



# The language we use to describe Open Access publishing can activate bias against Open Access.

## The Status Quo Bias and the Uptake of Open Access Publishing

### INTRO

Information provided online about open access is for the most part prohibitively complex and introduces contradictory interpretations that increase the **cognitive load** of readers; high cognitive load activates a phenomenon known as **the status quo bias**. The only reliable method of counteracting this bias in order to bolster the uptake of open access is to re-frame the language commonly employed in association with open access and to minimize the tiers of decisions expected of authors, which create a barrier rather than a gateway to open access engagement.

### METHODS

- Scraped text from publisher, library, and advocacy org websites.
- Text analysis for complexity using Textstat.
- Definitions coding for
  - Parameters of Open Access mentioned.
  - Whether “choice” language is used.
  - Number of options for cost recovery.

• Melissa H. Cantrell & Lauren B. Collister



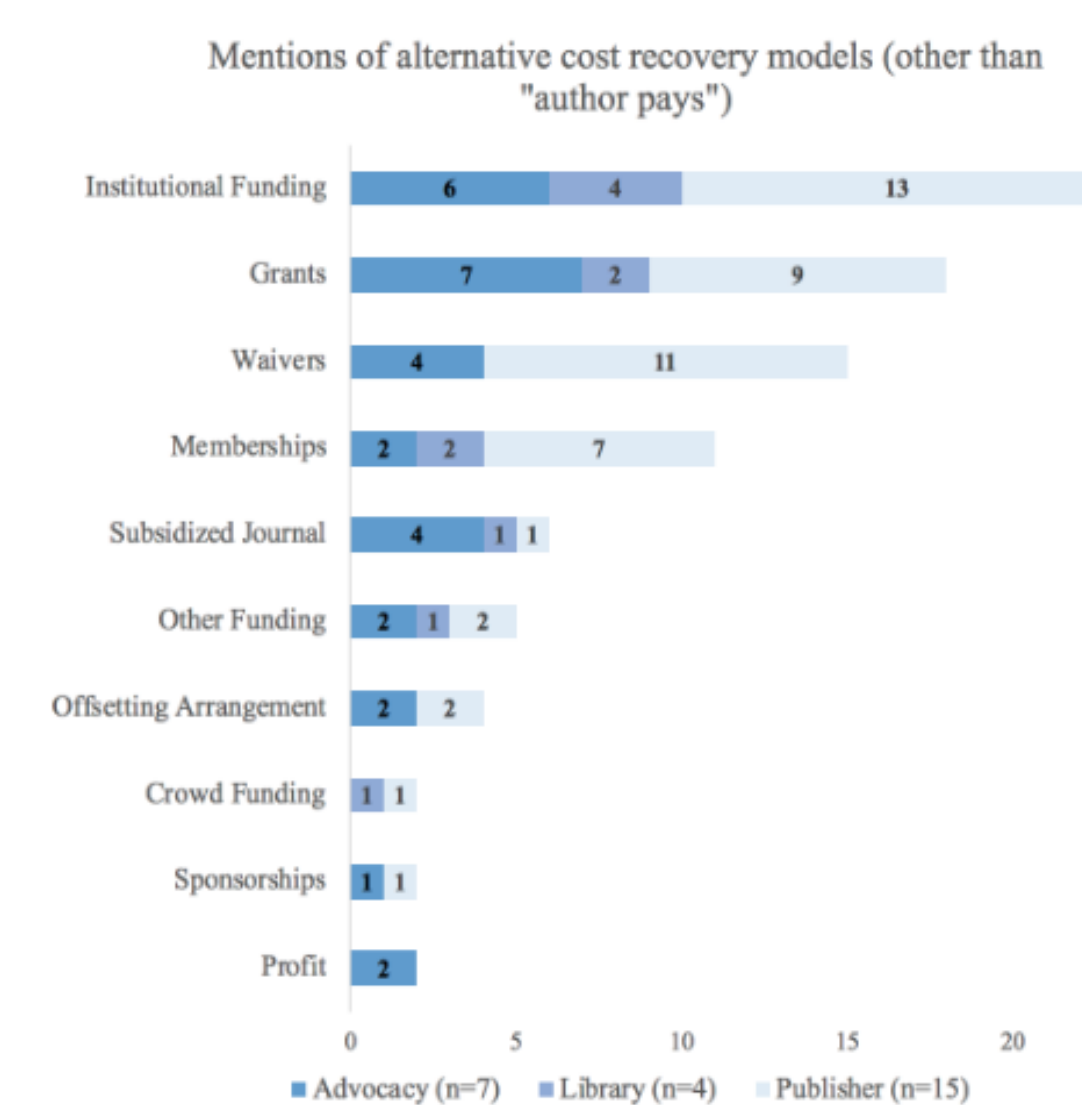
### RESULTS

- Over half (52%) of sources scored a graduate or above reading level for their OA webpages; all but one source scored at college level or higher. **Higher reading level increases cognitive load for readers.**
- Many library and advocacy group definitions include “squishy” language such as *without most permission barriers*.
- More parameters also increase cognitive load.** The majority (55%) of sources included 8+ parameters for definitions of OA.
- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of sources described OA as a “choice” or “option”; **more choices lead to high cognitive load and bias towards the status quo.**

Source	SMOG Index	Flesch Reading Ease Score	Combined Grade Level
ACRL	24.6	-115.6	25
CORNELL U.	24	-11.6	24
DEGRUYTER	Invalid	-212	22
SHERPA	18.9	-22.6	27
RIGHT TO RESEARCH	25.4	-22.2	17
WIKIPEDIA	21.9	2.3	24
SPRINGER	20.1	14.1	23
OASIS	19.5	-14.2	20
WILEY	Invalid	-14.7	20
IOP	18.6	25.3	21
NATURE	18.2	22.6	18
OXFORD	17.1	10.1	18
PROQUEST	Invalid	3.36	20
HINDAWI	Invalid	24.9	17
CREATIVE COMMONS	Invalid	23.9	27
ELSEVIER	20.7	-5.3	13
BMJ	18.2	21.6	13
BOAI	17.1	36.1	17
PLOS	18.4	26.1	9
SPARC	16	-3.21	16
MIT	17.2	37.9	16
U. OF KANSAS	16.4	17.4	14
BRILL	14.1	22.1	16
PETER SUBER	16.2	39.9	16
CAMBRIDGE	14.2	44.2	14
HARVARD U.	14.8	44.7	14
TAYLOR & FRANCIS	14.4	45.4	14
SAGE	14.2	47.2	13
OAWG	14.5	47.6	13

Beyond Post-Graduate
Post-Graduate
Graduate
College
High School

	Author Always Pays	Author Usually Pays	Author Sometimes Pays
<b>Choice Language Used</b>	Oxford UP Nature Wiley BMJ SAGE ProQuest	Springer Cambridge UP Taylor & Francis Brill Cornell Libraries	Elsevier IOP Publishing DeGruyter Right to Research Coalition MIT Libraries OASIS Wikipedia Harvard Libraries BOAI
<b>Choice Language Not Used</b>	Hindawi SHERPA PLoS One	ACRL	Peter Suber Overview KU Libraries

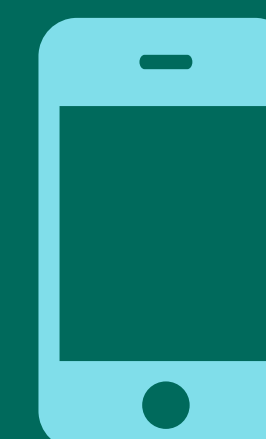


Melissa H. Cantrell, University of Colorado-Boulder  
melissa.cantrell@colorado.edu

Lauren B. Collister, University of Pittsburgh  
lbcollister@pitt.edu



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