Commonplace •

The Global Transition to Open: Structuring Library Sustainability Toward a More Equitable Knowledge Ecosystem

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We invite contributions to a series that explores **how** libraries are realigning their collections spending with their values around Open. We ask that abstracts of 300 words or fewer be submitted by **Monday, September 13, 2021** ([please see key details below](#)).

Libraries face a dizzying and growing array of open access investment opportunities. These range from open infrastructure to new open access publisher agreements. Although libraries can be motivated by altruism when investing in open initiatives, many are trying to embed “openness” into their collections strategies. This is much easier said than done when emerging open access models rarely mimic the legacy subscription or one-time purchase models upon which the library community has grown accustomed. This series seeks to examine the challenges and efforts underway at academic libraries as they make their way forward in this new environment.

An article published in the *Commonplace* in June 2021 titled “[Balancing Investments in Open Access: Sustainability and Innovation](#)” inspired this upcoming series. In this article, Annie Johnson raises questions that many in the library community are starting to ask:

“So how can we ensure that our support for open does not become unsustainable in the face of continued cuts to our collections budget? And perhaps more importantly, how can we make informed, strategic decisions about which initiatives to support (and which not to support) when each agreement takes so much time to evaluate, and staff are already spread so thin?”^[1]

These are critical questions that all academic libraries are facing. We believe sharing our stories and learnings at this important juncture will help us to collectively navigate the challenges ahead and, critically, to create a more equitable and just scholarly communication system.

We seek proposals that will address topics or questions, such as:

- What guiding goals and principles can help libraries make decisions and measure the efficacy of their spending?
- How is “transformative” defined? What are we transforming?
- How are libraries balancing local reading and publishing needs with the desire to transform global scholarly communications?
- How do we bridge the organizational divide between collections and scholarly communications?

- Who are the key stakeholders and how do we secure their buy-in?
- When should we go it alone and when do we partner?
- How do we align open knowledge practices and spending with issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice?
- How can libraries talk to each other and/or across campus about these topics?
- What new top-down models encourage new, sustainable, and open frameworks (rather than just operate within the existing, legacy structure)? Who has implemented them, and how?
- Describe strategies for libraries that do not have a Press at their university, that can still support local open scholarly publishing efforts.
- Anything you think we've missed!

Key Details

- Send in an abstract as your submission by emailing commonplace@knowledgefutures.org
 - Please include contributor's last name + "The Global Transition to Open" in the subject header.
- The submission deadline is **Monday, September 13**
- Abstracts should be no more than 300 words
- Submissions **do not** need to be text-based or "scholarly."¹ We welcome reactions in many forms, including art, fiction, poetry, audio, video, etc
 - While your submission itself need not be text-based, we do ask that your abstract still describe the form and key points of your intended final product
- If accepted, we'll ask for you to submit a draft by **October 25**
 - Submissions should be relatively brief and focused (essays should be around 1,500 words)
 - Text-based submissions should be written in English, though we will enthusiastically publish versions in other languages if you send us a translation
 - Submissions can (and are encouraged to) include multimedia elements like images, videos, podcasts/audio, and interactives if these assets help to communicate your point(s)
 - As mentioned above, submissions themselves do not need to be text-based

Key Dates

- Abstract deadline is Monday, September 13, 2021
- Responses back by Monday, September 20, 2021
- Drafts due Monday, October 25, 2021
- Pieces published in November 2021

You can learn more about the [Commonplace's mission here](#).

You can learn more about [serving as a contributor to the Commonplace here](#).

Please send any questions to commonplace@knowledgefutures.org.

Footnotes

1. Here we use the term “scholarly” to mean a more erudite tone and the implementation of discipline-specific language. All pieces in the *Commonplace* aim to reach a more general, casual reader and should be written in accessible language. As always, stated facts and claims should include citations. ↵

Citations

1. Johnson, A. (2021). Balancing Investments in Open Access: Sustainability and Innovation. *Commonplace*. <https://doi.org/10.21428/6ffd8432.195788f4> ↵