

# Opening the Black Box of Scholarly Communication Funding: A Public Data Infrastructure for Financial Flows in Academic Publishing

An important article on financial flows in scholarly publishing has been published in “Open Library of Humanities”, [here](#). Its conclusion is worth quoting, because it pinpoints a common problem, which needs to be addressed.

In this article we have argued for the importance of a joined-up, systemic, publicly accessible picture of financial flows around academic publishing to inform evidence-based deliberation, policy and action to shape scholarly communication systems. We have proposed a provisional visual model for assessing the availability of information about these financial flows, taking journal publication in the UK as a case study. **Our analysis of three broad types of flows in this model - institutional income, subscription payments, and APCs - highlights that there are still significant obstacles to obtaining the information that is needed to piece together a bigger picture. There is systemic opacity both within institutions as well as regarding the ‘black box’ of finances around scholarly communication** in the UK as a whole. Just as we do not yet possess an accurate overview of how much the UK’s total APC expenditure is, institutions often lack aggregate figures of their total APC payments towards a given publisher across different departments. [emphasis added]