

Open APC Sweden

**A national open
repository of
publication costs
for open access
articles**

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Production: National Library of Sweden. Reference no: 6.6-2016-763

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Introduction

During the spring of 2016 the National Library of Sweden through OpenAccess.se and SwePub initiated a pilot project in cooperation with Swedish higher education institutions (HEIs) in order to investigate the possibilities of establishing an open national repository for article processing charges (APCs). The model for this pilot was mainly the JISC project Total Cost of Ownership in UK¹ and the Open APC Initiative within the INTACT-project in Germany.²

In an open publishing system researchers are often invoiced directly for publishing their articles openly accessible. These article processing charges (APCs) are to a great extent financed by grants from research funders or through faculty funds. There is currently no national or international overview of the total cost of publication (TCP), where APCs make up an increasing portion. Many European countries are turning their attention to the need of monitoring APCs and many countries, lead by Germany, Austria and the UK, have established open databases.

By establishing a Swedish repository of paid APCs we increase the necessary economic transparency over the growing APC market and aid international comparisons and analyses. An open APC repository would also benefit research funders, HEIs and libraries, allowing them to monitor and evaluate the transition to an open access publishing system.

As more quality assured data is made openly accessible we increase the knowledge about the market for APCs.

National control over publication data would also mean that we have better means to negotiate with publishers, by not being reliant on publishers own APC data. Further, this control and knowledge is of great importance in order to be able to analyse what economical consequences the development of open access journals and hybrid journals will have in the transition from a subscription-based market to an open access publishing infrastructure, as well as supporting various types of analysis. This can only be realised by standardised reporting on APCs.

An overview of the costs incurred by Swedish researchers for open access publishing will lead to a number of desirable results:

- A clear understanding of how much Swedish researchers pay publishers per article.
- Access to aggregated APC data which can support the transition to open access-publishing, in accordance with the Swedish Research Council's guidelines on open access to scholarly publications, and for a more complete picture of which economic consequences a transition will have for HEIs, libraries, researchers and funders.

¹ <https://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/News/Releasing-open-data-about-Total-Cost-of-Ownership>

² <http://www.intact-project.org/openapc>

- Access to aggregated APC data can give the negotiators at the Bibsam consortium and research libraries data which they can use in order to establish open access offsetting deals, i.e. a license in which open access publishing costs are offset against subscriptions paid by an organisation (licensee) to the publisher (licensor).

Workshop

Representatives from the libraries at Linköping University, Malmö University, Stockholm University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences participated in a first workshop in May 2016.

The participants had prepared APC data on five open access articles from 2015 from their respective organisations. Metadata from these articles were then entered via Excel-files in the newly established Github repository Openapc-se.³ The following metadata was entered: Institution, Period, Cost, Is Hybrid, Publisher, Journal Full Title, ISSN, ISSN Print, ISSN Electronic and URL.

Also participating at the workshop was Christoph Broschinski from the German Open APC initiative. Christoph first gave an introduction to their system and work process, and also helped workshop participants entering their data to Openapc-se and visualising the results. Furthermore, he proposed recommendations for the establishment of the open Swedish repository and how to standardise both data and the data management process.

³ <https://github.com/Kungbib/openapc-se/wiki/Open-APC-Sweden>

Unlike Germany and the UK, Sweden has currently no common funding system in place in order to finance and handle invoices for Article Processing Charges (APCs) paid in order to publish open access articles. A Swedish open APC repository would therefore be difficult to implement in Sweden at present.

Challenges

The workshop participants shared experiences from retrieving APC data and entering data in Openapc-se. The result from the first workshop identified the following two problems and solutions which could dramatically facilitate the collection and monitoring of Swedish APC data.

Common APC code

Sweden has currently no common funding system in place in order to finance and handle invoices for Article Processing Charges (APCs) paid in order to publish open access articles, fulfilling the demands of research funders. To be able to enter the cost for open access publishing by Swedish researchers, every invoice sent out from publishers would need to be tracked down manually in local accounts and invoice processing systems at each HEI. While theoretically possible, it would be a painstaking and costly method.

Solution

Swedish HEIs need to establish a common invoice code for APCs in their respective accounts and invoice processing systems. This would greatly facilitate the collection of APC data and the establishment of an open national system.

Metadata on corresponding author

APCs are currently paid by individual researchers who are "corresponding authors" for articles. Presently there is no possibility of entering metadata about "corresponding author" in institutional repositories, and, by extension for the national publication database SwePub to harvest and aggregate data automatically at a national level for analysis.

Solution

Enable the registration of metadata about the role "corresponding author" in local repositories.

Conclusion

Sweden has currently no common funding system in place in order to finance and handle invoices for Article Processing Charges (APCs) paid in order to publish open access articles, fulfilling the demands of research funders. A Swedish open APC database, like the Open APC Initiative in Germany, would therefore be difficult to implement in Sweden at present. The needs described in the introduction of transparency, overview and control of TCP and APCs remain and will increase in the on-going transition to an open access publishing system.⁴

During the workshop a decision was taken that the pilot will continue, but in order to establish **Open APC Sweden** there is a great need for a concerted effort by stakeholders. At the same time as we continue working with the project and the repository Openapc-se, we will also investigate the possibility of receiving APC data directly from publishers. Hitherto, though, this has proved cumbersome as publishers only supply the Bibsam consortium negotiators with list prices, and not actual invoiced amounts. Renewed efforts will be made by the Bibsam consortium and by Swedish HEIs in negotiations with publishers.

The current project also aims to keep the Swedish HEI sector informed about ways in which to monitor the total cost of publication, which includes the collection of APCs. On the 25th of November therefore, the National Library of Sweden invited all stakeholders to attend a national symposium on APCs and Open APC Sweden.

Prof. Stephen Pinfield of the University of Sheffield, UK, delivered the keynote speech regarding the total cost of publication in a hybrid open access environment, followed by representatives from Swedish HEIs and funding agencies presenting their experience of monitoring APCs in Sweden. All presentations and films from the symposium will be published on the project web site.⁶

⁴ Modeling APC payments in CERIF:
<http://eurocris.org/blog/modeling-apc-payments-cerif>

⁵ <http://www.kb.se/bibliotek/centrala-avtal>
⁶ <http://www.kb.se/openaccess/Open-APC-Sweden/>



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