

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING



The open access (OA) movement first emerged in the 1990s as an alternative to traditional publishing models. Now in its third decade, open access is on the rise thanks to many factors, the biggest being the growth of the internet. With it came a shift to digital publishing, and greater possibilities for delivering, discovering and consuming content.

At the heart of open access is the ethos to facilitate the sharing of knowledge for the benefit of the wider public good, a mission that closely aligns with the ideals of librarians and the institutions they serve.

In a recent research project¹, we looked at open access awareness levels amongst librarians and identified improvements that could be made to the way we talk about open access for the chemical sciences.

We'd like to share these findings with you.



Libraries find themselves increasingly providing advice and financial support to researchers wishing to publish open access

95%

of librarians are confident in their understanding of what the term open access means

General knowledge of open access

There has been an explosion in open access publishing over the last decade. Today, more than 95% of librarians are confident in their understanding of what the term open access means. Familiarity with both gold and green open access models is also high and librarians are comfortable in their ability to explain the different options to researchers at their institution. There is less confidence however in understanding the requirements of the various funding bodies – fewer than half of all librarians surveyed feel that they have a sound or good understanding of these policies.

Learning about open access

Librarians will typically learn about open access from their colleagues and the wider library network, further evidence that a strong advocacy of open access exists within the community. While finding information about open access is relatively straightforward, staying on top of changes to policy remains a challenge. Publishers communicate open access reasonably well but more transparency on their terms and conditions is required, particularly about archiving policy and management of article processing charges (APCs). Publishers could also be more explicit in explaining what institutions can do with content published under either model.

Supporting open access

With over 11,000 open access journals available² and the introduction of open access mandates, libraries also find themselves increasingly providing advice and financial support to researchers wishing to publish open access. For example, 30% of libraries surveyed stated that they manage their institution's budget for gold open access. Open access membership schemes and initiatives are attracting greater interest as libraries look at ways to help cover article processing charges. But for now, payment still falls largely to authors and their granting bodies.

What's next?

As a result of this research, we will be looking to ensure that information on open access policies and schemes (such as our own Gold for Gold) is more easily accessible to anyone wishing to find it. We will also look at providing information on a country by country basis to help librarians stay informed of funder requirements for their own countries.

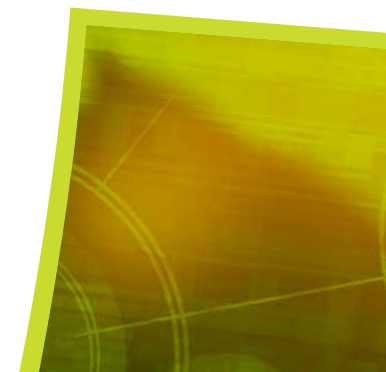
²Directory of Open Access Journals



11,000
open access
journals available²



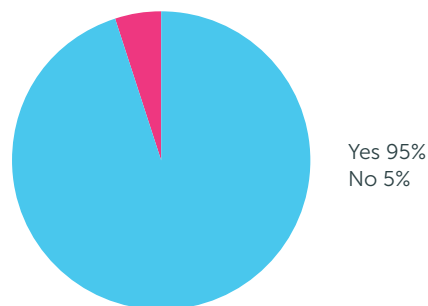
30%
of librarians
manage their
institution's gold
OA budget



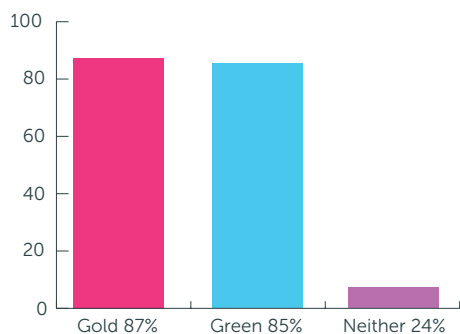
FULL OPEN ACCESS SURVEY RESULTS

Knowledge and understanding

Are you familiar with the term open access (OA) publishing?

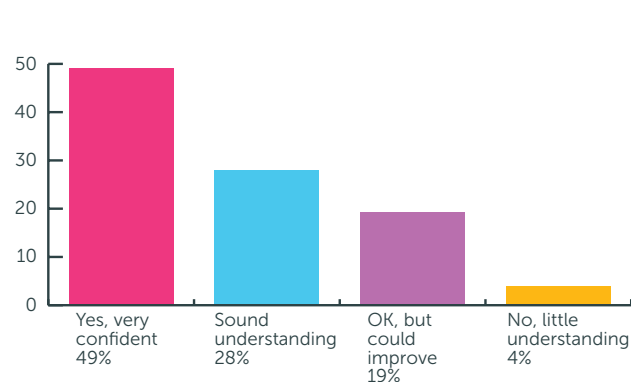


Which of the following OA models have you heard of?

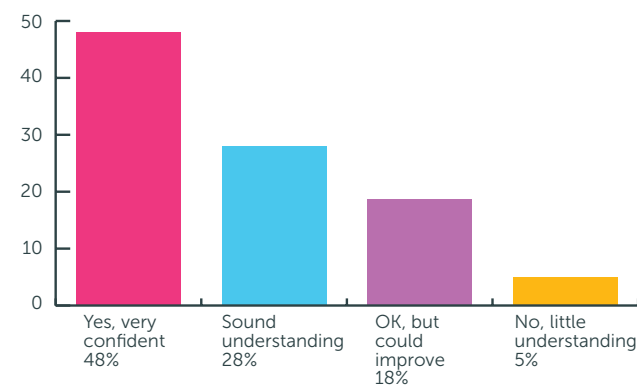


Do you feel you have a good understanding of what these models offer?

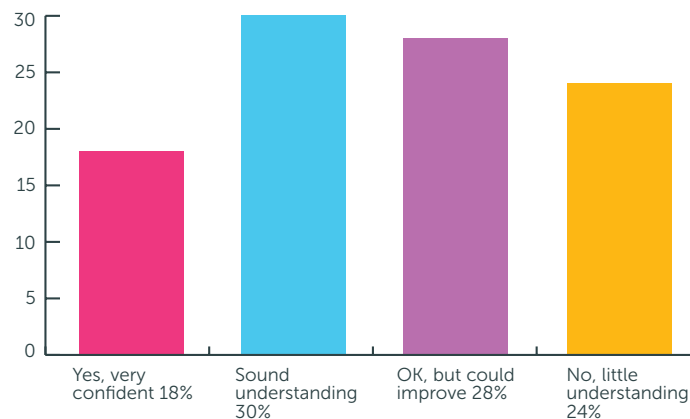
Gold



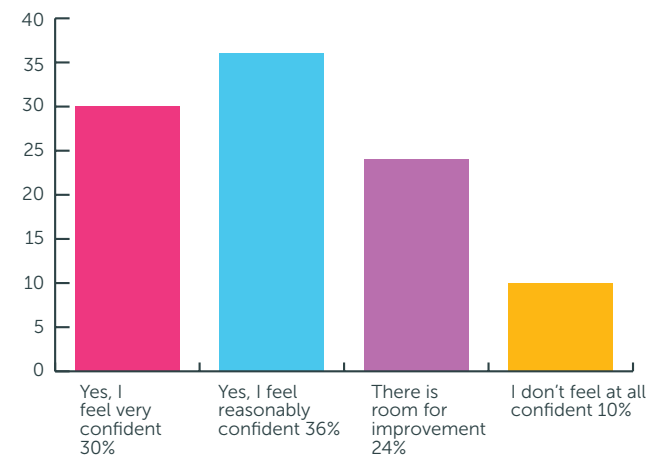
Green



Do you feel you have a good understanding of the OA policies and requirements of the main funding bodies?

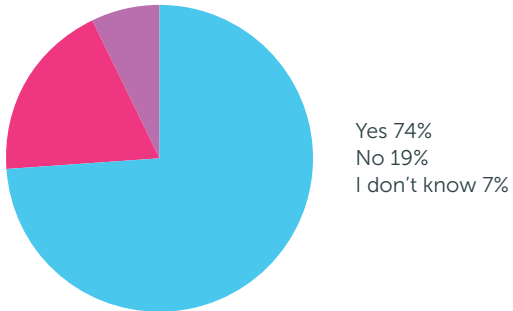


Do you feel confident in explaining open access to researchers at your institution?

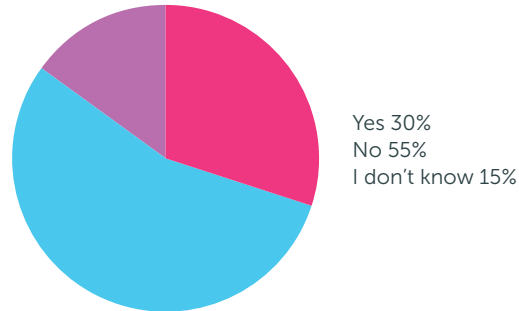


OA and institutions

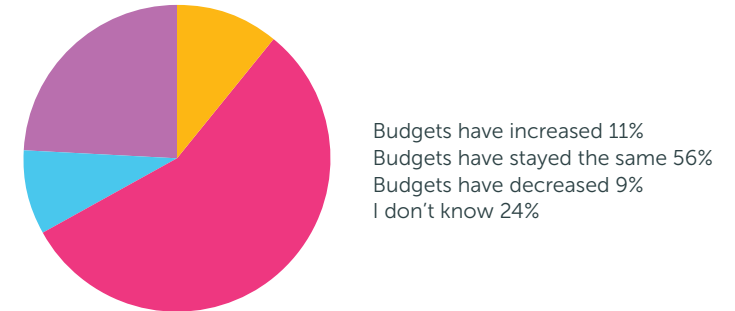
Does your institution have a repository with public access?



Does your library manage the budget for gold open access?

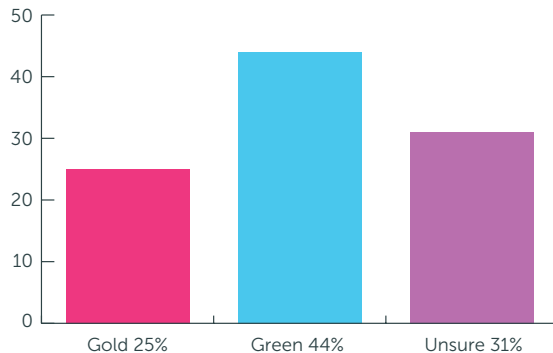


How has open access affected your library budget?



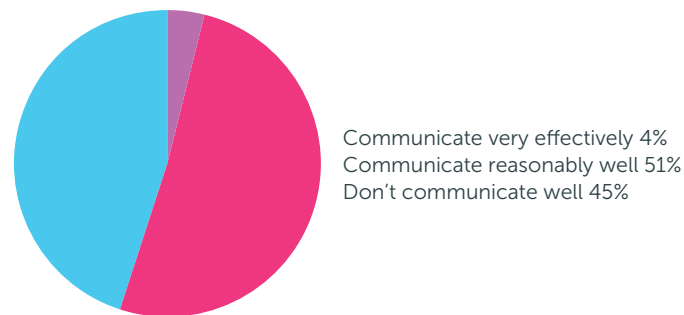
Preferred OA model

All taken into consideration, which is your preferred OA model?



Publisher communication

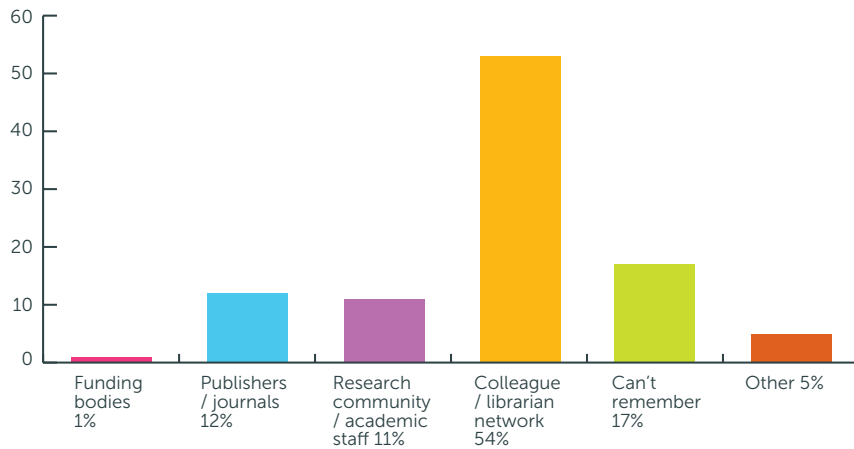
In general, how well do you feel publishers communicate about open access publishing?



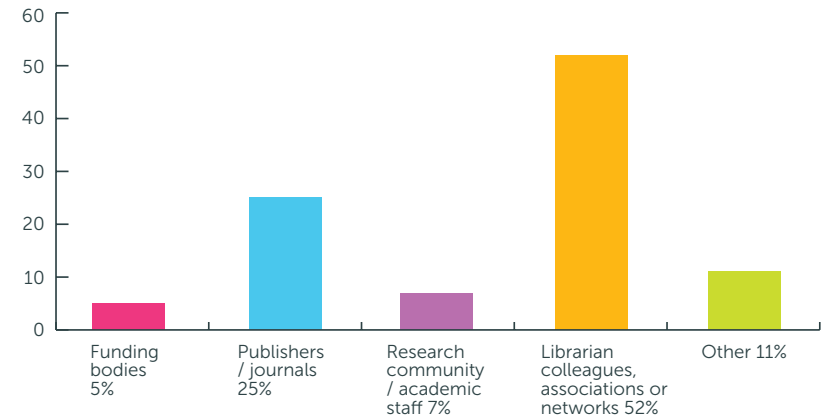
74%
have a repository with public access

Information sources

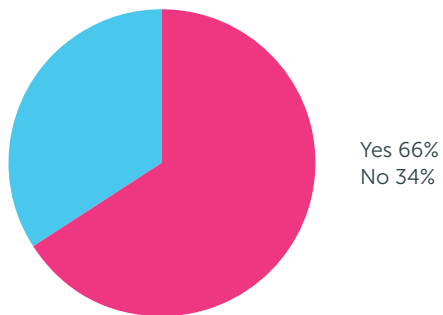
Where did you first hear the term open access from?



Where would you go for information about OA options and requirements in the first instance?



Do you feel you have easy access to all the up-to-date information on OA?



53%
first heard the term open access from a colleague / librarian network

66%
have access to up-to-date information