OAPEN-UK HSS Researcher Survey Results

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Overview

- Ran March – May 2012
- Distributed via networks
- Response bias?
- 894 responses, of which 690 were usable

Created in Feb and released in March and ran until May
Distributed via publishers, learned societies, librarians, social media and other RIN and JISC Collections networks.
Possibility that responses are biased towards those with an interest in OA – tried to minimise this with the wording that we used in distributing the survey, but have to be aware.
894 total responses, of which 690 were reasonably complete and done by the right people.
Good spread of birth decades – allows cross-tabulation
Again, reasonably good spread. We have eliminated those who only responded to a couple of questions or are outside the sample frame i.e. undergraduate and master’s students, administrators, and the self-identified librarians. But n.b. that there are still a lot of people who fall into the ‘library and information studies’ category – it’s grouped with communications, so we couldn’t eliminate it altogether. ‘Other’ category includes retired/emeritus positions and researchers who’d classified themselves as readers or tutors. We may be able to re-integrate these into the existing categories, but as stand-alone they are not big enough to merit cross-tabulation.
Region not a good spread: throughout analysis we have used all together but there may be some regional variations.

Nb other OAPEN projects may repeat the survey to give us some comparable data.

Discipline – slightly more humanities than social sciences, but this shouldn’t be a problem.
Overall, awareness of OA is high, which is encouraging
Overall, awareness of OA seems to increase as time goes on, with fewer researchers saying they are ‘not aware’ of and more saying that they are ‘familiar’ with OA.
OA awareness seems very slightly higher in the humanities, with fewer researchers unaware and considerably more familiar with open access.
This question attempts to understand whether researchers have a problem with people making money from OA publishing, by comparing it to their attitudes to making money out of any type of publishing.
Differences don’t look very significant between open access and other types of publishing.
Roughly equal groups saying that profit is acceptable for any purpose and only to cover costs. Very small minority think no profit is acceptable. Majority think it’s acceptable to make a profit if that profit goes back into supporting the discipline or making more OA content available.
Overall questions about the acceptability of profiting from publishing: early career researchers seem to be a bit more negative about this, and more established ones being happier about publisher profits, regardless of how they are spent. Post-docs are pretty divided! Is this representing a new trend about attitudes to profit, just making itself felt among newer researchers, or should we expect these attitudes to change as researchers become more established?
Awareness of Creative Commons is reasonably high
Over half of those who are aware of CC would be willing to publish with it, while 25% of those unaware would be unwilling to publish with it. Brave 3% who have never heard of it but would still be willing to publish with it! Roughly equal numbers in each group would need to look into it further. Better outreach/education?
Most researchers would prefer the most restrictive form of CC licence i.e. CC BY NC ND. It seems that they’re more concerned to protect their work than restrict income streams: CC BY ND is more popular than CC BY NC.
This breaks down the researchers into those who are aware and unaware of CC licences. So of all the researchers who are aware of CC licences, 22.7% would use CC BY, while of those researchers who are unaware of CC licences, 15.5% would use CC BY. The only licence where those who are not aware of CC are more likely to be willing to use the licence than those who are aware of CC is CC BY ND, reinforcing the impression that researchers care most about protecting the integrity of their work, rather than profit or openness per se.
Most important services are about getting the book out and printed. Those which come after are less important – esp. information about usage/sales/citation – or at least, authors do not see publisher services in this area as important.
Breaking down the services to look at important/very important, this is reinforced. The most important services are distribution and sales and marketing and promotion, and the print copy of the final book also seen as very important. The post-publication services are less likely to be seen as ‘very important’. 
Asked researchers which of these publisher services they’d be willing to take on in OA environment. Marketing and distribution are the ones that they would be most unwilling to take on: editing and design and layout they are happier to do. Do they understand exactly what is involved in these tasks?
As might be expected, the more senior you are, the less likely you are to want to perform these services. Researchers outside academia also quite unwilling to perform services – but not as unwilling as senior academics – and happier to do the unpopular marketing and distribution tasks.
The services more likely to be ranked as ‘very important’ are less likely to be taken on by researchers.
Self-publishing using Kindle Direct or similar: unwillingness increases by career stage, but uncertainty is very high among PhD candidates. All about getting that first book! Researchers outside academia are much more open to self-publishing. Comments (though not thoroughly analysed) suggest that lack of quality is an important factor – some would not self-publish as mistrust QA processes; others, because they think their colleagues would see their work as poorer quality, although they themselves do not necessarily think it would be.
Social science scholars seem slightly more open to self-publishing.
Nb a cross-tabulation – if we had asked this question immediately after, or specifically relating to, the one on self-publishing, we might have seen slightly different responses. On the whole, though, authors who would consider self-publishing are less likely to refuse to take on certain services than those who would not consider self-publishing. But the numbers are still high for refusals – over half of those willing to consider self-publishing would not do marketing or promotion, and even more would not consider doing distribution and sales.
Asked researchers to rank their priorities as authors, analysed here by career stage. Can see there are some areas where they agree strongly: releasing information is the most important, followed by communication with peers, and financial compensation is agreed to be the least important. But divergence around claiming research findings – more important for new researchers and those outside academia, and career advancement – which is more important for those towards the middle of their career than those at the beginning or end. Perhaps unsurprising for those who are at professorial level, but a little surprising in relation to PhD students?
Now looking only at authors who have published a book since 2000 – 397 in the sample. In answering the questions, asked them to think about the last book they published: a roughly equal split between monographs and chapters.
Last 3 are drawn from free-text comments: is there a real difference between self- and no-funding? Hard to say. Respondents could choose multiple options. Core university funds are most important, although if you aggregate RC and other funders they are nearly as big.
Again, respondents could pick as many options as they liked. Responses are noticeably different depending upon whether it is a book chapter or a monograph that they have done. Commissioning is most important for book chapters (unsurprisingly) while for monographs ability to reach a particular audience is important. Trust in quality assurance is important for monograph authors, as is (honesty!) the fact that the publishers were the first to be interested in a potential book.
Nb very small samples for self- no- publisher-funding: the actual numbers with availability of such funding are very small (1-4 people). But only one also had funding from another source, a research council, which could have been the source of the OA funding. So it is not clear where the funding or opportunities for funding would have come from for the other authors.
Segmenting is done to give roughly equal split between groups in terms of numbers. Availability of OA funding seems to have gone up in last 5 years, compared to previous 8 – or at least, awareness of such funding opportunities.
Humanities seems to have more OA funding available than social sciences (social scientists also less likely to remember, or to fail to answer the question – so lower awareness of such funding?)
But there are more publisher OA titles in social sciences than humanities: humanities more likely to have authors responsible for making an OA version available.
OA is more common among older titles – for the author-OA this may be due to embargo periods – but high number of ‘don’t know’ for newer books makes it hard to reach firm conclusions.
Co-authored monographs are the most likely to be made OA. Why might this be?
Publishers are not very involved with many of the tasks that researchers do not value highly (see earlier slides on author services). They are focused on the ‘important’ ones and, for the most part, author satisfaction with these is relatively high, although there is some work to do around some of the pre-publication services such as advice and guidance and copyediting.
Back to full sample of 690 researchers: although a higher number of ‘missing’ by this point – perhaps the survey was a little long? Most researchers read a monograph in the last few days: reinforces their importance for HSS researchers.
Most researchers either bought the book for themselves or borrowed it from the library. Slightly different from JISC Collections Tenopir/Volentine study which found a similar proportion (39.1%) buying for themselves, but fewer (25.7%) borrowing from the library. And higher proportions getting copies from the author/publisher. Nonetheless, encouraging as it suggests there is a lot of book-buying going on!
Promotional email/web ad and ‘don’t know’ removed as sample was too small for these (23 and 24 respectively). Authors are most likely to buy a book if it’s been recommended by another person, although they are also (unsurprisingly) likely to be given a copy by this recommender. Seems as though library is more popular when authors are already ‘working’ i.e. searching or looking for citations: possibly something to do with urgency?
More senior researchers and those outside academia are the most likely to buy books: PhD students are by far the most reliant on libraries. Those who are further along in their career also get more freebies!
Humanists are more likely to use the library, and slightly more likely to buy books (though not a great deal). Social scientists seem to make more use of ILL, departmental collections, friends and other free sources.
We asked researchers how the book was accessed (i.e. in what format did they read it?): could tick as many as applied. Most who bought it for themselves did so as a print copy: library e-book collections also well-used. Nb very small sample for school/department collection – only 8 people – so this is likely not representative.
Print is much higher for more senior researchers than more junior ones.
Print is more common in humanities than in social sciences.
Looking now at how read (i.e. what technology was used to read it, as opposed to how was it accessed). Can see that computers/laptops are more common than mobile devices: most common device was iPad, followed by Kindle: but only 25/16 individuals respectively therefore not a large number.
Again, print is more important in humanities. Mobile devices seem to be more dominant in the social sciences. Printing off the whole book, or parts of it, is relatively uncommon: seems that if people want print, they will try to get the published print version of the book. What does this mean for the OAPEN model?
We asked researchers about their preferred reading format – this is for actually reading the book, rather than locating or accessing it. Print is the most popular at all career stages, but PhD students seem to have a smaller expressed preference for print compared to, say, professors and even post-docs: but also a larger proportion of people without a strong preference. Slightly unusual to see the most junior being the earliest adopters of new technologies.
Looking by age instead of career stage, we see something of a declining preference for print, but a definite growing preference for electronic content. The number of people without a preference seems fairly consistent: would be interesting to track them and see whether they become convinced either way as e-books become more common and more flexible, or whether they remain agnostic.
Social sciences have more researchers who prefer electronic content, and fewer without a preference than humanities.
Can see that print readers are relatively well-served: most read their last book in the preferred format. But only just over half of those preferring electronic formats were able to read their last book in this format. Is this about availability? What could a business model like OAPEN offer to these readers?
All goals ranked as important/very important by researchers, but availability & dissemination and quality clearly the most important. Very homogeneous across career stage, age and discipline, apart from organisation and preservation, where older, more senior researchers and researchers in the humanities were more likely to consider it ‘very important’.
Ranking re-emphasises previous graph: availability & dissemination and quality are the most important factors. Reputation and reward least important. Again, fairly similar across different subgroups. Availability and dissemination is top for all; reputation and reward is bottom. Quality is ranked #4 by post-docs, social scientists and those born in the 1960s, while efficiency and effectiveness has a sprinkling of #2 rankings. Organisation and preservation is ranked bottom by social scientists and professors (interesting, in view of the previous slide)
Effect on availability will be very positive; quality and reputation & reward will be neutral, and organisation and preservation will be positive – interesting to know why they think this!
Efficiency and effectiveness was overall seen as positive, but mixed views on this: most career stages see it as ‘very positive’ but professors say neutral.