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Reasons to be cheerful?



A new year has rolled around, and there's no doubt that many of us wish that it brings fresh opportunities, hope for the future and, of course, rapid progress away from what has been, for many, a fairly ghastly 12 months.

Covid-19, and all that the pandemic has entailed, has had a drastic impact on the scholarly communications industry – no more so than in terms of its annual events programme. First the cancellation of a plethora of conferences and exhibitions around the globe in 2020, before organisers pivoted to 'virtual' get-togethers and a new world of Zoom presentations, discussion panels with participants strewn across the world, and the everpresent danger of 'photobombing' partners, children and pets.

Our very own event CISPC 2020 was no exception, and for those unable to attend the event we are carrying a four-page report – along with a short review of APE 2021 (held in mid-January) and a preview of February's Researcher to Reader event to be held in London and online. We are delighted to associate ourselves with these two top-notch conferences.

We also have features on peer review, digital preservation, the need for equity in open access publishing – and a report from Russia, where scholars and publishers are hoping that a declaration of 2021 as a year of Science and Technology will mean an increase in the sphere of scientific publications in the country.

There appears to be a long way to go before we are back to normal – whatever that might mean – but we are at least moving into 2021 with a spirit of hope! Feature

Peer review, preprints and a pandemic

Rebecca Pool asks: will coronavirus leave preprints and peer review inextricably entwined?

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, staff at MIT Press were noticing a problem with preprint servers. Over time, more and more preprints were being published and drifting into mainstream media, even government, in ways that weren't always helpful and were sometimes even misleading.

Then came coronavirus. As Nick Lindsay, director of journals and open access at MIT Press, puts it: 'These issues were exacerbated as the sheer volume of research we were seeing on bioRxiv, medRxiv and other preprint servers was immense. Literally thousands of preprints were going out there with no review, and we started to see some really troubling things take place.'

Amid the torrent of data released onto

preprint servers, research clangers emerged and withdrawals, retractions and expressions of concern followed. For example, in late January 2020 a bioRXiv preprint from a group of researchers from the India Institute of Technology reported HIV insertions in the spike of Sars-CoV-2 that were not present in past coronaviruses. The researchers also speculated these had been placed in the virus intentionally. Then around a week later, a ResearchGate preprint from a researcher at the South China University of Technology and colleague, proposed that coronavirus 'probably originated from a laboratory'.

In each case, the papers were re-drawn following outrage from the research community. The Chinese government

Feature



and World Health Organization have since condemned such reports, but these now infamous publications undoubtedly fuelled the already widely-circulating coronavirus conspiracy theories at the time. Herein lies the problem with preprints.

'With such examples in mind, myself and Amy Brand [MIT Press director] put our heads together and asked, how can we help here?' says Lindsay. 'As we talked, it became clear that this was a big opportunity to have a positive effect on the public understanding and trust in science, and also offer a service to mainstream media, researchers, scholars and clinicians that needed a preprint verification that wasn't yet happening.'

Rapid Reviews: Covid-19 (RR:C19), headed up by public health Professor "A ResearchGate preprint... proposed that coronavirus 'probably originated from a laboratory""

Stefano Bertozzi at the University of California Berkeley, quickly followed. Described as an 'open-access overlay journal', the publication aims to accelerate the peer review of Covid-19-related research preprints to advance findings and prevent the dissemination of false or misleading news.

To speed up the process, the editorial team, including an army of graduate

students, selects potential Covid-19 preprints for review, from preprint servers such as medRxiv, bioRxiv, SSRN, with help from Covid Scholar. This text-mining tool was developed by Berkeley Lab materials scientists to help researchers wade through mountains of Covid-19 literature.

The chosen preprints are then sent to RR:C19's pool of reviewers, who will answer key questions such as is this preprint reliable and trustworthy, should it be taken seriously, how might it be used to further our knowledge in fighting the pandemic?

Lindsay says, this isn't traditional peer review. RR:C19 is trying to balance the need for rigour with rapid response, and as such, preprints should be published, with two finished reviews, within two weeks. → 'Since we launched RR:C19, we've seen that the preprint servers link [preprints] back to our reviews - so they clearly see a need for review,' highlights Lindsay. 'And publications such as *The New York Times* are also picking up our reviews and using them as evidence.'

For Lindsay and many in scholarly publishing, this wider understanding of the preprint is critical. As he puts it: 'Faculty understand the difference between a preprint and a published article, but for plenty of others it's difficult to understand what the difference actually is.

'We need to engage in efforts to ensure people understand that there is a profound difference between the preprint and published article.'

Nic Marsh, senior researcher at The Peace Research Institute Oslo (Prio), agrees. Since the onset of the pandemic, Marsh has also noted how more and more preprints are being used more broadly than ever before. 'The public doesn't always know the difference between a peer-reviewed journal and a predatory journal, or even a preprint server – if it looks like academic research then it can be really difficult for someone to spot what's high-quality and what isn't,' he says.

However, he points out that pandemicrelated preprints have been more widely used to further research: 'I've seen some really significant findings first published as a preprint and quite senior researchers using this a route to publication. It is important to note that research not published in academic journals is commonly reviewed by peers for publications – and such non-anonymous reviews can be very useful.

Understanding change

Researchers at Prio seek to understand the processes that bring societies together or split them apart, and in recent months Marsh has been investigating peer review and the societal impact of different forms of Covid-19 research publications. His study, based on a Covid-19 Reddit forum comprising some 300,000 members, indicates that preprints and other non-peer-reviewed publications, such as press releases, are widely read and are now challenging peer-reviewed publications as a means of disseminating research.

'With the pandemic there's a clear need to get information out as quickly as possible,' he says. 'This underlines that even though many publishers have accelerated the publication process, it's still perhaps too slow for a pandemic.'

Clearly ongoing debate on the role of peer review in the research lifecycle will

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"We need to... ensure people understand there is a profound difference between the preprint and published article"

continue to hold importance for many years to come. But for now, will the likes of RR:C19 and similar endeavours such as the rapid review of Covid-19 Registered Report submissions by *PeerJ*, *PLOS Biology* and other journals, help to deliver the current need for speed?

Professor Detlef Weigel, director of the Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology and *eLife* deputy editor, thinks so.

Late last year, *eLife* announced that come July it will only review manuscripts already published as preprints, and will focus its editorial process on producing public reviews to be posted alongside the preprints. The open access publisher's new 'publish, then review' model follows in-house analysis that indicated around 70 per cent of papers under review were already available as preprints.

As Weigel says: 'I wouldn't say our move to this model is tied to the pandemic, but certainly the vast volumes of Covid-19 papers appearing on [preprint servers] have pushed us towards this.'

eLife is phasing in public review, with authors currently retaining a degree of control over when the review is published. If editors decide a paper is not appropriate for the journal, they will allow authors to postpone the posting of the public review until the paper is published elsewhere, so unfavourable review will not influence eventual publication. Weigel anticipates that within the next 'two years or so', a public preprint review will become the default. And in line with RR:C19's *New York Times* experience, he adds: 'By allowing reviews to be attached to your preprint, you can show a journalist that your work has been reviewed and there's a higher chance that the world will take notice.'

In the meantime, *eLife* has been instructing its editors and reviewers to write reviews for a public audience. 'We've been working very hard on our reviews – reviews for the public need to be written in a different way than those for just the author,' says Weigel. 'New guidelines for review start with an evaluation summary... these are going to be so much easier for someone from outside of research to understand.'

Weigel also reckons preprint review will be significantly faster than traditional peer review – and he is certain review quality will not suffer. 'We have a large cadre of senior editors who are committed, as well as amazing staff... not all journals have this luxury, which is why we can afford to be bolder,' he says. 'Initially we will need to work with reviewers to do things differently, but once other journals see this works well, habits are going to change.'

With 'publish then review' in place, Weigel and *eLife* colleagues hope to eventually create a system of curation around preprints that replaces journal titles as the primary indicator of perceived research quality.

'Of course we believe in peer review and for a while we hope our [publish then review] model will co-exist with traditional peer review,' says Weigel. 'But in 20 years I believe this will all move to the publish then review and curating model,' he adds. 'It's down to culture change. A new generation of scientists, students and postdoctoral researchers are getting used to putting their research onto preprint servers.'

That change aside, who will pay for these emerging models of preprint review? While MIT Press's Lindsay is keen to extend preprint review to other fields, primarily climate change, he does wonder where future funds will come from. 'The Patrick J McGovern Foundation has been incredibly generous but we are still working on a sustainable business model that will allow us to keep Rapid Reviews going,' he says.

And *eLife* finds itself in a similar predicament – the publisher is a not-for-profit business but has expenses.

'How to make money out of all of this really is the elephant in the room,' says

→

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→ Weigel. 'Funders and libraries might say, "these organisations are producing something valuable and we, as a community, are willing to pay for it" but it's a big hurdle.'

Tradition and transparency

Still, for many in the world of peer review, tradition largely remains. In September 2020, the Institute of Physics Publishing (IOPP) laid out plans to move all of its journals to double anonymous peer review – where reviewer and author identities are concealed – by the end of this year.

The decision is meant to tackle gender, racial and geographical underrepresentation in scholarly publishing, and follows positive trials on journals that involve single-anonymous and doubleanonymous peer review. IOPP also offers transparent peer review on a number of journals, giving authors and reviewers the option of publishing an article's peer review content in a discoverable, citable form.

'We're not forcing anyone down this route but we felt it was really important to give authors and reviewers the choice to display the review history of the article and have as much transparency in the process as possible,' highlights Marc Gillett, head of publishing operations at IOPP.

At the same time, the publisher is intent on driving efficiencies across its peer review process. As Gillett puts it: 'We consistently hear back from authors that the speed of peer review is one of the top things that they pay attention to when considering which journals to submit to.'

Given this, IOPP has launched a training and certification programme to support researchers in peer review, and has also diversified its reviewer pool to tackle the well-worn issue of reviewer fatigue. However, the rise in preprints is undeniable – physicists have long-published research on preprint server arXiv – so with this in mind, the publisher has also started trialling an option for authors to list and link to their preprints while a manuscript is under peer review at the journal.

And undoubtedly like many, Gillett is also watching *eLife*'s latest 'publish, then review' model with interest. 'It is possible that the nature of peer review will change over the next couple of years, as we find new ways for preprint platforms and journals to complement each other, but it's really important that research undergoes some form of peer review,' he says. 'Whether it's a preprint or accepted manuscript, researchers ultimately need to have a trusted method of quality assurance, and this is something that we, as publishers, can deliver.'

So, in the time of Covid-19, what next for peer review? Trust was the theme of Peer Review Week 2020, which, for Lou Peck – its steering committee co-chair from scholarly communications specialist consultancy The International Bunch – will remain as important as ever. 'The peer review process is built on trust,' she says. 'Trust in those submitting articles, trust in the peer reviewers, trust in the process itself, and the organisations behind it, and finally trust in the published output.'

However, Peck feels the pandemic has pushed peer review, and the quality of published work, to the forefront of many minds. 'One significant consequence of

"Culture change aside, who will pay for these emerging models of preprint review?"

Covid-19 is it has highlighted the impact of bad science and fake news, and how valuable peer review is. Publishers, service providers and those in research support have proactively taken steps to offer more support around peer review,' she says.

'I believe we've experienced more of a stakeholder community-driven approach, and as a result, I hope we continue to see more collaborative working, as ultimately, we are better together,' she adds.

MIT Press' Lindsay concurs, but also believes the pandemic has underlined the importance of transparency in peer review. 'Many editorial offices see the anonymity of peer review as something that needs to be preserved, in order for people to be forthright and open,' he says.

'But those arguments have been outweighed by this need to get quickly legitimate research to other researchers and clinicians. Fingers crossed, we're now looking at an era of more transparent, open peer review.' **Ri**

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For keeps: finest preserve

Here are three slices of the digital preservation pie. Doing nothing is not an option

Keeping up with digital preservation Deciding to do nothing about preservation could be a disaster, says Paul Stokes

Introducing digital preservation to an organisation is not a task for the fainthearted.

There's data to be found, people to convince, policies to be written... and that's before a single system has been procured or a single byte preserved. However, there is no time like the present and this is the ideal time to make a start.

Delaying is not really an option because of the alarming hike in the amount of data that is being created. According to the World Economic Forum, an astonishing 90 per cent of the world's data has been generated in the last two years alone. It says that 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are produced by humans every day and 463 exabytes of data will be generated each day by humans by 2025 – that's the equivalent of 212,765,957 DVDs per day!

Sometimes a backup is not enough

Failure to preserve data properly can pose a significant reputational risk and could result in the loss of unique and irretrievable knowledge, as the server crash in 2016 at the Memorial University in Canada shows.

In July that year, staff at the Queen Elizabeth II library at the university were

undertaking routine maintenance that required power to the building to be cut and switched to a backup system, which failed. The backup to the backup (big batteries) came online and lasted about 40 minutes, which wasn't long enough. More than 70 terabytes of data was lost.

Luckily, physical documents and objects still existed – but it all had to be digitised again.

Rescuing the bronze age in York

Failing to adapt to rapid change of systems and technology is another risk to consider when preserving data – something that York University understands only too well.

It's often put about (in archaeological circles at least) that archaeologists destroy their primary evidence as they discover and catalogue it. There's no going back for a second bite of the cherry.

After archaeologists had finished work on almost 180 sites in north-east London, all that remained were the archives stored in vaults of local museums. Those archives included data from many unpublished excavations, with very impressive Bronze Age material discovered on the banks of the River Thames.

"Luckily, physical documents and objects still existed – but it all had to be digitised again"

But when the project finished, the archaeologists discovered, to their horror, that their irreplaceable data was running on obsolete technology using outmoded software and file formats. Some of their magnetic media was also corrupted. Luckily, a team of specialists managed to retrieve most of it.

Getting started with preservation can be a daunting thing but to ensure access to digital materials is maintained in the long run, it's important to ensure all systems are equipped to keep up with technology and organisational change.

One means of automatically keeping systems aligned and 'speaking to each other' is to use clever tools, such as Jisc's Preservation. This tool automatically reformats files, so they are readable with new and yet-to-be-invented software. Once in the Preservation system, the files are automatically 'recognised' and processed according to pre-set rules into an appropriate format that is as futureproof as possible.

Nothing human is alien

However, no matter how cleverly technology is deployed, there's no absolute defence against human error, which remains one of the major risks to digital content. After hardware failure, the most common cause of data loss is user mistakes (at least it was in 2003, 2009 and 2015).

It is not uncommon that users will unintentionally move files or delete content inadvertently.

Strict user policies that separate 'archives directories' from 'working directories' where users can still edit and actively work with content, can protect against this risk.

So what to do now?

Preservation is about identifying and managing risk. There are several questions to answer to help: has a data asset survey been completed? Who is generating data and who uses it? Where is it stored, and what is it worth? Finally, put policies in place to manage the preservation process.

Why digital preservation has become more important in the time of Covid-19

A crisis requires rapid decision-making. Keeping a record of them is crucial now more than ever, says William Kilbride

Digital preservation is not going to do itself and it's not going to go away, especially in light of the global pandemic. We need to act quickly to make sure that digital materials will be available for the long term.

When the UK went into lockdown, everyone pivoted to digital in the space of two weeks. Teaching, learning and research are now taking place online and informal collaboration and video conference tools such as Zoom, WhatsApp and Microsoft Teams have become the platforms where key, historymaking decisions take place.

This raises the question: how do we preserve these more informal platforms, and are we keeping record of these historic materials in times of crisis?

Rapid decisions

The pandemic has prompted companies, universities, local authorities, nondepartmental public bodies and quangos to make decisions rapidly, affecting the health, income and wellbeing of billions of people around the world.

Think of the hourly WhatsApp messages from Downing Street and what they mean in terms of a process of decision-making. It all has to be accountable, as it is subject to the Public Records Act.

Routes out of lockdown

Digital preservation will also play a key role in shaping a route out of the current health crisis. To get out of the pandemic we need a vaccine that works and is trusted. The research into a vaccine needs to be reproducible quickly with lots of eyes on it.

In this post-truth era, it is crucial that

this process is well documented and authenticated as its produced, because the last thing we need is anti-vaxxers disrupting the implementation of a cure. Preserving this research information can then be subject to the most robust scientific scrutiny, because there's going to be all sorts of people who will try and find fault with it. Dependable, reliable, authentic data is essential to demonstrate that the creation of a vaccine isn't a hoax.

Preservation needs continuous assessment

What the global search for a vaccine also demonstrates is that the volume, complexity and importance of data is growing. For instance, when we look back on the history of the webpage, we see that web archiving has evolved tremendously. In the 90s, HTML code was embedded to write and design pages.

Preserving this data involved making a copy of the code and storing it somewhere safe. Since then the internet has evolved into a complex entity with all sorts of personalisation and audio and video files.

Skills will drive innovation

The sector is in great need of researchers

"The technology we now need to capture and preserve web content has changed and is changing as technology evolves" with better digital skills. Technological solutions have developed faster than the skills and policy development in the community. I believe that we need to prioritise the human element. Once we have that in place it will reveal the weaknesses of the technology and opportunities within the data that we are not currently fully exploiting.

Best practice by design

Another element that needs addressing is how we keep records. Preservation is a global ubiquitous challenge. Instead of trying to solve the question of obsolesce at the end of a data lifecycle, we should be looking to move preservation upstream. It would be much better to build in preservation at the point of creation, or when it comes out of the machine.

We are currently talking to archivists and librarians, but we will need to engage the people upstream who design and imagine digital infrastructures to integrate preservation at the outset. Software and healthcare organisations will need to talk to IT companies to solve this design flaw, and take responsibility for their data in a different way.

We see companies and institutions spending more time looking at the depreciation of their furniture than the value of their data. If data is a valuable commodity, we ought to include it on the balance sheet and get the auditors to assess it. Data has become incredibly valuable but it only appears on balance sheets as a liability – not an asset.

William Kilbride is chair of the Digital Preservation Coalition

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Applying international standards to special collections

Two librarians from the National Library of Scotland share their experiences with Faye Holst

Reaching people via the internet has revolutionised everything we do, from ordering a takeaway to spreading news and views to worldwide audiences. Previously, the first port of call in the search for specialist knowledge was a library. Now, with the internet, knowledge is increasingly democratic and open.

However, in an era of increasing expectations and decreasing budgets, disclosing and disseminating knowledge online in a cost-effective way has become a daily challenge for many librarians.

As Gill Hamilton, digital access manager at the National Library of Scotland, says: 'People often want our content, which is great, but it takes us weeks and weeks to bring together and collect the content. While we'd like to participate in projects that make our collections more visible, it can be a real challenge to make it happen.'

Most collections need reformatting and aligned with widely recognised standards that ensure collections are compatible with other institutions' content banks and digital infrastructure.

[']There is a myriad of different digitisation programs, and the standards for storing

"Disseminating knowledge online in a cost-effective way has become a daily challenge"

digital collections are all over the place at the moment,' says Sarah Ames, digital scholarship librarian at library.

To help university libraries expose their collections to larger audiences, Jisc has partnered with global research and teaching platform, JSTOR, which provides access to more than 12 million academic journal articles, books and primary sources in 75 disciplines.

The partnership gives UK higher education institutions (HEIs) the opportunity to add their digitised content to JSTOR's Open Community Collections programme, which enables libraries, museums and cultural organisations anywhere to reach a global audience of academic teachers and students.

The National Library of Scotland

'When we brought our in-house standards in line with international standards last year, we did so for digital scholarship purposes, so that researchers could use our data in machine learning and data mining exercises. We never thought that internationalisation of our content would enable us to join international programmes,' Ames says.

Hamilton adds: 'We're always interested in extending the reach of our collections, because people don't necessarily come to the National Library of Scotland to find things. But by putting our content on a major platform like JSTOR, which is used by many researchers and academics, will really help make our collection more visible.'

The National Library of Scotland has uploaded six collections on the JSTOR platform. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1768-1860), papers from the Edinburgh Ladies' Debating Society, *A Medical History of British India, Scottish school exam papers 1888-1963,* materials from geographical dictionary the *Gazetteers of Scotland*, and editions of *The Spiritualist* newspaper.

The choice to include these collections in the Open Community Collections was a practical one, explains Ames: 'Unfortunately, what we make available openly often comes down to practicalities. Copyright assessment is massively timeconsuming and we had already done that for these collections. 'We have a digitisation selection schedule, which factors in the library's priorities, and we always look to highlight diverse audiences, or materials that are particularly focused on Scottish subjects. But, ultimately, the amount of material we can make available through initiatives such as the community collections programme is very small, which is always really frustrating,' continues Ames.

A 2012 survey conducted by Research Libraries UK, showed that 'hidden' collections remain an immense problem for UK libraries. The survey found that 18.5 per cent of materials are uncatalogued.

Gaining maximum exposure is import, says Ames: 'We want our collections to be featured on as many platforms as possible. Each platform has different audiences and there's no point having collections if people can't access them and can't use them.'

The work undertaken by the National Library of Scotland highlights a change, concludes Hamilton: 'Our old strategy was all about making more content available digitally. We are working towards making one third of all our content digitally available by 2025, the library's centenary. Our new strategy is all about 'good reaching people'.

'With that in mind, we're now looking to make our collections available for platforms such as Wikipedia. It's great to reach millions of researchers through JSTOR, but if we are to reach the rest of the world, we need those sorts of platforms, too.' **Ri**

Viewpoints available online

Have an opinion? Now you can share it with the

Research Information community

The Modern Language Association Releases 'Literary Topics' EBSCO, MLA

The Modern Language Association (MLA) is pleased to announce the release of "Literary Topics," the fifth subject-area module for use in conjunction with our free teaching resource Understanding the MLA International Bibliography: A Free Online Course

Best practice for effective searching for literature reviews EBSCO, IFIS Publishing

In a webinar with Research Information, given in November 2019, Rhianna Gamble and Carol Hollier of IFIS presented on the topic of literature reviews in food science

Skills need an upgrade as digital techniques take hold Royal Society of Chemistry

By Richard Kidd, Head of Chemistry Data at the Royal Society of Chemistry

Our understanding of the universe and scientific research are inexorably linked, of that there is no debate. As we improve our knowledge in one area, the other inevitably benefits.

Indexed by Experts, MLA International Bibliography is a Global Collaboration EBSCO, Modern Language Association

The MLA International Bibliography is known around the world for the quality of its indexing. Mary Onorato, Director of Bibliographic Information Services and Publisher, MLA International Bibliography, shares the secrets of its success

The Importance of MathSciNet to Mathematicians EBSCO, Mathematical Reviews, MathsSciNet

Leading subject indexes provide critical information to academic researchers, enabling them to conduct a thorough review of literature with speed and efficiency.

Using the MLA International Bibliography to Guide the Research Process EBSCO

In a recent webinar presented by Research Information, Angela Ecklund and Farrah Lehman Den of the Modern Language Association (MLA) shared an overview of the free online teaching tools developed for use with the MLA International Bibliography. Claire Buck, Professor of English at Wheaton College, also described how she integrates the Bibliography into the curriculum to engage students in the research process.

Springer Nature Education Podcast Series Springer Nature

Author Insights: The Future of Education with Professor Rupert Maclean

Education and schooling is always a hot topic, but particularly at the current time during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a profound impact on the ways in which education and schooling is delivered to learners.

The role of health care professionals in a changing sector Springer Nature

The health care sector is undergoing a significant change, moving away from a system of caring for the sick to early intervention, prevention and supporting of wellbeing.

Latest trends in Al and robotics

Springer Nature

Artificial Intelligence has long entered our workplace and home. It is used in robotics, where collaborative robots deliver parts and perform repetitive or even dangerous tasks.

Virtual event delivers realworld interaction

There was high praise for the fourth iteration of CISPC – this year held in an entirely digital format

EBSCO

All hail the sponsors!

CISPC is reliant on sponsorship in order to remain viable, and the organisers were delighted to have attracted support from no less than seven industry organisations representing different areas of scholarly communications.

The sponsors for CISPC 2020 were: ISSN, Royal Society of Chemistry; Clarivate Analytics, Digital Science, MyScienceWork, EBSCO and the Company of Biologists. Our media partner was the European Database of Libraries, and CISPC 2020 was organised in partnership with Info International. Many thanks to them all! More than 120 delegates from an array of institutions and countries around the world joined the organisers of CISPC for the first virtual version of the event.

Despite the pandemic – and a busy industry calendar in terms of the number of events on offer in late autumn – CISPC attracted not only a pleasing array of delegates but also an intriguing, international set of presentations and lightning talks, a series of virtual workshops, and a rousing panel discussion to round off proceedings.

The speakers were:

- Rachel Bruce, head of open science, UKRI;
- Martin Jagerhorn, FAIR Funder Workflow;
- Tom Jakobs, National Research Fund Luxembourg;
- Michelle Urberg, Maverick Publishing;
- Liz Bal, director of open research services, Jisc;
- · Phil Gooch, Scholarly;
- Steve Carlton, University of Manchester;
- Anita Schjøll Brede, Iris.ai;
- Alenka Prinçiç and Frederique Belliard, Technical University of Delft;
- Ian Bruno, Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre;
- Danielle Apfelbaum, Farmingdale State College, New York; and
- Barbie Keiser, president at Barbie Keiser Inc.

The event as held over two days, with short, snappy 20-minute sessions that ran prettymuch like clockwork thanks to the team at partner organisation Info International.

Host Tim Gillett said: 'Naturally, having never organised a digital event before, we were somewhat nervous about how the event would pan out. In fact, it worked an absolute treat and Imagine we will consider delivering at least part of any future CISPC events digitally.

'Of course there were a few teething problems at the outset, but by the time the first presentation started we were into the swing of things, and delegates quickly worked out their way around the online system, ReAttendance.

'Our speakers were able to replicate the feeling of a live, in-person presentation, with the opportunity for questions-and-answer sessions at the end of each morning and afternoon.

'Of course, it also gave our delegates the chance to dip in and out of sessions, press the pause button, and watch sessions at their leisure if they were not able to catch them live. All in all we were delighted with how it went.'

There was high praise from delegates as well.

One wrote: 'Just to say that it was the first time I'd attended this event – really enjoyed it and would attend again. The programme was great, the sessions were just the right length and (once I'd figured out the platform) online delivery worked.'

Another said: 'Don't change anything! I applaud the successful use of the virtual platform. It worked really well, especially considering it was likely the first time most of us have organised or attended a conference in this way.'

One delegate was full of praise for the

sessions on technology and artificial intelligence, describing them as 'inspiring'; while another described CISPC overall as a 'beautiful and inspirational event'. High praise indeed, and the organisers were delighted at the number of delegates who attended CISPC 2020 after having signed up to the event in previous years.

There were, in particular, many compliments for workshop sessions on 'Libraries in a Covid World' on the Monday afternoon, and a closing panel discussion on Tuesday (report opposite), for which moderators Helen Clare and Tasha Mellins-Cohen deserve the highest praise. **Ri**

Open to discussion

After two days of CISPC 2020, the event closed with a panel talk rounding up the main themes. Here are some of the questions posed by moderator Tasha Mellins-Cohen – and a selection of the panellists' comments

How would you like to see scholarly communications bodies work together to create an ecosystem that works for everybody?

Alenka Princic: This is a really complex question, and it will take time. Looking at the funding situation in the EU, with the funds that are available there are geographical limitations to openness, which is actually contradictory to what we are trying to achieve. We are missing chances to increase collaboration - how can we engage Asia, Africa, and bridge the gap to emerging countries? Citizen science is certainly something that can help to bridge the gap, but we need to practice what we preach a little more in terms of inclusivity. However, I believe that the younger generation are already there in many ways, and we just need to support them in that.

Rachel Bruce: We have as set of aligned policies emerging quite strongly in the global north, but perhaps they don't really fit in with other environments. We commissioned research into developing countries to enable us to develop our policies an d perspectives, and it was fascinating to look at the results of that. You are to a certain extent limited in terms of levers, but perhaps certain conditions around policies should be less stringent or more open. We need to look at different solutions around the world, such as the Diamond OA model in South America, and learn from them. But developing policies that apply around the world, and taken into account different situations around the world, is a very complex matter!

"We need to look at different solutions around the world, such as the Diamond OA model in South America, and learn from them"

→ Barbie Keiser: Merely paying lip service to the Global South isn't going to work. If we were to include local institutions, researchers, and particularly local publishers at the start of the conversation, we would have a much better product in the end.

We've heard a lot over the last couple of days about FAIR data, open data, and there have been frequent acknowledgements that researchers need to understand whether the data is trustworthy or useful. How would you like to see open methodologies embraced within your fields? **Ian Bruno:** Think about this across the whole research cycle, I'll make three points. As the start, when data starts to be generated, systems need to put in place to ensure that the right things are being captured at the time they are generated. We need to make it easy for that to happen. It's also getting researchers to think about when they have data, that should deposit it somewhere and perhaps publish it, even if it's under embargo. There's an interesting role, at the point at which something is going to go public, about enforcing editorial standards – publishers need to be explicit

Reigning cats and dogs

A chief consequence of the pandemic on industry events has been the move to online conferencing, and all the associated issues it throws up.

CISPC 2020 was no different, with a couple of small technical hiccups that passed off without any long-lasting trauma, a presenter's child walking past her computer while playing a recorder, a loud public announcement during a presentation from a university in the Netherlands – and a pet invasion that nearly brought chaos to the end of day one during a workshop feedback session.

At the precise moment conference host Tim Gillett uttered the words: 'That brings us to the end of the first day,' Helen Clare's seven-year-old tortoiseshell cat Trixie slinked onto her desk, while just seconds later fellow moderator Kirsty Merrett's German Shepherd Dog Chachi followed suit and barged her way into shot – causing hilarity among the rest of the panel: Tasha Mellins-Cohen, Ian Bruno, Faye Holst and Lou Peck.

'They know it's time to go,' quipped Kirsty. 'They are saying goodbye – hurray!' and researchers need to work to those standards.

How would you go about dealing with the recent explosion in different types of content and bringing all the different aspects of research back together?

Phil Gooch: In some ways we are doing it in reverse, by taking an entire article and deconstructing it. There are some new platforms that encourage people to write in a more modular way, such as publishing the methods section as an object, writing a literature review separately. The challenge is getting authors to think that way; you don't write papers in the order that it appears at the end. In humanities the research output is the scholarship, so it's hard to split something like that into different chunks that you can write and publish separately. But from a technology angle its very interesting and there is a lot of value in making different parts of research available individually.

Michelle Urberg: If we could decouple our dataset from our writing, that would be fabulous. Phil's right, the writing is the object; the book is still the hallmark in terms of humanities publishing, but there is a lot of work behind the scenes and none of that is valued. If credit could be given to that work, and it could be organised in a way that makes whatever you are studying more accessible, I am all for that. Let's start the revolution!

Danielle Apfelbaum: You need to bring a community with you when implementing an OA policy or trying to change the research cycle, it's just a question of figuring out what that incentive should be. What speaks to people, what brings them along – it's definitely not the same in every community.

Martin Jagerhorn: We have to look at things in context. We shouldn't be trying to drive things from the top-down, there are a lot of forces in place: the publishers want to retain their revenue and have a sustainable way forward, not every country wants to go along with Plan S – a fact that we cannot neglect. From a technical point of view we are trying to see that if we want to reduce unnecessary costs and the friction that we have in the

Introducing Jamboard!

whole system, then we quickly get into technical areas like PIDs, and establishing where possible standards that work across the industry – things that are essential but unfortunately are still some way away.

Has Covid changed your strategic planning?

Ian Bruno: A lot of the market that we serve is the pharma sector, which is exactly who you turn to in a pandemic, so in terms of that there is still a lot of value in our services. We are being cautious because we are still not sure the longer-term economic impact; of course we perceive that there will be some vulnerability in academic circles. We'll do what we can to make sure people have access to the data that they need.

Alenka Prinçiç: We launched a new roadmap and an open science programme in 2019/20. In terms of what we want to achieve over the next four of five years not much has changed, but of course our priorities and some of the outcomes have changed a lot. There have also been some delays. Of course we are offering more services online, and many of our services have been strengthened - and our endeavours towards open science have been accelerated.

Phil Gooch: With respect to your earlier question about the Global South, maybe as a result of the pandemic there's more of a desire forepeople to learn more about science and research in general; we've seen a lot more interest from students and researchers in Latin America and Asia-Pacific. It has made us realise that a large part of our market is going to be in these regions, and less in Europe and the UK.

Rachel Bruce: As a funder, we have been monitoring activity in terms of impacts across the innovation sector and the research sector, negotiating funds and rescue packages, looking at ways in which we can pivot our research funding, extend grant funding timelines, and trying to look collaboratively and in an agile manner across interdisciplinary research. We'll be looking at ways in which we can continue to gather data and information, and tracking the impact on Organisers, delegates, presenters and moderators at CISPC had to get their heads around an impressive array of technology in order to make the event a success – none more so than during the workshop sessions on the Monday afternoon, entitled 'Librarian Strategies in a Covid World'.

The session was delivered through the ReAttendance conferencing platform, presentations and slide

"Publishers have also realised that they are going to need to have a stronger digital transformation"

productivity of different groups researchers, and what that means in the longer term. We will also be looking at the lessons learned – in terms of the positives and negatives – of the last year.

Martin Jagerhorn: Due to Covid, a lot of people have tuned to preprint archives and I think going forward this will have a big impression.

Publishers have also realised that they are going to need to have a stronger digital transformation, and obviously move more towards open access.

We are also seeing from the universities that we are working with that they are facing

decks were uploaded via off the StreamYard app, the sug workshop breakout rooms gro were delivered using Zoom the – and the note-taking for the sec discussions was completed on a piece of technology abi called Jamboard. sug

Essentially a collaborative clipboard that can be shared between a number of operators, Jamboard allowed the CISPC 2020 moderators to attach 'virtual post-it notes' and other messages relating to suggestions made by their group members, which were then passed digitally to the session organiser Helen Clare. Helen was then easily able to group comments, suggestions and questions by theme – and provide an informed feedback session for delegates.

The moderators agreed that Jamboard had proved to be a simple but very useful piece of technology.

budget cuts and are no longer going to be able to pay staff too do a lot of the manual work around open access and administering article processing charges. This will be a chance to institutions to see if they can work more cost-efficiently.

Danielle Apfelbaum: As an academic librarian, on our campus the biggest impact has been the limitation in terms of access to physical materials, as well as the fact that our budget is completely frozen – for nobody knows how long, at this point!

It has been tough but in terms of our strategic planning it has allowed us to double down. The situation has brought visibility to many of the things we were already doing, such as educating our campus about open access, and openlylicensed materials.

It has forced many of our faculty members and instructors to really think about how the production and dissemination of different materials impact how are able to acquire them or not acquire them. It has opened up a dialogue about things that open access has the potential to solve. **Ri**

New dawn for Russia?

The Russian Federation has declared 2021 a year of Science and Technology – which predicts an increase in the sphere of scientific publications, writes Julia Peregudova

According to the SCImago Journal & Country Rank, Russia was 10th in the list of countries in terms of published documents in 2019. However, there are many obstacles that non-English speaking authors face before successful publication in international journals.

While some researchers need to concentrate only on manuscript content, the majority of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries struggle with the language-related problems. Firstly, not so many people have at least an intermediate level of English. Secondly, basic knowledge of the foreign language is not enough for writing a high-quality academic paper with complicated terminology. Thirdly, what are the chances that, for example, someone with a PhD in oncology from Kazakhstan possesses excellent English language skills?

Usually, the article is written in a native

language and then the author needs to find a certified specialist, who will translate it into academic English. It's not as easy as it seems and, moreover, the next step would be proofreading by a native English speaker.

Even such a simple thing like formatting an article according to the journal's guidelines can cause frustration. As a matter of fact, writing a cover letter, submitting a paper, communicating with the editor and many other steps in publishing include compulsory knowledge of a foreign language. All the additional work, done by different professionals, costs an unknown amount of money and takes quite some time. Besides, where to find all these people? Are they trustworthy?

Help or fraud?

Due to high demand, many fraudsters provide fast publishing services in predatory journals. In addition to violating publication ethics, such organisations

"We will do everything possible to raise the impact of Russian and CIS scientists"

deceive scientists with the promise of publication in an incredibly short time. They approve any papers, including poor quality, because there is no peer-review process. In fact, the authors often put their career at risk, wishing to save some money and time. In the worst case, such agencies do not provide a contract – they just take the money and disappear, leaving no guarantees behind.

Why do people fall for these false promises? Bureaucracy might be the answer.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation obliges universities

"Even such a simple thing like formatting an article according to the journal's guidelines can cause frustration"

to publish a certain number of works in international scientific databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. A few CIS countries have the same system. Thus, the researchers are pushed to publish more than they can, so overall quality of the manuscripts might suffer.

The saddest part of the rush is that the authors must provide the university with a report in a short period of time, especially if they have a grant. However, the scientists often cannot correctly estimate time of publication and start working on it too late, not taking into account several peer-review circles their paper may need.

Why are we different?

World Sci Publ is a progressive scientific publishing house with its own package of services for the promotion of scientific articles for thousands of authors from Russia and CIS countries. Today we help scientists from 13 countries.

Our goal is to raise the level of scientists

from post-Soviet countries and make the publication process comfortable, transparent and understandable, thereby contributing to the development of science and co-operation of researchers from all over the world. We focus on IT solutions, customer service and quality of provided services in general.

Unlike fraudsters, we have legal obligations to authors, so they can be sure of our reliability. The prices of our services are fixed and do not come as a surprise for clients. We respect publication ethics and strictly follow the rules. An exclusive partnership with a Dutch editing service provides European quality and necessary specialists, while Russian-speaking client support during all the publication stages helps to understand the process – this gives us an advantage on the market.

So far we are not as popular as Enago or Editage, but I am sure that in a couple of years we will grow and come closer to big success. The year 2020 showed us how difficult it is for authors not to get into the predatory journals. Scopus has made its checks more thorough and extended deadlines, because a huge number of journals came under investigation, or even got cancelled from the database.

People who have never published their manuscripts in international databases before, do not always have an idea of what an article should look like to be sent to a good journal. So, often the customer's expectation and reality do not coincide: an unfinished or inappropriate article with a request, for example. After chargefree preliminary examination we advise the authors what can be done, warn them about the timing, so later they will not have problems with the university administration.

We also provide them with general requirements for articles of Scopus and Web of Science. World Sci Publ focuses specifically on the quality of published articles, so we carry out a number of mandatory works aimed at compliance with the norms of international publication.

- Each manuscript goes through:
- Preliminary examination;
- Translation by a certified specialist in academic English;
- Pre-submission review;
- · Proofreading;
- Targeted journal selection;
- Formatting according to the journal's guidelines;
- · Consulting in submission; and

• Help with contacting editors. We notify the author about the work done and all documentation and improvements can be tracked in the author's personal account, online. There are no other examples of such a service at the moment in the post-Soviet countries.

We strongly believe that the publication process for people who cannot speak English eventually will become easier. For our part, we will do everything possible to raise the impact of Russian and CIS scientists on the world's scientific arena. **Ri**

Julia Peregudova is editor and head of the business development department at WorldSciPubl

Open access needs to be equitable There is no easy answer, but some routes through the maze are becoming visible,

writes Tasha Mellins-Cohen

In Issue 111 of *Research Information* Steven Inchoombe argued that 'we are on the threshold of an accelerated transition to OA publishing'.

I doubt many would argue with that, or with the desirability of a transition to open access (OA). That said, there is a clear need for funders, publishers and institutions in high-income countries to consider the implications of this on less well-funded researchers and institutions.

Consider 'read and publish'-type transformative deals. For some the fees are simply too high - the recently announced deal between Springer Nature and the Max Planck Digital Library, offering OA in Nature-branded journals for a base fee of €9,500 per article, is far beyond the reach of many institutions even in high-income countries. For others, a cap on the number of OA articles brings with it a need to either cherry-pick authors to maximise the impact and influence of the institution's research, or create a system that requires authors to time submissions carefully to avoid being published behind a paywall (the recent suspension of the Wiley /Jisc deal springs to mind).

While not a panacea, the cost-neutral

"€9,500 per article... is far beyond the reach of many institutions, even in high-income countries."

models created and piloted by members of the Society Publishers' Coalition offer a glimpse of a more equitable option for institutions with funds to transition.

Even these, however, will not work for everyone. Today more than 10,000 institutions in low- and low-middle income countries can access paywalled research from around 180 publishers through the Research4Life initiative, either for free or at a nominal cost, and in most if not all paywalled journals there is no fee for publication. In an entirely OA world, could and would publishers subsidise entire regions of the world in this way? Or would we find that read fees have been replaced by even higher publish fees?

We face a fundamentally inequitable scenario in which researchers are forced to choose a publication venue based not on the nature of their work, but their funding status. In that world the persistent 'logic' of our prestige economy – notwithstanding the excellent work done by Dora signatories – would create an academic underclass of authors locked out of fee-taking, high-profile journals due to lack of funds. There is no easy answer, but some routes through the maze are becoming visible:

- Publishers must do more to ensure their OA models are accessible to funders and institutions in low- and low-middle income countries;
- Funders in high-income countries need to consider the effects of their mandates on the rest of the world;
- Institutions should consider researchers without grant funding when creating local OA mandates; and
- All parties ought to engage with initiatives like AmeliCA that are creating new infrastructures to facilitate open scholarship, with no paywalls and no author fees.

We have made real progress towards OA in recent years. Let's work together to make sure we don't leave anyone behind as we continue the journey. **Ri**

Tasha Mellins-Cohen is founder and director at Mellins-Cohen Consulting

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Natalie Pilote, Patent and Scientific Analyst, Novartis

It seems like a generation ago since the physical library disappeared, to be replaced by corporate information hubs, where search was transferred from expert searchers to the scientist and enduser at their desk.

Powerful, yet complex, online databases morphed into user-friendly curated systems that provide insight and reliability but also, by definition, human bias.

At the same time, the end-user's reliance on public search has been alarming (even across circumspect R&D-centric corporations) although these general-purpose search engines (powered by secret algorithms) primary focus is to drive ad revenue whilst serving up content alongside.

Deep SEARCH 9 has redefined the search engine with the potential to change the entire information landscape. DS9 tech enables organizations to quickly build their own intelligence systems, dynamically sourcing freely available content from the surface and deep web. Based on user-defined algorithms, unbiased and in real time. This approach has been quickly adopted by some of the world's leading pharma companies and can be applied across other corporate verticals and academic research.

Join us on 17th February when Philip Ditchfield, DS9 Director, explains the story behind Deep SEARCH 9, why the approach of a tech company, headquartered in the Black Forest, is disrupting the status quo. Then hear from one of DS9's early adopters, Novartis, to understand why they chose to implement DS9 and the results they've experienced.

www.researchinformation.info/webcasts

Registration required

Research information

Success as APE event goes virtual

Organisers of the Academic Publishing in Europe (APE) event in Berlin report that the conference was a great success in its first year in a virtual format.

Newly under the new auspices of the Berlin Institute for Scholarly Publishing, the organising team reported that there were various technical glitches on the first day – almost inevitable when introducing a new format – but that the traditionally strong programme and a plethora of expert speakers more than made up for any teething problems.

Many of the sessions were filmed at APE's traditional home, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. At the time of going to press most of the sessions have been optimised for audio and video and are now available to view for delegates – they will be available in highquality format until the end of the year on the Morressier platform.

Anyone who missed registering for the conference but who might be interested in this year's topics can purchase an archive ticket: https://ti.to/ape2021.eu/ape2021

The Berlin Institute for Scholarly Publishing will use surplus funds from this and future APE Conferences towards developing a series of training courses and seminars for early-career publishers and early-career professionals who work for research funders.

The APE organising team would like to thank sponsors, co-sponsors and media partners – and the event's new patron, the Berlin University Alliance, for its support.

Visit www.researchinformation.info for further reports and interviews from the event

Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities

STM reasserts the importance of research data

The international publishers' organisation STM has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting and supporting the wider sharing of research data with the establishment of a permanent research data programme.

At the 16th Academic Publishing in Europe Conference (APE) held in January, STM's director of research integrity Joris van Rossum explained how the programme will emphasise how research data is crucial to advancing Open Science and research, while highlighting how the improved sharing of data promotes transparency, reproducibility and leads to additional opportunities for scientific discovery and collaboration.

STM highlighted how publishers connect researchers, their research and the wider world and how they innovate to add value into an increasingly digital and interconnected environment. In doing so, they have created vital data infrastructure and founded programmes that assist researchers to share, cite and link their data with all forms of research output. The continued development of these initiatives will play a vital role in making science more transparent and improving the reproducibility of research, as well as having the potential to be a driving force for scientific discovery, he said.

The establishment of STM's new research data programme follows Research Data Year in 2020, with STM working alongside publishers and partners to boost the effective sharing of research data. Over the course of the 12-month project, the number of journals with data policies (of participating publishers) grew by 7 per cent, while the number of articles that contained data availability statements (DASs) rose by 5 per cent.

STM says it is aiming to continue to build on these foundations, by exploring how research data sharing can positively impact the wider scholarly ecosystem – from funders and research institutes to data repositories, data services and wider international collaborations (such as the European Open Science Cloud). STM's new research data function will also seek to advance progress on AI and how data can be 'AI-ready', as well as widening support for open science and FAIR data principles.

Speaking of the establishment of the research data division lan Moss, STM's CEO, said: 'Publishers have held a longstanding commitment to sharing data, and STM is continually expanding our efforts to ensure that the wider sharing of research data, the adoption of leading-edge tools and increasing transparency continues.

'I am delighted that Joris will be heading up our new research data programme and leading the further development of community standards and principles around which the wider sharing of research data can be best achieved.'

R2R conversation goes online

Researcher to Reader promises 'live and continuous' conference

This year's Researcher to Reader (R2R) conference – normally held in London – will be completely virtual.

As usual R2R, which will be held on 23-24 February, will offer workshops, Q&A sessions, debate and networking – and also additional online sessions for the benefit of delegates in American time zones.

The event will kick off with a 'Participant Perceptions' session to determine exactly what the R2R Community thinks about the scholarly communications landscape – hosted by Rob Johnson, founder and director at Research Consulting, and Danny Kingsley, a scholarly communication consultant and visiting fellow at the Australian National University.

Conference participants are asked to give their opinions on key scholarly communications issues in a live interactive survey.

The anonymised results will be shared on the fly, to give a picture of the views of the R2R community, and to provide qualitative and quantitative information on a range of hot topics. The consolidated survey results will be available at the end of the conference.

Further sessions include: a panel on inclusivity; a series of interviews with representatives of China's scholarly research and communications sector to get their views on key trends and developments to watch out for in 2021 and beyond; a series of workshops on subjects such as 'new models for open access', 'who decides what is good academic writing, and 'an anti-racist framework for scholarly communications'.

Further keynotes and debates will include:

- Current trends in research integrity, taking into account the lessons from the current pandemic;
- Resolved: journal publishers should pay academics for providing peer review;
- Diversifying eBook readership through open access;

• New funding models for open access monographs;

cOAlition S rights retention strategy; and

• Covid-19 rapid review and preprints. Event founder Mark Carden explained that a key message for delegates is that 'sitting at home watching some webinars, however interesting, is not the same as participating in a conference'.

He said: 'R2R has always been a conversation, not a lecture, and it will be the same for 2021, but online. We will be completely live and absolutely continuous for two days; people can grab a break when they can, but we will be relentlessly carrying on without them. We will have live video networking in virtual rooms, live Q&A, fullyinteractive workshops, our debate, and all the normal elements of our varied and lively programme.

'We are also doing 'Lightning Posters' in the breaks (that's just like a poster session, but with a 10-minute speed-dating ethos). We have also announced a series of free online pre-sessions, so anyone can meet the presenters and moderators and discuss their planned sessions in the weeks before the event.'

Sponsors and media partners for the 2021 Conference include The Royal Society of Chemistry, Atypon, Wiley, Aries, Karger, Ringgold, Ebsco, Mosaic, Research Information and Retraction Watch.

Carden added: 'For all that we have been preparing on the timetable and processes, content is of course key, and we have some really great topics that we will be covering, "For all that we have been preparing on the timetable and processes, content is of course key"

as you can see in the programme. I think the China interviews will be particularly interesting, and I'm looking forward to hearing insights from early-career researchers from all around the world.

'All this is a lot of work and quite expensive to do, with more tech, loads of professional AV support and a huge amount of preparation and rehearsal. But we are aiming to deliver the same value as R2R always delivers, just in an online format. We are using a world-class online platform to make sure navigation is smooth and delivery is reliable.

'Online is different, but we are not cashing in by just trying to get five times as many people to watch some speeches on TV at half the price. We still want to be the R2R that more than 96 per cent of participants say is valuable and relevant, with a couple of hundred people discussing scholarly communications with each other, as usual.

'I don't think anyone else in this space has our commitment and ambition. It is going to be absolutely immense and intense!' **Ri**

For more information and to register for the event, visit https://r2rconf.com/

Springer Nature unveils alternative OA route

All authors submitting to *Nature* and the Nature research journals have had the option to publish open access since the start of the year.

Springer Nature had previously announced that German authors would be able to publish their primary research open access in *Nature* and the Nature research journals, thanks to a ground-breaking agreement with the Max Planck Digital Library (MPDL). While highly effective in transitioning articles to open access, transformative agreements like this can be complicated and take time to put in place. So Springer Nature announced late last year that all authors seeking to publish OA in *Nature* and the *Nature* research journals will no longer have to wait.

It mean authors will be able to publish Gold OA when submitting to Nature and the 32 Nature primary research journals and will be afforded the same APC as MPDL, which is €9,500. As such, these are the first highly-selective journals to offer their authors an immediate OA publishing option in this way. Research published in Nature and the Nature research journals is, the company says, downloaded by institutional users more than 30 times more than papers in a typical journal. Springer Nature says dedicated in-house teams promote the research articles widely, achieving around 10,000 mentions in policy documents, generating over 100,000 news stories around the world and attracting more than three million mentions on Twitter during 2020.

This OA option is positive news also for Plan S-funded authors, as it means

Springer Nature has delivered on its commitment to enable gold OA publishing in all its owned journals by January.

Springer Nature also began an OA pilot in January. It initially covers six journals and offers authors the chance to publish in one of a number of *Nature* portfolio journals, while only submitting once, reducing time and uncertainty and increasing efficiency for all. Authors willing to opt-in to the pilot pay an editorial assessment charge and have their manuscript guided through the submission process by a *Nature* research editor who offers extensive feedback,

"We have come up with a range of options for authors to publish OA"

including external peer review, in the form of an editorial assessment report.

If authors then publish in one of the participating journals, they pay a top-up fee, which for a *Nature* research journal means a reduced total APC of around €5,000. Authors that opt out when they receive the editorial assessment report or are not accepted for publication, can use their report to help them get published in another journal.

Authors will still be able to choose to publish their work via the existing traditional route, where authors can publish without paying an APC and their primary research is available to institutions and individuals who subscribe to the journal. Articles that the *Nature* journalists and editors create and commission, such as highly-valued news and views articles, which provide readers with an expert summary of scientific advances as reported in recently published papers, will continue to be available to institutions and individuals who subscribe to the journal.

Alison Mitchell, chief journals officer, said: 'At Springer Nature we have been committed to driving the transition to OA for 20 years. This is why, using our experience, we have been able to come up with a range of options to enable authors to publish OA in our highly selective titles. While transformative agreements are the biggest driver of OA transition and largely avoid the need for significant additional funding from authors themselves, these take time for institutions to put in place and are not suitable for all organisations. I am delighted that we are now able to open up this opportunity to all authors and also to experiment with brand new ways of helping our authors succeed via the guided-OA pilot.

'In addition, and in recognition of our shared goal of gold OA, we have submitted these titles, along with all the other journals we own and the vast majority of journals we publish on behalf of partners, to cOAlition S for registration as transformative journals and inclusion in the Journal Tracker Tool. With a clear OA option in place for the *Nature* portfolio, this should ensure cOAlition S-funded authors can be made aware of all Springer Nature's gold OA options.'

Jisc launches Plan S-compliant repository

Jisc has launched a multi-content repository for storing research data and articles that will make it easier for university staff to manage the administration around open access publishing.

The repository offers simple, costeffective ways to manage, store and share digital research outputs, and will allow institutions to meet all Plan-S mandatory requirements and other funder and publisher mandates for open scholarship.

Developed with input from the research sector, the research repository allows institutions to manage open access articles, research data and theses in a single system. The service is the most interoperable system on the market and permits integration with a wide range of Current Research Information Systems (CRIS), research management systems and digital preservation systems. This makes it easier to report against funder mandates, creating automated workflows that transfer data objects and metadata, which reduces re-keying information between systems.

Liz Bal, Jisc's director of open research services, said: 'We are delighted to offer institutions this service for the long-term management of all their digital research outputs, from articles, datasets and theses, to metadata-only records and outputs that normally can't be added to subject or funder data repositories.'

Cardiff University's research data manager Kellie Snow said: 'Cardiff University recognises the significant social and economic benefits associated with free and open access to publiclyfunded research. That's why we welcome Jisc's research repository, which allows us to meet funder and publisher expectations for open data, aligning with our commitment to open research and our signature to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, supporting responsible research assessment and accountability. Jisc has worked closely with us to align their research repository with our workflows, and to ensure that our connectivity requirements are met. Jisc's support around integration with our CRIS has been particularly responsive to our customisation needs.'

The research repository is a fully managed 'software-as-a-service' provision, which is hosted on a secure cloud platform. Included in the service is a 'FAIR checker' to make sure research data is 'findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable'.

In support of open research, Jisc also offers research systems connect, a preservation service and research repository plus: a single service to manage, store, preserve and share digital research outputs.

Physics societies unite in support of OA

Major physics societies, which support physical science researchers with the publication of more than 75,000 peerreviewed journal articles each year, have joined forces to show their commitment to open access (OA) for physics research.

The group comprises 16 societies: the Acoustical Society of America, the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, the American Association of Physics Teachers, the American Astronomical Society, the American Crystallographic Association, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, American Institute of Physics, American Physical Society, **AVS Science & Technology** of Materials, Interfaces, and Processes, the Chinese Physical Society, European Physical Society, Institute of Physics, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, the Laser Institute of America, The

Optical Society (OSA), and the Society of Rheology.

In a joint statement the societies detail how they have long embraced open science and OA to research results. Their proactive engagement, such as the launch of highquality OA journals, switching hybrid journals to full OA and establishing transformative agreements, has contributed to an average annual growth in OA physics articles of more than 25 per cent, compared with an overall average annual growth in physics articles of around two per cent.

Having supported open publishing in physics for decades, the group says its common ambition is that all OA models provide financially sustainable support for author choice and the quality of peerreview and publication upon which excellent physics research relies.

The statement highlights how policies, such as the proposed

cOAlition S Rights Retention Strategy, could undermine the viability of high-quality hybrid journals and the important role they play in balancing OA expansion with the researcher's freedom to publish where they choose.

It stresses the need for broader international financial support for OA to be in place before hybrid journals can fully transition, pointing out that adjustments to the global flow of funding will take time.

The group also acknowledges the strong culture of sharing results before peer review via preprint platforms, and calls for funders to increase their recognition and encouragement for this practice in physics as a complement to peer-reviewed journal publication.

Brave New World research study garners industry support

A group of industry organisations have signed up for involvement in a 'Brave New World' research study organised by Kudos.

The project will provide publishers, societies and providers of related services with vital insights to shape strategies using desk research, interviews and surveys to reveal the implications of Covid-19 for research funding policy, university budgets and practices, and researchers' workload and workflows.

The project's newest headline sponsors are Cactus Communications, Wiley and STM, who join the Royal Society of Chemistry and Kudos in steering the project's scope and direction. Other research partners include the American Chemical Society, American Society for Microbiology and the BMJ.

Dina Mukherjee, marketing director at Cactus Communications, said: 'For some years we have been expanding our scope of services and products for researchers. As part of this initiative, we introduced R – researcher.life – an ecosystem of tools, solutions and support that aims to not only enable the researcher with intuitive technology for greater speed in research and publication, but also equip them with their learning and development requirements for improved performance in academia. Brave New World is a timely project that will complement our own market intelligence, and capture how the market is shifting.'

Shari Hofer, SVP of marketing at Wiley, explained: 'Wiley has a 360° role in the information sector, supporting researchers as well as societies and professionals. We understand how these stakeholders are impacted by environmental drivers, such as changes in funders' priorities, policies and processes, and the Brave New World study is one of many sources of insight we will use to shape our publishing services and support for the research community.'

Matt McKay, director of communication at STM, said: 'Our role in supporting the academic publishing sector means we always need to be up to speed with the latest issues. This need is acute in the case of Covid-19, which potentially represents the biggest disruption to our sector for a generation. Brave New World is well timed to provide us with critical insights into how the pandemic will affect research funding and dissemination, and how publishers need to respond.'

Wiley announces Hindawi acquisition

John Wiley & Sons has bought Hindawi for \$298m. Wiley says the purchase adds 'quality, scale and growth to the company's open access publishing programme'.

Open access is a rapidly growing scholarly publishing model that allows peerreviewed articles to be read and shared immediately, making important research broadly available. Hindawi has played a critical role in advancing gold open access, an OA model in which validated articles are made immediately available for reading and reuse following the payment of a publication fee.

Hindawi, privately held and headquartered in London, has a portfolio of over 200 peer-reviewed scientific, technical, and medical journals,

its own publishing platform, and a low-cost infrastructure. Wiley says its acquisition of Hindawi unlocks significant and profitable new growth by tapping deeper into the fast-growing OA market and by delivering innovative publishing services to researchers. societies and institutions around the world. For the fiscal vear ending December 31. 2020, Hindawi was projected to generate approximately \$40m in revenue with year-on-year growth of 50 per cent.

Brian Napack, Wiley CEO and president, said: 'The acquisition of Hindawi enables Wiley to move faster towards our goal of meeting the world's urgent, escalating need for knowledge. Hindawi is a true pioneer in the industry, empowering researchers with a fully digital, user-friendly publishing process that gets life-changing, peer-reviewed discoveries out into the world faster and more efficiently.'

The addition of Hindawi's journals doubles Wiley's gold (pure) OA journal portfolio and will increase author retention by giving researchers more options to publish in Wiley titles, the company said, adding that Hindawi's technology combined with Wiley's innovative platforms and services will enhance the publishing experience for authors, editors and reviewers. The deal will also strengthen Wiley's growing position in the global research industry, particularly in China - the fastgrowing research market.

Paul Peters, Hindawi's CEO, will continue to lead Hindawi

as part of Wiley's Research business. He said: 'We are driven by a mission to advance openness in research, working with researchers, publishers and institutions to build a vibrant ecosystem that helps this community thrive. With Wiley's commitment to Hindawi and OA, we are excited to accelerate scientific discovery, collaboration, and innovation to maximise the impact of research.'

Ahmed Hindawi, Hindawi's co-founder, said: 'We have worked hard with our partners to build one of the world's largest fully-OA publishing platforms. The combined strengths of Hindawi and Wiley will continue to support the evolving needs of the research community in new and innovative ways.'

SciCrunch announces Luxembourg collaboration

The Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine (LCSB) at the University of Luxembourg is partnering with SciCrunch.

The LCSB will be one of the first academic institutions to use the firm's SciScore – an automated validation tool for scientific articles – as part of its internal quality control process. It will contribute to further enhance the rigour and reproducibility of the publications written by LCSB's researchers.

Scientific research always faces new challenges and, with the increasing volume of data, the complexity of new tools and the fast pace of modern science, ensuring that experiments can be repeated and results validated is as crucial as ever. Over the past years, the scientific community has widely acknowledged that the reproducibility crisis needs to be addressed in order to guarantee trust in the published literature and best use of valuable resources.

Early on, the LCSB recognised reproducibility as a key topic and decided to tackle the issue by implementing measures to promote research quality. Grouped under the umbrella of the Responsible and Reproducible Research (R3) initiative, they include state-of-theart IT infrastructures, GDPR-compliant data processes and tools for highquality scientific computing code. 'A particular emphasis has been placed on a standardised publication workflow which will now be complemented through the development of a pre-publication check, said Dr Christophe Trefois, R3 team leader.

This internal verification is aimed at monitoring the compliance with the latest standards and high quality of all manuscripts written at the LCSB, through a series of checks addressing issues such as plagiarism, data protection and source code quality. SciScore, through its rigour check, will be one of the main components in this pre-publication pipeline.

Anita Bandrowski, founder and CEO of SciCrunch, said: 'Part of recent research is not reproducible due to flaws in reference material, unreliable source identification, and similar issues,'. 'Our solution helps flag these issues before scientific articles become part of the permanent record.'

Chorus deal 'enhances open research audit process'

Chorus, the non-profit membership organisation, is now using Get Full Text Research (GetFTR) technology to speed up and enhance their open research audit process.

The organisation is applying the GetFTR API to further automate the gathering and checking of key data on journal articles and conference proceedings from multiple publishers, supporting its mission of advancing sustainable, cost-effective public access to content reporting on research funded by public organisations.

For GetFTR, this means its technology is being used in increasingly innovative ways

to support the discovery of research.

By using GetFTR to automate the metadata feed from millions of individual Versions of Record (the definitive version of a journal article). Chorus is now supported in scaling the auditing of some of its largest publisher members, including the American Chemical Society, Elsevier, Springer Nature, Taylor & Francis Group and Wiley. Additionally, GetFTR will enable Chorus' reporting to be more timely, as its auditing process gets faster.

Howard Ratner, Chorus executive director, said: 'Before integrating the GetFTR data feed, Chorus used a combination of manual and automated processes to audit whether article and conference proceedings versions of record or accepted manuscripts were open on a publisher's website.

'Using GetFTR complements our own auditing process, as it can rapidly check our records against a publisher's access control systems, without interacting with the HTML of multiple publisher sites.

'While it doesn't fully replace Chorus' own audit processes (because not every publisher is using GetFTR and because it doesn't yet support open Accepted Manuscripts), Chorus will be encouraging our members to get involved with GetFTR.'

GetFTR launched its pilot in late 2019 and has since been welcoming partners, building and evolving the service after feedback from all scholarly community sectors. GetFTR's primary purpose has been to increase speed and ease of accessing research by making it clear which content researchers can access across different publisher and research platforms.

The GetFTR service is now being used by six publishers and eight integrating partners. Find out more at getfulltextresearch.com.

UK collaboration to accelerate global open access

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Wellcome and Jisc, the not-for-profit research and education technology provider, are among the first organisations supporting the establishment of Open Access Switchboard.

It's an independent body that will help the research community transition to full and immediate open access and simplify efforts to make open access (OA) the predominant model of publication of research.

Led by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), the OA Switchboard is a not-for-profit collaboration between funders, institutions, consortia and publishers to provide essential infrastructure, standards and back office services. The OA Switchboard will support information sharing as well as help reduce barriers to the OA market. It aims to allow funders, publishers and institutions to streamline their communications, improve transparency of data collection and storage, and reduce costs.

UKRI, Wellcome and Jisc are all represented on OA Switchboard's board of directors.

Rachel Bruce, UKRI's head of open research, said: 'We are delighted to

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form this partnership to enable shared infrastructure, bringing transparency, efficiency and cost effectiveness to the OA ecosystem.

'The OA Switchboard has the potential to enable a breakthrough in the transformation to open access, supporting it as a predominant model of research publication.'

Liam Earney, Jisc's executive director of digital resources, added: 'This working relationship underscores Jisc's commitment to driving a sustainable and equitable transition to OA. Crucially, it will enable institutions to have clearer, automated reporting of OA publications, and it will help foster the inclusion of more publishers in the transition to OA, regardless of size or business model.' Hannah Hope, OA project manager at Wellcome Trust, said: 'We believe the OA Switchboard has the potential to streamline the management of open access publishing for all parties. We look forward to working with Jisc and UK institutions to incorporate the OA Switchboard into Wellcome's OA reporting processes.'

And Yvonne Campfens, executive director of the OA Switchboard, added: 'Other industries have tackled similar problems successfully a long time ago, which gives me confidence that we can apply this to the OA ecosystem. However, to address challenging topics around communication and data across different stakeholder groups, and to implement a cost-effective collaborative infrastructure solution, transparency is key, and an independent neutral intermediary is indispensable.'

The newly-founded OA Switchboard became operational on 1 January. Jisc is working with the OA Switchboard to explore how UK institutions can best benefit from the shared data and infrastructure this service will provide. Institutions are encouraged to get involved by contacting Yvonne Campfens, project manager.

Interdisciplinary research community launched by Jisc

Jisc has announced the launch of a digital research community to explore how technology and innovation can help improve current research practices.

The organisation says the new support for leading research will have global impact, by cutting across disciplines, mission groups and geography, and is a direct result of Jisc's new research strategy which aims to increase wider engagement with research and alignment with the needs of the sector.

Researchers, research leaders, research managers and other professionals in the field, such as developers, software engineers, library and IT staff, can all join the community.

Victoria Moody, Jisc's research strategy lead at

Jisc, explained: 'We are excited to launch this digital research community group, which will support the sector to respond to new policies that affect research such as the recent UK Government's Research and Development Roadmap, National Data Strategy, UKRI's Corporate Plan, and the announcement of a new research funding agency. The community will provide a safe space for professionals active in the research process to assess technology solutions that can enhance research excellence and efficiency, as well as the culture, skills and processes to achieve these objectives.'

The group met for the first time online in December, and will meet quarterly, led by a community council of 18 research experts. Helen Clare, senior e-infrastructure strategy manager, said: 'Policy and technology are both changing so quickly that bringing together the community is the most effective way to respond to these changes, learn from one another and influence the research agenda. We'll be bringing together different parts of the research community to share and show best practice to shape the future of research.'

Anne Boddington, visiting professor at Birmingham City University, and REF 2021 subpanel chair for art and design, said: 'I'm optimistic about the potential of this group and look forward to playing a part in shaping collective action for the advancement of research and research careers. I'm particularly interested in how we can best create equitable access and agree core competencies for researchers, including those currently not recognised and rewarded, but that may support a more generous, inclusive research

sector.' The collective wisdom of the community will be shared with the wider world through various forms of communication. The first output from the group is a webinar, which will present priorities and potential activities for the community.

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