Supporting Public Content Goods

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Does your Library support article processing charges (APCs)?

A. True
B. False
Does your Library financially support any Public Content Goods (excluding digitized content, subscriptions, and funding for APCs)?

A. Yes
B. No

88% Yes
12% No
If yes, please answer the following question: do these funds come from the materials budget?

A. Yes
B. No
Have you/would you be willing to set aside an annual % of your materials budget to support Public Content Goods?

A. Yes
B. No
If yes, indicate percentage:

A. <1%
B. 2% - 5%
C. 6% - 10%
D. >10%
If no, under what circumstances would you be willing to set aside Library PCG funds:

A. Faculty requested library support
B. Scholars/scientists identified key PCG in their disciplines as priorities for support
C. PCG met minimum criteria for support (transparency, openness, longevity, deep engagement with designated community, etc.)
D. A shared funding model included support from the government, foundations/corporations, the general public, and/or my university
E. A consortium of my peers support this
If not from your materials budget, would you consider making OTHER funds available to support PCGs?

A. Yes
B. No

81% Yes
19% No
Do you consider PCG as worthy of support as are commercial/scholarly publications?

A. Yes  
B. No
Do you consider PCG as worthy of support as APCs?

A. Yes
B. No
Perspectives and Biases

1. Public Content Goods (PCG) refers to a definable set of services and scholarly content (eprints, articles, data sets, and other materials) that are freely and immediately available on the internet to users worldwide and to which authors/creators can contribute content without charge.

2. PCGs are worthy of broad-based support under a set of definable circumstances.

3. PCGs can be sustained without resorting to licenses or APCs.
arXiv: the Poster Child

- Established in 1991 by Paul Ginsparg to share preprints prior to formal publication; maintained by Cornell Library since 2001
- Hard Science disciplines: physics, mathematics, computer science, quantitative biology, quantitative finance and statistics
- 1.2 M e-prints; 105K submissions and 139 M downloads in 2015
- Collectively supported since 2012 by Cornell Library, the Simons Foundation and a global set of institutional members
Draft Principles for Determining Public Support

- Contains significant scholarly, scientific, creative content of value to discipline(s) and designated user community(s)
- Longevity of PCG (e.g., not startup)
- Deep involvement by user community (heavy use, continued submissions, volunteer moderators/reviewers/board members, expansion to other subjects)
- Immediate dissemination (no embargo)
- Globally accessible, 24/7 to all
- No cost to users and submitters
- Institutional home

- Commitment, rights, and wherewithal to provide persistent and perpetual access to all content
- Stable, effective technology base, metadata, and services to support submissions, permanency, integrity, security, discovery, and use
- Transparency and accountability in technology, governance, policies, funding, other
- Neutrality and trustworthiness
- Succession plan
Moving Forward: a Modest Proposal

• Identify and prioritize disciplinary public content goods
• Determine if meets base level requirements
• Engage broad coalition of support so burden is shared
• Develop pool of reserved funds within ARL community to provide support for PCGs
• Anticipate and respond to impacts such a program could have on the scholarly communication ecosystem
Is patreon.com a model for funding public goods content?
Crowdfunding (or “tipping”) for ongoing support

Recurring funding for creators.

Discover what creators are doing on Patreon

Scholarly Journals
Eprints services
Principles and conditions of patreon-like funding

- The pledges are open and transparent
- Patrons can see other patrons’ pledges (and amount)
- Contributions are recurring until they are canceled
- Patrons can set a monthly limit on their payments
- Creators can rely on a pledged revenue stream
- Creators can offer incentives and rewards based on pledge amounts
Collection development practices & infrastructure

- Knowledge of local needs and priorities
- Groups like Chief Collection Development Officers
- Coordination with consortia partners
- International Coalition of Library Consortia
- Platforms like GobiTween
Opportunity to test assumptions with open data

1) “Free rider” problem vs. esteem of being a sustainer?
2) With stable, transparent funding of public goods content, will we draw use, higher exposure, and therefore prestige to these resources?
3) If research libraries had a public goods content fund that was a percentage of their materials budget, how would they behave in a crowd-funding environment?
Current state

• Subscription prices are varied and undisclosed, creators not accountable
• Libraries’ interests at odds with scholarly societies
• Subscription fees tied to proxy measures of budget, such as Carnegie class or FTE

Anticipated state

• Pledges are transparent, creators accountable
• Libraries become direct benefactors of scholarly societies
• Pledges based on actual library budget