

## Library Publishing: A Commentary on “Diamond Open Access”

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### Abstract

The diamond open access (OA) model generates impacts in the academic publishing domain while simultaneously posing challenges to the library profession. As an emerging model of academic publishing or “diamond” open access, it seeks to achieve completely free and open sharing of academic resources. However, in actual implementation, some libraries may sacrifice the collective bargaining power of library consortia in resource procurement and service provision in their pursuit of diamond OA publishing, concurrently weakening the efficacy of institutional repositories as public service platforms. We analyze the current landscape of library publishing, highlighting its challenges including insufficient staffing, aging platforms, and difficulties in securing sustainable funding. To address these challenges, we recommend strategies such as strengthening cross-organizational collaboration, ensuring stable budgetary investment and professional staffing, and establishing scientifically rigorous evaluation systems, thereby fostering the flourishing development of library publishing.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

#### Library Publishing: A Commentary on “Diamond Open Access”

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**Abstract:** The Diamond Open Access (OA) model has created significant impacts in academic publishing while simultaneously posing challenges to the library profession. As an emerging “diamond” model for academic publishing and open access, it aims to achieve complete, free openness and sharing of scholarly resources. However, in practice, some libraries pursuing Diamond OA publishing

may sacrifice the collective bargaining power of library consortia in resource procurement and service provision, while also weakening institutional repositories' effectiveness as public service platforms. This paper analyzes the current state of library publishing, identifies its challenges—including insufficient staffing, aging platforms, and funding security issues—and recommends strategies such as strengthening cross-organizational cooperation, ensuring stable budget allocations and professional staffing, and establishing scientific evaluation systems to promote the prosperous development of library publishing.

**Keywords:** Diamond Open Access; Library Publishing; Collective Bargaining Power; Cross-Organizational Cooperation; Alliance Procurement

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the Diamond Open Access (OA) model has emerged prominently in academia, becoming a widely discussed topic. Characterized by journals and platforms that charge neither authors publication fees nor readers access or download fees, Diamond OA represents a new scholarly publishing paradigm that enables completely free openness and sharing of academic resources. However, within the global open access movement—originally intended to reduce paywalls, create networked clusters of institutional repositories, broaden public access to knowledge, and establish funding baselines for OA publishing—the reality has not fully met these aspirations. While the Gold OA model has advanced open access to some extent, it has failed to create large-scale, permanently sustainable funding mechanisms for publishing. In this context, Diamond OA appears to present an opportunity to address libraries individually. Some libraries, pursuing Diamond OA publishing under the banner of library publishing, may inadvertently sacrifice the collective bargaining power of library alliances in resource procurement and service provision, while simultaneously weakening institutional repositories' functionality as public service platforms.

Against this backdrop, library publishing has gradually emerged, attempting to become a significant bearer of Diamond OA publishing. However, we must remain vigilant that library publishing should not merely represent a nominal shift, but should genuinely leverage libraries' rich resources and professional expertise to actively engage in publishing activities that support the broad dissemination and utilization of scholarly achievements. Simultaneously, library publishing must preserve the collective bargaining power of library consortia and the public service capacity of institutional repositories to ensure libraries continue playing their irreplaceable role in the open access tide.

## 2. The Diverse Landscape of Library Publishing

The origins of library publishing trace back to the early 2000s, when rapid information technology development and growing scholarly communication needs spurred the rise of institutional repositories. These platforms initially served as experimental venues for disseminating grey literature and electronic theses and

dissertations, effectively promoting academic resource sharing and laying preliminary foundations for library publishing. However, despite the global open access movement's intentions to reduce paywalls, create networked repository clusters, broaden public knowledge access, and establish OA publishing funding baselines, reality has not unfolded as expected. While the Gold OA model has promoted open sharing to some degree, it has failed to establish large-scale, permanently sustainable publishing funding mechanisms. Consequently, Diamond OA appears to have become a tactic to address libraries individually. Some libraries pursuing this model under the guise of library publishing may sacrifice their consortia's collective bargaining power in resource procurement and service provision, while weakening institutional repositories' public service effectiveness.

In recent years, library publishing has expanded further to encompass more diverse content, including open access monographs. Nevertheless, we must guard against potential risks this trend may introduce. Library publishing should remain true to its original purpose: leveraging libraries' abundant resources and professional strengths to support broad dissemination and utilization of scholarly achievements, while ensuring it does not undermine the collective bargaining power of library consortia or the public service capacity of institutional repositories.

### 3. Current State of Library Publishing

According to annual surveys conducted by the Library Publishing Coalition, library publishing funding primarily relies on regular operational budget allocations from libraries themselves, reflecting libraries' commitment to prioritizing publishing in resource distribution. However, within the global open access movement—originally intended to reduce paywalls, create networked repository clusters, broaden public knowledge access, and establish OA publishing funding baselines—the reality remains complex and variable. The Gold OA model's failure to create large-scale, permanently sustainable publishing funding mechanisms has left libraries facing numerous challenges in pursuing open access. Consequently, Diamond OA appears to have become a tactic to address libraries individually, with some institutions sacrificing consortia bargaining power and weakening institutional repositories' public service effectiveness while pursuing this model under the banner of library publishing.

In terms of publication type distribution, journals remain dominant, constituting the primary content of library publishing, followed by conference materials and dissertations, which also occupy significant positions. While pursuing open access, we must remain vigilant about potential risks, ensuring that library publishing promotes free sharing and broad dissemination of scholarly resources without compromising consortia bargaining power or institutional repositories' public service capacity. Notably, the vast majority of library publications adhere to open access principles, which both demonstrates library publishing's positive role in promoting open scholarship and simultaneously sows the seeds

of crisis for the publishing industry and library profession.

#### 4. Reassessment of European Library Publishing

Since the launch of Plan S—an ambitious initiative promoting open science and data sharing—the importance of institutional publishing supporting Diamond OA has been reassessed and gained broader attention in academia. However, within the global open access movement, reality has not fully aligned with original intentions to reduce paywalls, create networked repository clusters, broaden public knowledge access, and establish OA publishing funding baselines. The Gold OA model's inability to create large-scale, permanently sustainable publishing funding mechanisms has created challenges for libraries pursuing open access. Consequently, Diamond OA appears to have become a tactic to address libraries individually, with some institutions sacrificing consortia bargaining power and weakening institutional repositories' public service effectiveness while pursuing this model under the library publishing banner.

Facing these new challenges and opportunities, European library publishing has not blindly followed trends but has responded swiftly through cross-organizational cooperation and resource sharing. These initiatives strengthen internal collaboration, optimize resource allocation, and ensure sustainable development of library publishing, while also transcending geographical and institutional boundaries to seek broader support and partnerships. By establishing close cooperative relationships with other libraries, research institutions, and publishers, European libraries jointly promote prosperous Diamond OA publishing development while preserving consortia bargaining power and institutional repositories' public service capacity, ensuring libraries continue playing their irreplaceable role in the open access tide.

#### 5. Challenges

Library publishing faces numerous developmental challenges, with insufficient staffing, aging platforms, and funding security issues being particularly prominent. These problems affect not only the quality and efficiency of library publishing but also constrain its further development. Within the global open access movement—originally intended to reduce paywalls, create networked repository clusters, broaden public knowledge access, and establish OA publishing funding baselines—the complex reality has created additional difficulties. The Gold OA model's failure to establish large-scale, permanently sustainable publishing funding mechanisms has intensified libraries' struggles in pursuing open access. Consequently, Diamond OA appears to have become a tactic to address libraries individually, with some institutions sacrificing consortia bargaining power and weakening institutional repositories' public service effectiveness while pursuing this model under the library publishing banner.

To address these issues, stakeholders are actively exploring multiple strategies. On one hand, cross-organizational cooperation enables libraries to pool profes-

sional expertise and collectively tackle staffing shortages. Such collaboration facilitates optimal resource allocation and sharing while enhancing overall library publishing quality and influence. On the other hand, to address platform aging, the library community continuously explores and develops advanced tools and resources for library publishing. These innovations aim to improve publishing platform performance and functionality, better adapting to modern scholarly publishing needs and establishing a solid foundation for library publishing's long-term development.

## 6. Conclusion

As research institutions worldwide increasingly emphasize open science and implement policies requiring immediate open access (OA) for publicly funded research results, the roles and expectations for Diamond OA publishing and library publishing will likely expand further. However, within the global open access movement—originally intended to reduce paywalls, create networked repository clusters, broaden public knowledge access, and establish OA publishing funding baselines—reality has not fully met expectations. The Gold OA model's failure to create large-scale, permanently sustainable publishing funding mechanisms has made Diamond OA appear as a tactic to address libraries individually, with some institutions sacrificing consortia bargaining power and weakening institutional repositories' public service effectiveness while pursuing this model under the library publishing banner.

In this context, library publishing's importance in the open science era becomes increasingly prominent, serving as both a crucial pathway for broad scholarly dissemination and a key force driving research transparency and knowledge sharing. To fully leverage library publishing's role and ensure its stable development, the primary task is securing stable budget investment and professional staffing, which enhances publishing quality, efficiency, influence, and competitiveness. Simultaneously, strengthening cross-organizational cooperation to pool resources and wisdom in addressing open publishing challenges represents another key driver for library publishing development. Establishing close partnerships with other libraries, research institutions, and publishers enables optimal resource allocation and sharing, jointly promoting library publishing prosperity. Furthermore, resolving evaluation issues by establishing scientific and rational assessment systems that objectively reflect library publishing's value and contributions holds significant importance for its long-term development, helping elevate its social status and recognition while laying a solid foundation for sustainable growth.

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