

Towards Transparency in APCs

Stephen J Eglén
<https://sje30.github.io>
sje30@cam.ac.uk

Cambridge Computational Biology Institute
University of Cambridge
@StephenEglén

Slides: <http://bit.ly/eglen-apc> (CC-BY license)

Declarations

1. Member of *Bullied into Bad Science* campaign
2. Affiliate editor of *bioRxiv*
3. Senior editor of *Scientific Data*

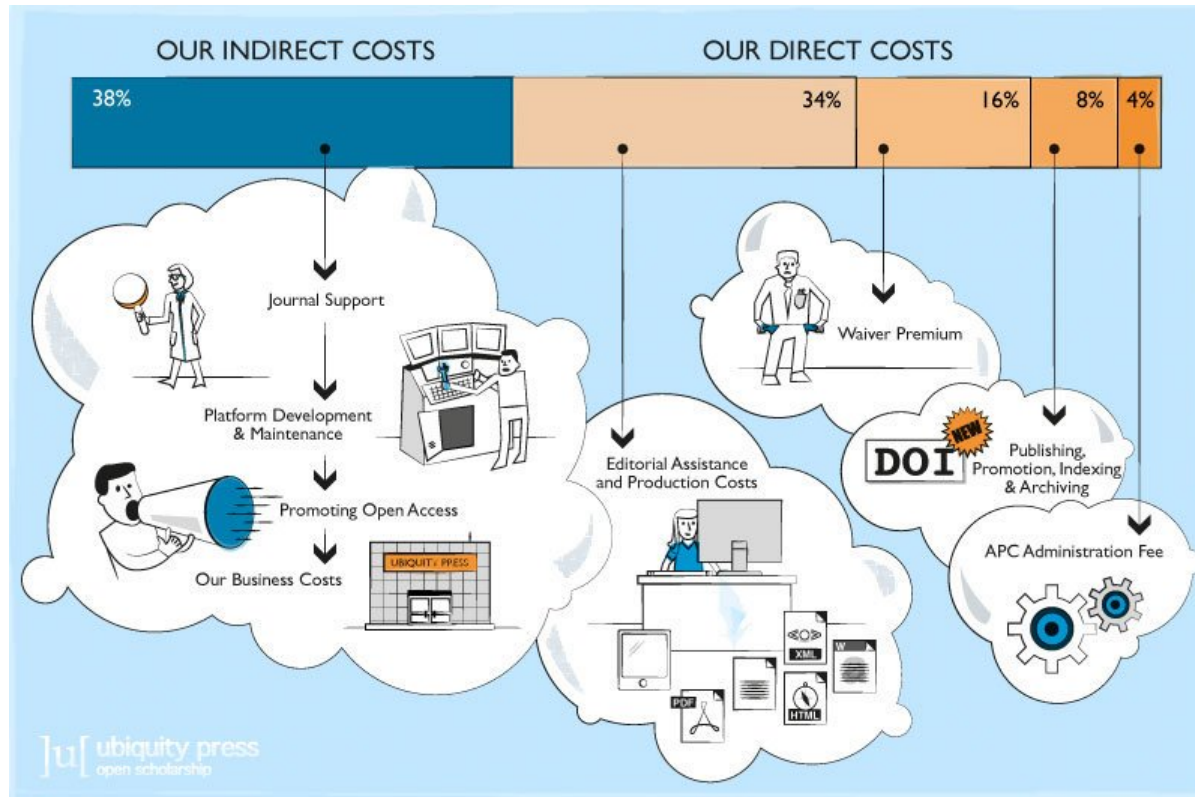
APCs: current status

Two academics walk into a bar. They bring their own drinks, pay \$5000, and leave feeling both proud and ashamed. It's a publishing metaphor.

11:28 AM · Mar 13, 2015 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

1K Retweets **802** Likes

Examples of transparent APC



See also Copernicus, Royal Society, JOSS, eLife [thread](#).

Examples of "not-so-transparent" APCs

Van Noorden R (2013):

“In the end,” says Wim van der Stelt, executive vice president at Springer in Doetinchem, the Netherlands, “the price is set by what the market wants to pay for it.”

Poynder (2015):

When I asked ... why the publisher had decided to increase the APCs ... she replied: “The decision, based on market and competitor analysis, will bring Emerald’s APC pricing in line with the wider market, taking a mid-point position amongst its competitors.”

1. APCs often set by what market can bear, not what it costs.
2. **Spending other people's money is easy.**

Suggestions

1. Immediate Green OA of author accepted manuscripts (AAMs) should be available *everywhere* to comply with OA mandates. (UK SCL should help here.) Pay for publisher services out of your own funds if you want them.
2. Give academics more ownership of funds. "Do you really want to spend 5K on an APC, versus other uses in your lab?"
3. Routes to OA need to be generate less admin for librarians / funders, not more. Green OA achieves that.
4. Support diamond OA initiatives led by academics and academic societies.
5. Where APCs must be paid, they need to be transparent, and reflect costs of particular services. (Waivers = essential.)

Costopoulos (2019):

"It is not up to commercial publishers to convince us to transition to OA, by which ... they mean APC. It is up to us as scholars to commit to OA."