

# The 3rd SPARC Japan Seminar 2018

“Roadmap for Open Access : The Road to OA2020”

## Panel Discussion



**Koichi Ojiro** (Research Center for Open Science and Data Platform, National Institute of Informatics)

**Ralf Schimmer** (Head of Information Provision, Max Planck Digital Library)

**Midori Ichiko** (Mita Media Center, Keio University)

**Noriko Osumi** (Vice President, Tohoku University;  
Director, University Library, Professor, Graduate School of Medicine)

●Ojiro Open access has so many aspects that it is impossible to deal with everything in the limited time of 40 minutes when considering open access issues. And today we have Dr. Ralf Schimmer here, so I think I would like to focus on the OA2020 model to go deeper into this topic. I would like to thank the panelists beforehand.

We have quite a few questions from the floor. I would like to summarize them into several themes and make it a topic of discussion. First, many researchers are very interested in the impact factor, but I think that they are not very concerned about whether it is open access or not. I assume that there is a difference depending on their field as to how conscious they are about whether it is open access or non-open access. I would like to hear a comment from Prof. Osumi regarding this.

●Osumi I do not know much about other fields outside of mine, so I will speak from the viewpoint of life science. Although it may differ greatly from generation to generation, I think at least younger people than my age support the idea of open access in expectation of making greater achievements as

their articles will be read and cited more. Although, in the generation older than my age, there may be a few cases of people saying, “It does not matter if it is open access or not,” since the young people are digital natives, I think open access is more natural for them.

●Ojiro Since I was a librarian, I was working on the promotion of open access at the library all the time, but again it was hard to approach the researchers. I have had a very hard time explaining the benefits and significance of open access. In Prof. Osumi’s field, I think that open access is very common, could you tell me if there is an idea on how to persuade the researchers in other fields?

●Osumi After all, it is a matter of money. It is terrible to say by myself, but if someone could support the costs to publish on an open access journal, and if there is no extra effort to put into, I think the researchers will willingly publish their articles on open access journals.

●Ojiro Thank you very much.

I would like to move onto another topic. Regarding the promotion of the OA2020 model, there are some people with opinions that it may be locked in to a few specific publishers more than ever, that oligopolies may get worse than now, and that small and medium publishers may be eliminated. I would like additional explanations from Dr. Schimmer on that point.

●Schimmer I reported about the negotiations in Germany. This is also what the domestic smaller German publishers have articulated and what they always discuss and debate in their own meetings.

We can see the reason for such a perception. When it is only a few publishers that we target first, whether it is only eight in the Netherlands or the top 20 in the Max Planck Society, then these are inevitably the larger ones.

When you all listen to our message and what we define as our goal, then it should become clear that this is not the reality that we want to continue with a lock-in for the big publishers, it is quite the opposite. We want to unbundle the big deal situation. We want to liberate the money so that it can flow to other services and publishers. We also want to have open access and a more sustainable financial model. The real conclusion is that it would be positive for other publishers and smaller publishers. It would create better business opportunity and better chances to also get part of the money that is flowing in the system.

To highlight this, the current situation is when a provider of a new product goes to a library, knocks at the door, demonstrates what they have, and even if the librarian likes the product a lot, it is very likely that the answer will be, “Oh, I like your product, but please understand, I have no funds

available. My money is locked in the agreements with the existing publishers.”

In the new model, we want to create a situation where the money can follow where our researchers request a service. If it is a new product that our researchers would like to start, then the money is free to follow the researchers and flow to that publisher. This gives new business opportunities to both smaller and startup publishers.

●Ojiro I think some participants here are involved in publishing Japanese academic journals. I would like to hear an opinion on how this model of the OA2020 looks like from their viewpoint. Is there anyone who would like to comment on this?

●Floor 1 I am Nozaki from High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (a member of the Steering Committee for SPARC Japan). I am involved in publishing in the Physical Society of Japan. Since the journal *Progress of Theoretical and Experimental Physics (PTEP)* is already open access, there is nothing new about this journal. On the other hand, we also publish a journal adopting the hybrid model, so we have just started to discuss how we will do it in the future.

The issue is that even if we decide to shift to open access, the process along the way is not clear. It cannot happen that one day, APC is paid for all articles all over Japan and suddenly these articles become open access. When the circumstances and contracts are different for each university, how can we resolve the issues along the way? I think this is the future task.

●Ojiro I think that it will be an issue also for the library side about how to carry out the transition

process. I would like to have a comment from both Ms. Ichiko and Dr. Schimmer on this.

●Schimmer This is a very good point and is also the reason why we need transformative agreements. It is same for the commercial publishers. With such a large endeavor, nobody can make the leap overnight. It is not possible to operate until December 31st on subscription and switch to open access on January 1st.

Transformative agreements are an exercise, both for publishers and libraries involved to practice new workflows, to learn and gain from the experience and the data and see what it all means to rebuild the submission system where until today no invoices were generated from. Through transformative agreements, you can get all the data you need to switch the model.

I have discussed with a variety of publishers, also smaller society publishers in several countries, and invited them to think about it. Now that there is debate about transformation, it is better to be prepared. Why not go into a pilot agreement with one institution or country or consortium. It must not be on a very large scale, start small, but then you learn and get new data. It is also not only about processes, it is also about the human beings involved in the process. It is about psychology.

People have to do even if it is the same task, but it has to be done in a different way. You have to convince people and educate them. You have to understand what the new target and the new efficiency is. This is a process. The sooner all the stakeholders, libraries and publishers engage in a pilot, the sooner they understand when the numbers go up, when it scales up, and they are pre-

pared. That is to the advantage of everybody. Even if the transformation does not come, it is not a big risk or a big investment. If the transformation really comes and they are not prepared, then maybe even as a crisis or a catastrophe, that can bring trouble for both libraries and publishers.

●Ojiro I would like a little supplemental explanation from Ms. Ichiko. We are preparing for the transition to OA2020 with JUSTICE, and I think we are coming into the stage of starting a concrete discussion with publishers from now on. Could you please tell us if you have an outlook on this, such as starting it with a small start?

●Ichiko Just as Dr. Schimmer pointed out, JUSTICE is also thinking of a small start. We have been gathering various data. For example, if we target universities that have a large number of articles, I believe that we can apply it to other universities. Therefore, we are also in the process of preparing to start a small pilot.

However, some JUSTICE members have doubts about starting to move towards an open access model. Still, I would like to explain that this is such a time, ask for their understanding and cooperation, and bring it forward step by step.

●Ojiro So, with JUSTICE, the preparation of the transition to an open access model is proceeding in Japan. I think there are commercial publishers on the floor today. Are publishers preparing to start negotiations with JUSTICE on the OA2020 model?

●Floor 2 I am from Springer Nature. We have not started something concretely, but we have been talking about this matter with JUSTICE continu-

ously.

●Ojiro By all means, I hope that publishers start the preparation.

Now, I would like to move on to the next topic. There is a report on journals in the STM field called the STM Report, which is issued once every several years. According to it, the number of published papers is increasing by about 3% to 4% every year. As the number of published articles continues to increase, whatever model is adopted, for example, whether adopting the subscription model or the open access model, I think the publication costs may not be covered. Dr. Schimmer, would you like to comment on this matter?

●Schimmer The continuous massive increase of the number of publication will pose a problem, no matter what system we have. The current situation is characterized from two very distinctive money streams that go to the publishers. It is the subscription money that is subjected to massive annual price increases on the one hand side, and on the other hand it is also a massively increasing APC spent to hybrid journals and newly founded open access journals by the same commercial publishers.

The publishers know about their income. Elsevier would know the total revenues and how much is coming from open access gold journals or from hybrid or from subscriptions or from page and color charges. All these money streams can be monitored. On the publisher side, the research side has no chance to monitor these costs. The researchers have no clue what the library spent for their journals. The library does not know what the researchers spent for page and color charges and now also for APCs. In the current system, the

research community is utterly disadvantaged.

If we managed to successfully transition to an open access system, then there will be only one way of money flow for the publication services. It must not be APC only, but it is at least for publication services and all the costs will be transparent. They will not be hidden because only certain elements of the market have access to the data.

In the future system, the increasing numbers of publications might pose a problem, but it will be much easier to take counteraction or develop the publication system further to move beyond the notion of journals so that we have other forms of publishing and of aggregating publications. The money can flow where the services are requested. Also, this is our chance to better deal with situations where we are confronted with challenges.

●Ojiro Let's move on to the next topic. Today, we heard from Dr. Schimmer that in order to proceed with the negotiations toward the OA2020, it would be difficult to just bring together the people involved in the library and that we need more participation from senior-level people in the universities to attain a good outcome. I would like to ask Ms. Ichiko and Prof. Osumi whether there is such a movement in Japan as well.

●Ichiko This time I assertively approached Prof. Osumi. In the result, I could hear opinions from the different viewpoints today. I am quite straightforward, so when I attended the Transformation workshop of the OA2020 held in Munich last year, I asked Dr. Schimmer to come to Japan. And that is realized today. When there is the initiator of the OA2020 who is leading the transition is here, the enthusiasm can be transmitted to eve-

ryone, so I wanted such a person to be here with us. Another person who came to mind as a researcher who was committed to various things at the university was Prof. Osumi.

So, my wish is to give explanations to those who are influential in the university, to get their understanding first, and then to have them committed to this project. Prof. Osumi is influential in different fields, so I believe the network could be spread from here.

Earlier, I showed Dr. Schimmer's DEAL organizational structure (Figure 1) to Prof. Osumi and I told her this was exactly what I would like her to do. In my mind, I strongly hope to work on this project together with Prof. Osumi.

●Ojio Now, from Prof. Osumi, who is also a vice president and director of the University Library.

●Osumi For example, although Prof. Ohno, Tohoku University president, was not a director at that time, he held an academic forum on journals, libraries, and open access as the director of the third session of the Science Council of Japan ("The Current State of Academic Information that Faces a Crisis and its Future," 18 May 2017). And, my predecessor Ueki, the director of a university library,

gave a speech at this forum. So, I believe that Tohoku University has a certain understanding of OA. However, there are many universities. So, there is an issue of what kind of alliance should be made when it comes to how to expand the circle.

Dr. Schimmer stated in Figure 2 that the global alliance might be promoted if there were five to seven firm support institutions in Japan. Then, there is a need to think about the first step, such as picking up seven institutions.

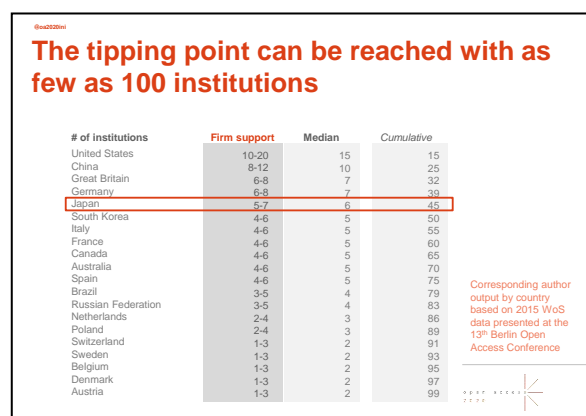
●Ojio In the next stage, I think it will be necessary to work in cooperation with not only library councils and associations but also the Japan Association of National Universities.

Last, I think there are some fields that cannot be managed by open access based on the APC model. For example, I think the journals in the humanities and social sciences are not very compatible with the APC, which means the transition towards the OA2020 might not work well. I would like to ask Dr. Schimmer to comment on how we can proceed with the procedures towards open access for such journals in conclusion.

●Schimmer I would like to give two answers to this question. Firstly, OA2020 is not prescriptive



(Figure 1)



(Figure 2)

in the model. It is not necessarily about APCs. We already have a variety of other successful initiatives that organize the money in a different way so that it is not directly spent as APCs.

For instance, the SCOAP3 model, where the library redirected their previous or former subscription money into a common pool, is organized and arranged by CERN in Geneva and from that globally contributed money. Then, the publishers are paid directly for their publication services. We have the example of Knowledge Unlatched, also a community effort in funding open access services. There are some others that would also fall into this category.

Secondly, when we look into the future we have to see that we are not limited only by the conditions we have in the current situation. This means the subject librarians in the Humanities and Social Sciences have small budgets and only know relatively low-cost for subscriptions. They have no idea how much money is being transacted in the science, technology and medical areas. This is 10, 20 or 100 times as much. They have no idea how much money will be liberated and reallocated in other subject areas. My personal prediction is the Humanities and Social Sciences will be the particular beneficiaries of a switch to an open access business model.

●Ojiro Thank you very much. There are endless things we would like to discuss, but we have run out of time. We had a lot of questions from the participants, but we could not answer everything. I apologize for this. I hope we can continue this discussion at the next opportunity.

I would like to conclude the panel discussion here.