Outreach to open access or scholarly communications librarians

OA/scholarly communications librarians may support this model as part of the broader effort to shift the academic landscape towards open research.

Open access librarians are often extremely savvy and well versed in new models for open access. Given the affordability of Opening the Future and the fact that scholarly communications budgets are often being cut back, this initiative offers a powerful and affordable way for institutions to signal their support for open access books, even when they do not have a great deal of available funding.

One potential point of confusion for this group is that they may misconstrue Opening the Future as a read-and-publish or transformative agreement. That is, they may erroneously believe that they are paying for their authors to publish openly with the press. Communication with librarians in this group must stress the novelty of the approach and that the aim is to reach the entire frontlist becoming OA, thereby avoiding the need for hybrid interim measures.

One of the aims of models like OtF is to try to uncouple the link between a university (library) paying a fee so its own researchers can publish openly. Instead the model endeavours to encourage universities to sustain presses that they value, and that publish work in relevant fields: if BPC-free models like OtF are successful then *any* authors (including their own) who come to those presses with a book proposal will be able to publish OA.

See also this toolkit's FAQ section on OtF: Comprehensive list of OtF FAQs

Key elements of outreach to OA/Schol Comm librarians include:

- Stressing the affordability of the initiative, with particular reference comparison to BPCs.
- Emphasising the need to avoid Book Processing Charges.
- Where accurate and where you have the data to support this, tying the request to authors from the institution without implying that this is a transformative agreement (i.e. showing that authors from the institution are publishing with the Press).
- Tying the request to subject-specific readership/usages (e.g. are there books set on courses at the university that are published by the Press?).

- Stress the relevance of the backlist being offered to their research and/or teaching collections.
- Personalisation so as not to come across as marketing spam.
- Complying with all General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provisions for opt-out if a librarian does not wish to hear any more.

In order to find OA librarians who may be sympathetic to a scheme of this sort, there are a few options. One is to research which libraries are participating in other similar collective funding models, or who have advocated for them strongly in forums such as OA webinars or via Jiscmail such as:

- oagoodpractice@jiscmail.ac.uk
- lis-e-resources@jiscmail.ac.uk
- lis-link@jiscmail.ac.uk

For a template based on our own outreach to open access / scholarly communications librarians please click here □□ Template direct outreach to OA or scholarly communications librarians

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