

Making evidence-based decisions about Open Access fees with an open dataset on annual APCs

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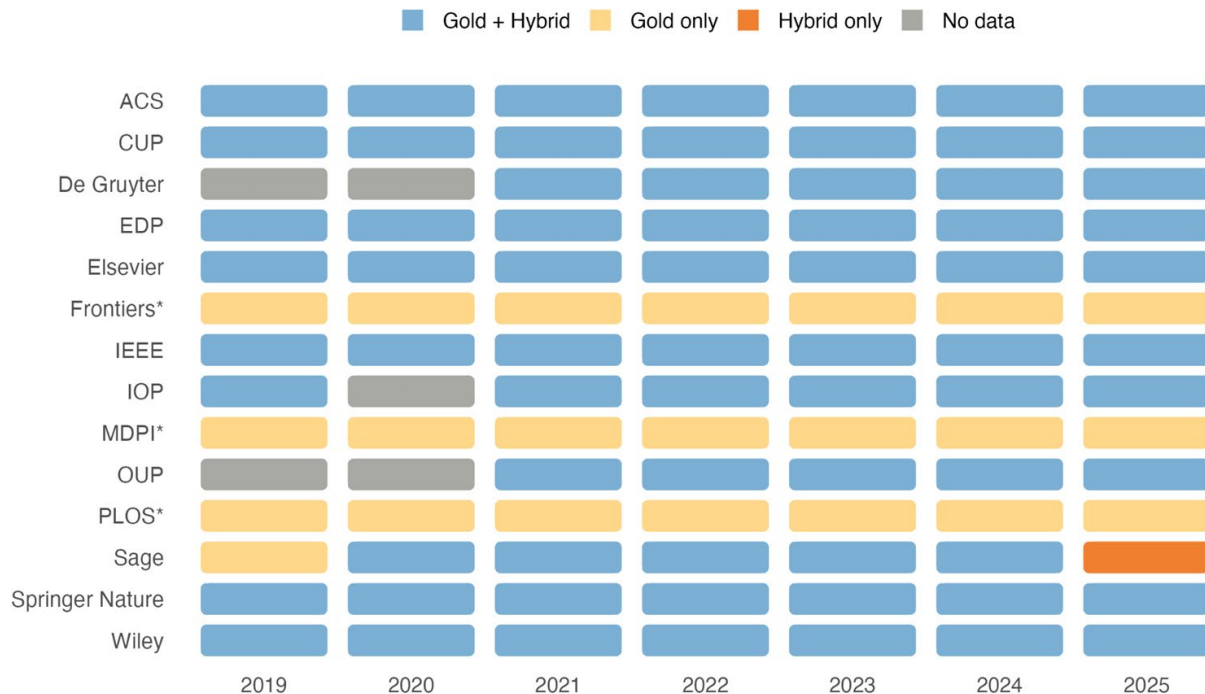
A market without transparency

- Article processing charges have risen steadily—but how, by how much, and for whom?
- Commercial publishing market lacks systematic, publicly accessible price data
- Libraries, funders, and researchers need better tools to track and anticipate APC costs
- Existing data is either paywalled (e.g., Delta Think) or incomplete

- An open dataset of annual APC list prices from 14 major publishers, 2019–2025
- Gold OA and hybrid OA journals
- Will be available on Harvard Dataverse
- v2 expands on [Butler et al. \(2024\)](#), includes eight additional publishers and two more years
 - 8,712 → 12,557 unique journals
 - 36,618 → 69,862 journal-year combinations

APC data coverage by publisher and year

Gold OA and/or Hybrid OA records present, 2019–2025



* Gold OA only publishers—absence of Hybrid OA reflects their publishing model, not a gap in data collection.

Three main sources:

- Direct downloads of price lists from publisher websites (annual)
- Wayback Machine snapshots (~June each year for consistency)
- Manual data entry for non-machine-readable formats

The messy reality

- Price lists published in inconsistent formats, currencies, and structures
- Some years have no archived snapshots at all
 - IEEE hybrid 2019: no price list existed, reconstructed from Wayback Machine journal pages and archived journal issues
- Errors (?) in publisher price lists: wrong ISSN, journals that transferred away or ceased publishing, or switched access models

Key variables per journal-year record:

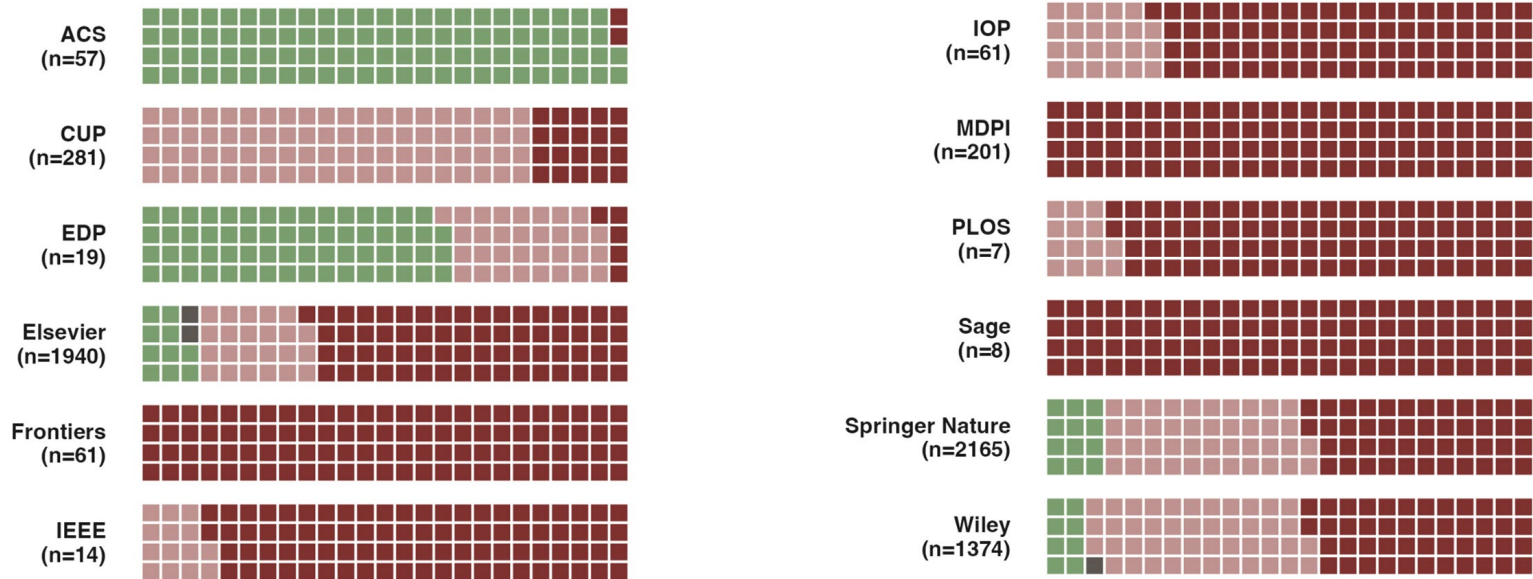
- Publisher, journal title, ISSNs, OA status (gold/hybrid)
- APCs in 7 currencies: USD, EUR, GBP, JPY, CHF, CAD, AUD
- Flag: original vs. converted currency
- Fee type (flat rate, page charges, etc.)
- Notes on publisher changes, OA status flips

#2: Most Journals Raised Prices Above Inflation

APC change by publisher, 2019–2025

Inflation over period: 22.5% | Flat rate APCs > 0 only
Each square = 1% of journals

■ Decreased ■ No change ■ Increased within inflation ■ Increased above inflation



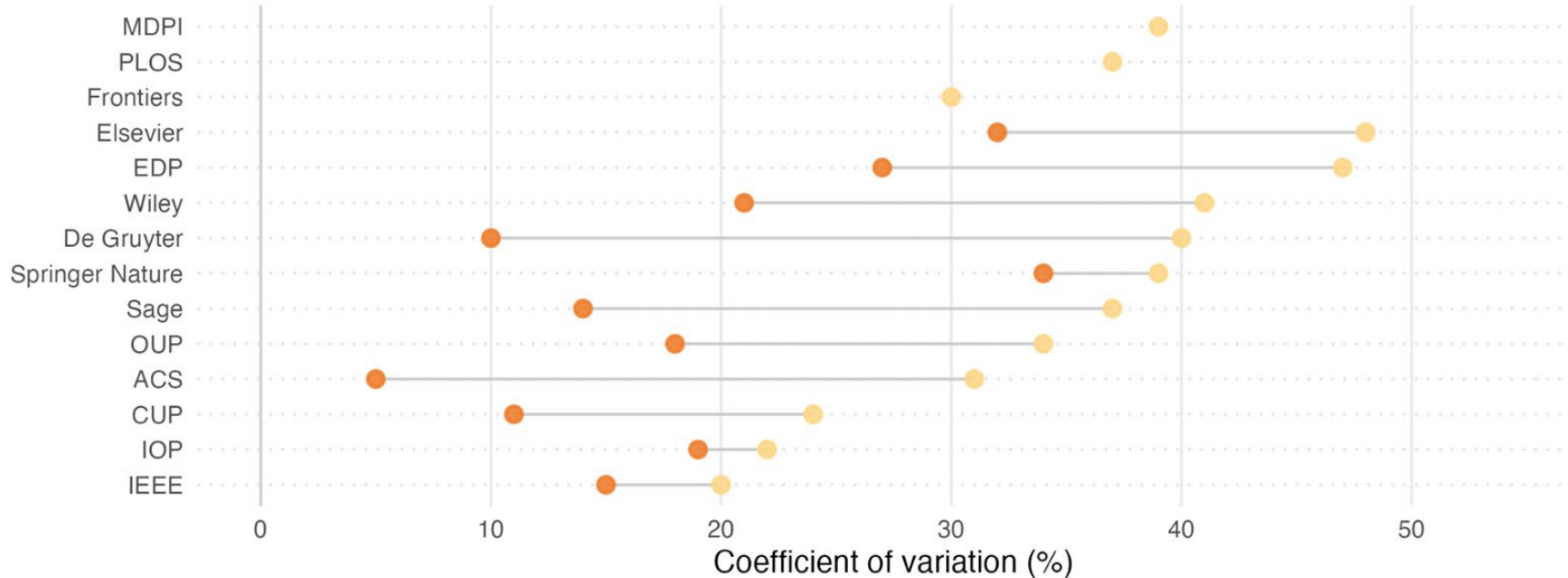
#3 APCs Vary Significantly by Publisher and OA Model



Price variability by publisher and OA type

Higher CV = more variability in APC prices across journals

OA type ● Gold ● Hybrid



Beyond standard APCs, the dataset captures:

- **Liberty APC (EDP)**
 - 1,988 of 69,429 journal-year combinations
- **Page charges/Per quanta charges (EDP, Elsevier, IEEE, IOP, Sage, Springer Nature, Wiley)**
 - 48 journal-year combinations
- **Rapid Service Fee (Springer Nature)**
 - 38 journal-year combinations
- **Editorial Processing Fee (Elsevier)**
 - 1 journal-year combination

Practical applications:

- Libraries:
 - Increasing bargaining power in TA negotiations through knowledge of fee structures, APC prices, and profit margins
- Research funders:
 - Mandating full transparency and monitoring of publication fees
 - Supporting researchers by addressing nuanced or alternative charges
- Bibliometricians:
 - Understanding APC pricing variability and oligopolistic market structures ([Akbulut, 2025](#))
 - Focusing APC spending analyses ([Jung et al., 2025](#))

- Part of the **R**epercussions of **O**pen **A**ccess on **R**esearch **A**ssessment (ROARA) project
 - Long-term bibliometric analysis of journal publication outputs per country and major publisher, tracing the uptake of different OA models
 - Estimation of total APCs paid to major publishers
- Analysis of alternative fee models
 - Open dataset on rapid service fee journals