

Chapter 16

Article Processing Charges and Their Impact in Open Access Publishing

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge transfer is the key to the sustained growth of human civilization. This chapter on open access and article processing charges aims at addressing the various issues associated with open access publishing as a business model with a distinct opportunity. The chapter throws light on article processing charges (APC), the relevance of impact factor, citations, and pricing. The complexities the researchers confront, and the rise of predatory journals and their concerns are discussed in detail. The ethical dimensions of publishing and the role and relevance of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) are also explored. This chapter dwells on some of the remedial measures to improve the awareness and practices among the diverse stakeholders.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-9805-4.ch016

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is power and acquired knowledge has to be shared for humanity to survive and progress. With the development in communication technologies, the shared knowledge space has increased manifold. Dissemination of knowledge is one of the key factors in the progress of civilization, as is evident in the advancements in science and technology, education, healthcare etc. In this era of internet and digital communication, there is no dearth of information, but evidence-based knowledge transfer is the key to the sustained growth of human civilization. This is of paramount importance in academia and research. However, access to authentic and relevant information is not easy. One of the reasons for low-quality research across the globe is the lack of access to relevant, credible and appropriate resources. Individual authors need to make payments to access articles from quality journals. Open access publication is an important development in this context and has come as a distinct opportunity for the academic and the research community to publish and to have access to quality research work.

The open access publishing model helps the research community in having access to a wide range of research work not accessible earlier to a majority of knowledge creators and was a deterrent to research progress. They can now have better access and greater scope for publication. It also gives high visibility to the authors' works and creates wider scope for collaborative work. With the publication, citation, h-index, i10 index becoming the Academic Performance Indicators (API) in institutions of higher education, the open access model of publication is more welcoming to the academia. The discussions in this chapter will focus on the open access centred on the academia. The chapter begins by introducing the Open Access as business model with its variants. The focus is on Article Processing Charges (APC), the relevance of impact factor, citations, and the pricing of the big players in the publishing industry and its impact on the researchers. This is followed by a discussion on the concerns and complexities faced by the researchers and how APC is both an opportunity and at times a burden to the authors in the new open access model. The ethical dimensions of publishing and the concerns over the rising predatory journals are also explored. The role and relevance of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and the need and ways in which the scientific community can mitigate the problems in publishing has also been touched upon.

OPEN ACCESS AS A BUSINESS MODEL

Knowledge is not only power, it is power and money. And it is power and money like never before (Kerr, 1994, pp. 9-15). Open access (OA) is the provision of free and unrestricted online access to research outputs such as journal articles, books, amongst others. Published research outputs can now be accessed without the usual subscription fees. Open access (OA) supports the researcher to access the earlier work of most authors with little or no restrictions. Publication of Journal articles usually fall under two business models

1. Subscription based, where individuals or institutions subscribe to the journals and make the payment.
2. Open access journals where Article publishing charges (payments) are borne by the authors, institutions /universities or funding agencies. Article Processing Charge (APC) is the central funding mechanism for open access journals (Solomon & Bjork, 2012).

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