



■ The 1st SPARC Japan Seminar 2014

“How do we face APCs?”

— Perspectives of APCs through trends and surveys in and outside Japan”

Monday, August 4, 2014: National Institute of Informatics
12th floor conference room (Attendees: 129)

The 1st SPARC Japan Seminar 2014 focused a spotlight on Article Processing Charges (APCs). The presentations included a report on two surveys in Japan on open access (OA) journals, as well as case study reports by university libraries and research institutions that do APC processing. Three reports shed light on the current situation in Japan, and one report introduced worldwide APC trends and possible scenarios for financial support for APC. Participants then discussed how to deal with APC issues down the road. As shown also by SPARC Japan survey results, Japan has been slow to consider APCs and formulate open access policies, making it hard to see this as an urgent issue; but it is hoped that, with this seminar as a primer, discussion on APC initiatives will lead to application and practice editions. A summary of the seminar is given below. See the SPARC Japan website (<http://www.nii.ac.jp/sparc/event/2014/20140804.html>) for the handouts and other details.

Presentations

Overview of Two Surveys Conducted in FY2013 on Open Access Journals

Toshihiro Inoue (Kyoto University Library)

1. SPARC Japan “Survey on Submission to Open Access Journals”

a. Questionnaire survey

Researchers in the natural sciences at 44 universities were surveyed. They included institutions publishing large numbers of articles in OA journals as well as several research universities outside the field of medicine.

Summary of Survey Results

- The percentage of articles published in OA journals varies greatly from one field to another.
- For researchers, whether or not a journal is open access is not an important factor in deciding where to submit an article; instead, the decisive factors continue to be “recognition in the field,” “matching of article to journal’s scope,” and “provision of appropriate peer review.”

Researchers are submitting their articles to OA journals that meet these criteria.

- Among the additional comments written in on the questionnaire were calls for subsidies from the government or university level in light of the “expensive



publication cost,” and for involvement in an institution-funded model.

b. Interview survey

To obtain a more detailed picture of the situation, library personnel and others involved in publication were interviewed at a number of the universities included in the questionnaire survey, with the cooperation of their schools.

Summary of Survey Results

- University libraries are aware of APC-related issues. Libraries also believe that this awareness is making its way to researchers.

- Most university libraries are not involved in APC payments; nor are there moves to learn about the payment situation.

- There were no institutions reporting the existence of a university policy on open access. A major issue will therefore be how to go about strengthening the dissemination of research results and obtaining resources including OA journals.

Proposals by SPARC Japan

- It will be necessary to keep track of journal payments by the university as a whole, not only traditional subscriptions costs but also APC payments.

- Stakeholders will need to consider an institution-funded model for APCs and suitable price setting.

The role of libraries, in addition to obtaining journal subscriptions and supporting research results dissemination through institutional repositories, should also extend to OA journals with author-paid APCs.

2. Report on results of FY2013 survey by Japan Association of National University Libraries (JANUL) Committee on Scholarly Information, Subcommittee on Scholarly Information Distribution: Current State of Open Access Journals and Publication of Scholarly Articles - Database Survey

Covering both APC and non-APC OA journals and subscription-based journals, the publishing of articles in the natural sciences was surveyed based on Web of Science SCI (Science Citation Index) data.

The survey determined the three-year trends in number of articles over the ten-year period from 2003 to 2012. Using data on SCI WoS Categories (WC), comparisons in each category were made between Japan and the rest of the world.

Summary of Survey Results

- Both the number of journals and number of articles continue to grow. Prior to the survey it was supposed that as OA journals increased, subscription-based journals would decline; but in fact both increased.

- The number of OA journals is still small, ranging between 3 and 9 percent of the whole depending on the field. It is growing rapidly, however.

- Subscription-based journals continue to be the most common, at more than 90 percent. Subscription costs are still a concern for libraries.

Looking at the number of scholarly articles for each country, over the 10-year period of the survey the United States, UK, and Germany grew slightly (1.29, 1.30, and 1.35 times, respectively), whereas China rose sharply (3.85 times). Japan, on the other hand, saw a slight decline (0.98 times). While these results are of some concern, it is possible that the number of low-quality articles is growing, and that numbers alone are not the whole story.

Proposals by the Subcommittee on Scholarly Information Distribution

- With the number of subscription-based journals remaining large, the emphasis should continue to be on negotiations with publishers, and subscription frameworks should be established at universities.

- The number of OA journals is growing rapidly, but attention should be paid to APC and the like.

- The situation should continue to be monitored carefully by conducting regular surveys.

Case Study on Keeping Track of APC Payments at a Small University Library

Hideki Higuchi (Asahikawa Medical University Library)

Scholarly Article publication fees and reprinting fees are considered to be service fees like fees to participate in academic conferences, and are in

many cases processed by a division other than the library, such as the finance or accounting department.

Who

processes APC payments? If it is considered a materials fee the library is responsible, whereas the finance or accounting department handles it if it is seen to be a service fee.

At the University of Electro-Communications where the author previously was employed, the majority of data was collected in the library, but the APCs were counted in the financial accounting system, with the cooperation of the finance department. Since small universities tend to have a uniform financial accounting system, the APCs can pretty much be determined by searching for the strings “publication fee,” “academic journal,” and “reprinting.”

The Asahikawa Medical University initiative went a step further. By declaring in the school that from 2013 the library would handle all payments of publication fees and reprinting fees, information concerning article submissions became concentrated in the library. Since this initiative also led to administrative improvements, the library received an award from the head of the Administration Bureau.

In fiscal 2013, there were 102 articles by the Asahikawa Medical University that were published. Of the 55 articles with publication fees in Japan and overseas, 6 were APC. The APC total was 1,115,000 yen. In some cases, publication fees include reprinting fees, but because of the complexity these are not distinguished. It helps if there is a receipt with the publisher’s name on it, but in some cases people use PayPal or other payment services in which the settlement agent is recorded as a recipient. With hybrid journals, moreover, there is always the possibility that an article was published as open access, so these checks have to be made for all articles. The process ended up being more trouble than expected, requiring a full two days.

Even if APC information is not all collected in the library, as long as the APC was processed by the university the information will certainly be somewhere at the school. To obtain this information, a general estimate can be made at some level of precision or other, provided that accounting data can be gathered effectively from the relevant departments. Additional means may



need to be considered, however, in case there are articles published in journals that do not charge publication fees, or fees were paid out of pocket and the details cannot be determined.

Case Study in the JAEA Library of Submission Fee Grants and Central Management of Publication Data

Misa Hayakawa (Japan Atomic Energy Agency)

At the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) library, information on R&D results by JAEA personnel is centrally managed and financial aid is provided for submission fees and the like. The JAEA employment regulations stipulate that when personnel announce R&D results, including in scholarly journals, permission must first be obtained from the JAEA.

Before and after announcing R&D results, researchers register information with the R&D Results Management System developed and operated by the library. The registered information is used for three purposes: deciding permission to announce the results, issuing the results information, and conducting financial aid-related procedures. Since registering information is a condition for financial aid, it is possible to get a rather high percentage of information on researcher submission and publication status.

The objectives of the financial aid program include supporting young researchers and creating a level playing field across research divisions for publication opportunities. The library division is in charge of obtaining, executing, and managing the budget for this program. Looking at the payment situation for April and May 2014, the average submission fee payment per article was 58,000 yen for domestic journals and 94,000 yen for overseas journals. This amount is inclusive of reprinting fees, since these cannot be distinguished. An example of APC payments is the hybrid journal of the Atomic Energy Society of Japan (US\$2,950). Others including the IEEE and PLOS are rather more expensive than the above average.

Centralizing the budget process in the library has the advantage that researchers can publish their results regardless of the size of the research group's budget. Administrative procedures are also more efficient, as they are all handled by the library.



Since payments all go through the library, it is easy to keep track of information; and knowing the kinds of journals in which results are published helps in

selecting journals to subscribe to.

An issue is obtaining funds. There are limits as to how much can be covered by the library budget alone, since it is obtained without assuming APC payments. The regulations state that APCs for hybrid journals are not covered by the aid program, but such cases can be discussed individually if there is a particular desire.

The involvement of the library increases exchanges with researchers and helps to shrink the distance between the library and researchers. Presumably the program also makes it easier for researchers to ask the library when they have questions about APCs or other matters.

International APC Trends

Shinji Mine (Mie University Faculty of Humanities, Law and Economics)

· Background in the UK

Viewed from the outside, the debate in the UK concerning what type of open access (OA) to adopt (APC-based OA or Green OA) may seem like a game, a battle, or power politics. While the administration took a cue from the Finch Report in deciding to support APC-based publication, BIS (the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills) has expressed the view that the Finch Report ought to be revised. RCUK, Wellcome Trust, and other large research funding agencies in the UK devise and implement their OA policies based on Finch, whereas the REF (Research Excellence Framework), for which the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is responsible, calls for putting the results of research for assessment not in OA journals but in institutional repositories by 2020. The future outlook is far from clear.

· APC Trends

A paper by Björk, investigating APC prices, found that there are two peaks. Those in the US\$601–800 ranges and those around \$1,601–1,800 or \$2,000 are frequent. Different surveys, however, show quite different APC prices, with field-dependent variation.

In the case of hybrid journals, charging methods have become diverse and there are differences among publishers. There was also a bundling approach, combining APC with subscriptions, by which APC payment was waived or discounted; and this was introduced by the Max Planck Institute. The consensus is growing, however, that this approach has failed. Of the articles registered in Scopus, no more than 0.5 percent are OA articles published in hybrid journals. Hybrid journals also have the problem of double dipping. Although it is said that the price is reduced by the amount of APC paid, there are doubts that this is really the case.

· Publisher Trends

Publishers have come up with a number of services for getting articles published by means of APCs. Similar to APC member discounts, there are publishers offering APC discounts to researchers through contracts with universities.

· Researcher Trends

The publishing experiences of researchers differ by field and by country, but the numbers are believed to have risen somewhere around the years 2009 to 2011. Presumably this is because OA mega journals and major commercial publishers began providing OA-related services.

Comparing the results of the SPARC Japan survey and the Wiley survey of worldwide authors regarding factors for article submission, in both cases the authors did not choose an OA journal primarily because it was open access but gave weight rather to “recognition in the field,” “matching of article to journal’s scope,” and “Impact Factor.”

· Research Funding Agencies

Since April 2013, RCUK has given block grants to universities in support of APC payments. With plans to provide 100 million pounds of funding over a five-year period, the target is to achieve Gold OA for 75 percent and Green OA for 25 percent of the funded research results. The APC funding amount was set at 17 million pounds for the first year and 20 million for the second year, with the third year amount to be decided after discussion about the results.

Funding by the Wellcome Trust covers articles in peer-review scholarly journals and also monographs and book chapters. The policy is that within six months following publication not in institutional repositories but in PubMed Central (USA/UK) and the like, articles are to be made freely available. Influenced by the Finch Report, the organization promotes OA journals over self-archiving, and provides Open Access Awards (APC grants) to 32 universities in the UK.

· Universities

Alongside this policy-based approach in the UK, an organized APC initiative is being carried out mainly by Jisc. The Jisc APC pilot project ended just this past July. In the pilot project, an APC payment system was tried out in cooperation with universities, publishers, and research funding agencies. Another project, Jisc Monitor, is currently being trialed. In order to ensure compliance with the OA policies of REF2020, this project is providing infrastructure for monitoring research output at each university, checking compliance with OA policies, and determining costs, as well as creating metadata standards.

In the UK, both the number of APC articles and the total amount of APC payments rose sharply in

2013. This no doubt reflects the impact of RCUK and the Wellcome Trust. Looking at the amount of payments per publisher, major players such as Elsevier, Wiley, PLOS, OUP, and Springer stand out. Payments to the top two amount to around a million pounds per year. The average APC payments per publisher are in the range of 1,500 to 2,250 pounds a year.

How much is paid out by the Wellcome Trust for APC? Supporting 559 articles in full OA journals and 1,569 in hybrid journals, the average APC payments were 210,000 yen and 340,000 yen, respectively. In this case, too, the top two publishers for APC payment amounts were Elsevier and Wiley.

There are 107 universities eligible for block grants from RCUK, with most of the grants going to famous universities. The top 30 schools received around 80 percent of the total amount.

There are moves to create an organized workflow for APC payments at UK universities. It has progressed to the point of establishing a flow clarifying who does what in APC payments at each university. Both the monetary amounts and the amount of processing being quite large, this is not something that can be handled using an ad hoc approach.

COPE [Compact for Open-Access Publishing Equity], a US movement, is an agreement on the provision of APC grant programs by research institutions. As the number of university libraries participating in COPE increases, it is hoped that a permanent APC funding program can be established. With universities providing the environment, the aim is to achieve a level playing field for both OA journals and subscription-based journals. At Harvard University, this compact has been implemented as HOPE. It is restricted to journals listed in the DOAJ and publishers who are members of the OASPA, with grant amounts limited to US\$3,000 per person per year.

· APC Financial Assistance Scenarios

Based on the Wellcome Trust report by Björk et al. last March, the following are some of the scenarios by which research funding agencies might offer APC assistance.

1. APC repayment schemes

APC assistance is provided by paying the full amount. All the money goes to the publisher. In the case of hybrid journals, the APC amount paid by the agency is guaranteed to be



deducted from the subscription charge.

2. Multilevel cap schemes

APC payment amounts are capped at different levels based on the quality of the journal. One proposal is to set three price cap levels (US\$1,000, \$2,000, and \$3,000) for full OA journals in Scopus, based on the SNIP metrics (Source Normalized Impact per Paper) of Scopus scholarly journals. In reality, looking at the average APC for journals classified by SNIP factor, most can likely be covered by a rate of \$2,000 or less.

3. Burden-sharing schemes

Research funding agencies cover a fixed percentage of APC costs, with the rest paid by the university and/or author.

·Conclusions of Report

In the APC market, price competitiveness should be guaranteed even while maintaining innovativeness. If APC costs were to be fully and unconditionally covered, researchers would use funds indiscriminately, price competition would suffer, and publishers would push the price.

It would be possible for some publishers to bundle subscription costs and APC, but it would then no longer be possible to know how the APC was calculated and something like the APC Big Deal could arise.

In the case of hybrid journals, the question is whether the subscription price is really being reduced. In the present state with the Big Deal being the mainstream, nondisclosure clauses make it impossible to know how much each university is paying, and difficult to achieve a drop in price. As the amounts paid by research universities, which produce large numbers of articles, are increasing, the problem is free-riding by universities that publish fewer articles.

·Conclusion

The APC is not a pressing issue in Japan like it is in the UK; but as questionnaire surveys and article surveys indicate, among researchers the submission of articles to OA journals involving APC payments is clearly growing more common. To decide how to handle APCs, we need to be aware of international trends and of what kinds of initiatives are being taken by each research institution. APC payment information should be shared in Japan and globally. It is laudable that UK university data is being made public. This helps ensure APC transparency and competitiveness. Intermediaries are also necessary. Can JUSTICE fill this need in Japan?

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Tomonari Kinto (University Library, The University of Tokyo)

Panel members: Toshihiro Inoue (Kyoto University

Library) / Hideki Higuchi (Asahikawa Medical University Library) / Misa Hayakawa (Japan Atomic Energy Agency) / Shinji Mine (Mie University Faculty of Humanities, Law and Economics)



The moderator, Mr. Kinto, advanced the discussions along four topics by posing questions to the panel members.

1. Japan's researchers and Gold OA/APC

Regarding the point that researchers do not choose OA journals because they are open access, Mr. Inoue said that in terms of what is to be gained from publishing, OA is not inevitable. Mr. Mine noted that choosing journals based on their quality and field is common worldwide, and that in another survey the reasons for choosing an OA mega journal included the speed of peer review and the desire to release research results quickly, bringing the risk of submitting to a "predatory" publisher without realizing it.

On the question of whether there were differences even in the same field, Mr. Higuchi noted that in the case of the engineering field, at least, researchers on networks and supercomputers tend to value oral presentations at international conferences over article publishing itself. Ms. Hayakawa said that at the JAEA, as well, there are some areas where articles are common and others where issuing of technical reports is mainstream.

2. Determining the number of Gold OA articles and APC payment amounts at universities and research institutions

To give an example of how universities keep track of the number of OA articles, a representative of Kyushu University made a comment with reference to Kyushu University and Mr. Sunaoshi of the Tokyo Institute of Technology offered further details.

As reference in selecting e-journals, Kyushu University purchased data from Scopus and uses this data to keep track of the number of articles published by the university's researchers. The number of articles in OA journals is then found by matching against the 857 APC-based OA journal titles listed in the recent SPARC Japan survey. Kyushu University was compared with global trends and Japan trends in number of articles, and trends in number of OA articles per department at the university were described.

On the issue of keeping track of APCs, Mr. Inoue noted that at large universities there is no single approach, with the diversity of payment methods at different departments making it difficult to obtain accurate data. Mr. Higuchi reported that at Asahikawa Medical University, a great deal of labor goes into checking the revised personal versions submitted by authors to find the name of the journal and whether it is issued as an OA journal or hybrid journal. Mr. Mine said the situation outside Japan, in countries where more progress has been made in the provision of OA-related databases and funding conditions, makes it easier to keep track of information than in Japan (even though it is still a lot of work).

3. Who are involved in APC (about stakeholders)? Speaking about the role of the URA (University Research Administrator), Mr. Higuchi suggested that since the URA can be expected to choose journals for submission and joint research partners so that the percentage of articles in the top 10 percent and the international authorship rate will be higher, the URA and library ought to work together in promoting submission to OA journals. Speaking on grants at the JAEA, Ms. Hayakawa explained that when it comes to payment of outside funds such as Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, the library only checks documents and the actual payment is made by another department which is responsible for outside funds.

4. Model for institutional burden/involvement and fund sources

Regarding APC prices, Mr. Higuchi introduced two cases of price setting for network services. One is digital certificates (using an SSL server). There are three types of certificates depending on the use, with prices ranging between 200,000 yen to a few thousand yen. These prices reflect differences in the level of the security review procedures and relate to differences in the reliability of the certificate itself. With OA journals, price competition should operate so that people use journals that are of high reliability even if the cost is high due to peer review, but they do not use journals with high price and poor reliability.

The other case is radiko.jp. This is an example of a service that was originally free but now charges for listening outside the broadcasting area. Even though it was originally free, a for-fee service will be supported if it offers additional value.

Mr. Mine offered an additional comment on his earlier presentation regarding the three scenarios, explaining that the report included the nuance that if university libraries do not take sufficient care when dealing with APC, publishers will take advantage of the situation, as in the case of subscription fees to e-journals, raking in more and more money. Another comment offered was that

the provision of metrics for journal reliability and quality was a chance for the library community to demonstrate its prowess.

Making a comment from the floor about researcher awareness of costs, an attendee noted that the detachment of users (researchers) from payers (library) has pushed up e-journal costs. The attendee also suggested that if the same thing were to happen regarding APCs, it might be better to leave APCs more to researchers, who would either choose not to pay if they cannot afford to, or would choose a journal that is affordable. A variety of views were expressed by panelists. One panelist felt that given the current trend by universities toward creating a framework for canceling journal subscriptions, they would eventually realize the wisdom of leaving APCs to researchers. Another panelist offered that if money were handed out to researchers, they would end up wasting it on things like adding color pages to their papers, since it was not out of their own pocket. Another thought that institutions need to keep track of the costs of journal subscriptions and APC payments as the total amount of outlay involving scholarly articles. Finally, Mr. Kinto made a proposal about the interim approach institutions should take to deal with APCs.

After gaining an awareness of international trends and gathering information on government policy and the policies of research funding agencies, he suggested that institutions should

- find out how much is paid in APCs,
- conduct dialog with stakeholders inside and outside the university, and
- in preparation for the appearance of an APC institutional model, draw up an OA policy, including a Gold OA, for the university.

On this basis they should carry out the system design and funding source planning for APCs. With that proposal, the panel discussion was concluded.

-----From attendees-----

- (people affiliated with universities libraries)
- Regarding the Asahikawa Medical University case, I had assumed that if surveys were conducted you would wind up with an approach like this, but it was useful to have it explained anew. As for the JAEA case, I was surprised to learn that there is an institution doing processing so intelligently. On the APC question, I got the impression that it would be easiest to start out with small institutions and those specific to certain fields. As with the final discussion, though, I am still conflicted as to whether now is really the time for our library to get involved in this issue.
 - Regarding APCs, I gained some hints about information gathering and cooperation with faculty

members.

- While the seminar offered much to think about, it would seem there is still a need to build a common awareness about APCs as the audience's reaction was flat.

- I came to feel that if subscription prices for subscription-based (hybrid) journals are going to be reduced, there would be value in conducting sample surveys of APC payment amounts. (Without that merit, it would be difficult to carry out in our situation.)

(researcher in academic society)

- I believe that reports on the detailed survey results would be useful for further studies.

(person in academic society, involved in scholarly journal editing)

- The information I learned at this seminar will be useful background when deciding on APC adoption. Since many submissions are by

-----Afterword-----

😊 I would like to thank Kyushu University for providing slides.

With SPARC Japan surveys showing that university libraries are only starting to realize the implications of APCs for their services, I wondered how this seminar would go. I was relieved that participants offered so many positive views in response to the seminar.

Hisao Sunaoshi

(Tokyo Institute of Technology Library)

😊 Thanks to all who braved the summer heat to attend this seminar. Inasmuch as Japan is slow to adopt an organized approach to APCs, I

universities, it will help in understanding universities' thinking.

(person affiliated with corporate library)

- Along with the shift from printed journals to e-journals, there is now a new trend toward open access, driven in part by the price increase. The workload of journal staff at the library is decreasing. Possible areas where they can find new duties are APC management and management of research results.

(university educator)

- This was an instructive seminar in clarifying the current state and issues for APCs.

- As I listened to the discussion today, I thought it would be interesting to discuss Institutional Research, OA with APC, and OA without APC, as well.

hope this was a step forward in sharing issues among people from various standpoints.

Tomonari Kinto

(University Library, The University of Tokyo)

😊 APC is not as pressing a matter in Japan as it is in the UK, but I believe it will be necessary to continue keeping abreast of the trends.

Shinji Mine

(Mie University Faculty of Humanities, Law and Economics)

