THE ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL-ECONOMICS OF OPEN-ACCESS MONOGRAPH PUBLISHING

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE. 2ND OCTOBER 2019.

Professor Martin Paul Eve, Birkbeck, University of London
OPEN ACCESS (OA)

- Peer-reviewed research
- Free to read online
- Permission to re-use

- **Gold**: at publisher/source
- **Green**: institutional/subject repository

- **Gratis**: free to read
- **Libre**: free to re-use
LET'S START WITH A PROBLEM

- Palgrave: $95 x 200 copies = $19,000 [price]
- Open Book Publishers: £10,512 (2015) [cost]
- UCL Press: ~£14,000 [£400k/25 books/6 journals] [cost]
- CUP: Variable Book Processing Charge: $10,000 [price]
- Ubiquity Press: Book Processing Charge: £6,890 [price]

WHERE DO THESE COSTS GO?

Assume fixed costs:

- 3x staff + on and estates costs
- Travel and subsitence
- CLOCKSS, Crossref, COPE, COUNTER memberships
- Around £190k per year

Assume production costs:

- Typesetting: £500
- Copyediting: £500
HOW MANY BOOKS WITH 3X STAFF?
MY UNIVERSITY'S ENGLISH DEPARTMENT'S ENTIRE BOOK BUDGET

£7900

Less next year
A MATTER OF DISTRIBUTION: THERE ARE 100 PEOPLE IN A ROOM FOR A TALK

- They have $10 each
- The speaker speaks for free
- The venue needs $50 to cover its staff costs
- There are 40 talks per year
SUBSCRIPTION LOGIC

- Each person pays $0.50 and hears the talk
- No payment, no entry
- Each person can only afford half of the talks
- The general public cannot attend
OA WITH A BOOK PROCESSING CHARGE

- The speaker pays the full fee ($50)
- The problem is that the speaker only has $10
- The general public and all others can attend
OA WITH CONSORTIAL LOGIC

- 5 people attend each talk and pay $10 each
- They let anyone else attend for free
- Everyone can hear 50% of the talks, including the public
This is how OA looks in a dry funding climate

- Is the "venue" overcharging?
- The distribution of the economics is the most important thing
- BPCs do not work well in the humanities
- BPCs concentrate costs
BPCS FOR MONOGRAPHS SCALE BADLY + CONCENTRATE COSTS

- 5,023 monographs in UK in 2013 by largest 4 publishers (source: Crossick)
- At a £5,050 BPC (UP price): £25,366,150
- At a £6,500 BPC (CUP price): £32,649,500
- At an £11,000 BPC (Palgrave price): £55,253,000
- UK spend on all books 2010/2011: ~£60,000,000 [~£12m on res monographs] (source: SCONUL)
BPCS FOR MONOGRAPHS SCALE BADLY
UK REF COSTS FOR MONOGRAPHS

"to publish 75% of anticipated monographic submission output for the next REF would require approximately £96m investment over the census period. This is equivalent to £19.2m per year. Academic library budgets as they are currently apportioned would not support this cost."

WHY WE MUST SOLVE THESE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

1. £
   Researcher Access

2. Public Access

3. Re-use
PROBLEM 1: RESEARCHER ACCESS

See above: our book budget
PROBLEM 2: PUBLIC ACCESS

- Increasingly educated populace
- Institutional missions to benefit society
  - Or what is a university?
- The academy becomes irrelevant
  - Especially the humanities
- Imagine a world of OA sciences and toll-access humanities
Problem 3: Restrictive Re-Use Rights

- Photocopying licenses
  - Even for teaching
- Text mining/derivatives prohibited
- Inclusion in Wikipedia and other resources
- Community translation
COPIM (COMMUNITY-LED OPEN PUBLICATION INFRASTRUCTURES FOR MONOGRAPHS)

- £2.2m funded project from Research England
- Infrastructure work
- Business model work
- Converting university presses to OA

OTHER MODELS ARE AVAILABLE
THE END

Presentation licensed under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license. All institutional images excluded from CC license.

Available to view online at https://pres.eve.gd/CamMonographs2019.