Commonplace • Series 1.2: Business of Knowing

Community Publishing Business Models

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To have an economically sustainable, inclusive, and fairer business and publishing model, we need to look outside the existing systems. What would it look like if scholars were the at the helm of the scholarly publishing ecosystem? How could we shift towards a community-lead or -owned model? What's needed to provide trust and cooperation amongst different stakeholders? How might we fairly recognize and compensate each participant within the publishing ecosystem? What infrastructural and technological tools would we need and how can these tools help support new economic models?

These questions — and more! —were addressed in this discussion panel as part of [Open Publishing Fest 2021](#), motivated by the recent *Commonplace* series Business of Knowing in addition to its reception and discussion on Twitter and in the articles' margins.

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Community Publishing Business Models

Introductions

Sarah Kearns (SK): Thanks all for coming to this event. So before we jump into the bigger discussion about community publishing and business models, I wanted to give a little bit of background about sort of why we wanted to host this and why we're all here. So back in May, as you probably remember, Clarivate announced that it was buying ProQuest and now a pretty common trend of acquisitions in the scholarly publishing space.

Something else that's been more and more common are these large corporations are halfheartedly adopting open, where perhaps some of the final research product is accessible, but the business models surrounding that product are moving towards selling analytics for profit, just keeping a lot of the knowledge production behind a paywall of a different sorts. So the very wise people of the Knowledge Features Group,

including one of our panelists, Zach, wrote a piece responding to this trend calling for more community driven and open infrastructure to adapt to the changing infrastructure of publishing rather than solidifying the models established for the for profit entities.

But the KFG is not alone and wanting to see these changes. So we ended up having a call for ideas that became a series on the *Commonplace*, which is a publishing outlet of the KFG called [The Business of Knowing](#), which came out earlier this year in August. And that is where a lot of the rest of our panel comes from as author contributors to the series. This session and sort of an emerging theme out of the series was about these ideas on democratizing knowledge production and shifting towards platform coops to have a more fair distribution amongst actual people doing the work and having these models be sustainable and not just economically, but philosophically.

And I'll definitely leave these readings as homework for the ambitious attendee. But for this event, we wanted to end up discussing and sharing more of the insights on what community publishing would look like and more granularly what has worked and what hasn't and sort of how we can go from where we are to where we'd like to go and establish the resources that are required to sort of making these radical changes to the publishing ecosystem. So I think for now, what we'll do is go around and introduce the panelists so you can share your name, affiliation and sort of as an ice breaker.

We can talk about what brought you to realize that there had to be this major change in the way that things are currently done. And then I'll go first. Just because I'm already talking, I'll give everyone a moment to think about the answer to that, and then we can go alphabetically from there. So after me, it'll be Ámbar, Dan, Evgenya, Jeff, Peter, and then Zach.

I'm Sarah. I'm an acquisitions editor for the Knowledge Features Group, and specifically for Commonplace. I helped out put together this original business knowing series. As for what sort of like radicalized me, I feel like probably what really pushed me over the edge was having to ask ProQuest and I'll study permission to reuse figures that I made for papers to reuse my thesis, which ProQuest also owns, and then explaining to my parents that, no, I don't own the things I published and would have to pay to access them if I didn't have University access. I think just explaining that to my family over and over again over the years, it's really driven the point home for me.

Ámbar Tenorio-Fornés (ATF): Hi, my name is Ámbar, and I am the founder of Decentralized Encourage Bennetts. And I guess what drove me to this more activist

place in academia was realizing how I was doing free labor, but not for the academic community, but for a handful of companies that were profiting from my free labor. And also they were reviewing my work and not letting me promise in there. And of course, that's just involved. But I was like, okay, review it for you. I'm offering for you, and it's just stating that a few bad reviews can bring down could work.

So I guess we could do better if we find better ways of distributing value and not making big companies profit from our work and find better ways of reviewing each other's work. So that's it for me. I guess this frustration the driver.

Dan Rudmann (DR): Hello. My name is Dan Rudmann. I was up until recently part of the COPIM project, which is a research development project on infrastructure for open access publishing, and I was working on there with one of my co authors for the piece that we wrote for the series Le Jerra Copulu, and we were particularly charged with discovering ways in which we could empower people to begin new publishing projects on their own all over the world and make scholarly publishing of monographs in particular, more discoverable more communicative with one another.

And over the course of our research, it became very clear that there was no sufficient top down approach. Every context is unique and requires its own sets of tools, ways of governance. And we thought about how to foster that and how to support that. And it became increasingly clear that cooperatives were the structure that I think could help a lot of different people in different circumstances to publish.

Evgenia Lupova-Henry (ELH): Hello, my name is Evgenia. I work with Ambar on this project for open access, and well before that, I worked on my PhD in management and Organization studies. And this is where I discovered the wonderful world of academic publishing, and I discovered how I'm fair and it can sometimes be and the way the value is distributed and well. First, I was mostly frustrated with how the peer review system works and while doing my PhD, I was thinking, well, why does it have to be this way? Maybe we can do something to change it.

Maybe we can launch a new platform that would allow more transparent accounting for different contributions and how the peer reviews are done and could be improved. And after I finished my PhD, I actually had some time to think about how this platform could work. And this is where I found that there is already something like this. And there are other people that are doing this. And I was a bit upset. I have to say in the beginning that someone else came up with this idea at first, but then I just decided to contact them and say, okay, well, that's good that you are doing this. Can I help you

somehow? And then this is how it started to work. And now it transformed from just a peer review platform to something bigger than that.

Jeff Pooley (JP): Hi, I'm Jeff Pooley. I am both a professor of media and communication at a small Liberal arts College in the United States called Nielsberg College and the founder of a small scholar led Publisher Media Studies Press, which publishes books and journals. And I'm happy to say we just this week were accepted into Scholar led the coalition of scholarly publishers. And I suppose that when I hit an author paywall is what I would call it back in 2015, where I was asked for a \$3,000 APC article processing charges when I was being radicalized about this issue, just the tragedy of open access, having dropped barriers for readers only to erect them for authors.

Peter Kraker (PK): Hi, my name is Peter Kraker. I'm the founder and chairman of Open Knowledge Maps and how I became an open infrastructure advocate is actually by starting one and actually seeing the huge inequalities within the system, having hundreds of thousands of users and basically just understanding how few revenues there are for becoming financially stable. This is what drove us I think more into this activist position as well.

Zach Verdin (ZV): I'm Zach Verdin. I'm the head of strategic Programs, the Knowledge Futures Group, which means I get the great privilege of thinking about how our work intersects with society and various partners. And I think a bit about business models and sustainability and money. So I guess my radicalization moment is sort of like a conversion of, like two kind of individual experiences in my life. Like one was I at one point ran a for profit multimedia publishing platform that really struggle.

Able to find a viable business model that wasn't advertising and selling user data. And then on the other, I spent a number of years working on disinformation and looking at the impact of what happens when we centralize humanity's data and sell that back to the highest bidder. And so I think it was both the sort of, like idealism of the Internet and then looking at what happens when we allow large platforms to capture data and turn that into an economic model that seems somewhat misaligned with healthy and vibrant information and knowledge ecosystems.

Any progress towards co-op models?

SK: Well, thank you all for coming to this. Thank you. Maybe like a kick off question to start the discussion, and any attendees feel free to pop some questions in the Q and A or in the chat. We'll look at them as they come. So the first question is maybe sort of like a stepping stone: has there been any progress or what sort of practice have you seen towards processes or outlinings that are transitioning to more co op type based governance models? Or are there any stepping stone or intermediate that could be something that we could be working towards to have these bigger changes happen?

JP: I'm happy to jump in. Not so much on the coop side, though. I'm really excited to hear from Dan, Evgenia, and Ámbar on that front, but I've been really excited about this idea of like a mission aligned funding exchange. But it is a kind of emerging model of direct funding from libraries, foundations and other funders, two nonprofit born OA, in most cases publishers that gets around the kind of core tragedy of open access that I mentioned a moment ago that APCs and read and publish and transformative deals essentially are erecting barriers to authors, excluding authors except at a handful of rich North American universities and wealthy European countries.

The result is, ironically, that authors can't publish open access, and the sort of regime that we have is also kind of re-crowning. I would say the Big Five publishing oligopolies because they're capturing the lion's share of library funding through these read and published deals that are cascading across the University sectors and especially in Europe and North America. So I was really kind of wondering how an entity like mediasudies.press born OA could fund itself.

And I'll tell you that I was thrilled to come across this nascent program that Sharla Lair, who is at LYRASIS — she might even be here — which is a big North American library consortium, and it's called the [Open Access Community Investment Program](https://openaccesscommunityinvestmentprogram.org/). And the reason I was so excited about it was that it essentially is a model that was just in a pilot phase at the time and remains so a model to bring together funders and publishers in a way that reduces the challenges, at least that exists for connecting lots of publishers and lots of funders in the form of librarians and others. By providing a kind of web based, you could call it like a matching platform in which participants like, let's say my organization would fill out a structured set of questions that are kind of form of vetting, and then funders presumably would also have their mission elaborated.

The idea would be that on a platform that these two come together and it successfully worked in the first round, there's a second round in which Journal that we publish is

involved in it. And as I thought about it, I just noticed that this is a broader model. There's an open book collective that will be launched, a similar style of mission aligned funding exchange by COPIM the group that Dan is affiliated with and some others UK based. And fundamentally, I think it is a potential solution to the funding issues.

Existing University presses, existing nonprofit society journals can leverage their back catalog through subscribe to open or similar models like that that exist on the book publishing side. But born OA publishers don't have that kind of collateral to post. And so the challenges are especially acute for publishers like mine, and the sort of benefit of a mission aligned funding exchange, which is an idea really credit to Charlotte Rachel Sandberg, who she worked with UC Berkeley, is that it reduces the kind of vetting and logistics burdens that librarians in particular have to deal with since it kind of takes on some of that work.

So anyway, I just want to throw that emerging model out. There is a really exciting, promising way in which funding can happen for our kinds of work.

PK: Yeah. I just wanted to say I think there has been a lot of progress. We started OKMaps five years ago, and I think if we had started it ten years ago, we would have had no chance of surviving five years. There's just so much activity, so much energy, all these models, like the one that Jeff just talked about, they're popping up and people are really taking this serious and trying to work towards an open infrastructure future. And in that sense, I think there's been a lot of progress. I think there's still a lot of work to be done to really enable financially sustainable infrastructures and community led infrastructure. But the progress actually has been really great to see over the past five years.

DR: I agree with everything that Jeff and Peter have been saying that there has been a lot of progress, particularly in the open infrastructure side, insofar as the cooperative aspect of this, I think that the progress has not been as significant. I think that's hopefully the next step. But what you do see more and more is realization among the communities that we are a part of that we need structures and mechanisms that support people from the ground up. There are starting to be attempts at that. But I can't cite a good example of, like a successful cooperative in the US or UK context in particular, which I'm more aware of.

But I don't know if I answered the where was I radicalized question, but I think for me I was radicalized because I went to grad school, and I think that's where so many people see that there are significant inequities, there's structural problems that we

don't really know how to overcome insofar as people go through this entire process, many years of research and study, and they're not able to find a way to support themselves after they finish grad school.

This is endemic now to the experience and now that that is so transparent. I think among more people just seeing the way that the discourse goes on Twitter and people describing their experiences and struggling to find secure employment and sustain themselves after graduate school. And these scholars, I think that now, especially in times of the pandemic, there's a lot more understanding that we need to think seriously about empowering people on their own terms and not through just major institutions or through large funders that people need solidarity and to work together.

Steps or advice to overhaul the system?

SK: Yeah, dove-tailing off of what you just said and what Jeff said about how it's easier to have better models for, born OA journals or born digital journals, if there is advice we could try and give to established, non open access journals or journals that want to flip to OA or institutions that want to have a better business model... What sort of steps could they take to sort of start overhauling these infrastructure changes or these infrastructures that are sort of blocking scholars and researchers and even people trying to access information outside of academia in making these sorts of steps or progress forward?

ZV: I'm happy to jump in. I think also just to sort of add to what's been said before. I think we can also **look outside academia for examples of where there's a change happening when it comes to individual people or groups of people supporting the work of others**. So you can look at things like Substack as an example where people value the work of an individual writer and are willing to support that or Patreon as another example, where there are artists that are producing work and there's people.

And so I think to the question, something that's been sort of on my mind lately is this idea that within academia, the idea that there's a network of people who are also interested in what you are interested in as a researcher, as a publisher is sort of like baked in, and it's hundreds of years old, that idea. And so I think when you think about, I guess, to what sort of what Jeff had said, where what does it look like to prioritize sort of mission impact? And where are we seeing misalignment between stated mission impacts and resource allocation?

And I think if we sort of look at things through that lens, you could see a lot of misalignment there. And so I think that's like a starting point of, like, where is your resource allocation misaligned with what you're saying your public impact is intended to be and then sort of back on the network point. I think if you sort of remove the idea that the network is sort of built in that there's just, like already an audience of people who are going to read what it is that you're publishing the thing that then is sort of left in that void is this need to go out and find your own audience and find the people who are going to benefit from the work that you're doing.

And so I think there's this sort of in this era now where I think in many cases we think it's okay to make sense of the world and we publish, and then it just goes into some it just goes into a black hole. And we are okay with that. I think on the other side of it is how am I helping others make sense of the world? And how am I thinking about publishing as a form of usefulness? And so this idea of sense making and going beyond just the individual way of making sense of the world.

But then really prioritizing, who is the audience? What do I want them to do with what it is that I'm publishing and what are the ways that I can change my behavior to support that? I think it's very much a bottom up approach to it. But I think letting go of that network that's sort of like this idea that there's this built in network that we don't have to think about and shifting more energy towards who is my audience, and why do they care? And how can I make the work that I'm doing feel more useful to them?

ATF: Yeah. So I think this is great. We need to find how the audiences and the people who is interested to support journals and academics can do it. But for that, we also need technologies that enabled it or at least practices or communities, because as a researcher, I don't have a say in where the money of my public institution goes. Usually it goes to big publishers that I am angry with instead of the researchers that are struggling or the really brave publications that maybe are new and not well known but deserve some funding.

So if we can somehow, as a community, say: hey, here are our priorities. We want to find these colors these journals and make it easy for libraries to do that, to start making more payments to the open access community instead of the big publishers. I guess there is a possibility to start changing things, but we need to target all the individual funds like I can maybe donate \$100 to my favorite Journal, but the big money is at the universities, and if we can help them decide to support the open access community, that's something we should try, at least.

ELH: I just wanted to jump in also and say that while this idea that there is a Journal, there is a community around this Journal and we as academics, we're a community as well. Sometimes it doesn't really feel that there is a community because we have spoken a lot to different journals or diamond open access journals, independent journals recently, and many say that they feel that they are alone and they just knock on the doors of the libraries, and it's like fractional. Really, it is not a community action, but everyone is on their own, and everyone is trying to solve their issues on their own.

And there are some initiatives like COPIM, some communities, yes, but for many it still feels like there is no community action that would bring you alternative publishing models or independent publishers that would help them to gain attention from libraries. And it is also because, again, to support what Ámbar was saying in some ways, it's also because it is difficult for libraries to support those independent publishers because it is much easier to just have one subscription to Elsevier's journal than to 1000 small independent publishers.

So administrative burden is much higher. So maybe if we can come up with new technologies and new ways to support these smaller journals, this could help solve this problem and help enable this community.

JP: I'll just jump in to answer a slightly different facet of Sarah's question or provide an answer, which is to set aside our discussion for a second around alternative and independent journals born OA projects like we're all involved in and to think about also how the academic community might **reclaim its society journals** and society publications that their existing nonprofits. They may in many cases not have made the transition to open access, but most of them have signed over their titles to the Big Five oligopolies and are essentially for a fee perpetuating this system, often with high prestige journals.

And I'm really intrigued about the idea of a consortium or some real cooperative that would involve society journals leaving their Wiley, Taylor and Francis, and Elsevier deals and kind of pulling together certain functions in some of the logistical operations that currently are handled by at a high premium and enormous profit margin. The way in which even that part of publishing, which you might consider legacy, but that we as a community after World War II, gave to the commercial publishers that that is a recent and reversible decision that we can take back into the Academy.

And there's an interesting way maybe that some of these cooperative legal arrangements could aid that.

What actions have worked? Which haven't?

Yeah, that's a great segway. A question I was thinking about asking was like, what kind of actions have you seen that work to sort of create these communities? And it sounds like you're saying reclaiming society journals could be one of those ways. I guess, in terms of the cooperative sort of model, maybe you can sort of steer the focus towards that on, like, what sort of actions have worked to sort of move towards those models, or I guess also, Conversely, what hasn't worked or what are some roadblocks in keeping us from those?

JP: There is a question in the chat that's related to this. So maybe that would be a segue. Sarah, if you wanted...

SK: So there's this idea of **decentralized autonomous organizations (DAO)** is similar to co Ops. Are there many groups exploring or setting up publishing communities in the crypto world?

ATF: So actually decentralized autonomous organizations, unlike many other things, not only two cooperatives, but our organizations, these are organizations that could really help this broad ownership. That platform cooperative is more cooperative requires. And actually we are considering as a platform cooperative and using the centralized autonomous organizations to gather investment from the community. We don't want to sell the technology to alter. We want the community of scholars to own it. And the way to do it is to allow people to invest in the community.

And some disintegrate autonomous organizations are great for that. For instance, there is a project we are considering called Grassroots Economics that helps creating community currencies and a community currency for the open cooperative open access ecosystem would be great, but yeah, I guess lots of technology opens some doors. It's still to be seen if it will work. There is a lot of experimentation there yet.

ZV: I'm going to get in trouble... Actually go ahead, Peter.

PK: No worries. I'd love to hear what you get in trouble for. Open Knowledge Maps, it's not a publishing platform, right? It's a discovery platform, but we do have this community treatment. It is community owned. And I think the most important thing for

us was talking to the community, right. And talking to the people. **You don't build a community. Community groups itself around issues that they think are important and around organizations that they trust.** And so we've been working on this for five years now, in a sense that we built out different boards, different ways of interacting with the community and in terms of financial sustainability, do now have 16 supporting members on the board of supporters soon. Also, more going to be announced.

But in terms of I think what was really the deciding factor was listening to them and understanding to them how we can actually create services that would be relevant to these organizations. And for us to figure out how we can actually fulfill our mission, which is to increase the discoverability of scientific knowledge for everyone — not just for people in part of organizations, but for everyone. We can align the needs of our supporting members and the communities that we are trying to serve.

And we've come up with a system called the Custom Services, which essentially enables organizations to embed open large components in their own discovery systems. But it runs on our general technical platform. And I think that we might have found that this was kind of the Eureka moment, and this is very well received by keeping organizations. And especially, I think in cases where there is really bad support from the commercial actors. So I think we should look for those and really try to bring the innovation from that we are working on to the institutions and help them in that way.

ZV: Can I jump in now? Okay. I'm going to do it.

It's 2021. I think all options are on the table at this point. I think to put it in a Web 2, Web three sort of context. I think in Web two, a lot of what happened was you launched free services that are essentially extracting data from people and then trying to get as much scale as possible, and then you sort of figure out the business model sort of later on.

And I think what Web 3 is starting to do is this idea that you can have a state admission of an organization or a DAO, and that you get, like, a quick injection of crypto into your cash or currency depending on how you want to look at it. And then there still is this question of scale and how does it grow? And so I think if you separate it out, there are still the questions left of: how do we compensate people? How do we make decisions? What is the communication look like within the organization? And I think that the reality is that there's a lot that has been done to figure that out in sort of

traditional organizational structures, and the problems that were solved are not going to go away because they're human problems. I think there's a lot of excitement around co op models. There's the disco there's the DAO. And I think all of these things are on the table in terms of thinking about what kind of structures would make the most sense. But I think it's important to note that **there are a lot of human problems that come with it that just like making a DAO doesn't actually inherently solve.**

And I I think just want to go back a little bit to some earlier points. But I think part of the starting point in my mind is almost just like wiping the table clean of this idea that impact is sort of can be generalized. And I think when you start talking about mission, it's like in my mind this conversation about impact should just go away because what it's really pointing to, I think is what few of you folks have said is that I think if you're starting with mission and thinking about what is it that I'm doing and how is it serving my audience or the people that are part of my community or network?

I think the benefit of that is that it means that as an individual community, you get to make the determination of what impact looks like to you. And so it's highly subjective. And I think having those conversations I think, are tied to OK, what is the right structure for us organizationally where do we look to for funding, but it really requires this sort of the starting point of like I'm not going to adopt this sort of like these generalizable notions of impact or these preconditions of what it means to publish in any context.

And I'm going to sort of say here's my community and what makes sense for us. And then hopefully there's infrastructure (plug: KFG and other folks that are on the panel) and support to be able to then start to sort of realize that.

ELH: Yeah. I just wanted to add to that. I totally agree that whether it's a DAO or it's a platform co-op or it's a platform co-op that is built on blockchain, and that is in some way it is not the key point. But I think **what is more important also is how do we organize as a community and also what kind of contributions do we want to incentivize?** Because how we account and valorize different contributions then will influence how people behave and what they do in this community and what we value as a community.

Also, something difficult to do, I think. But it's really important to do is to establish those rules as a community or the missions and the values that we want to support and then also trying to stick to these missions and bodies. So how do we actually track these contributions? How do we account for all these different types of contributions

and which contribution is more important and how do we then reward it? Maybe. So all these different questions, I think every community, if they decide to organize it as a DAO or as a platform, coop, will have to face those questions.

And this is what is really important. But I think it's pretty interesting if you go in that direction, how you organize and how you value contributions is really one of the important things.

How are you in particular answering these questions and having conversations with community members?

SK: To concretize this a little bit. How have sort of you of getting able to with the organizations and co-ops and libraries and people that you work with? How have you sort of outlined starting to answer those questions? This kind of ties into a question that Dawit added, he asked: how our cooperatives driving conversations with institutional libraries along the lines of commercial publishers pushed sales? So it's like, how are we starting to answer those questions of mission alignment and aligning resources to have big budgets and increase the actions that we discussed? What does that really look like in particular for any of you?

ELH: Well, for us, it is really, like early stages, so we cannot say that we have figured everything out. Actually, we don't want to figure everything out on our own, and we want to first involve the community and then decide altogether on what is important for us and how we valorize those different contributions. But we have been looking into different models and different tools that are out there. Like, there are tools — maybe Ámbar will be a better position to answer this — that allow to account for and trade and track different contributions.

So there are already some technologies that are being developed not by ourselves, but other people that we could also try to use and build upon. But for us now, the key stages to involve the community impact and to start answering these questions altogether.

DR: If I could add there, too, I think this is such an important question, and so many people have been providing really important contributions to this issue. And so far as what Zach was saying as well, and what he was saying about impact, about what you are rewarding. And it's a real danger, because once you are at the point in which

you're asking a specific institution or an entity to set out conditions, you are inviting a kind of conformity, and you risk erasing communities. You risk limiting expression.

And we have to really think critically about how we let these communities themselves dictate who they are and how they publish or educate. I have no answer to how you do that, but one of each community in itself might have an answer. The question is, how do you create enough space for that to happen from the ground up, rather than simply through a major institution? And how do you invite institutions to listen? And I think that a cooperative model would hopefully provide the momentum and the show of solidarity and unity to move the needle toward communities themselves and demonstrate to people that there are a lot of different interests that are valuable in scholarly communication.

But we have many steps to take to let that structure flourish. And you see examples of this, I think in parts of the world, I think in Latin America in particular, there's a lot of really great work being done in, particularly in the OA space for different forms of expression, for open access, to be more publicly focused. But we have to do a lot more listening before we can make very decisive action.

ZV: This is going to maybe come across as an oversimplification, but at the risk of not saying it, I'm going to say it anyways. I think two things. One, I think what's exciting about what a co-op model implies to me, the way that I think about that is that it's like a group of people coming together and saying, okay, we're going to jump and we jump. And I think the feeling that we're not in this alone is a big deal. And I think to concretize it like you said, Sarah, I think the reality of it is just like, do more of what's working. And I think you look at what Jeff is doing. What Jeff is doing is working. And so the question is, how do we continue to do more of what's working and then highlight the examples of where that is happening, bring people together so that they feel like they're not alone and really celebrate this sort of the multiple instances of individual sort of sparks that something is happening. And I think over time, to me it feels like it's inevitable.

It's like a campfire that's already smoking. And, you know, the fires that eventually is going to catch. So it's happening before it's happening. But I think the way that we can be really Proactive in doing that is to sort of do what we're doing here today, continue to do that and sort of find the groups of people that are thinking along these lines that are sort of willing to unhook themselves from the advertising model, from the model of prestige and saying: okay, wait, I want to serve people, and I want to make knowledge and information more accessible to more people.

And I can do this in partnership with other folks. And I think the more we do that, the more of the sort of groundswell will continue. I think it really is just do more of what's working and just keep doing it and do it together.

DR: I agree completely. Zach, I think the question, as you alluded to earlier, is that how do we get people paid for doing that? The risk we have is burnout. And people have been doing this work for a very long time, out of passion and out of love. And we need more structures for people to do this. You should not be publishing scholarly work only if you're at an institution have a tenure track job. There's a lot of people who can contribute to this conversation who do not fit in those criteria.

So the issue of labor and compensation, I think, is central to everything that we're talking about.

What does compensation for labor look like?

SK: That brings me to a question I've been wanting to ask is like, how can we sort of introduce payment into that process when it's already so ingrained in the system of, like, what's right to be volunteer work and what isn't? And yeah, I think what you said there about having the burden be on people who are already fed up with doing and then asking them and assuming that they're going to be doing more work out of the love of it and out of the necessity of it. But yeah. So how can we sort of meld these two together to sort of make these switches?

ATF: So one thing that we learned when we were exploring the possibility to reward peer review and work was that there is a huge discrepancy between people who believe peer reviewing is community work. You should do it for free because you're already paid by an institution, and people who say, Well, actually, I'm doing this for free on my free time. Sometimes I have a lot of clarity or not stable job. And even people from universities that are not located in the global north were much more keen to say, hey, yeah, this is work.

We should get paid for it. So it's interesting how just **introducing the possibility to reward one activity can create such a big discussion and how different communities might want to reward something while others are really against it.** So I think it's a challenge. If we want to start creating new models that rewards and value its contribution, it's going to be right. It's going to be a difficult thing. And as it

was mentioned already, it cannot be a top down approach. It has to come from the communities to decide which behaviors they want to instant device.

JP: I mean, just to first beat what might be a dead horse the overall point. I think that maybe most of us would agree that there is enough money in the system sloshing around to fund what really shouldn't cost as much as it does, given the high profit margins and so on. The estimates of what an actual Journal article costs to produce are much, much lower than the \$4,000 APC charge. On the funding side, setting for one second aside the question of paying for peer review the funding side, it just seems like there needs to be mechanisms put in place to take the library and foundation community, which by and large is already sympathetic to wanting to move into a nonprofit open access direction and has well earned entity for some of the big corporate giants that have shrunk their ability to pay for things like books and staff, thanks to the rising serial cost, there's already buying on their side.

And there's lots of excitement and interest on the nonprofit side, including in our independent worlds to make the sand and the gears to remove some of that stuff really are more like boulders in the gears to make it easier for that, I think quite robust interest among librarians and other funders to fund stuff on the one hand, and the ability to get it to those of us doing that kind of work on the other is more sort of logistical in a way. And that's why I'm really excited about the mission aligned funding exchange like Sharla and COPIM have been building.

On the issue of paying for things that scholars have traditionally done as volunteer labor. I share the kind of ambivalence within myself that Ámbar described recognizing in the communities that he and others have pulled. I mean, I was convinced, Dan, by the article that you submitted for the special issue about I think the title was "[Hire everyone](#)" something like that. And the implication is including those doing peer reviewing work or authoring work, which in the Academy has traditionally been uncompensated. And the reason I mean, Ambivalent is, on the one hand, I find the argument totally convincing, especially in a context of precarious academic labor, where lots of people don't have a living wage from their University employer or might not work or be affiliated with the University at all. On the other hand, I do have this perhaps romantic notion of like an academic ethos by which that kind of work is part of a kind of vocation in a way, and introducing a kind of transactional monetary element into it is somehow I don't know if I'm being too gauze and romantic about this, but introducing a kind of commercial ethos into what has been this pocket of non market life to some extent.

DR: I think that kind of suggests that would be like neoliberal-esque or market driven. And I would say that compensating people for their labor is actually a little bit against that stream because this is just a way of hopefully moving away from exploitation and labor. I agree that if you're a tenure tracked, very comfortable professor, this might not be as meaningful, but I think that solidarity and that need to let in more people is necessary, because on the other hand, you risk saying that this work is only for people in this realm, and that's where we don't want to preclude so many people who have significant things to share.

PK: Yeah. And I also wrote this in [my piece](#). I think **we need a lot of experimentation on every level**, right. And we need to start shifting funds now. I think that's for me, the most important point, right. Because we live in a capitalist system, and if the money is always on one side, this side is going to win. There's no way around that, right. No amount of brain power is going to counteract that. And so I think it's going to be important to as much as it is to think about what is the right system and how do we distribute funds, but also to start distributing funds.

And in many cases, this is just little money, right. A membership with one of the nonprofits out there. It's very little money, and there's not a huge mistake. If the next year you decide this was actually not the right move. I think on the side of the infrastructures, it's important to understand that we need to show how we add value for the organizations and for the system. That's something maybe that we're not often that good at and that's important, even though we're doing it, we need to also show it and also to interlink amongst each other.

I think this is where the commercial products are much better than the open infrastructure with me, Ironically, but I think we're often doing this on our own, and it has already been said before. So I think we kind of need to get going and continue there because otherwise, I mean, it's not just academics, right. There's a lot of people in the system, developers, designers, community managers that work really a lot of volunteer hours, and we really need to get them paid, because otherwise I don't think this is going to go very far.

ZV: I think what I'm going to do is give three points that are maybe agenda items for three future conversations. But I guess:

1 | just to double down on what Dan said. I think labor and compensation is at the core of it. What does it look like to acknowledge that the possibility of tenure in promotion?

I'm channeling my colleague Catherine here. What does it mean to understand that the possibility of tenure in promotion is not valid compensation? That's the first thing.

2 | The second thing: where are the funders and how do we hold funders and the institutions accountable for? Again, the misalignment between stated, like public mission and resource allocation.

3 | And I think the third point that feels really exciting to me is that in some ways we could do this today, and it would take the students and take the faculty, take the folks within the campus to sort of say enough is enough and to sort of move in this direction. And so then what does it look like for us to create that groundswell? And just to start with the folks that are on campus, the students, the faculty and move in this direction collectively, all big problems, all big things to talk about.

But it's been really great to be here with all of you.

SK: Yeah. I'm also cognizant of that time, so I don't know if anyone has anything, any last comments they have to say, but I definitely think that sort of as a summation maybe, and next steps is like what everyone has been saying, really leaning into the experimentation of it or the plurality of everything and really just keeping these conversations going. And as I said, just keep doing things that work. Maybe it is really just that simple how to keep in contact with us again.

Like we said at the beginning, a lot of this conversation started on the Commonplace, which is part of the Knowledge Futures Group. And if there's any further questions, when you try and get in contact with any of the panelists, you can feel free to find me on Twitter or email me. Just thank you again and all the panelists and attendees for coming to this and definitely a pleasure talking with you and keeping these things going for sure.