

Policy Awareness

David Castle



The Open University



Summary Observations

- Of 22 interviewees, there was general awareness of the RCUK OA policy
 - 7 admitted to not knowing the details
 - 10 showed quite detailed understanding
 - Awareness was not related with OA publishing practice

Summary Observations

- Gold OA practices
 - 12 had Gold OA experience before the policy
 - 5 were incidental
 - 5 said they were responding to RCUK policy
- Green OA practices
 - 5 systematically archived before OA policy
 - 3 incidental
 - 2 archived because of RCUK policy
 - 12 did nothing



RCUK Policy and Awareness

- *I think the policies did force me to think about it, to be honest. I hadn't really clocked it, and then suddenly, some of the funders were saying to me, 'You have got to,' and then I suddenly thought, 'Oh yes, absolutely.'*

RCUK Policy and Awareness

In 2011 we published something in an open access journal. (...) Yes, I am moving towards that. I guess that is more because I have been persuaded by this missive which has come from government, by the research councils, that this is a good thing to do. More than necessarily being able to see whether the benefits that are claimed are necessarily justified. But I suppose it a pressure that it being put on us, and you might as well. There is no reason not to do it, if you like, unless it is the financial reason.”



Funding of Gold OA

- 15 of 22 interviewees made specific reference to the funding of OA in the context of disclosing their awareness of the policy
 - Most, but not all, were aware that funding for OA could no longer be included in funding proposals but was intended to come from institutional indirects, if supported directly by universities
 - *Don't put money for publishing in your things because we've already given money to the universities through some other route*



Funding of Gold OA

- Potential misunderstanding of the funding model

...as far as I understand they are moving from this system where we used to put publication, funds for publication, onto the grants. They are moving to the central system where they basically give universities a bucket of funds for open access publishing.

Funding of Gold OA

- Potential misunderstanding of the funding model

I'm not an expert really, but yes. My understanding is that part of the budget of research councils will be contributing through the publishers to provide open access to work coming from research council funded work. That's basically it, isn't it?

Funding of Gold OA

- Frustration

If the Research Councils want everything to go Open Access, they should pay. The Research Councils are sneaky buggers because what they will do is say, “Oh yes, it has to be Open Access, but you can’t put publication charges on a grant.” “That is stupid. You are asking me to do something and you are not giving me the financial wherewithal to do it?” (...) The university gets some money, but you have to apply for it. It is just another hassle.



Funding of Gold OA

- Institutional variation is possible

So our university is lucky because we have some funding, not a lot, but funding to actually make it open access so we don't have to pay it from our grants. But I guess if it's not enough we'll probably have to pay from our grants.

Funding of Gold OA

- Benefits even if funding exists

What concerns me, again, is the amount of money that will be needed to go for the gold model and whether or not it yields significant benefits or not over the other model, the green model, which is where you embargo, you provide a draft, not a draft, a final write up and before the proof stage manuscript to someone else and you put on an archive.



Funding of Gold OA

- Option splitting

For me I would say that the green option is probably more attractive and one of the reasons for that is there are limited funds available for the sharing of these open access publications.

Publication Strategy

- Reinforcing existing behaviour

...an influence on me in the sense that I'm aware of it and I know that now there's this requirement there. That's obviously something I'm going to take into account. But, at the same time, that's a direction that I was already following.

Publication Strategy

- No change in behaviour – OA all the way

We're making sure our Welcome publications are open access and they have been for quite a long while. We're paying the fees or whatever if we're not going to a specific open access journal. (...) I guess we were quite early in doing it but I guess we followed the policy.

Publication Strategy

- Quality and OA hand-in-hand

I think that a large part of my publication is actually open access of some sort. (...) Almost from the beginning of my career. (...) for me nothing has changed. I will still go for the best journals and I would also not think about open access because of the research councils. (...) So I don't think it would change anything, because as I said, I already try whenever there is a possibility to have publications open access.



Publication Strategy

- Quality and OA hand-in-hand

For me, I'm happy to say that the journals that in my field that I would normally publish in are either leading the open access movement in the sense that they were already open access or are compliant with the current requirement.

Publication Strategy

- Fee avoidance

I've never paid a fee to a journal which would require you to pay an additional fee to make it open access, no. Because often their fees are just ridiculous, as is the journal that I edit. That is bizarre. If you are going to do that, then just find an open access journal.

Unintended Consequence?

- Papers **not** published through Gold route might not become accessible at all
 - Lack of clarity about appropriate Green channels and repositories – e.g. is Research Gate acceptable? Is a lab's website acceptable for posting manuscripts?
 - Assumption that papers are automatically deposited in PubMed Central
 - Green OA not often pursued by scientists



Institutionalised Remedies

- Following an embargo period a 'post-print' copy could be put in a repository (e.g. PubMed)
 - Could work if RCUK could establish standards for timing and the nature of repository to make it comply with policy expectations
 - HEIs collect manuscripts for localised repositories
 - Costs and compliance issues abound

Institutionalised Remedies

OA is ‘trendy’: I just look at that and I think “I cannot be bothered with this.” I just thought: “I will pay for Open Access. That way, the library will just leave me alone.” It is terrible, isn’t it? It is true, though, isn’t it? Then, they say, “You have got to send me a manuscript, but it can’t be the manuscript you have published.” “Well, that is bloody stupid. The manuscript I have published is the manuscript. I am not going to send you a beta. I am going to send you the right thing or nothing.



OA and REF

For all purposes to fulfil our mission, and even to get a good score in the REF and therefore get more incoming money, we need to publish more papers not less papers, we need to publish more papers in better journals or better papers, it's not by cutting down on publication. So I don't know what's going to happen when there's not enough money, what are we going to do, first come first served, personally I think that's the only solution that is morally acceptable, is first come first served.

