Laying the foundations

Building systems of support for OA books

Lucy Barnes & Joe Deville

UKSG 2021

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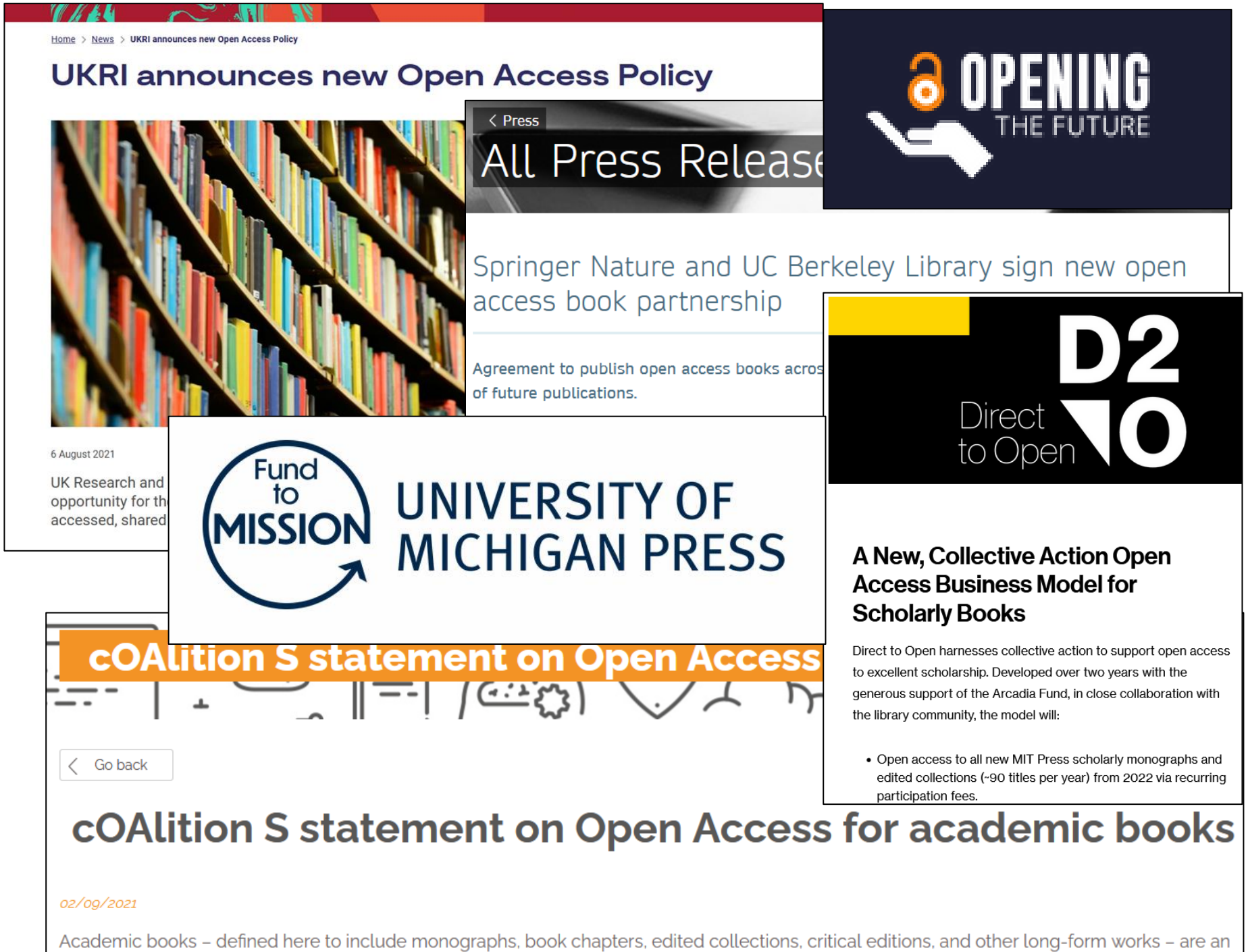
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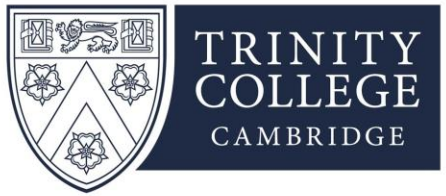


















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COPIM

- **3 years** (November 2019 – October 2022)
- Funded by **Research England** (£2.2M [$2.7M]), **Arcadia** (£800K [$990K]), and contributions from consortium partners (£576K [$712K])
- COPIM will address the **key technological, structural, and organisational hurdles**—around funding, production, dissemination, discovery, reuse, and archiving—which are standing in the way of the wider adoption and impact of open access books.

UKRI Research England

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Revenue Infrastructures & Management Platform

Knowledge Exchange & Piloting Alternative Business Models

Community Governance

Building an Open Dissemination System

Experimental Publishing, Re-use and Impact

Archiving & Digital Preservation



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Scaling small

- Building infrastructure to remove/lower barriers to entry to OA book publishing for smaller presses
- Able to flourish at smaller scales
- This work is collaborative, not competitive
- It encourages diversity – not 'one publisher/platform/process to rule them all'
- It is also **intentional**: a group of researchers, scholar-led publishers, libraries, universities, infrastructure providers & funders **choosing** to build an open, collaborative alternative to a largely closed-access system driven by commercial goals

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Publishing or being published?

- COPIM's infrastructures built, owned & governed by members of the scholarly community.
- Many of the presses COPIM will support are scholar-led.
- An approach driven by a belief that since publishing is an essential part of academic inquiry & the **sharing** of knowledge, it should be led by the academic community.
- Academics already perform a lot of the labour that is essential to publishing: research, writing, peer review.
- Publishing ought not be something that 'happens to' research at the end of a process.
- **We want to publish our work; we don't want to 'be published'.**

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BUT…

- Dominant academic publishing model:
  - Predominantly closed-access.
  - Commercial in approach (competitive, not collaborative). Not academic-led.
  - Rewards a small number of large entities (the opposite of scaling small).
  - Supports a system of reward & assessment for academic authors which is likewise typically competitive, and in which publisher prestige plays a large role (does not reward new innovators, but a small number of established players).

If you build it, will they come?

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- How to engage researchers enthusiastically with our vision for 'scaling small' to grow OA book publishing?
- We need:
  - Community-owned infrastructure to foster this system
  - Institutional support for its continued existence
  - Better arguments!
- OA for books is currently being driven largely by policy mandates: COMPLIANCE with external directives.
- OA publishing ought to be part of scholarly exchange: not something 'done to' research communities.
- We need a shift in how we talk about publishing: so that it's no longer about passive 'access', but intentional sharing.

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From accessing to infrastructuring

- An argument for shifting how we talk about the potential of open knowledge

	Dominant (closed) practices	Insurgent (open) practices
Accessing	Paid access via institutions / individual purchases	Self-archiving, institutional archiving, direct from open access publishers
Cataloguing and distribution	Proprietary platforms (e.g. EBSCO, Google Books)	DOAB, THOTH
Publicising	Closed access publisher platforms/websites, self-marketing	Collaborative amplification, ScholarLed white label site
Funding	Institutional subscriptions, big deals, read and publish deals	BPCs, crowd funding, OA library membership programmes, OBC

Other key practices: reviewing, teaching, writing, typesetting, editing, archiving



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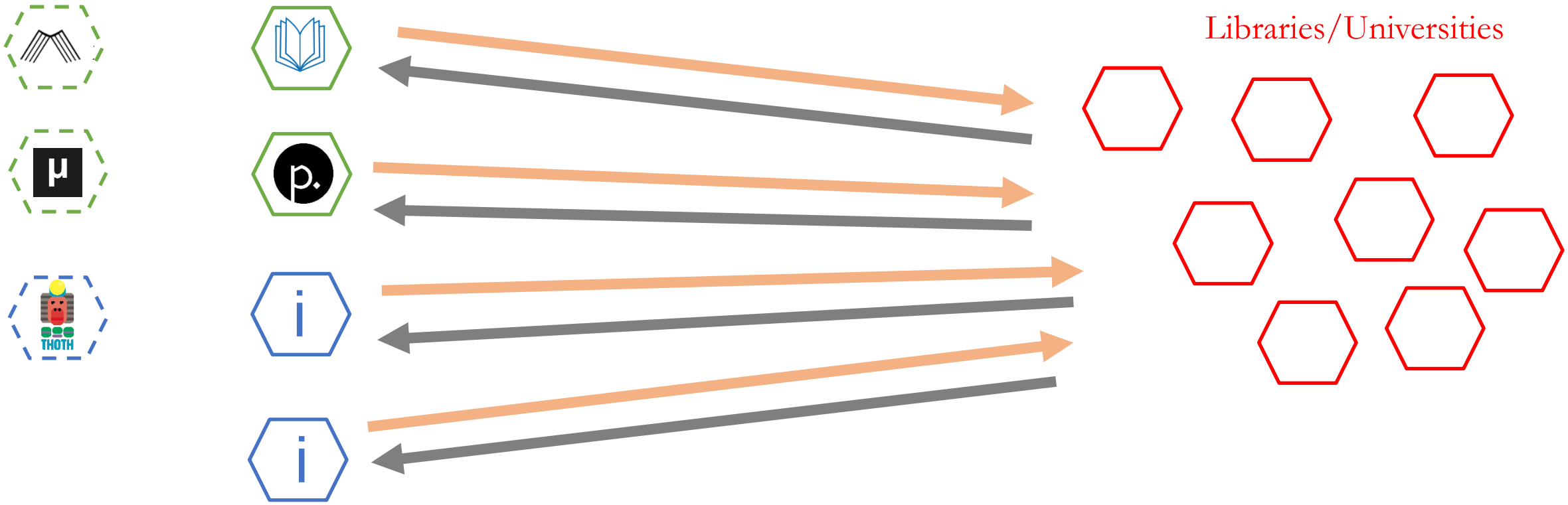
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From accessing to infrastructuring

- 'Open' was never, on its own, enough
- Intentional publishing requires a focus beyond just questions of how content is to be accessed to how content is *infrastructured*
- Attention to infrastructuring practices shifts attention not just to what is built, but what types of relations are put into play
  - Do they individualise or do they collectivise?
  - Do they support competition or collaboration?
  - Do they monopolise or do they diversify?

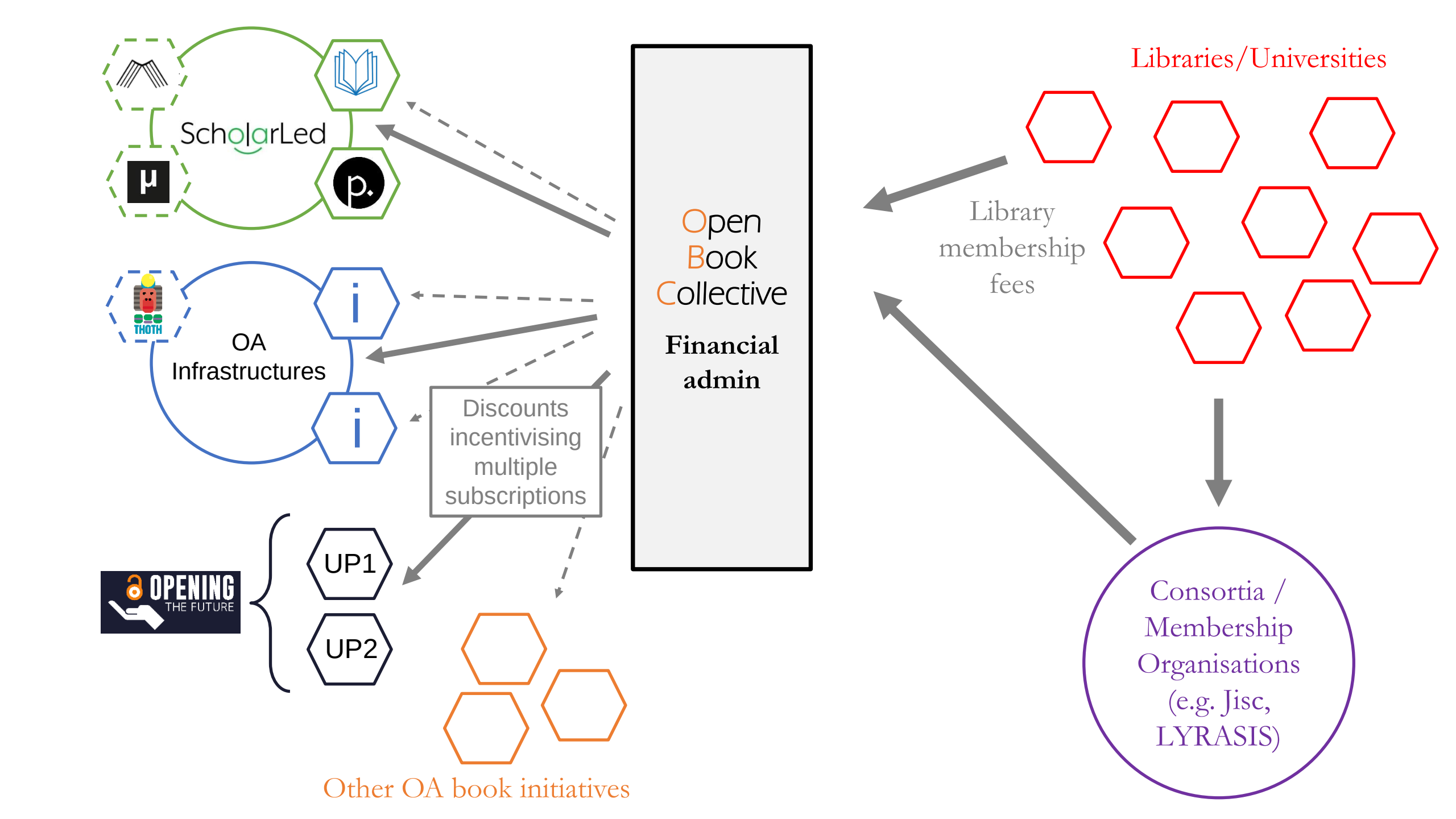


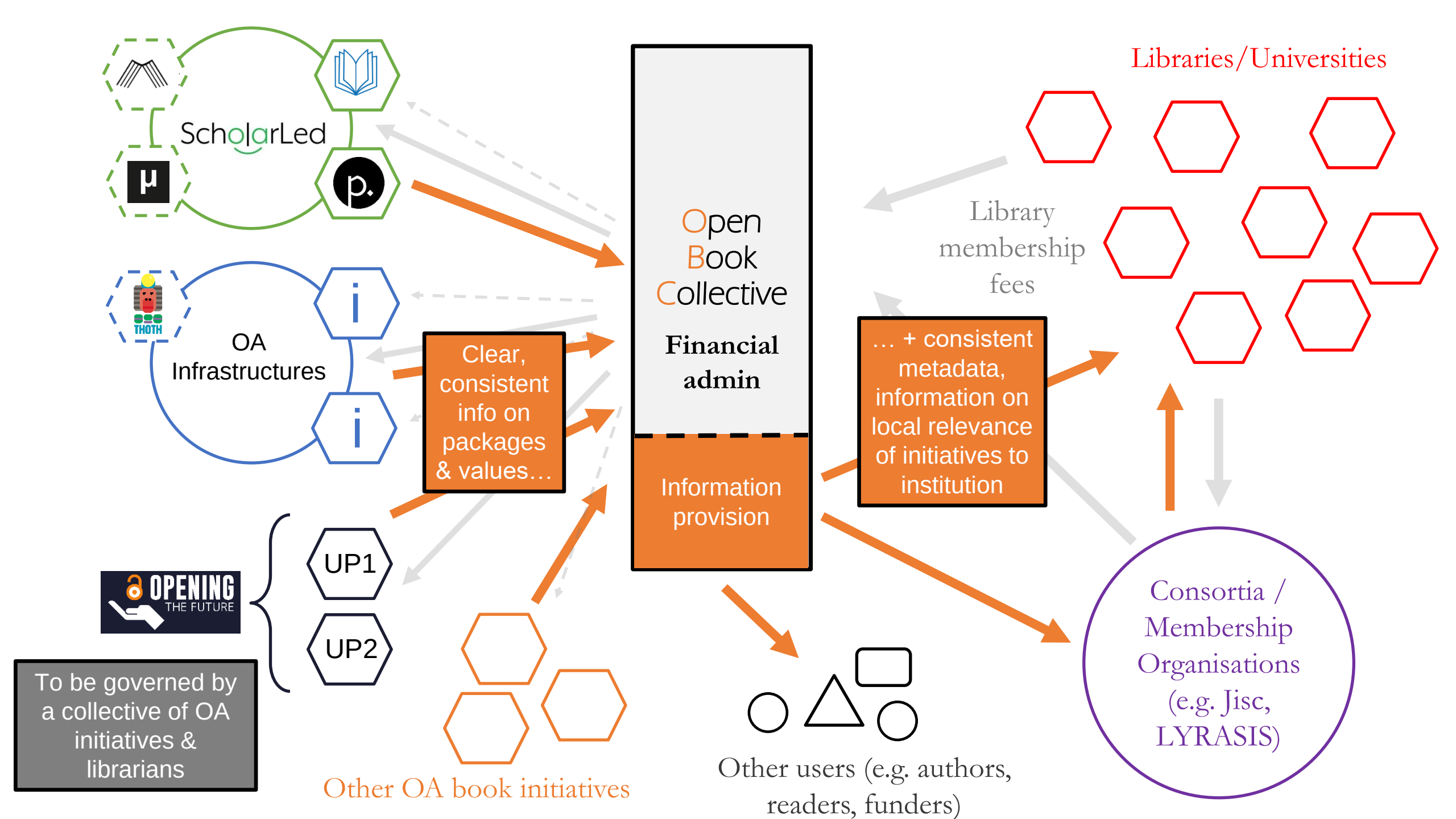
Challenges for OA initiatives

- Outreach work labour intensive
- Outreach tends to be geographically skewed
- Outreach rewards uncertain…
- … entrenches BPC-based publishing
- Barriers to entry for smaller initiatives

Challenges for libraries/universities

- Inconsistencies in how initiatives present themselves (inc. metadata)
- Labour intensive to assess many individual initiatives
- Want more evidence of how individual initiatives deliver benefit (locally & globally)


ScholarLed
OA Infrastructures
THOTH
OPENING THE FUTURE
UP1
UP2
Discounts incentivising multiple subscriptions
Open Book Collective
Financial admin
Other OA book initiatives
Libraries/Universities
Library membership fees
Consortia / Membership Organisations (e.g. Jisc, LYRASIS)


ScholarLed
OA Infrastructures
THOTH
OPENING THE FUTURE
UP1
UP2
To be governed by a collective of OA initiatives & librarians
Clear, consistent info on packages & values…
Open Book Collective
Financial admin
Information provision
Other OA book initiatives
Other users (e.g. authors, readers, funders)
Library membership fees
… + consistent metadata, information on local relevance of initiatives to institution
Libraries/Universities
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What does this infrastructuring work do for HEIs?

- Easier to demonstrate value of supporting OA initiatives: information on local researcher-authors represented in combined OBC catalogue
- Easier administration: Single information hub, simpler invoicing, reduced workload
- Increasing access to OA titles: e.g. ScholarLed membership scheme would support 90+ new OA Titles per annum, delivered with appropriate metadata

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What does this infrastructuring work do for the scholar community?

- Easier to publish OA: delivering more sustainable non-BPC-based revenue streams to OA publishers
- Sustainable, gradual funding model: supporting an OA ecosystem that can grow gradually over time, with funding to initiatives not dependent on hitting fixed annual targets
- Increased diversity in OA: greater integration of diverse range of OA initiatives into scholarly libraries
- More robust OA infrastructures: new revenue streams for key but often overlooked backbones of OA



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The values of infrastructuring

- Not enough to express values such as ‘scaling small’ and ‘collaboration over competition’ as abstract ideals – these values have to be made
- Get frustrated with text like this in funding calls

  > “projects must focus on substantive research [...] Academic infrastructure [...] can only be funded within projects with a substantive research focus”

- Infrastructure is not separate from, or subsequent to the research process: it shapes and conditions our research and how we share and discuss it
- The shift to OA requires more than OA just being 'added on' to publishing processes: it requires new infrastructures capable of enabling/sustaining processes of making-open