

14 May 2026

COALITION
PUBLICA

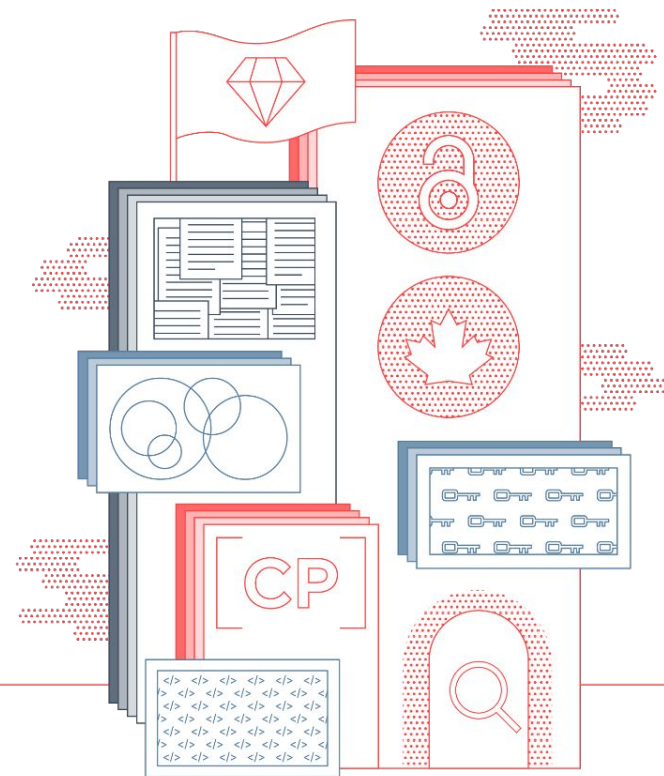
The Future of Collective Funding Models for Open Access

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Joe Deville,
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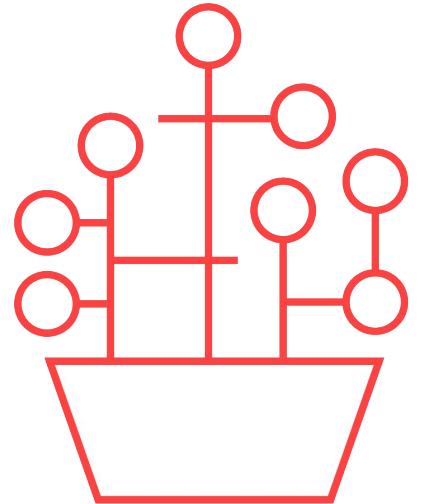
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Urooj Nizami,
Associate Director Engagement & Outreach, Public Knowledge Project



Plan

1. Presentation by Sharla Lair
2. Presentation by Joe Deville
3. Presentation by Jessica Dallaire-Clark
4. Panel Discussion
5. Audience Questions



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Collective funding

Dominant Revenue Models for Open

Earned Revenue
Models

- Advertising
- Article/Book Processing Charge
- Cross Subsidies
- Crowdfunding from Individuals
- Embargoed/Delayed OA
- Endowments
- Fundraising
- Hybrid (digital-only freemium)
- Hybrid (print)
- Third-Party Licensing

Embedded
Institutional
Support

- Library-Based Publishing
- Subsidy Model

Third-Party
Subsidies

- Grants
- Liberation

Collective
Models

- Library Crowdfunding
- Membership Fees
- Shared Infrastructure

Hybrid

- Conditional OA/Subscribe-to-Open

Earned Revenue Models

Advertising

**Article or Book
Processing Charge**

Cross Subsidies

**Crowdfunding from
Individuals**

**Embargoed/Delayed
OA**

Endowments

**Fundraising
(donations and
grants)**

**Hybrid (digital-only
freemium)**

Hybrid (print)

**Third-Party
Licensing**

Subscription

Embedded
Institutional
Support

Library-
based
publishing

Subsidy
Model

Third Party
Subsidies

Grants/
Sponsorships

Liberation

Consortial/ Collective Models

Organizational
Crowdfunding

Membership
Fees

Shared
Infrastructure

Hybrid
Models

Conditional
OA/Subscribe-
to-Open

Collective Models

Organizational
Crowdfunding

Membership
Fees

Shared
Infrastructure

Collective Funding Models

Benefits

- Shared cost and reduced burden
- Broader and more stable funding base
- Enables open access outcomes
- Equity in access to knowledge
- Alignment with shared academic mission

Challenges

- Free rider problem
- Coordination complexity
- Uneven participation incentives
- Revenue uncertainty
- Governance and decision making

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Barriers to collective funding of Diamond OA: The perspective of European librarians

Barriers to collective funding of Diamond OA: The perspective of European librarians

Joe Deville

Managing Director | Open Book Collective

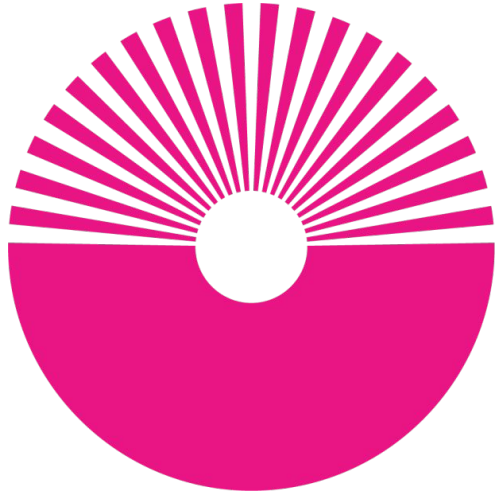
Professor in Science and Technology Studies | Lancaster University

All slides CC BY



Drawing on research from the Copim
'Open Book Futures' project, funded by





**OpenBook
Collective**

What is the Open Book Collective

Non profit

A **UK registered charity**

Community governed

Community governed by **libraries, publishers and infrastructure providers**

Intermediary

Collecting and **managing support from multiple institutions**, to multiple members

Collective funding

A **sustainable, financially efficient** alternative to dominant OA funding models (e.g. BPCs)

Transparent

Clear, robust **membership criteria**, clear **reporting requirements**

What kind of organizations are involved?



LEUVEN UNIVERSITY PRESS



University Presses



Scholar-led Presses



Independent Publishers



Open Infrastructure Providers

30 CRKN members already supporting at least one OBC member

Collective funding models for open access books

Librarians' experiences and barriers to
participation across six European contexts

Judith Fathallah, Joe Deville, Izabella Penier, Francesca Corazza

October 2025

v1.0



- **20 in depth interviews** with librarians (mostly) & OA advocates (a few) in 6 countries: France, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Finland, and Sweden
- Combined with **analysis of existing literature + profiles for each of the six countries**
- Primary aim was to understand the **experiences** of librarians with collective funding models and especially their **barriers** to joining organizations like the OBC

Support for Diamond OA exists in a space of tension

Strong ideological commitment to OA among many librarians and researchers; desire to advance the scholarly knowledge commons



Trust in new OA initiatives has been eroded by corporate buyouts; continual pressure to meet institutional needs

Interest in dedicated Diamond OA budgets within libraries



Hard to implement + for some transformative agreements have eaten up OA budget

Usage data can help support internal advocacy



Usage data on its own can't resolve these tensions

Frequent references to local and national OA policies in interviews



Formal policies influence shape librarians' OA decisions less than expected

Concerns about UK/US-centric initiatives



National language publishing often seen as under-supported

Broader questions about the role of librarianship

Forthcoming (hopefully) article in the Journal of Electronic Publishing*

- Librarians becoming **arbiters of what constitutes ‘good’ and ‘bad’ open access** – i.e. doing ‘boundary work’
- Work informed by **varying visions/values** about libraries, publishing, and the purpose of higher education
- Librarians’ roles need to be understood when thinking about **how to define and understand what Diamond OA is/could be**

“To whom is the librarian responsible? To their institution and its researchers and readers? To the state, as in some cases the primary funder of universities? Or to the global scholarly commons?”

*Fathallah & Deville (in draft), ‘Imagineries of Diamond: European librarians’ open access boundary work’. Accepted abstract for potential Special Issue on ‘The Future of Diamond Open Access’ in *Journal of Electronic Publishing*

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Open Book Collective: Stakeholder and Sustainability Evaluation

Judith Fathallah, Joe Deville

April 2026

v1.0



<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19914121>

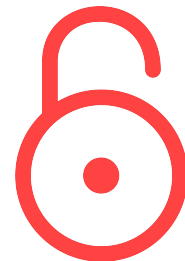
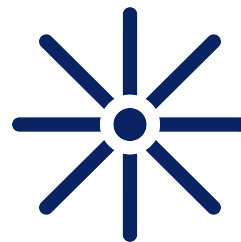
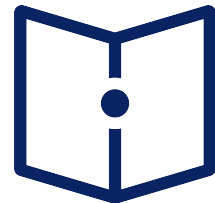
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Challenges and Opportunities of Collective Funding

The Partnership for Open Access (POA)

enables **diamond open access** publishing in Canada by providing financial support to non-commercial scholarly journals from library partners.

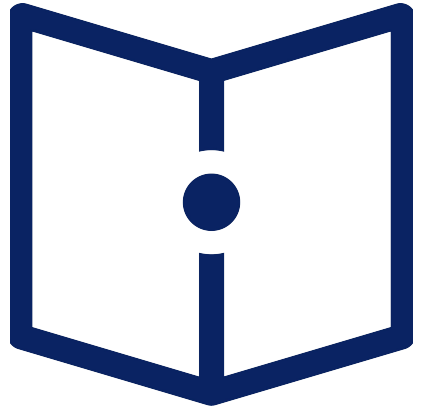
- **2,000+** new OA articles per year with no APCs
- **200+** diamond OA journals on Érudit
- **95 libraries** in 4 countries
- **40+** flips



Challenge #1: Explanations

Making clear what is different and why it matters

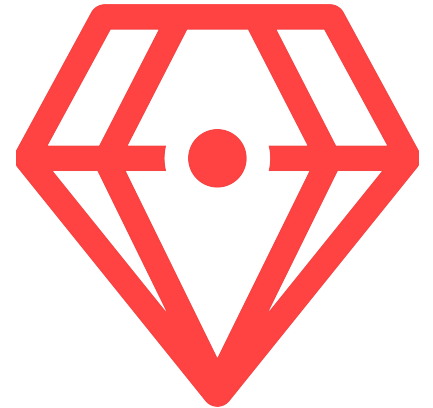
- In our society, paying for something usually gets you a *tangible* benefit, such as paying a subscription to access content
- Collective funding models typically provide *intangible* benefits, such as memberships, visibility, and furthering specific projects
- Working outside this commercial system requires a lot of explanation - what you are doing, how you are doing it, and why it matters (rinse and repeat as often as necessary)



Challenge #2: Comparaisons

Fitting new(ish) things into old(ish) systems

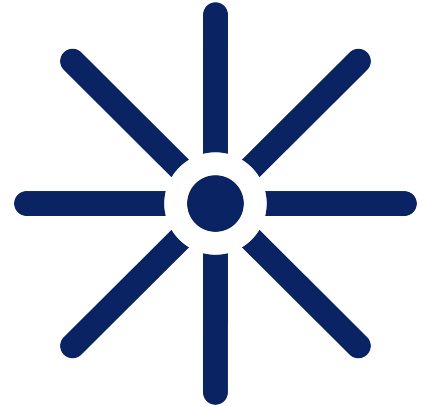
- Open access (which a lot of collective funding models seek to fund) is not exactly new and the for-profit scholarly publishing sector is not really all that old (Fyfe, 2022)
- *But*, libraries are used to paying for things (i.e. tangible benefits) so it seems natural to compare collective funding models to the other things libraries pay for
- Often becomes a situation of comparing apples to oranges (and insisting that the apples are, in fact, oranges)



Opportunity #1: Connections

Identifying and embracing local impact

- Metrics (while important) provide only a bare-bones outline of research impact, the difference between a sketch and a fully painted portrait
- Collective funding models can (and often do) paint a more complete picture by surfacing relationships, such as campus-based journals
- **More than 80% of the journals sustained by the POA are associated with a CRKN member**



Opportunity #2: Transformation

From loaded term to future reality

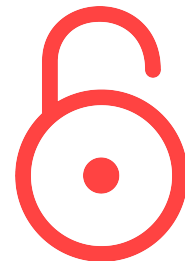
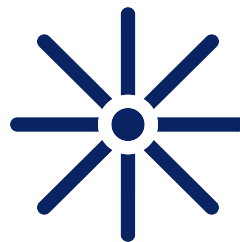
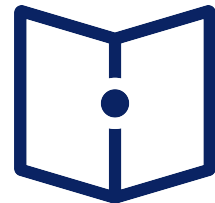
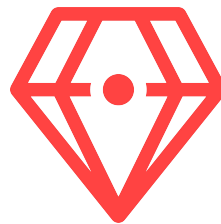
- It is now apparent that commercial approaches to open access, whether in the original form of APCs or their evolution into read and publish agreements, have not delivered sort of transformation that OA advocates envisioned
- Collective funding models *may* offer a more radical, if incremental, theory of change, that is both long-term and systems-wide
- **43 journals supported by the POA have flipped to full, immediate OA, without APCs** - not just for a single volume year, but for the long-term, and *none* of them have folded



poa

So, while we cannot ignore the challenges, we should continue to explore the opportunities.

Together.



4

Question Period

Question 1: What Institutions Misunderstand

When institutions hear the phrase “collective funding model,” what assumptions do they immediately bring to it, and what do they most often get wrong? Do they hear “additional cost,” when the real question may be redistribution of existing spending and control?

Question 2: Values versus Value

Thinking with Kaitlin Thaney's piece *Infrastructure is a dependency, not a donation*, are we relying too heavily on voluntary funding approaches built on values-based arguments of equity, openness, and public goods, only to have them dismissed as less essential and therefore expendable? Should we instead be legitimizing open infrastructures and open content programs with data and hard economic evidence? Do collective funding models need to prove both moral legitimacy and financial efficiency?

Question 3: Funding or Governance?

As Ralf Schimmer and others have argued, there may already be enough money in the system. The problem is how it is concentrated and controlled. How do collective funding models force funding entities to grapple with thorny discussions of governance and audits of where their money already goes? **Is this fundamentally a funding problem, a governance problem, or are we realizing these things are inextricably entangled?**

Question 4: Commitments and Accountability

We have seen efforts to quantify responsibility, such as the 2.5% commitment from academic libraries toward an open scholarly commons. In retrospect, we know those figures significantly underestimated what sustainable collective support for open access content and open infrastructure would actually look like. What have we learned from trying to quantify these obligations in this way? Does putting numbers on the table create accountability? **Or has the experience of the past decade shown that institutions will perform commitment without changing the underlying distribution of power?** At what point does measurement start becoming a substitute for transformation?

Question 5: Moralizing Business Models

Sharla, you said that we have “moralized business models,” which is a striking phrase. Subscription models are often treated as neutral and inevitable, while collective models are framed as ideological experiments. Can you expand on what you mean by moralizing business models? **If we stop treating certain funding structures as inherently legitimate, what should we evaluate instead?** What framework should we use to decide whether a model is actually serving scholarship, research communities, and the public good?

Question 5: Moralizing Business Models (Response)

Response by Sharla Lair, Lyrasis, sharla.lair@lyrasis.org ([Full transcript available](#))

What I mean by “moralizing business models” is that we often treat certain economic arrangements as good or bad, as Joe touched on.

One of the practical consequences of moralizing business models is the pressure it creates across the scholarly ecosystem when making decisions about what to support, renew, or invest in. Libraries are already operating in complex environments shaped by constrained budgets, user needs, disciplinary differences, infrastructure dependencies, and long term preservation responsibilities. These are inherently difficult decisions because they require balancing access, cost, sustainability, and performance under real world conditions.

When evaluation becomes moralized, an additional layer is introduced. Decision makers are no longer only asked whether a product, service, or infrastructure component is effective, sustainable, and needed by the communities it serves. They are also implicitly asked whether it is the “right kind” of organization to support. This creates a difficult tension. A resource may be essential for teaching, research, or scholarly communication, and still feel institutionally uncomfortable to renew or fund if it is framed as morally misaligned. That additional moral burden does not necessarily improve outcomes. Instead, it can distort judgment by shifting attention away from performance, outcomes, and system fit.

It also produces an uneven standard of evaluation across the ecosystem. In practice, systems that identify as “open,” community governed, or nonprofit are often held to a higher standard. They are expected to demonstrate stronger governance, clearer sustainability, broader participation, and higher transparency. At the same time, commercial, proprietary, or incumbent systems are more often evaluated primarily on functionality, adoption, or embedded dependency. Over time, this has created an asymmetry. Open infrastructure and open access initiatives are required to continuously justify their legitimacy in ways that other systems are not. This is not a neutral evaluative framework. It reflects how moral categories can become unevenly applied standards rather than consistent analytical tools.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that not all commercial actors operate in the same way. While there are absolutely commercial businesses that engage in highly extractive or profiteering practices that raise legitimate concerns about cost, control, and value flow within scholarly communication, not all do. The issue is not that commercial participation is inherently problematic, but that certain incentive structures can become misaligned with the long term interests of research communities. The key issue, then, is better understood as alignment rather than moral classification. The question is not whether an organization is inherently good or bad based on its category, but whether its incentives, governance, and practices are aligned with the mission and needs of the scholarly ecosystem.

A more robust evaluative frame replaces moral sorting with institutional design thinking. Instead of asking what something “is,” we ask what it “does,” and how it behaves over time in relation to shared scholarly and public goals. Key questions become:

- Incentives: What does the model reward over time?
- Governance in practice: Who actually has decision power, not just nominal authority?
- Value flow: Does money and control circulate back into scholarly communities or concentrate externally?
- Dependence: Does it reduce systemic lock in or deepen it?
- Equity: Who can participate meaningfully, regardless of institutional wealth?
- Transparency: Are costs, contracts, and decision processes legible?
- Resilience: Does the system survive leadership change, funding shifts, or market pressure?
- Mission alignment: Does it strengthen research, teaching, and preservation over time?

This shifts the conversation from “what kind of organization is this?” to “what kind of system does this produce?”

From that perspective, a coherent approach is to evaluate all content, services, and infrastructure using the same criteria, regardless of ownership model, tax status, or governance form. Open infrastructure, open access, and community governed models should not be treated as exceptional categories that must clear additional moral hurdles. They are part of the broader scholarly communication system, alongside publishing, indexing, discovery, preservation, and access infrastructure.

When “open” is treated as something extra or optional, it can unintentionally reinforce the assumption that the default system is neutral or already justified. In reality, all systems embed values, and all systems shape access, cost, control, and participation. The goal is not to pre-assign virtue or legitimacy, but to assess which arrangements best support the long term health, accessibility, integrity, and sustainability of scholarly communication in practice. This matters because it helps keep decision making anchored in stewardship rather than moral classification. Stewardship requires navigating tradeoffs in complex systems, not applying purity tests to content and infrastructure programs that are deeply interconnected and interdependent.

Question 6: Distribution and International Collective Funding

One of the core values of the open access movement is resisting consolidation and supporting distributed, decentralized infrastructure. But in an international context infrastructures are often all drawing from the same limited pool of institutional support. How do we decentralize in ways that strengthen resilience and community control while holding onto coordination between communities that vie for the same funds to support equally essential initiatives? **Can distributed collective funding work effectively on an international scale?**

Closing Question

Is collective funding actually capable of unlocking the kind of transformation we need?

Audience Questions

Merci à vous !

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