

STM statement on Plan S: Accelerating the transition to full and immediate Open Access to scientific publications

Science is undergoing a fundamental transformation in how published information is conducted, disseminated, used and consumed. The transition to an Open Access and Open Science environment offers the potential to provide great benefits to all stakeholders across the research sectors.

The International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM) welcomes the efforts by funders to work towards our shared goals of expanding access to peer-reviewed scientific works to maximise their value and reuse, but urges caution that the next steps in this transition avoid any unintended limitations on academic freedoms, and continue to ensure the overall viability and integrity of the scholarly record.

Above all, it is vital that researchers have the freedom to publish in the publication outlet of their choice. By opening up established subscription-only journals through hybrid Open Access options, publishers have helped facilitate this wider author choice and a landscape where researchers have the greatest potential to advance their fields. Shutting down this publication option for authors, especially where it contributes significantly to the transition to Open Access is not the answer and may lead to authors who do not have access to outside funding not being able to immediately publish their work.

Similarly, STM believes that flexibility in Article Publication Charge (APC) pricing is key to ensuring a vibrant and viable scholarly sector where researchers are fully able to take advantage of the full range of Open Access options available to them. Caps on APCs would restrict authors' choice of publication avenues for Gold Open Access, risk undermining quality and likely slow down the transition to a full Open Access environment.

STM's member publishers are committed to ensuring the widest possible dissemination of the literature whilst also ensuring that the quality, reliability and preservation of the scholarly record is maintained. We aim to support and develop an interoperable, and enduring scholarly communication environment, which involves all types of Open Access approaches, including Gold and Green Open Access, and other ways of enabling immediate access, such as preprint sharing. This model of Open access, in conjunction with the subscription business model, has a role to play in the scholarly communication system until such time that the whole world unites around Gold Open Access. This is not currently the case within Europe, let alone globally, as is clear from the signatories to Plan S.

Publishers support a move towards full and immediate access to research publications where this is desired, but urge that this needs to be fully funded; in the absence of adequate funding a transition to Open Access as envisaged by cOAlition S is unlikely to happen in practice.

Publishers already support the wider Open Science agenda through the provision of services which enhance the provision of Open Access, Open Data, research metrics and initiatives which augment collaboration, inclusivity and transparency. Given publishers' unique position at the interface between researchers, their research and the global public, we are well placed to contribute to the continued discussions around the most effective mechanisms to flip journals to Open Access - ensuring that they continue to meet the needs of researchers whilst also remaining the benchmark for quality and integrity.

STM and its members remain ready and eager to be fully engaged with all stakeholders, including Science Europe, to help translate the aspirations of this transition into a reality.

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