nascent university presses with limited capacity;
- Teaching-intensive universities in the UK (e.g., Salford, Sheffield Hallam) highlighted that book publishing expertise is scarce, and libraries cannot simply “become” publishers without investment;
- Budget pressures remain acute. Institutions are cutting journal subscriptions and OA BPCs far exceed what most libraries can contribute at scale.

Across regions, librarians reported **deep cultural attachment to traditional, commercial publishers by academic authors**:

- Prestige continues to dominate authors’ decisions, even among those who express philosophical support for openness. This is reinforced by promotion and hiring systems;



- Senior scholars and series editors strongly shape early-career researchers' choices; librarians stressed the need to “target the influencers,” not just the authors;
- Librarians in Greece, New Zealand, and South Africa described lingering distrust of OA by academics, often linked to confusion over predatory publishing.
- Some institutions are experimenting with community-funded models, shared hosting platforms (e.g., SciELO) or internal institutional funds to support books;
- Generational change appears to matter: early-career researchers and digitally oriented scholars are more receptive to OA.

Licensing and access models for e-books are expensive, restrictive, and inconsistent, making OA an attractive solution at the library level, even when researchers are hesitant:

- Usage statistics for OA books are harder to collect, making it more difficult for libraries to demonstrate value;
- Repositories, metadata quality, storage limitations, and discoverability all shape how well OA longform outputs actually reach readers;
- Several participants, notably in Greece, described the absence of coordinated national university press ecosystems, limiting the ability to share expertise and infrastructure.

Despite the challenges, librarians emphasised growing momentum and clear benefits:

- Equity and access: OA monographs reduce barriers for students, practitioners, and researchers abroad;
- Local university presses and Diamond OA initiatives are emerging as promising models, especially for unfunded humanities research;

Publisher focus groups

During this project we mainly engaged with new university and library presses. These publishers were not resistant to OA in principle. They perceived many benefits of OA books:

- For authors and institutions:
 - Increased accessibility and visibility, especially for niche fields;
 - Ability to update, revise, adapt, and remix content was particularly valued in rapidly evolving fields such as computer science, AI, and aerospace engineering;
 - Greater international reach and pedagogical re-use;
 - Stronger alignment with open pedagogy and inclusion principles.
- For students (especially in the US):
 - Lower costs lead to increased course retention;
 - Ability to modify or contextualise learning materials is very helpful.



- For publishers:
 - OA books can generate increased long-term usage and visibility;
 - Flipped backlist monographs can generate renewed engagement.

Across both focus group sessions, publishers emphasised that **longform OA will not scale globally without changes to academic incentives, funding, and workflow support**. They were constrained by the:

- Costs of monograph production;
- Lack of structured, predictable funding for OA publishing;
- Strong reader attachment to print books;
- Strong author attachment to established publishers;
- Author incentive systems; and the
- Technical and workflow challenges related to both digital publishing generally and OA publishing specifically.

OA adoption levels unsurprisingly varied dramatically by region, but more surprisingly varied by region in its nature. Where OA thrives, it is because concrete motivations align with infrastructure and funding.

- In **North America**, OA textbook production (via OER programmes) is driven by concrete local needs, especially reducing textbook costs and increasing student retention. Library-based funding is sometimes available to support the creation of textbooks (e.g., via **Pressbooks**).

- In regions driven by rankings (e.g., the Gulf States), where incentives revolve almost entirely around Tier 1 journal output, there was said to be “no rational motivation” to write books, OA or otherwise, because:

- Books do not count for rankings;
- Books bring no financial bonus;
- Publication expectations are tied to high-frequency journal output.

Instead, all funding goes to journal APCs and transformative agreements, leaving no resources for OA books.

- In **Europe**, OA policy exists, but publishers feel there are “not enough tools” to make these policies workable in practice. Adoption is slower than expected because traditional publishing structures and incentives remain strong.
- In **Africa, Asia, and South America** libraries do not even have basic OA policies, let alone OA book funding, infrastructure, or publishing programmes.



The dominant barrier for publishers is funding and funding models

- Longform OA costs remain prohibitive for authors and presses;
- Authors lack incentives to plan for OA: most researchers do not consider OA dissemination costs until after the manuscript is complete;
- Even when they want to publish OA, they often cannot identify any organisation willing to fund this;
- Humanities monographs are especially difficult to fund because they:
 - Have small markets;
 - Take longer to produce; and
 - Are less frequently covered by funder mandates.
- Institutionally supported presses (e.g., Westminster, White Rose):
- Are scholar-led and primarily digital;
- See themselves as infrastructure providers rather than commercial enterprises;
- Rely heavily on institutional funding, collaborations, and community-led models (OIPA, shared platforms, etc.);
- Use rigorous peer review to counter misconceptions that OA is “low quality.”

- Commercial and independent publishers (e.g. Boydell & Brewer):
 - Are open to OA “if funding exists,” but emphasise that humanities monograph economics are fragile;
 - View OA as an additional workflow complexity, not something they can prioritise without external support;
 - Highlight that legacy workflows and expectations (print-first processes, indexes, footnotes, page numbers) impede smooth transition to OA formats.

Author attitudes and academic culture are also important barriers

- Incentive structures and prestige expectations shape publishing choices;
- Many authors still associate credibility with:
 - Traditional publishers;
 - Print workflows;
 - Well-known series or imprints.
- Quality concerns—especially a stigma around self-publishing—persist, mainly among administrators, evaluators, and senior faculty;
- Authors fear being associated with “poor-quality OA”;
- Stigma remains entrenched despite extensive peer-review practices at reputable OA presses;



- Authors themselves are reported to usually be more positive once they have first-hand experience with OA publishing.

Technical and workflow challenges abound

- Digital formats require different workflows.
- Publishers reported consistent challenges when converting or producing OA books in digital formats:
 - Indexing tied to page numbers does not translate well to HTML;
 - Authors expect footnotes at the bottom of the page;
 - Digital books require structured metadata and accessibility compliance not familiar to most authors.
- Metadata quality is a significant problem:
 - Self-publishing or publishers at new university and library presses can struggle with metadata and inconsistent standards;
 - Poor metadata reduces discoverability, especially in global indexes and library systems.
- Some platforms are moving toward chapter-based OA models because:
 - Researchers rarely use an entire textbook;
 - OA can be delivered faster; and

- Funding fragments more naturally around smaller units of content.

- However, the metadata and workflows are especially challenging where books have some chapters that are OA and others that are not.

The publishers with whom we engaged had thoughtful suggestions about what would help them progress with OA publishing:

- OA publishing must be grounded in real purpose rather than an idealistic aspiration. Resonant purposes included increased affordability for students, more local language publishing, indigenous knowledge sharing, championing digital innovation, equity of access, and increased visibility for niche fields;
- Stable funding is required in an array of forms including community funds, consortial support, and publisher–library partnerships to lower costs while increasing quality;
- Small- and medium-sized publishers need simpler digital workflows, metadata management, and indexing;
- Cultural change in evaluation systems. As long as tenure and promotion reward article-based metrics, OA books will remain marginal.



Annexe C:

Background study

Monographs in the arts, humanities, and social sciences

Monographs have a long tradition of being an essential medium for scholarship within the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS) disciplines (Clark & Hill, 2019; Giménez-Toledo, 2020). How OA should best be introduced for monographs into this particular environment has sparked a lot of debate and targeted inquiry over the last decade. The disruptive effect of OA on existing research cultures and practices is something that needs to be managed well, otherwise there is a great risk of developing and pushing for solutions that are a bad fit with their implementation context, which can lead to various negative outcomes. Traditionally the AHSS disciplines do not have high levels of external funding that could be utilised to cover payment of individual BPCs. We review the many ways that this is being worked around with collective funding models later in this report.

A comprehensive early study of the status of monograph publishing in the humanities and social sciences through the use of stakeholder interviews and a survey is the final report of the OAPEN-UK project by Milloy & Collins (2016). With the findings divided into three main parts (attitudes and perceptions; systems policies and processes; business models)

of the report, it was clear across all of these areas that OA for monographs was still to be properly established. At the same time, a lot of the recommendations were cautionary in the sense that no actor should aggressively push for something without collaboration with other stakeholders and consultation with the affected researcher communities.

Based on a recent study that surveyed AHSS publishers in Europe, the UK, and the USA on their experiences and views on monograph publishing and OA, it is possible to gain insight into how publishers are perceiving the situation (Shaw, Phillips, & Gutiérrez, 2023). The study gathered web survey responses from 25 publishing organisations around the world, including 15 university presses, 9 commercial presses, and 1 learned society, and claimed the sample to be covering approximately 75% of all AHSS monograph output. With the survey distributed in February and March 2021, publishers had already had over a year to see the effects of COVID-19, during which the respondents indicated a strong shift from printed toward digital in terms of sales. Concerning the proportion of content that the publishers had published as OA during 2020, for most publishers the results were overall very modest: 15 publishers reported less than 10%, 5 publishers reported 0%, 4 publishers reported 10–25%, and 1 fully OA publisher reported 100%. In terms of OA business models, BPCs were the most frequently mentioned, and mentions of



Green OA were in conjunction with use of a Gold OA model. Over half of the publishers reported substantially greater usage of OA titles than traditional titles. The momentum for OA among authors seemed low, where nearly all publishers reported low levels of enquiries about OA publication options for their monographs. Funding was also scarce among authors, where almost all publishers reported that fewer than 10% of authors had funding available to make their research available OA. The majority of OA publications that had been published so far through the publishers had come with a relatively even split of funding from research funders and the author's institution. Based on the publisher's responses, CC-BY-NC-ND was the preferred licence among authors. Views on rights clearance were split between the publishers, with 12 identifying it as a problem and eight not perceiving it as a problem. Some of the obstacles mentioned included challenges with making backlist titles OA when existing rights needed to be revisited, image rightsholders being unwilling to grant rights in perpetuity, and licence fees potentially based on print runs. Publishers saw obstacles in the way that existing publication workflow and information systems are attuned to the challenges introduced by OA content, and, for example, the increased need for per-chapter OA publishing possibilities for edited works and associated metadata, something that the systems are not well adapted to handle. The publishers indicated a lot of concern for research funder requirements demanding Green OA without sufficient funding to support the publisher. Overall, it was clear that OA publishing is still in its early stages within AHSS, with no particular business model being dominant. For the foreseeable

future there will be a mix of many different business and access models.

Regional and national policy

Funder mandates and institutional OA strategies

In 2018, the international research funder consortium cOAlition S published a detailed list of 10 requirements (known as Plan S) for the openness of journal articles that their grant recipients should follow for funding calls issued from 2021 onwards. Acknowledging that OA to books is a less mature and more complex issue, the consortium instead published a set of 5 recommendations in 2021 that were set as aspirations for funders to strive towards (<https://www.coalition-s.org/coalition-s-statement-on-open-access-for-academic-books/>):

1. "All academic books based on original research that was directly supported with funding from cOAlition S organisations should be made available open access on publication;
2. Authors or their institutions should retain sufficient intellectual property rights to make their academic books available OA and to allow for re-use;
3. Academic books should be published open access under a Creative Commons licence;
4. Any embargo periods on academic books should be as short as possible and never exceed 12 months;



5. cOAlition S funders should financially support open access of academic books via their funding schemes and open access publishing business models via dedicated arrangements.”

The most up-to-date high-level information available about the status of funder mandates and institutional policies concerning OA books in Europe stems from the 2-year PALOMERA project (Policy Alignment of Open access Monographs in the European Research Area), which ran in 2023 and 2024 (Project PALOMERA, n.d.). By collecting and analysing hundreds of OA policies, of which most are now publicly archived as part of the OA Books Toolkit Knowledge Base (knowledgebase.oabooks-toolkit.org n.d.), the project was able to generate insight into the approaches taken by RFOs and RPOs when it comes to furthering OA to books through policies. The full findings of the project, which in addition to policy analysis also included web survey, bibliometrics, and interview data, is available in Laakso, Bandura-Morgan, Bazeliuk et al. (2025), and customised recommendations based on the findings for each major stakeholder group in a separate document in Bandura-Morgan, Bazeliuk, Davidson et al. (2024).

Among the key findings from the PALOMERA project concerning existing European policies and practices for books were that acknowledgement of them is very diverse across the countries and stakeholder groups, signalling that this is still an emerging area where there are some early movers but also many who have not activated themselves, despite having elaborate policies in place for OA journal articles. Within the dataset of

collected policies, it was research funding organisations that had stricter policies concerning OA books, often in combination with funding opportunities to enable payment of associated BPCs. If research policy organisations had policies in place for OA for books, they were more commonly on the level of recommendations, highlighted self-archiving as a path to OA, and more rarely had any funding opportunities for BPCs mentioned within the policies.

Argentina

Figure 1 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to Argentina, from 2001 up until 2024. Being at around 70% for the most recent years, the development demonstrates some unique traits not seen among the other countries. First, the starting point for 2001 and the early years is markedly higher than any other country at almost 40%. The growth was early and strong until around 2015, after which stagnation, moderate decline, and internal change in the composition of OA mechanisms appeared to have happened, going from repository-supported OA to the status today where unique repository copies are marginal. The reasons for this would need to be explored through other means, but this could have roots in changes in science policy, changes in international publications, and change in emphasis placed on archiving outputs in repositories.

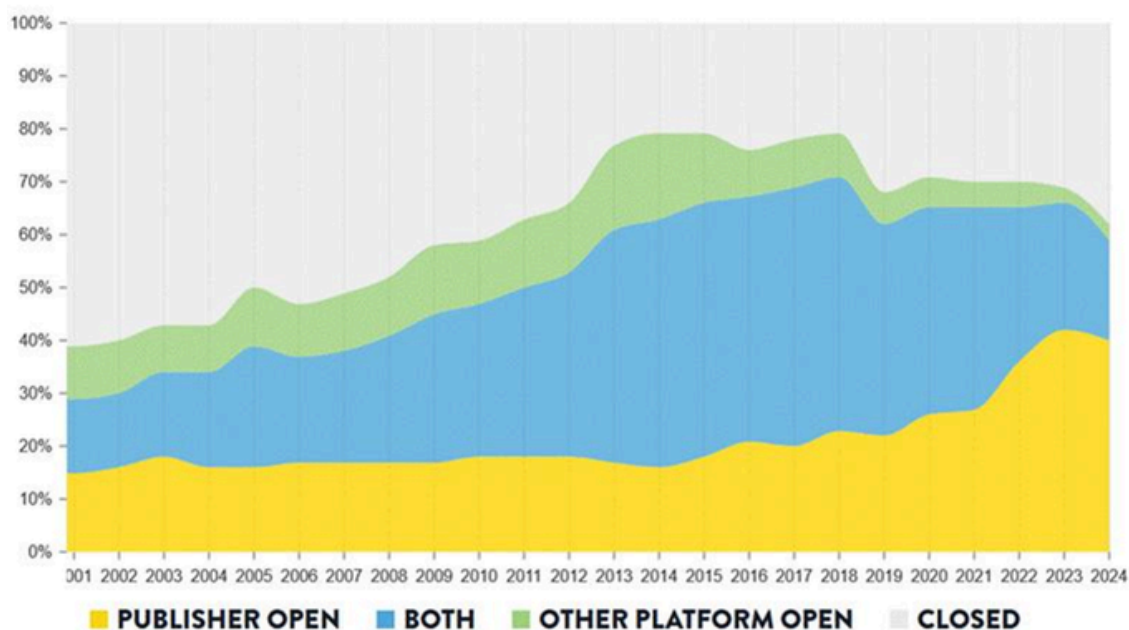


Figure 1: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Argentina-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).

Zanotti, Céspedes, & Mauro (2024) describe the national open science policy environment of Argentina as part of a case study of open science practices at the second largest university in Argentina, National University of Córdoba, where it was clear that OA publishing was the most mature area of open science. Argentina is one of the several Latin American countries that have implemented OA-related legislation in the last decade. In 2013, national law 26.899 was put into force which requires that all research outputs funded from public sources must be made available via Green OA through the National System of Digital Repositories. From the case study, which included a web survey with faculty conducted in 2021, it was clear that the most common reported open science-related activity was OA, which came in the form of institutional repositories and Diamond OA journals. The authors point

out that while this system appears to work well on the national level, it is at the intersection with the international where tensions and challenges emerge. “Opting to publish in journals that do not charge APCs is both a political decision and a pragmatic strategy for scholars grappling with resource scarcity and unaffordable payments in foreign currency. However, UNC’s institutional efforts to encourage practices in this direction are at odds with prevailing scientific-academic evaluative cultures, which continue to prioritise publications with expensive fees to be paid by authors or readers (Beigel, 2015).” (Zanotti, Céspedes, & Mauro, 2024).

At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 377 active OA journals registered from Argentina, 97% of which were Diamond OA, with a modest average APC for the remainder of \$2 USD (Crawford, 2025a).



Germany

Figure 2 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to Germany, from 2001 up until 2024. The figure of 60% for the most recent years builds upon consistent growth that progressed between 2001 and 2019, after which there have been substantial jumps upward in OA shares. Repositories have played a consistent but minor part in providing OA, and the recent growth appears to be primarily fuelled by publisher-provided OA options.

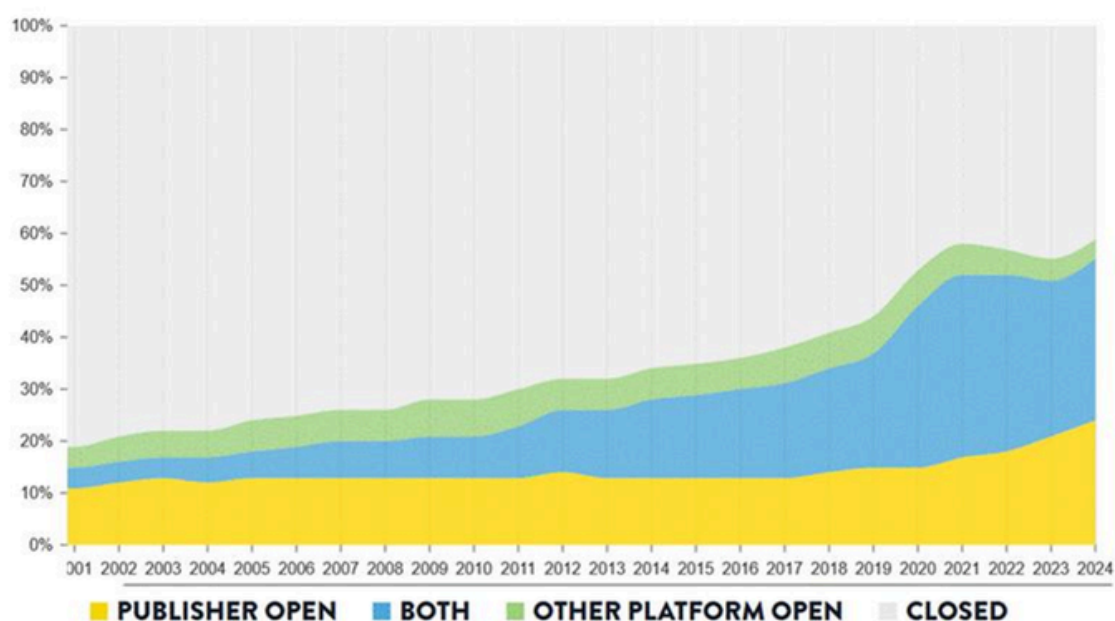


Figure 2: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Germany-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).

The federated structure of Germany creates a unique environment for the wider rollout of uniform science policies, as each of the 16 constituent states have the power to set their own policies (Bärwolff, Benz, Dreyer, et al., 2023). This was observed during the PALOMERA project, when OA policies were collected as Germany had the highest number of different policy documents in the dataset, and also through some perceivable confusion among German respondents to the circulated web survey concerning the existence of a national OA policy (Dreyer, Stone, Tummes, et al., 2024).

Germany has been a very visible and

vocal supporter of transformative agreements to journal publications, with, for example, the OA2020 initiative being coordinated from the country. Morka & Gatti (2021) provide a national overview of OA book developments in Germany up until when the report was published, highlighting that the two largest publishers of OA books in the country are university presses (KIT Scientific Publishing and Goettingen University Press), with the former being BPC-based. Key funders such as the national research funder (DFG), Volkswagen Foundation, and the Leibniz Consortium have policies and funds in place for OA book publishing, as do several universities in the country.



Kenya

Kenya was the overall leader in terms of total OA% when considering OA to outputs published between 2001 and 2004. Figure 3 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to Kenya, from 2001 up until 2024. Being at over 80% for the most recent years builds upon consistent growth that was initiated in 2006. Only a small share of outputs are only made available through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has particularly happened by making outputs OA directly by the publishers.

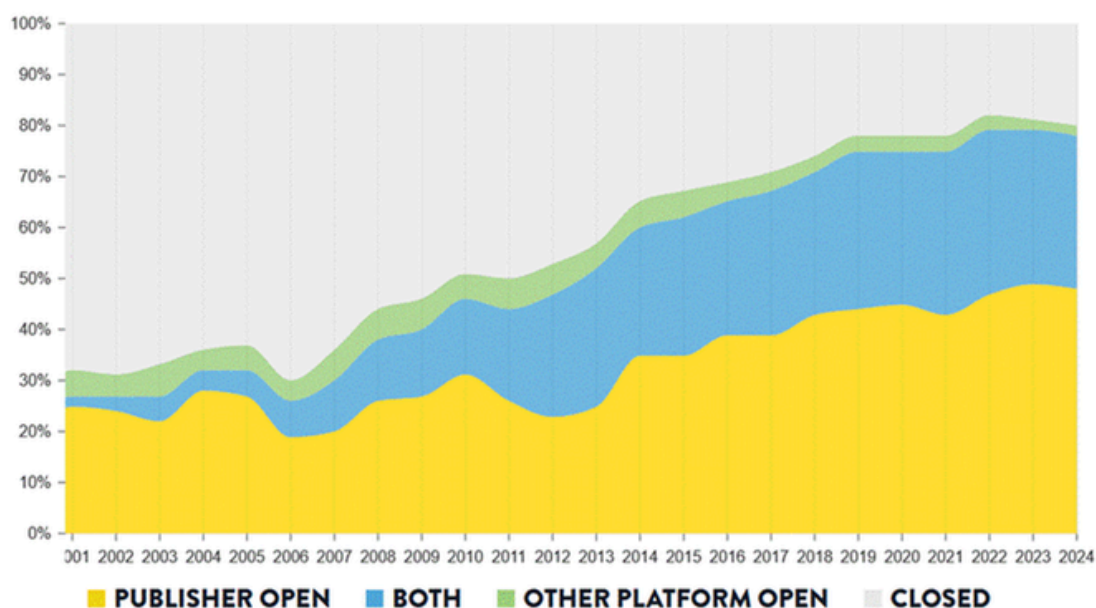


Figure 3: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Kenya-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).

In a recent comprehensive report covering no-fee OA publishing in African countries (Kuchma & Ševkušić, 2024: p. 76), Arnold Mwanzu provides a national overview of OA advancements in Kenya, focusing mainly on Diamond OA but also providing some more general information. A central organisation for promoting OA journal publishing and policies has been the Kenya Library and Information Services Consortium (KLISC). Many organisations have developed and implemented OA policies, and universities have set up OJS-based portals for publishing. Mwanzu points out some of the challenges in the following way: “... OA journals face a continuous decline in

budgetary allocations, which affects their growth and development. Some OA journals also lack hosting platforms and domain subscription fees after the host organizations withdrew their support.”

Onaolapo, Ayeni, & Mncube (2025) conducted a web survey in 2023 directed at researchers across several different universities, disciplines, and seniority in South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya (400 invites, 241 responded), inquiring about the views and experiences on OA publishing. While the context was related to OA journals, it can be argued that the main findings also carry implications for the design of models for OA books. Most of the



respondents had published OA articles in the last few years (80%) and overall awareness of OA was found to be high. The perceptions of OA publishing were also in general positive when it came to variables such as quality of research, trustworthiness, and reputation. Half of the respondents had paid APCs in the last 3 years, with the highest funding source being personal funds (39%). A total of 59% of respondents answered that they have had no funding available to use for publications during the last 3 years. Asked about their perceptions of APCs, over 60% of respondents saw them as necessary to maintain OA publications, but roughly equal shares also saw them as too expensive and limiting the publishing practices of researchers. In light of these results, it is challenging to see how BPC-driven models could prosper; OA for books would need to happen through some mechanism that does not require payment from authors.

At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had six active OA journals registered from Kenya, 50% of which were Diamond OA, with an average APC for the remainder of \$536 USD (Crawford, 2025a; Crawford, 2025b).

The Netherlands

Figure 4 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to the Netherlands, from 2001 up until 2024. The level of 60% for the most recent years builds upon a consistent growth that endured between 2001 and 2014, after which there have been substantial jumps upwards in OA shares for consecutive years. Repositories have provided a consistent unique OA share of less than 10% of publications over the entire time. What is unique to the pattern of the Netherlands is the dip in publisher-provided OA publishing in tandem with the overall growth that happened between 2019 and 2022, which suggests that self-archiving compensated when the use of publisher-provided OA options decreased.

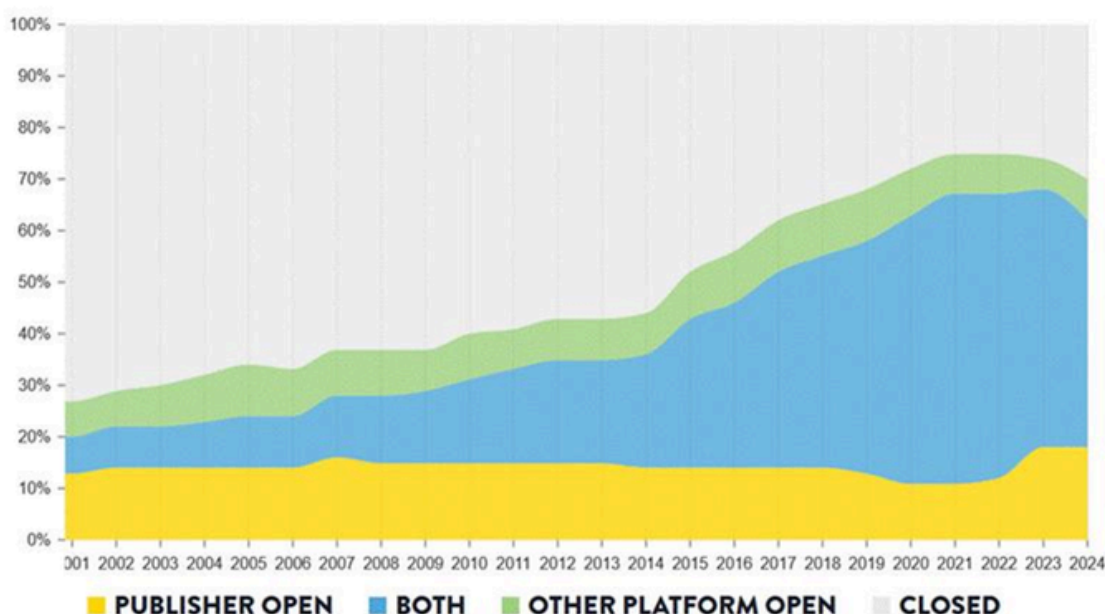


Figure 4: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one author with the Netherlands; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



New Zealand

Figure 5 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to New Zealand, from 2001 up until 2024. The figure of nearly 60% for the most recent years builds upon consistent growth that was initiated after 2010. Only a small share of outputs are only made available through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has specifically happened by publishers making outputs directly OA.

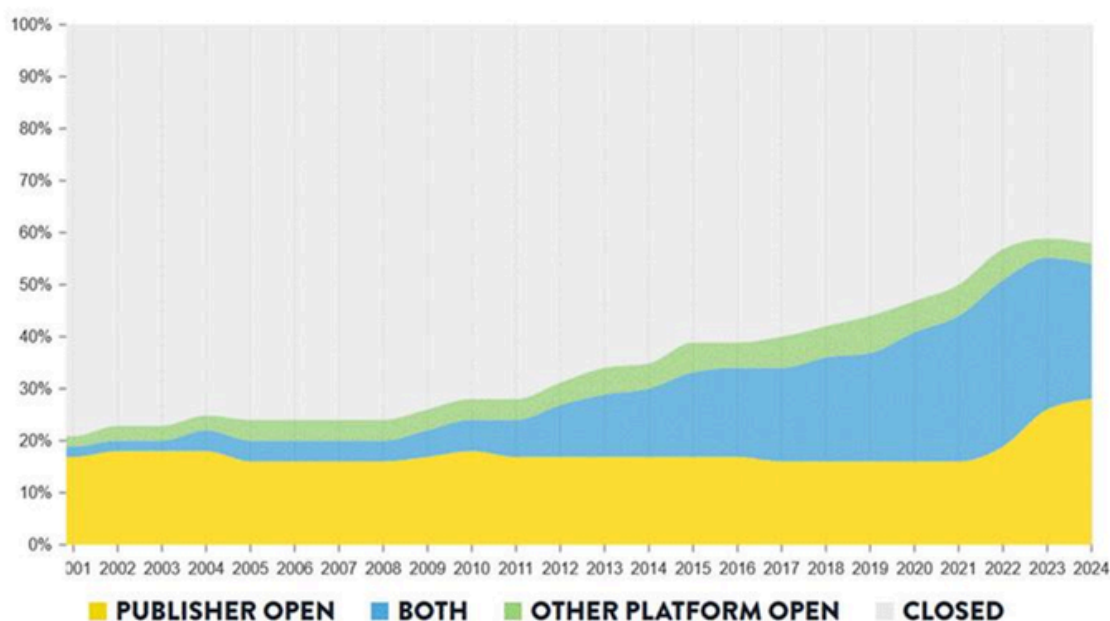


Figure 5: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one New Zealand-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).

Catterall, Barbour, & Tairi (2025) provide a comprehensive summary of how OA has developed in Aotearoa New Zealand, both through important advances in policies and practices, as well as comparing the development with that of Australia and also the world more broadly. From the early 2000s onwards, it has been particularly key advocacy groups and communities of practice that have driven significant progress in the promotion and understanding of OA in the country. Despite a lot of regional bottom-up activity, it is also clear that the development of Aotearoa New Zealand as well as Australia have both been heavily influenced by international initiatives. One

of the earliest significant advances within the open movement stemming from Aotearoa New Zealand is Katipo Communications Ltd and Horowhenua Library Trust launching Koha, the world's first open-source integrated library management system, in the year 2000.

Auckland University of Technology was the first to launch a university repository in 2006, and launched Tuwhera Open Publishing (<https://tuwhera.aut.ac.nz/publications>) in 2016, which caters to staff and students of the university through the OA publication of 19 Diamond OA journals, books, and conference proceedings. The article



presents a bibliometric breakdown of OA shares per publication type for outputs with an author from Aotearoa New Zealand using OpenAlex data for the years 2023–2024, with book chapters being at 9% (194 of 2,108) and books at 17% (24 out of 251). These are both lower than the shares presented for Australia. Journal article share OA share for Aotearoa New Zealand is 67%, which is two percentage points higher than the result for Australia. Following trends from Europe, the share of Green OA has been declining during the last 5 years at the expense of payment-enabled OA models such as hybrid and APC-driven journals. The first strongly mandated funder OA policy was set in 2023 by the New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Catterall, Barbour, & Tairi (2025: p. 10) provide some context on what the expected next steps were to be: “This move was anticipated to pave the way for other funders to follow suit. However, subsequent changes in government, coupled with national reviews impacting the university sector

and research funding, have created a period of uncertainty. Many stakeholders are currently awaiting the outcomes of these reviews before committing further to OA initiatives.” So there is currently a wait-and-see status in terms of official policy developing to support OA. At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 19 active OA journals registered from New Zealand, 98% which were Diamond OA, with a modest APC for the single remaining journal of \$80 USD (Crawford, 2025).

Philippines

Figure 6 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to the Philippines, from 2001 up until 2024. The figure of 70% for the most recent years builds upon consistent growth that was initiated after 2008. Over the entire time OA has predominantly been supported by OA enabled by publishers directly and not through archiving in repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which has had a consistently marginal role over time.

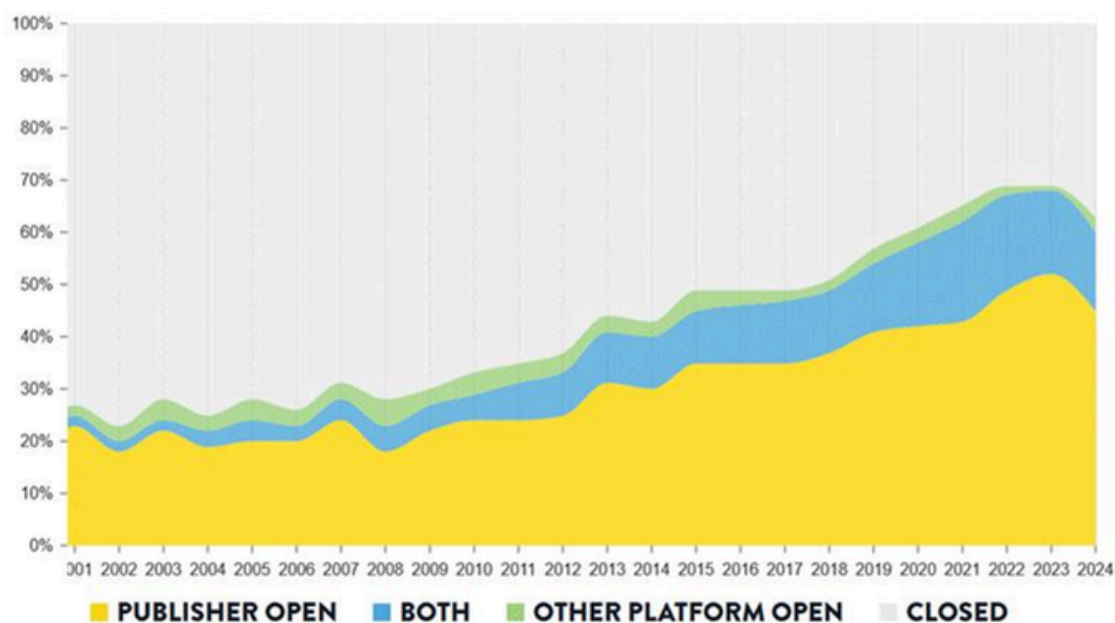


Figure 6: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Philippines-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 31 active OA journals registered from the Philippines, 79% which were Diamond OA, with a modest average APC for the rest of \$16 USD (Crawford, 2025a).

Singapore

Figure 7 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to Singapore, from 2001 up until 2024. The figure of nearly 60% for the

most recent years builds upon consistent growth that was initiated after 2008. Among the countries included in this analysis, Singapore has a relatively higher share of outputs only made available OA through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has been supported by archiving in repositories; however, that share is still less than 10% of all publications for any given year.

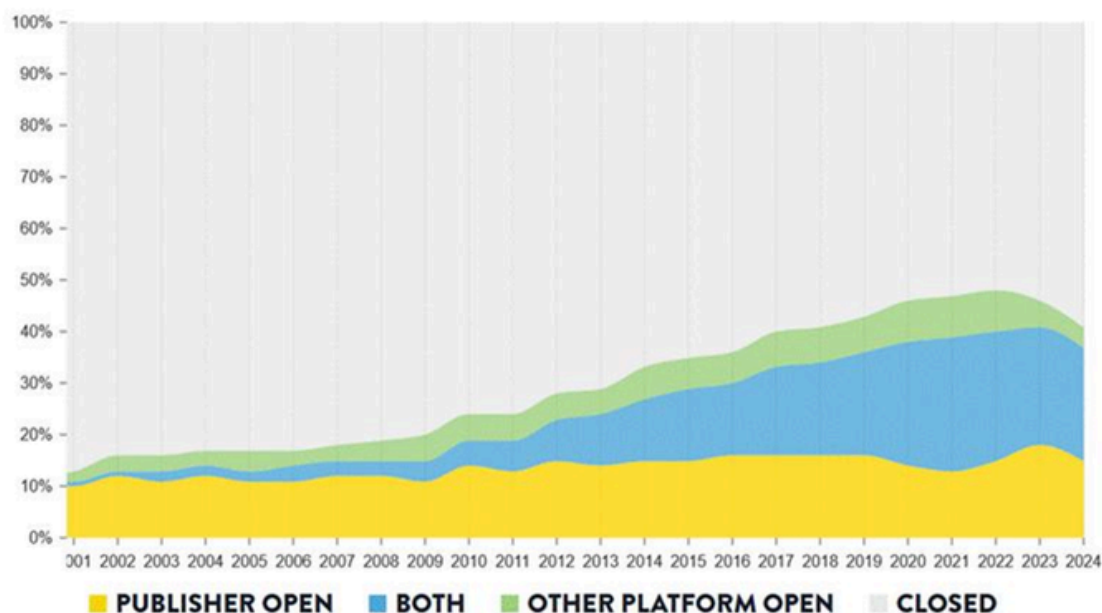


Figure 7: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Singapore-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).

Liu (2025) provides an overview of OA advances in Singapore, but is limited to information found in international registries such as ROARMAP, OpenDOAR, and DOAJ, which might lead to some policies, repositories, and OA journals failing to be included. Despite its relatively small size, Singapore ranks high on many international measures for research intensity and quality. The number of DOAJ journals registered to Singapore was 50 in 2024, showing a growth in registrations specifically during the last few years, with 41 of them being within science, technology or medicine.

Four of the journals were published by universities, with National University of Singapore publishing three journals. OpenDOAR included records for eight OA repositories in the country, all by universities. ROARMAP had two OA policies recorded, both adopted well over 10 years previously at this point.

At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had 61 active OA journals registered from Singapore, 61% of which were Diamond OA, with an average APC for the rest of \$1,172 USD (Crawford, 2025a).



South Africa

Figure 8 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to South Africa, from 2001 up until 2024. The figure of around 65% for the most recent years builds upon consistent growth that has been going on over the entire observation period. Only a small share of outputs are only made available through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has particularly happened by making outputs OA directly by the publishers.

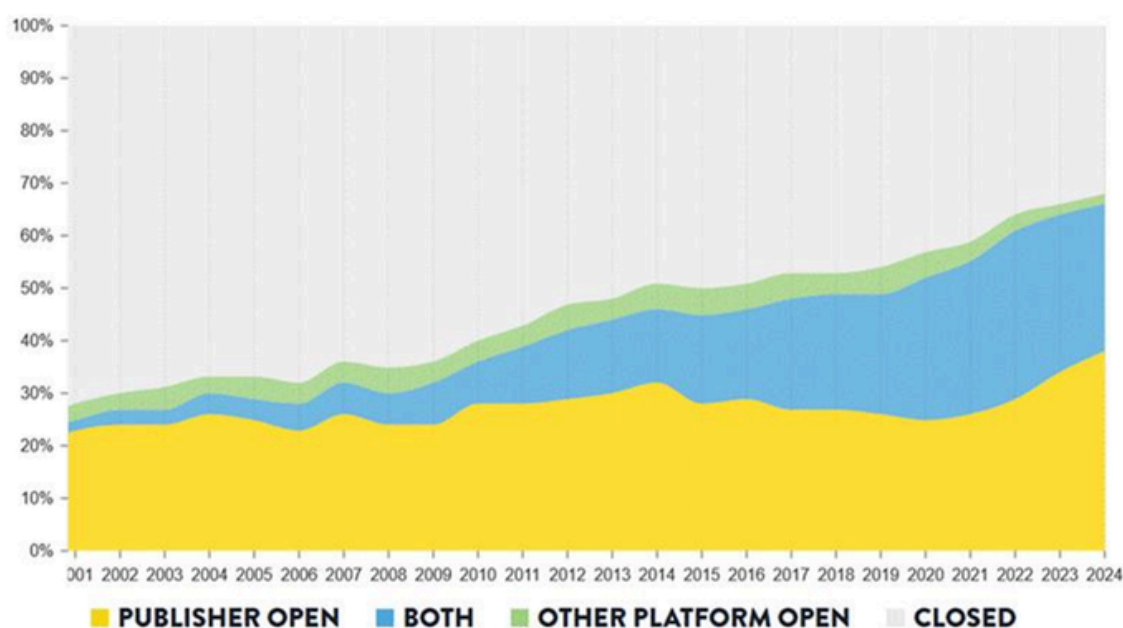


Figure 8: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one South Africa-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).

A recent research article by Kodua-Ntim & Fombad (2024) focused specifically on the challenges and strategies for OA in South Africa. From a historical perspective, a particular highlight of advancement is the OA policy issued in 2015 by The National Research Foundation (NRF), which requires that all publicly funded peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings be made available in OA repositories within 12 months of publication. Several key organisations also signed the Berlin Declaration of Open Access between 2011 and 2014, including the University of

South Africa, Academy of Science of South Africa, and the National NRF of South Africa.

In 2023, the Universities of South Africa (USAf) published an online post outlining the progress made in terms of OA in the country, along with a call out for more national-level collaboration between national stakeholders in order to overcome some persistent obstacles, preferably as a national project convened by the Department of Science and Innovation government agency (usaf.ac.za, 2023). USAf aligned themselves with the OA2020



initiative in 2018 and strived to sign transformative agreements with global publishing houses. At the point of writing the blog post there had been 11 active transformative agreements signed by the South African National Library and Information Consortium. These have had a marked effect on making articles stemming from South African researchers available OA, with estimates for approximately 80% OA for the year 2024 if all deals in planning were signed. As such, the environment for facilitating OA has similarities with some of the most advanced countries in Europe when it comes to OA journal article output and the models used to achieve it, which is perhaps not a surprise as the OA2020 initiative is founded and anchored in Europe. Some of the issues currently on the agenda within this sphere in South Africa relate to how to move on from transformative agreements “...towards a scholarly publishing paradigm that is fully open, sustainable, inclusive and globally

equitable,” which many global publishers are resisting.

At the end of 2024 the DOAJ had 155 active OA journals registered from South Africa, 20% of which were Diamond OA, with an average APC for the rest of \$428 USD (Crawford, 2025a).

Tunisia

Figure 9 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to universities in Tunisia, from 2001 up until 2024. Currently sitting at a share of approximately 45% OA for the most recent years, there are two distinct spurts of OA that are discernible, one in 2010 and the other in 2019, which have then been sustained. Only a small share of outputs are only made available through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has particularly occurred by making outputs OA directly by the publishers.

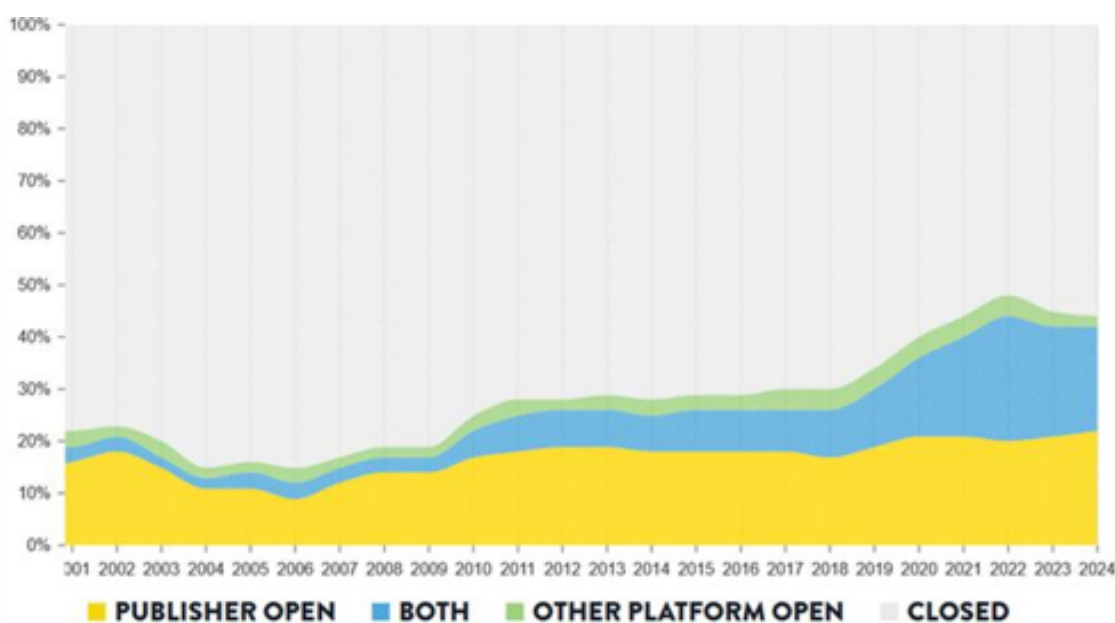


Figure 9: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one Tunisia-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).



In a recent preprint, Mhamdi (2025) reviews the development and current status of OA in Tunisia, relying both on existing literature and studies, as well as a newly performed bibliometric analysis of journal article output indexed by Scopus by researchers affiliated with Tunisian organisations. Historically and currently, there has not been a strong practice of founding repositories in the country to enable OA content. Previous research has pointed out limited resources, policy inconsistencies, and infrastructural constraints as barriers for the wider progress of OA in the country. From 2021 to 2024, the OA% of Scopus-indexed articles has, on average, been 39%, with no strong growth pattern. The clear majority of all articles that are OA are available through Gold OA and typically involve APCs. A large part of the OA research output by Tunisian researchers is done in collaboration with researchers with a Saudi Arabian affiliation, which stems from, for example, the government academic exchange programmes that exist between the countries, and particularly supporting the Gold OA and hybrid OA paths. Based on funding information included in the articles, Saudi Arabian funding sources are the most commonly named research funders in OA articles (in 12% of OA articles), with national Tunisian funders coming second (in 7.5% of OA articles).

As such, the two countries are to a degree linked, with Saudi Arabia having a

strong OA policy that includes funding of article-based charges that shows up to a high degree in the national outputs of Tunisia, which as a country does not have an as-clear policy or monetary momentum behind facilitation of OA to the same degree.

In a recent comprehensive report covering no-fee OA publishing in African countries (Kuchma & Ševkušić, 2024: p. 111), Bessem Aamira provides a national overview of the policy and practice landscape of OA, stating that: “There are no clear institutional and/or national policies that cover OA publishing in Tunisia. This means that there is no official guidance or support for researchers who want to manage an OA journal, except for the support provided by the National University Centre of Scientific and Technical Documentation – CNUDST. [...] Moreover, there are no institutional and/or national OA journal portals showcasing the Tunisian scientific journal output and increasing its visibility and impact. Therefore, OA publishing in Tunisia is mainly driven by the individual choices and initiatives of researchers who seek more impact from their work by taking advantage of the increased accessibility and citation that the open access movement offers.”

At the end of 2024, the DOAJ had five active OA journals registered from Tunisia, all of which were Diamond OA (Crawford, 2025a).



United Kingdom

Figure 10 provides a visualisation of how OA has developed among authors affiliated to the UK, from 2001 up until 2024. The level of 65% for the most recent years builds upon consistent growth that was initiated in 2007. Among the countries included in this analysis, the UK has a relatively high share of outputs only made available OA through repositories (the green-shaded area of the graph), which means that growth has been supported by archiving in repositories. There is a noticeable jump in the “publisher open” category for the most recent 3 years, which suggests that there has been a stronger use of publisher-provided OA options than before.

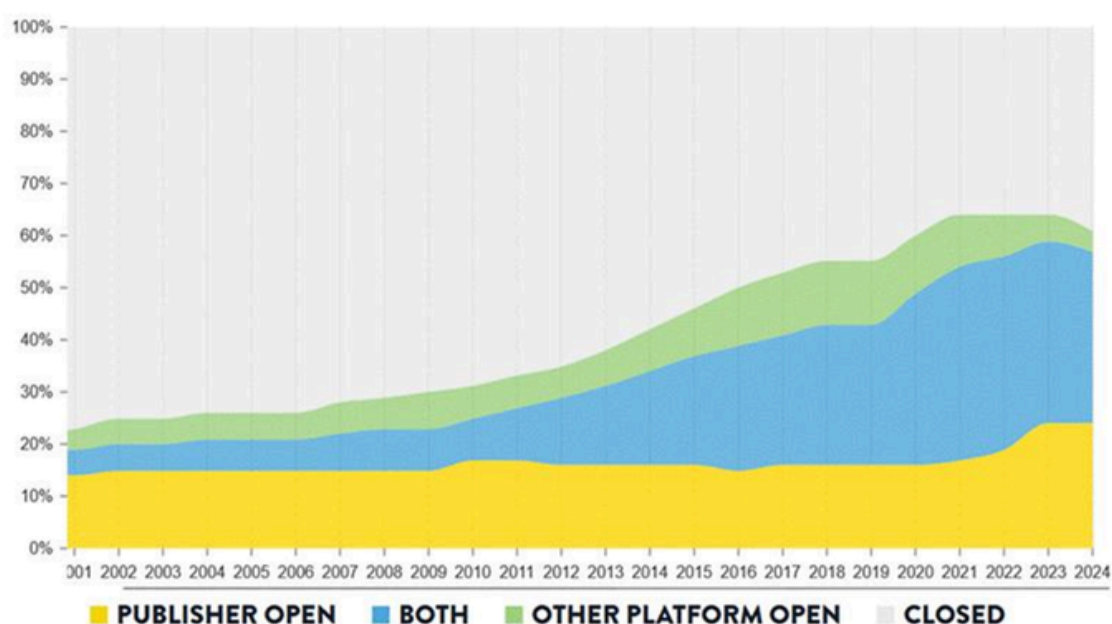


Figure 10: Percentage of OA over time (research outputs with at least one UK-affiliated author; <https://open.coki.ac/>; data updated 18 August 2025).

The UK has been home to some of the most impactful advancements in furthering practices for OA books. After a decade of high-level science policy preparation and debate in the UK (Crossick 2015; Universities UK Open Access Monographs Group 2019), the UKRI introduced an OA mandate for monographs, book chapters, or edited collections for works published after 1 January 2024. The UK debate is now around the details of how to enable more OA book publishing by authors, and how

other actors and processes in the UK landscape could facilitate OA for books; for example, through its inclusion as a requirement of the REF. The COPIM (Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs) project that ran from 2019 to 2023, and then continued as the Open Book Futures project, has spawned a lot of new knowledge as well as real-world products and services specifically for OA books such as Thoth Open Metadata, Open Book Collective, and Opening the Future.



Known barriers to adoption

As will become clear through the review of materials in this section, the barriers related to the wider adoption of OA books are very diverse in nature, and would often require collaboration or collective action to take place at different levels to be mitigated. This is easier said than done in a fast-changing environment where awareness, let alone adoption, of emerging models and initiatives can be challenging to keep up with, even among those interested in supporting such developments.

As part of the data collection process for the recently concluded PALOMERA project, 42 interviews were conducted with different stakeholders in the European OA books landscape, for which most transcripts are publicly available through the OA Books Toolkit Knowledge Base (knowledgebase.oabooks-toolkit.org, n.d.). The interview transcripts were studied as part of the interview analysis to identify barriers related to the proliferation of OA books, and particular policymaking around books (Laakso, Bandura-Morgan, Bazeliuk, et al., 2024). The most frequent barrier that came up in the interviews was lack of funding resources holding back development, followed with the lack of policies that would shape and steer OA book publishing. The following two barriers that appeared most frequently was lack of national coordination and established publishing traditions creating obstacles for making OA books more common. The full list of identified barriers has a long tail and covers a broad spectrum of topics.

There is a lot of change happening right now within the context of academic e-books and the interplay between libraries

and publishers, and OA models are definitely a large part of that change, but far from the only moving part. This becomes clear from a recent report published by ITHAKA+SR based on interviews with librarians and publishers; for example, through the broad mix of acquisition and access methods that are used to bring relevant content to users from publishers and aggregators (Bergstrom & Skinner, 2025). Publishers noted that new OA models require significant time investment and persistence to gain awareness and adoption, something that can be hard to make work financially.

Financial models

What makes the funding of OA to books more challenging than, for example, journal articles, is that they are independent titles and processes that each generate significant costs that need to be covered.

One of the best sources of data, despite its limitations, about the pricing levels of BPCs is available through the BPC subset of the OpenAPC service. It relies on data supplied by 96 European institutions to titles that have been assigned a DOI by the publisher, so there is a degree of bias included in these aspects (OpenAPC, n.d.). As of 4 October 2025, the dataset details the BPC amounts paid for 1,738 non-backlist titles, with a mean BPC of €8,208 and a broad range of values on both sides of the mean that includes both national and international publishers.

How BPCs are set and calculated across publishers varies a lot, as they include a mix of direct and indirect costs to be covered, in addition to potential profit or surplus that needs to be collected. Pinter (2018) provides a review of different approaches based on a landscape study



involving publishers across eight European countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and the UK). There is a lot that goes into the calculations of what a BPC should be set at from the publisher's perspective, including accounting for how potential profit/surplus or institutional subsidies, for example, university press publishers, should be assigned in relation to directly calculable title costs. The main argument put forward by Pinter (2018) is that increased transparency by publishers would be beneficial for increasing a broader understanding and acceptance of how BPCs or other per-title costs in financial models are derived.

For costs and pricing to be transparently communicated, and allowing for comparisons to be made across and within publishers, there is a need for a common approach to categorise and present the different types of costs involved. Key work in this area has been done by Nancy, Schmelzinger, Mulhern, et al. (2016) through a project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, where the key question was: What does it cost to create and disseminate an OA monograph (i.e., first digital copy costs)? Through the involvement of 20 university presses and 382 titles, the project was able to explore different ways that costs could be acknowledged in different organisations, depending on whether press-level overheads and in-kind contributions should be included or not. The average costs for titles were between around \$30,000 USD and \$40,000 USD

depending on which of the optional costs are to be included in the calculations. Nevertheless, the most important takeaways from the study were the standardised methodology to register costs to allow for comparisons and estimations to be made, and the finding that the largest cost item across the board is university press staff time, particularly for activities related to acquisition. Another project where the created cost accounting tool was heavily featured is the TOME (Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem) pilot project (Nancy, McLaughlin, & Schmelzinger, 2022). The project followed up the costs of 57 books published by university presses included in the study where the average cost was \$19,954, with a low of \$6,495 and a high of \$35,547. The study highlighted the importance that print sales can have even if content is made available OA on the web, where most titles reached a financial break-even point through sales of physical copies of books.

Recently, authors affiliated with the Open Book Collective published a report focusing on librarians' experiences and barriers to participation with collective funding models for OA books (Fathallah, Deville, Penier, et al., 2025). The report is based on 20 interviews with primarily librarians but also some other OA book stakeholders in six European countries (Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Sweden). The interview participants were recruited from OBC membership and broader Copim/partner networks, so respondents had high awareness of models and alternatives, having demonstrated previous



activity in this specific area. Among the main findings from the respondents was that:

- There was generally a strong commitment to the idea of equitable OA, but there was also tension between on the one hand contributing institutional funds toward these kinds of Diamond OA models, and on the other hand meeting the needs of the own institution. Concrete justification is needed by some funders, which is not always compliant with some of the existing models;
- The OA book space is not isolated from the merger and acquisition activity that has been going on in the scholarly publishing space during the last decade. This has led to reduced trust in OA initiatives that cannot convincingly demonstrate credible transparency and how they are protected from corporate acquisition;
- Librarians were concerned about the US/UK centricity that is present in the OA book initiative landscape. National publishing landscapes and national languages are currently left outside of this sphere.

Reward and recognition structures

In many environments, the publication of academic books in general has been decreasing over time, often happening in tandem with increases in journal article output. As such, the growth of OA shares of books needs to happen within a broader context that is also often shifting.

In designing OA book services and outputs it is also important to consider the different reading needs and patterns that

different users have, and how those might change over time. In a survey conducted in 2019 by Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press among researchers from the Social Sciences and humanities, Clark & Hill (2019) report that the majority of respondents interacted with digital monographs at the chapter level, seeking specific content, and only a small proportion read them from cover to cover. However, the importance of the monograph was undeniable, with over 90% of responses considering them extremely or very important to the overall body of knowledge in their subject area.

Within the interview materials from the PALOMERA project, publishing traditions, lack of incentives, and lack of recognition were some of the common barriers that were mentioned in the interviews across Europe (Laakso, Bandura-Morgan, Bazeliuk, et al., 2024).

There seems to be a persistent perception among some authors that OA equates to lower quality (see, e.g., Bergstrom & Skinner, 2025). It could be useful to provide evidence to the contrary, where available. A lot of trust and perceived quality is associated with the professional editing and publishing of the book. While standardised ways of labelling peer-reviewed content have never been widespread practice for academic books, there have been new approaches developed to signal to readers and aggregators of content when a book has been peer reviewed. One such way is utilising PRISM—Peer Review Information Service for Monographs—which is a standardised way for publishers who are members of the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) to communicate their peer-review practices in a clear and transparent way (<https://www.doabooks.org/en/article/prism>).



OA for books can offer a new way to make book publishing more attractive to researchers, opening up their works to a broad global audience rather than limiting access by high price tags set by large publishers.

Infrastructure limitations

An additional challenge facing the wide-scale adoption of OA books is integration into an evolving technical environment where there is still a lot of divergence in terms of how content is made available, discoverable, and preserved.

The Andrew Mellon Foundation funded the “Developing a Pilot Data Trust for Open Access Ebook Usage Project,” which produced a report analysing the OA book supply chain through interviews with key stakeholder groups, both in terms of downstream production and dissemination of the content in key channels, and in terms of collecting and aggregating the usage data of published content (Clarke & Ricci, 2021). The report identified five key findings that relate to the role of metadata and usage throughout the OA books supply chain:

1. Journal-based standards and models are a poor fit for OA books;
2. The supply chain is built for paid access and incentives are aligned for paid access—not necessarily for OA;
3. Distribution processes are complex and do not easily handle changes to a title’s OA status;
4. Existent standards and practices are not yet firmly established for OA monographs, and some are insufficient;

5. The large and growing number of platforms that deliver OA books to end users creates challenges for usage reporting.

Services catering to the digital scholarly publishing space, such as indexing and discovery, are reliant on published items having persistent identifiers through which content can be uniquely identified and linkages made between; for example, items citing each other. In an explorative bibliometric study mapping academic OA books, Laakso (2023) identified 396,995 titles spread across the web, a population of content that utilised a breadth of different approaches when it came to use of identifiers (ISBN, DOI) influencing their indexation, discovery, and how they integrate into the workflows of preservation service providers.

In 2020, shortly before announcing its OA book policy, the UKRI commissioned a gap analysis of OA books infrastructure (Ferwerda, Mosterd, Snijder, et al., 2021). The identified gaps were the following:

- Lack of awareness among researchers of possibilities concerning OA book publishing;
- Lack of infrastructure to help authors clear third-party rights for OA publications;
- Lack of compliance-checking tools for OA books;
- Missing metadata to connect OA books to research grants and publication funds;
- Lack of standardisation and best practices around usage data;



- Lack of representation of OA books in CRIS/RIM systems;
- Lack of downstream coverage of metadata, in particular persistent identifiers (PIDs) and funding details;
- OA book metadata degradation throughout the e-book supply chain. Libraries have trouble identifying OA books (OA tagging);
- Technical preservation challenges and ambiguity concerning who is responsible for the preservation of OA books;
- Self-archiving is not an established route for longform publications;
- Co-existing metadata formats, lack of best practices for OA books metadata and implementation of PIDs.

For each of these gaps the report presents a number of recommended actions that would aim to mitigate the size and presence of the gap.

A recent report that focused on the challenges present for learned society, subject association, and smaller specialist publishers in transitioning their book publishing to OA primarily focused on data gathering through interviews, focus groups, and a web survey with publishers in the UK, but most of the challenges are relatively universal (Estelle, Jago, Jones, et al., 2025).

From the perspective of infrastructure, the following issues were among the most pressing ones raised by publishers:

- The transition from print to digital is happening alongside the transition to OA;
- New open infrastructure operates in parallel to book supply chain infrastructure;
- Despite progress in this area, there is still an unmet demand for infrastructure/services to enable many libraries to contribute small amounts of funding so that specific books or collections of shared interest can be published OA, to discover what books could be commissioned and published OA if only the publisher knew that money was available;
- Changing the OA status of backlist titles is challenging. Publishers need to be able to clearly and quickly communicate when they have received funding to retrospectively convert a book or chapter to OA, and libraries need to be able to quickly receive and act on this information;
- Formats and editions need to be differentiated at collection, title, and chapter levels. Employers and funders need to be acknowledged to enable OA payments and reporting. Information about the relevant licence needs to travel through the supply chain;



- Chapter-level OA is both a technical and business model challenge. Publishers use title-management systems, digital distribution systems, and metadata management systems. These typically operate at a single book title level, where each book has a unique ISBN identifier that is used to track sales and usage. Layering in an OA business model at a chapter level is beyond the capabilities of many publishers and their book-production systems, and the OA status of individual chapters can therefore be difficult. Librarians are also not keen on books with just some content being available OA. Incorporating an OA chapter, and not the other paywalled chapters, in their catalogues is potentially confusing to users.

In some cases, one can see that the emerging OA books infrastructure is benefitting from extending existing services that are already in use for managing OA journals article metadata. After a pilot period during 2023–2024, the OA Switchboard now also intermediates OA book metadata between publishers, institutions, and funders, with three publishers participating from its formal launch in October 2025 (oaswitchboard.org, 2025). Being able to ingest ONIX data that publishers in the book space often have to produce makes the solution customised for this specific purpose rather than being reliant on the data workflows that have been developed for OA journal article metadata.

Two central infrastructures dedicated to OA books that have grown substantially over the last decade have been OAPEN and the DOAB. Ferwerda, Snijder, & Stern (2023) describe the origins, evolutions, and intersections of these infrastructures

and how they will continue their work both in terms of quantity and quality of content that they host or index. With over 25,000 titles hosted by OAPEN and the DOAB covering over 100,000 academic peer-reviewed books in its index, they have become services that both libraries but also publishers of OA books need to be aware of in order to assess if inclusion of their content makes sense for them in order to get it aggregated and made more discoverable beyond what other channels and infrastructures can provide.

Thoth is a non-profit, open metadata management and dissemination platform tailor-made for OA book content that spawned from work conducted in the COPIM project (<https://thoth.pub/>). The service integrates and automates a lot of the workflows to make dealing with the current infrastructure environment as smooth as possible. Publishers can manage and distribute their content metadata, have automatic DOI registration for books and chapters, integrate into other platforms and workflows, and facilitate long-term preservation of their content through archiving. With more than 60 international publishers and partnerships with key stakeholders and infrastructures in the OA book space (e.g., Crossref, DOAB, and PKP), this service can alleviate some of the common challenges mentioned earlier in the section depending on how well publishers can integrate Thoth features into their workflows.

Cultural or disciplinary norms

In a study conducted among Spanish philosophy and ethics researchers, a web survey concerning journal and book publishing revealed that the most important factors among 201 respondents to a web survey were publisher's prestige,



the publisher's subject orientation or specialisation, and that no publication fee is charged (Feenstra & López-Cózar, 2022). That the publication is free to read, that is, OA, was the second-to-last ranked option among all answer alternatives, suggesting that OA by itself is a weaker priority than the publisher-related factors that were scored as most important. The study also provided results that would suggest that researchers perceive fees for facilitating publishing less negatively for books than they do for journal articles. An interview component of the study queried researchers for elaboration on this point, and part of the explanation comes from there being a practice under some circumstances to have to pay a fee to national book publishers in conjunction with publishing, money that is usually covered from a publicly funded project, even though the book does not become available OA.

Research disciplines differ a lot, not just to the extent that external funding is available to cover, for example, publishing-related costs, but also more fundamentally when it comes to how OA is positioned and perceived within them. Frankl (2023) developed an OA culture framework that is aimed to help different actors in the landscape gather and structure key information about OA for specific research areas that are of relevance to them, and where they perhaps would like to become involved; for example, as publishers or funders of publication fees. The key questions that one should seek answers to, for example, through interviews and surveys to understand the OA culture of a specific research area, are divided into six main categories:

OA activity

- How often do scholars in the field publish their research OA?
- Does the field use OA repositories?
- How many publication venues exist for scholars to publish OA?
- Why do scholars in the field choose to publish OA?

OA knowledge

- Can scholars in the field define OA? How do they define OA?
- Do scholars in the field understand different OA funding models and copyright?
- Are common misconceptions about OA circulating in the scholarly community?

OA prestige and perception

- Do scholars in the field view OA publications suspiciously or as less prestigious than non-OA publications?
- Are OA publications viewed negatively by tenure committees?

OA funding

- Is publishing OA financially feasible for scholars in this field?
- Are there specific grants or awards in the field for scholars to publish their work OA?
- How do scholars typically fund OA publications?



Field population and publishing needs

- Are there certain populations within a field that tend to be more favourable towards OA (e.g., subfields, institutional affiliations, faculty rank)?
- Are there populations that tend to be less favourable toward OA?

In their article, Frankl (2023) provides three case studies for how this framework was applied by University of Michigan Press to inform the design and decision-making concerning their OA monograph initiative, focusing on three disciplines within the Social Sciences and humanities: Asian studies, classical studies, and political science. Throughout the structured exploration using interviews and survey material, the study found considerable differences between these disciplines, all which was key

information for deciding on how to better design the OA publishing model that was under consideration.

Even though it is already over 5 years old at this point, the global author survey conducted by Springer Nature on the topic of OA books is still one of the most comprehensive studies among academic book authors on the topic of OA books with its 2,542 responses (Pyne, Emery, Lucraft, et al., 2019). While keeping in mind that self-selection among respondents likely plays into the results, the majority of the responding authors believed that all future scholarly books should be OA, even though fewer than 20% of the respondents had published an OA book at that point in time. Print options were also highly valued by the respondents. One of the major obstacles and concerns was funding options to enable OA publishing.



Innovative approaches and emerging alternatives to traditional publishing

The introduction of OA as a factor in the scholarly publishing space has generated a lot of experimentation with new types of publishing and business models that enable OA of the final published outputs. As development in this space has been moving fast during the last decade in particular, the concepts and terminology to distinguish between different approaches are still evolving. Mellins-Cohen (2024) provides an overview of some of the key business models common for all OA publishing, reproduced as Figure 11, with a few models applicable to OA book publishing specifically.

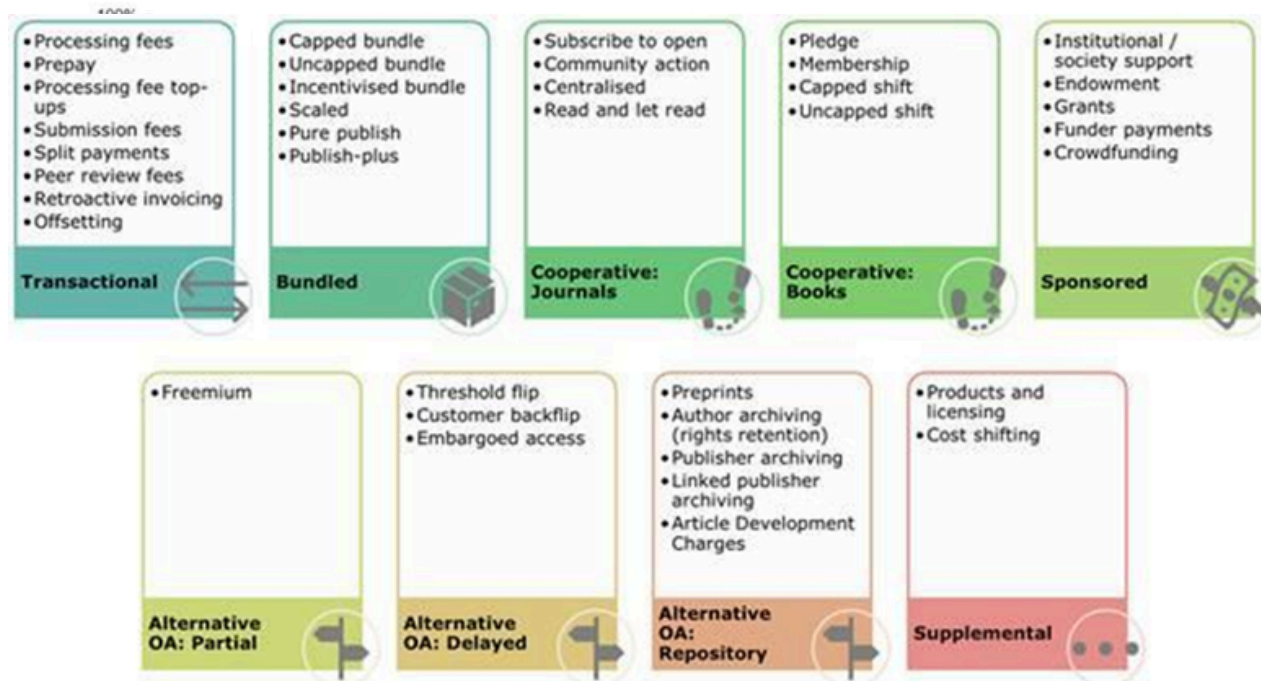


Figure 11: A classification scheme for open access business models (Mellins-Cohen, 2024).

Looking more closely at models documented specifically from the context of OA books, the COPIM project produced a report focusing on identifying revenue models for OA monographs, together with a SWOT analysis conducted on each (Penier, Eve, & Grady, 2020). The revenue models are listed in Table 1.

Diverging from the original published table, we have added the revenue source of “Traditional sales + Green OA,” and renamed hybrid (print) to “Print sales with online OA,” as we have previously found this useful for better distinguishing between hybrid in the context of OA journals, which has another meaning (Estelle, Jago, Jones, et al., 2025).



Table 1: Classification of revenue models (adapted and cited from Penier, Eve, & Grady, 2020). These models can be used alone or in combination.

Revenue models for OA books	
Earned revenue model	Short description
Advertising	A demand-side model that consists of advertisements, contextual links, and/or product placement within the OA monograph or on the publisher website
Book processing charge	A demand-side model in which publishers charge the author or his/her employer/funder a fee upon acceptance of the book for publication
Cross-subsidies	A supply-side model, in which funding for OA monographs comes from revenues from the publisher's commercial activities, such as service provision, institutional funding, sale of translation rights, or profits from other non-OA publications
Crowdfunding from individuals	This is a demand-side model, in which the publisher organises crowdfunding campaigns pitching monographs online to readers
Embargoed / delayed OA	A demand-side model, in which a monograph becomes OA only after a delay or embargo. During the embargo period, only priced editions are available
Endowments	A supply-side or third-party model, in which the publisher builds or receives an endowment or subvention (e.g., as part of a start-up grant) and uses annual interest to cover its expenses
Fundraising (donations and grants)	A demand-side model, in which the publisher solicits donations, periodically or continuously, from individuals or foundations
Digital format freemium	A demand-side model in which the OA edition is in one digital format (e.g., HTML) and the priced edition in other digital formats (e.g., EPUB, PDF, MOBI) that may have a higher utility



Print sales with online OA	A demand-side model that uses the dual formats of digital and print, which are priced by “media preference.” The priced version could be a print edition while the online version is offered as OA
Third-party licensing	A supply-side business model, in which the publisher licences some of its OA content to third-party distributors and uses some of the revenue to support the costs of OA publishing (the publisher might make the content available for commercial distribution under a separate licence)
Traditional sales + Green OA	When the author’s accepted manuscript is made available through archiving (Mellins-Cohen, 2024). This can be used in conjunction with an embargo or without one. The publisher can still sell access to the final book, although they will be doing so in competition with a free draft version
Embedded institutional support	
Library-based publishing	A supply-side model, in which the press collaborates with the university library to share resources to make OA financially feasible
Subsidy model	A supply-side model, in which a university/faculty/research centre and/or library subsidises a university press directly or indirectly (financially or through facilities, equipment, or personnel; i.e., in-kind institutional support)
Third-party subsidies	
Grants	A third-party business model, in which an institution (learned society, not-for-profit organisation, or foundation) subsidises OA publications, in whole or part, directly or indirectly (financially or through facilities, equipment, or personnel; i.e., in-kind institutional support)
Liberation	A third-party model for books that have already been published/are on backlists. Sponsors (foundations or governments) buy the copyright for books and then make them OA



Consortial models	
Library crowdfunding	This revenue model is one in which an intermediating platform connects many purchasers with the option to “unlock” or “unlatch” a title
Membership fees	A supply-side model, in which distinct user groups create a platform for economic exchange that provides each group with the benefits of a large network
Shared infrastructure	A supply-side model, which entails sharing infrastructure and resources
Subscribe-to-open	Under subscribe-to-open, libraries subscribe to have access to the content. After subscriptions reach a certain threshold, the content becomes openly available to all readers

In a recent web survey directed at libraries around the world, 185 organisational responses were received, with a skew toward respondents from the UK (42%) and the USA (22%), with questions included on how libraries perceive their support for OA through different models and initiatives (Estelle, Jago, Jones, et al., 2025). The number of different OA book-related initiatives that the respondents supported ranged from 1 to 25, and while not all memberships necessarily involve financial contributions, there are clearly many different avenues to support OA books, with many libraries supporting around half a dozen initiatives. Diamond OA and consortial funding agreements were among the most popular ones indicated by the respondents; however, some respondents raised complaints about their transparency in terms of supporter thresholds and what potential additional

funds are used for. And while Diamond OA was the most favoured model, there was at the same time a pressure to be able to demonstrate clear benefit to the institution in contributing money toward different models, explaining why access to paywalled backlists have become a popular model in conjunction with funding Diamond OA (Estelle, Jago, Jones, et al., 2025).

Equity and inclusion in OA publishing

APCs create an uneven playing field for equal participation in the journal publishing space, enabling authors with funding from either their institution or research funder to have options to get published in certain outlets or make their works OA in subscription-access journals when they otherwise would be locked behind a paywall. With BPCs being substantially more expensive than individual APCs on



average, the divide between different members of the scholarly community risks growing unless models are developed with equity and inclusion as central values in their design.

As collaborative models that do not rely on BPCs differ from traditional subscription-access agreements in the way that they contribute toward participating library services and activities, where traditional ways of calculating cost per title or read are overtly limited, Farrell, Poznanski, and Watkinson (2021) have pointed out the need to develop new indicators and ways of assessing value that would be able to capture the benefits of OA book models in a more holistic way. The authors suggest that the degree to which models advance diversity, equity, and inclusion could be one attribute through which to assess the value gained from participation.

Equity has remained high on the agenda in the dialogues around OA publishing in recent years, with driving factors being the ever-increasing volume of journal articles that are published through payment of APCs, the growth of transformative agreements, and the still emerging OA books space, which—for now—has BPCs being the dominant publisher-driven option being offered. In autumn of 2024, a multi-stakeholder group convened by cOAlition S, Jisc, and PLOS developed a tool called “How Equitable is it” (<https://coalitions.typeform.com/Equity-Tool>) that intended to help stakeholders to assess equity among scholarly communication models.

It asks users to rate a specific model that they have in mind based on the following

seven criteria:

- Access to read;
- Publishing immediate OA;
- Maximising participation;
- Re-use rights;
- Pricing and fee transparency;
- Promoting and encouraging open research practices: data and code;
- Promoting and encouraging open research practices: preprints and open peer review.

The tool itself does not provide any scores for named models, but it can be seen as a supportive tool for stakeholders to compare how different competing models fare on these key criteria.

Collaborative, non-BPC, and community-led models

In recent years, several collective models have been developed and launched to enable non-BPC-based publishing of OA books within AHSS disciplines, increasing the amount of OA titles that are made available on a more equitable basis. The three models that are briefly described in this chapter share the trait that they aim to be scalable in terms of contributor membership and incentivise participation through access to otherwise closed access backlist (and in some cases, frontlist as well), with potential additional discounts to other offerings that the publishers have in their portfolio, and direct a substantial part of the collected institutional membership funds toward making newly published titles OA when they otherwise would not be.



Opening the Future

Opening the Future is a revenue model developed within the COPIM project launched in 2021. Taking inspiration from the subscribe-to-open models familiar from the journal publishing space, Opening the Future leverages the collective power of multiple modest financial inputs from a growing number of institutions that participate in the model. The basics are perhaps best explained in the word of the authors of the model themselves:

“Opening the Future is a revenue model for open access monographs in which a press solicits a relatively small financial contribution from a moderate number of academic libraries, in order to cover the costs of new OA publications. In return, the member libraries receive special access to elements of the press’s backlist, as well as frontlist titles that are made OA. Libraries will retain access to the backlist for as long as they are members and with the option for the press to offer perpetual access to libraries after a certain period of membership. Membership will last a minimum of three years, with the option to renew after that. The revenue from the membership – that grants access to the backlist – will be used to fund the frontlist to be OA.” (Eve, Pinter, Poznanski, et al., 2022: p. 4)

The model contains a backlist access incentive for institutions to participate beyond just helping finance the OA expenses of new titles being published by the participating presses. It is equitable toward authors as it is not giving any OA publishing privileges to authors of participating institutions; when sufficient funding has been collected by participating presses for making one new title OA, the next title at a suitable stage in production is made OA. Currently (as of October 2025), Opening the Future is running based on the content of three presses: Central Europe University Press, Liverpool University Press, and Michigan State University Press. While Opening the Future can scale to include more presses in the future, the idea is that there would also be others creating similar consortia with other publishers based on the tools and resources made available by the authors in Eve, Pinter, Poznanski, et al., (2022), including financial forecasting tools, communication, and marketing strategies, and IT source code.

MIT Press Direct to Open

MIT Press launched its Direct to Open (D2O) model in 2019, which is a similar collective funding model to Opening the Future that contains gated backlist incentives for institutions to participate, where collected funds contribute toward making new titles from the press available OA without cost to authors. Initially launched as a model covering only outputs from MIT Press, beginning in 2026 Duke University Press and Goldsmiths Press will also join as partner publishers within the model (<https://direct.mit.edu/books/pages/direct-to-open>).



University of Michigan Press Fund to Mission

In spring of 2021, University of Michigan Press, collaborating together with LYRASIS, launched their Fund to Mission programme, which works on a similar logic to Opening the Future and Direct to Open, but has the additional incentive for institutional membership that they also gain access not just to backlist titles, but also frontlist titles that are not available OA. The money pooled into the model comes from three different sources: the University of Michigan Provost, library investments, and authors' funding supporters (<https://ebc.press.umich.edu/invest>).

Open Book Collective

One of the major outputs of the COPIM project was what has now become known as the Open Book Collective (OBC) (<https://openbookcollective.org/>). Snyder & Fathallah (2023) provide a comprehensive article on the motivations behind developing the platform and the central principles it leans on, seeing a need for a service that could help publishers move away from BPCs, creating mechanisms that could also channel money toward infrastructure providers, and which would in itself also be based on principles of openness in governance. OBC provides a common platform for publishers to offer their different OA book offerings that libraries and other funders can sign up to support, all through cohesive invoicing and metadata interfaces that mitigate problems with fragmentation when it comes to these practices if each publisher would have their own independent processes set up. Infrastructure providers such as DOAB,

Thoth, and PKP are also available to be financially supported on the platform.

Author voices, particularly in AHSS disciplines

There are at least two distinct perspectives that would be key to catch if one was to gain a better understanding of how to make authoring OA books more common among authors; on the one hand, hearing from individuals who have not published OA books (gauging awareness, motivation, other barriers), and on the other hand, from individuals who have successfully published an OA book, learning from the facilitating factors that made it become a reality. Hearing from only one of these perspectives distorts the usefulness of the inquiry, as the vast majority have yet to have any major experiences with authoring OA books, and only recording learnings from successful cases gives a strong self-selection bias. It can therefore be argued that one should listen to both and carefully consider what conclusions one can draw from the evidence provided.

Unfortunately there are not many studies that have comprehensively gauged researchers internationally on their awareness and attitudes toward OA book publishing. A large part of the literature concerns the publisher perspective. However, there are two survey-based studies conducted by publishers from around the same time in 2019 that give some indication and baseline to how researchers in the AHSS disciplines perceive things.

The survey conducted by Springer Nature, presented by Pyne, Emery, Lucraft et al (2019), generated global responses (albeit heavily skewed toward respondents from



Europe and the United States) from 2,542 book authors. A strength of the study is that it separates and compares responses between OA book authors and non-OA book authors, which benefits interpretation, making the dataset of the study openly available. Some key findings of the survey stemming from differences between AHSS disciplines and others is that AHSS author responses reported relatively higher value placed on their books increasing interdisciplinary discussion and use of their work, as a mechanism for career advancement, and for reaching policy-makers. AHSS authors also reported less motivation of financial profit from their books compared with other disciplines. As for how authors select their publisher, the AHSS disciplines had a markedly higher share of respondents that were influenced by the reputation of the publisher in their field, in comparison to other disciplines. AHSS authors also had a higher agreement than authors from other disciplines on the importance of having a print version of their book available. Overall, the share of authors who saw this as important was lower among authors who had published an OA book. The study found statistically significant results in the differences in non-OA book authors from the AHSS disciplines and those of other research areas in the reported higher inability to fund BPCs and higher concern for perceived quality of OA books. More senior researchers were more sceptical of the benefits of OA and less willing to pay for it than more junior researchers across the entire dataset.

The other report from 2019 (Clark & Hill, 2019) presents the results of a survey study conducted by Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press among 4,984 AHSS researchers

around the world regarding what they think about reading, writing, and publishing monographs. In comparison to Pyne, Emery, Lucraft, et al. (2019), which was summarised in the previous paragraph, this study does not have an open dataset and the structured questions do not inquire about OA, but rather about how the respondents perceive books overall as readers and authors within their disciplines. Here most of the responses were again from the USA and Europe. From the results, it is clear that monographs in particular have very strong support from respondents, both in terms of current importance within the AHSS disciplines as well as how they perceive their role in the future. Interestingly, early-career researchers were more likely to only read and access particular sections of monographs, while more senior researchers had a higher tendency to read them cover to cover. The respondents called out for flexible digital options in addition to print that would enable things such as annotations and multimedia content. In terms of all these findings, OA can only add to the flexibility, both in terms of piecemeal discovery, reading, and use, as well as integration of various digital tools, as the content can be imported into a developing landscape of tools and devices for such purposes due to their lack of digital rights management (DRM) protection.

The OA Books Toolkit maintains a section where a collection of author interviews concerning OA book publishing processes are made available (oabooks-toolkit.org, 2024), and Springer Nature has also published a number of similar articles where authors of books have given responses to a standardised set of questions (springernature.com, n.d.). All cases from both locations have been



reviewed for their key information, with the results presented in Table 2.

One can conclude that, so far, these types of documented cases stem from the Global North and only from a small subset of different publishers, and it would be valuable if there were more diverse examples available in the future. Although one needs to interpret what is presented through the lens of marketing, it is clear that the authors in the interviews are genuinely convinced that OA has been beneficial to them, and often quote access numbers to back that up. Most of

the cases that have been written about have been paid through BPCs where sources of funding vary, with only a couple of non-BPC models featured. These examples also show a difference to how funding can be sourced for edited works in comparison to monographs, where each author pays for their own chapter and that in some cases not all authors need to do this in order to push the full book to become OA. One case also raises the issue of how edition updates are handled in a world of BPCs, where in this case a separate fee was paid to update the work and its content between editions.

Book title	Publication year	Publisher	Publisher country	Author(s)	Author affiliation	Author country	Business model and funding source	Case URL	Book URL
Academic Ableism : Disability and Higher Education	2017	University of Michigan Press	USA	Dolmage, J.	University of Waterloo	Canada	BPC. Funded by the Arts Research Office at the University of Waterloo	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/3824515-academic-ableism-disability-and-higher-education	https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9708722
Contextual Process Digitalization: Changing Perspectives – Design Thinking – Value-Led Design	2020	Springer Nature	Germany	Fleischmann,, A., Oppl, S. Schmidt, W., Stary, C.	Johannes Kepler University Linz	Austria	BPC. “Funding from various projects and initiatives”	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/5631558-contextual-process-digitalization-changing-perspectives-design-thinking-value-led-design	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-38300-8
Coronavirus Politics: The Comparative Politics and Policy of COVID-19	2021	University of Michigan Press	USA	Greer,S., King, E., Massard da Fonseca, E., Peralta-Santos, A.	University of Michigan	USA	“Most of the funding for the book came from the International Institute at the University of Michigan. It also received support from the Fund to Mission programme at the University of Michigan Press that brings together support from a cohort of libraries and matching investment from the University of Michigan’s Provost’s Office”.	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/5287897-coronavirus-politics-the-comparative-politics-and-policy-of-covid-19	https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11927713
Destination London: The Expansion of the Visitor Economy	2019	University of Westminster Press	UK	Smith, A., Graham, A.	University of Westminster	UK	University of Westminster Press is a Diamond OA publisher	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/12678163-destination-london-the-expansion-of-the-visitor-economy	https://doi.org/10.16997/book35

Book title	Publication year	Publisher	Publisher country	Author(s)	Author affiliation	Author country	Business model and funding source	Case URL	Book URL
Hippocrates Now: The 'Father of Medicine' in the Internet Age	2019	Bloomsbury Academic	UK	Helen, K.	The Open University	UK	Funded by Knowledge Unlatched's library consortium	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/16092982-hippocrates-now-the-father-of-medicine-in-the-internet-age	https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350005921
Music on the Move	2020	University of Michigan Press	USA	Fosler-Lussier, D.	Ohio State University	USA	Supported by a grant from The Open Monograph Initiative (TOME) and the Ohio State University Libraries. This grant of \$15,000, awarded through an on-campus selection process, went directly to the University of Michigan Press to defray the cost of making the book open access	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/496900-music-on-the-move	https://doi.org/10.1353/book.76592
Rethinking Social Action through Music: The Search for Coexistence and Citizenship in Medellín's Music Schools	2021	Open Book Publishers	UK	Baker, G.	University of London	UK	The Music & Letters Trust contributed to the cost of publishing the English version, and Agrigento to the cost of the Spanish translation	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/4155309-rethinking-social-action-through-music-the-search-for-coexistence-and-citizenship-in-medellin-s-music-schools	https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0243
Still Life: Notes on Barbara Loden's "Wanda" (1970)	2021	Punctum Books	USA	Backman Rogers, A.	University of Gothenburg	Sweden	Publisher is Diamond OA, funded primarily through an institutional library membership programme	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/10825829-still-life-notes-on-barbara-loden-s-wanda-1970	https://doi.org/10.53288/0326.1.00

Book title	Publication year	Publisher	Publisher country	Author(s)	Author affiliation	Author country	Business model and funding source	Case URL	Book URL
Wonder, Horror, Mystery: Letters on Cinema and Religion in Malick, Von Trier, and Kieślowski	2021	Punctum Books	USA	Meis, M., Tyree, J.M.	Virginia Commonwealth University	USA	Publisher is Diamond OA, funded primarily through an institutional library membership programme	https://oabooks-toolkit.org/article/10562238-wonder-horror-mystery-letters-on-cinema-and-religion-in-malick-von-trier-and-kieslowski	https://doi.org/10.53288/0359.1.00
Indigenous Knowledge and Education in Africa	2019	SpringerOpen	Germany	Ezeanya-Esiobu, C.	Soka University of America	USA	BPC. Paid by International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/sharing-indigenous-knowledge-with-the-world--q-a-with-chika-ezea/17128152	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-6635-2
Public Health Ethics: Cases Spanning the Globe	2016	Springer	Germany	Barrett, D.H., Ortmann, L.W., Dawson, A., Saenz, C., Reis, A., Bolan, G. (Editors)	US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	USA	BPC. The OA fee was paid for by the US CDC (employer of the editors)	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/open-access-books-humanities-drue-barrett/19202050	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23847-0

Book title	Publication year	Publisher	Publisher country	Author(s)	Author affiliation	Author country	Business model and funding source	Case URL	Book URL
Value and the Humanities: The Neoliberal University and Our Victorian Inheritance	2020	Palgrave Macmillan	UK	Bulaiti, Z.H.	University of Exeter	UK	BPC. Paid by the University of Exeter's open access (OA) fund	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/open-access-books-humanities-zoe-hope-bulaitis/19193094	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37892-9
The Potato Crop: Its Agricultural, Nutritional and Social Contribution to Humankind	2019	Springer	Germany	Campos, H.	International Potato Center	Peru	BPC. Funding was provided by employer, the International Potato Center (CIP)	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/oa-books-supporting-sdgs-interview-hugo-campos/19896658	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28683-5
The Innovation Revolution in Agriculture	2021	Springer	Germany	Campos, H.	International Potato Center	Peru	BPC. Funded by the research funder, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/oa-books-supporting-sdgs-interview-hugo-campos/19896658	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-50991-0

Book title	Publication year	Publisher	Publisher country	Author(s)	Author affiliation	Author country	Business model and funding source	Case URL	Book URL
Sustainability, Human Well-Being, and the Future of Education	2018	Palgrave Macmillan	UK	Cook, J.W.	Finnish Innovation Fund (Sitra)	Finland	BPC. Paid through inclusion into project plan while working at the Finnish Innovation Fund (Sitra)	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/oa-books-supporting-sdgs-interview-dr-justin-cook/19896678	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78580-6
Innovative Models for Sustainable Development in Emerging African Countries	2020	Springer	Germany	Della Torre, S.	Politecnico di Milano	Italy	BPC. Departmental funds. The decision was shared by the departmental board	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/oa-books-supporting-sdgs-interview-stefano-della-torre/19896512	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33323-2
2nd edition of The Handbook of Salutogenesis	2022	Springer	Germany	Mittelmark, M.B., Bauer, G.F., Vaandrager, L., et al. (Editors)	University of Bergen	Norway	BPC. The first edition of the handbook was funded by donations from the editors and their workplaces. The second edition was funded by a Swiss foundation that provides long-term support to advance salutogenesis scholarship	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/oa-books-supporting-sdgs-interview-marice-mittelmark/19896634	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79515-3

Book title	Publication year	Publisher	Publisher country	Author(s)	Author affiliation	Author country	Business model and funding source	Case URL	Book URL
Asylum Determination in Europe: Ethnographic Perspectives	2019	Palgrave Macmillan	UK	Gill, N., Good, A. (Editors)	University of Edinburgh	Scotland	BPC. ERC grant covered most, a couple of the chapter authors also contributed	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/oa-books-supporting-sdgs-interview-anthony-good/19896552	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94749-5
Housing Estates in Europe	2018	Springer	Germany	Hess, D.B., Tammaru, T., van Ham, M. (Editors)	University at Buffalo	USA	BPC. Some of the co-authors wanted to publish their chapters OA. As there were enough contributions towards the chapter-processing charges for their own chapters, it meant that the total amount was enough to cover the BPC for the entire book to be published OA, effectively meaning that some of the chapters became OA for “free”	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/tips-for-open-access-book-funding/18324022	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-92813-5
Disability, Health and Human Development	2018	Palgrave Pivot New York	USA	Mitra, S.	Fordham University	USA	BPC. Funded by a seed grant programme at Fordham University as their Office of Research	https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/the-researchers-source/open-science-blogpost/tips-for-open-access-book-funding/18324022	https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53638-9

Table 2: Summary of published interviews with authors of OA books.



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