A sustainable scholar-led model for open access without publication fees

1) The current model is in trouble

Subscription publishing is in crisis. In addition to exponentially increased research output over the period since 1986, a rise in fees has triggered what is known as "the serials crisis". As a result, library budgets are unable to keep pace with the prices set by publishers.

![Image 400% above inflation since 1986](https://tinyurl.com/y93zymwz)
The overall portion of open access articles is growing, with green, gold and hybrid options predominating. Many articles that are currently available through publishers are bronze, lacking any open licensing.

2) And APCs are on the rise

The system is currently sustained by APCs, supported by national-level offset agreements and a network of discounts and deals with large publishers.

But...

Costs are on the rise. In 2018, for example, 40% of the 56 Frontiers journals have experienced APC increases of 18–31% from 2017 to 2018. The data that these journals have provided is one example of a wider system of rapid APC inflation.

*Figures 2 (top) and 4 (bottom) from Piwowar, H. et al. (2018), The state of OA: a large-scale analysis of the prevalence and impact of Open Access articles, https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.4375. Licence: CC BY.

3) But what is to be done?

What alternative is available when a researcher needs an article to which a publisher has exclusive rights?

None

It is a micro-monopoly!

The current level of APCs makes gold OA publishing unaffordable for the majority of unfunded humanities scholars. The OLH aims instead to implement a collaborative, or collective, funding model for gold open access in the humanities.

4) If we pool our resources

The OLH model is extremely cost effective, with a base cost of approximately $500 per article. This covers ongoing technological costs, staff costs, digital preservation, typesetting and other costs.

This means lots of libraries all paying a small amount to make it work.

5) Then there is an alternative!

Ever-increasing APCs?

or Scholar-led production?