Renewals

- **When the current subscription has a few months left, you should get in touch with the librarian you are already in contact with to discuss renewal.**
- **Renewals may take the form of additional backlist packages, or a supporter package without backlist content.**
- **Despite the extremely difficult financial environment for HEIs, we have seen about 40% of our initial subscribers renew so far, alongside continuing new sign ups. We therefore feel like this is a sustainable model in the short to mid term.**
- **We have also provided a template email to libraries about renewals.**

A natural question for schemes of this sort, and one we get asked quite frequently, is about their sustainability. Questions certainly remain about this in the long-term, if for no other reason than for the fact that all publishers - eventually - reach the end of backlist they have which is viable for packages. At Copim, we have made no secret of the fact that we believe a fundamental and systemic change about how closely library budgets are tied to direct acquisitions is required, with money instead being used to enable OA publishing to the benefit of all.

However, there is good reason to believe that these sorts of models work in the short-to-medium term, and that they will, as more and more publishers use them, becoming a more fixed part of the OA funding landscape. Our confidence in this rests on a few factors.

1. We have continued to accrue new supporters over the whole period from 2020 to late 2024, which increases the pool of potential renewals and also extends it by, at this point, to the period 2027-2030 (as our most recent new members will enter their first renewal period in 2027 and, if they renew for three years, will continue their subscription until 2030).
2. CEUP entered its first renewal period in early 2024 and we therefore have nearly a year of renewal data to work with. Our renewal rate so far has been around 35-40%. While this may not seem very robust, we must look at it in the following context:

a. Library budgets are under immense strain right now particularly in the UK, and budget cuts have been the main reason given to us for non-renewals.

b. As this model does not work by term access but acquisitions, there is less incentive to renew for this model than for some other collective funding model (the pay-off for this being that the model is able to access acquisition budgets than a temporary access cannot, which is reflected in the amount of money accrued by CEUP and LUP).

3. The landscape of collective OA funding models for books has grown hugely since 2020, and has been adopted by several large commercial publishers and large institutional presses. As they become less experimental and more advocated-for and understood by libraries, we expect more

libraries to be willing to, and interested in, engaging with them.

As the subscription is for a three year period, by the end of the second year you are going to want to start thinking about renewals. Your CMS of choice ought to have a running list of when library memberships began so that you can keep track of this time period. We use a spreadsheet which we manually check regularly to see whose memberships are nearing their end point, in order to get in touch about renewals.

There are two main options when it comes to renewal:

1. Creating a new package of your back content to offer them.
2. Creating an 'OA' supporter package which comes with no back content attached to it.

There are pros and cons to each. A massive point in favour of a new package of back content is that it comes with further acquisitions to the library, which are ultimately the main draw for participation. On the other hand, though, it means committing more of your backlist. Theoretically, if it were in a very different subject area, it would also mean that a different librarian at the supporting institution would be responsible for signing it off than the one you originally dealt with, but ideally they would provide internal advocacy to their colleague supporting the acquisition.

The benefit of an OA supporter package is that you do not need to commit more backlist, or go through the work of creating an additional package (i.e. curating the theme, selecting titles). Both of our presses offer an OA supporter package. At CEUP this is in addition to 5 backlist packages. At LUP it is the only alternative to their one original package. CEUP is getting renewals on both additional content packages, and OA supporter packages, but it is also clear that libraries prefer backlist packages where the option is available. As we are only just now at the start of our renewals for LUP (CEUP began earlier this year) we cannot yet say how attractive the OA supporter packages are as the sole renewal option. Additionally, an OA supporter package without content being acquired may have to come out of a different part of the library budget than the initial package, which may add complications, although in our own experience it has not yet.

We have also seen, in reality, that some libraries choose to renew with the same package they originally had despite being aware that this is unnecessary (as they have permanent access after their initial three year subscription), presumably as they would like to keep supporting the programme and this is logistically easier within their administrative structures than opting for a second package.

Once you have decided what your renewal option will be, you should email the librarian you were in touch with originally. You should do this a few months before their current subscription term is due to end. If they have moved role or retired, you should be able to get in touch with the library's general help or contact page to find who their replacement is.

We have also provided a template email to libraries about renewals.

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