Towards Transparency in APCs

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Declarations

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