Open Access Publishing: A Study of UC Berkeley Faculty Views and Practices

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Outline

• Background
• Faculty survey
• Methods
• Analysis/Findings
• Discussion/Implications
• Future research
Background

UC advocates for Open Access:
• In 2018 The University of California system announced a ‘major UC initiative to transform the scholarly publishing industry’
• Numerous communications regarding moving toward Open Access (OA)

Open Access in the Faculty Survey:
• In October 2018 UC Berkeley Library conducted the Ithaka Faculty Survey
• 71% of the faculty respondents at UC Berkeley versus 64% nationwide indicated that they would be happy to see the traditional publication model replaced by an OA publication system

Faculty views on Open Access vs. actual publishing practices:
• Investigate the open access productivity of the UC Berkeley faculty
• Compare faculty views on OA and scholarly publishing, expressed in the survey, to their actual publishing practices.
Faculty Survey Results:

- Higher percentage of the faculty in Arts & Humanities value no cost to publish
- A higher percentage of the faculty in Life & Health Sciences value no cost to read

Respondents reporting external funding in last 5 years:
Methods

*OA Status Definition by Unpaywall:
Gold articles: published in fully OA journals; Closed: non-OA articles;
Green articles: OA in a repository but closed on the publisher website;
Hybrid articles: freely available in a non-OA journal on the publisher website under an open license;
Bronze articles: freely available on publisher websites but no license was found.
Large OA Output at Berkeley with Gold OA on the Rise

Berkeley Authors Publication Output by OA Category: 2016–2019

- **Gold**: 29.3%
- **Hybrid**: 14.7%
- **Bronze**: 10.0%
- **Closed**: 28.1%

Gold OA Articles Published by Berkeley Authors: 2016–2019

- **Green**: 214
- **Gold**: 201
- **Hybrid**: 196
- **Bronze**: 179
Science Disciplines: Major Drivers for Gold OA

Berkeley OA Article Percentages by Subject Groups: 2016–2019

- LHS: 78%
- EPS: 75%
- SS: 59%
- AH: 37%
- Total: 72%

Berkeley Gold OA Article Distribution by Subject Groups

- LHS: 62.5%
- EPS: 25.9%
- SS: 10.6%
- AH: 0.9%
The More Gold OA Articles Published, the More Support for OA Publishing

Q: When selecting a journal to publish in, how important is that the journal makes its articles freely available on the internet so there is no cost to read?

Correlation between Gold OA% and the Importance of No Cost to Read
Not Paying APCs is Important to UCB Authors

Q: When selecting a journal to publish in, how important is that the journal permits scholars to publish articles for free (without paying APCs)?
Disciplinary Differences Impact Behavior & Perception

Subject Groups:
Average Ratings of the Importance of No Cost to Read vs. Gold OA Publishing

Subject Groups:
Average Ratings of the Importance of No Cost to Publish vs. Gold OA Publishing
Limitations

• UCB authors were not necessarily the first author and may or may not have made the journal selection. Also, their funds may or may not have gone to the article’s APC.

• Our sample was biased toward the sciences as a result of using Scopus; >70% of journals in Scopus are classified under science.

• Ideally we could have separated out Hybrid OA where authors pay APCs to make articles immediately available.

• Depositing articles in a repository at the time of publishing and making articles available through Academic Social Networks demonstrate OA intent but are not captured in our study.
OA is growing

- Studies show support for OA, and OA publishing, are both growing.
- Our results suggest UCB above average in both, with Gold OA rising.
- 3 recent large studies used Unpaywall data for articles from similar dates and found total levels of OA <50%; our study found 72%.
- UC’s Open Access policy likely contributes to high Green OA and Gold OA, as does the high level of research funding with funder mandates, especially in STEM disciplines.


OA is not a top priority for authors

- Despite UCB faculty’s above-average support for an OA publishing system, whether or not a journal is OA still ranks below other characteristics like wide circulation, reputation, and fit.

- However, UCB researchers who publish more Gold OA feel more positive about OA – and likely the reverse.

- APCs may be a barrier – many authors are concerned about APCs, whether or not their research is funded. Libraries can help, both with dedicated APC funds and transformative publishing agreements.
Recommendations for future research

• Explore other methods to assess OA scholarly output for AH & SS faculty
• User survey data might need to be refreshed
• Explore relationship between research funding and ability to afford APCs
• Continue monitor how the recent transformative publishing agreements impact OA publishing levels