



Transformative and
Institutional Open
Access Agreements:
A response to
scholarly publishing

The PLOS
perspective

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A background image showing a water splash with ripples, overlaid with a semi-transparent teal grid pattern. A white rectangular box is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the word 'Agenda' and a vertical yellow bar.

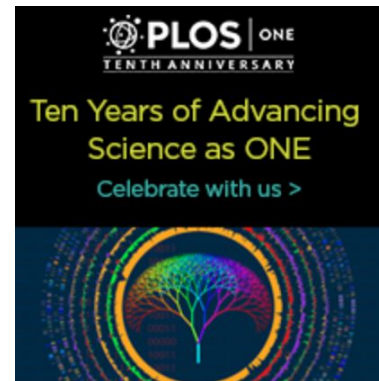
Agenda

- APCs and the definitions of OA
- PLOS approach to collaborative agreements with libraries
- Overview of PLOS non-APC models:
 - Community Action Publishing (CAP)
 - Global Equity (GE)
 - Flat fees

When PLOS started...

In the early aughts PLOS revolutionized scholarly communications via:

- Business models - *APCs meant that reading could be freely available to anyone, authors could fund publishing, and quality and selectivity could remain high*
- Dissemination vehicles - *PLOS ONE demonstrated that there was demand for and value in sound science grounded in rigorous, ethical methods and practices.*





1

Open access would = APCs



2

Evolution of predatory publishing



3

The co-optation of APCs by subscription publishers



4

APCs themselves would be a barrier



Unintended consequences...



1

We didn't understand how successful APCs would be



2

We didn't appreciate the pressure to publish could yield predators.



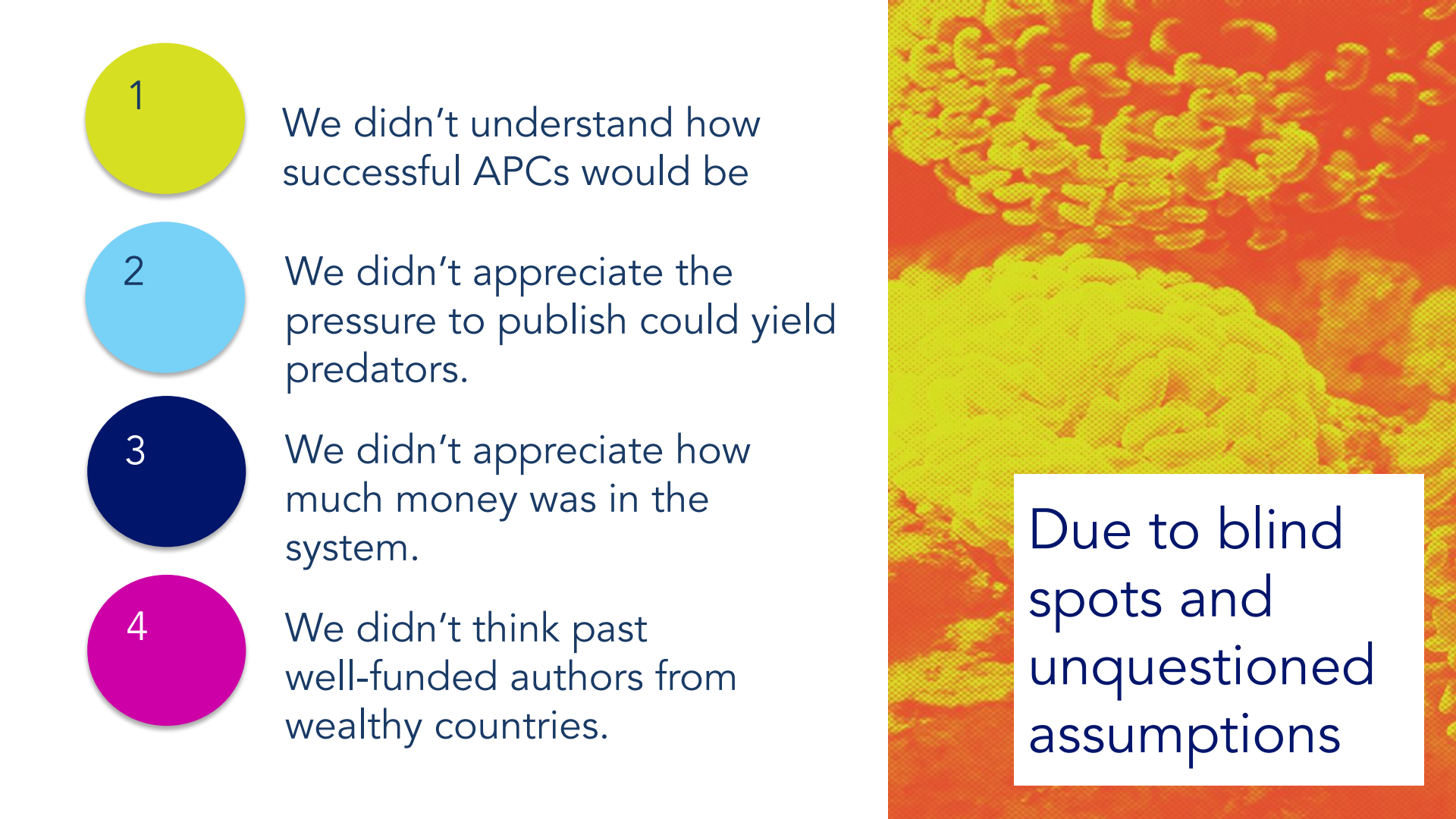
3

We didn't appreciate how much money was in the system.



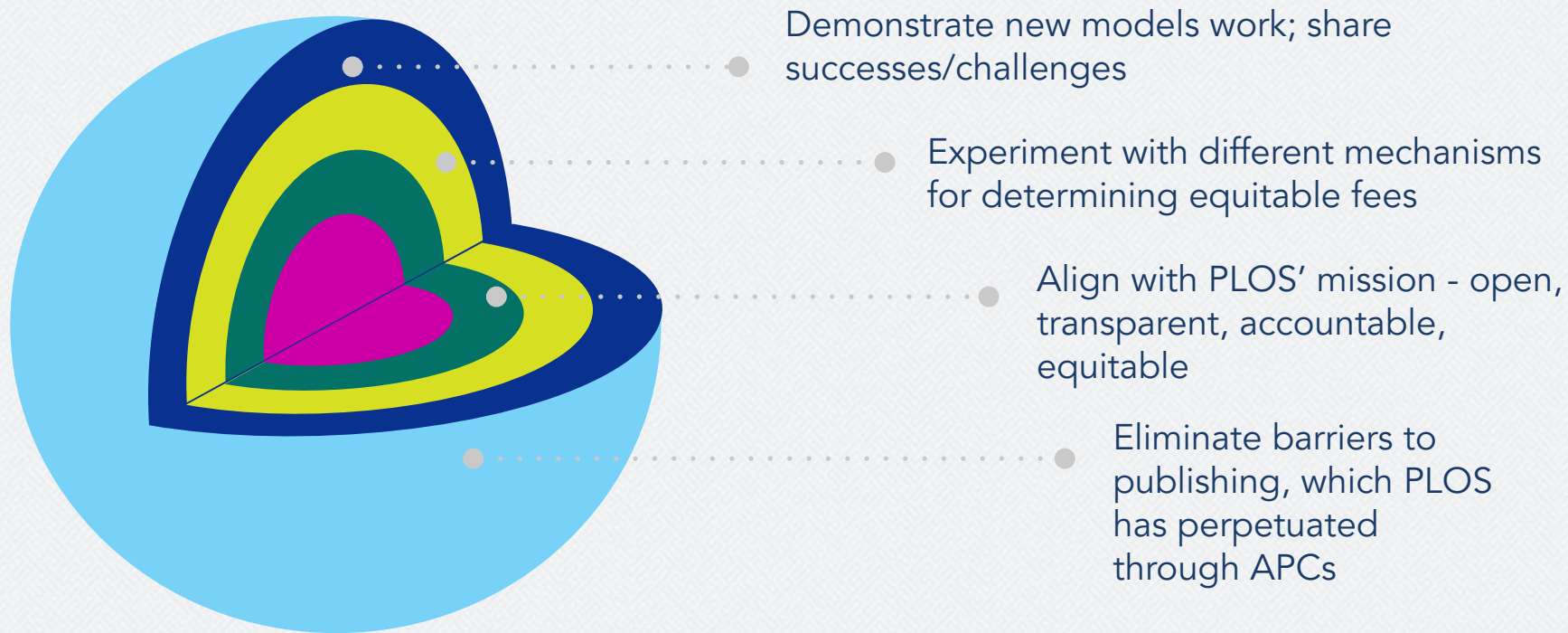
4

We didn't think past well-funded authors from wealthy countries.



Due to blind spots and unquestioned assumptions

In launching new models, PLOS aims to



PLOS current models

1

APC based - authors pay per paper

- Institutions pay per paper monthly

2

Flat fees for the SIX: BUNDLED

PLOS ONE, Genetics, Pathogens, Computational Biology, Neglected Tropical Diseases, Digital Health

3

Community Action Publishing:

PLOS Medicine, Biology, Sustainability and Transformation

4

Global Equity:

PLOS Global Public Health, Climate, Water



Why multiple models? They...

- Minimize risk by allowing us to test/iterate across a few journals
- Test hypotheses aimed at solving a particular challenge in scholarly publishing
- Facilitate experimentation without risking the entire portfolio, ensuring PLOS remains financially sustainable

What problems are they solving?

1

APCs: How do we make peer-review researched *free to read*?

2

Flat fees for the SIX: *How do we reduce the administrative burden* of managing APCs for institutions?

3

Community Action Publishing: How do we make *highly selective publishing open access* without high APCs?

4

Global Equity: *How do we address geographic inequities* without waivers?

Introducing Community Action Publishing



PLOS wants to cover the cost of selective publishing without high APCs.

PLOS CAP does that by:

- Identifying and publicly sharing costs and margin we need to cover:
<https://plos.org/resources/community-action-publishing/>
- Equitably distributing it amongst institutions with a publishing history as affiliated with corresponding *and contributing authors*
- Institutions pay their tier fee annually
- Non-member institutions' authors pay non-member fee
- Read institutions are encouraged to participate - Tier 12 fees

When communities reach their targets, additional revenue is redistributed to members at renewal.

What	Annual Fee For a Three Year Agreement 2021-2023 Medicine	Annual Fee For a Three Year Agreement 2021-2023 Biology
Tier 1	\$39,488	\$38,147
Tier 2	\$24,036	\$28,157
Tier 3	\$19,229	\$24,234
Tier 4	\$12,877	\$20,316
Tier 5	\$8,241	\$14,614
Tier 6	\$5,666	\$10,692
Tier 7	\$4,121	\$8,199
Tier 8	\$2,747	\$5,702
Tier 9	\$1,717	\$3,564
Tier 10	\$1,030	\$2,138
Tier 11	\$687	\$1,426
Tier 12	\$343	

Fees for a one year commitment are a

Research 4 Life countries are automatic members!

PLOS CAP gets a new title!

PLOS Sustainability and Transformation



EiC, Lian Pin Koh, National University of Singapore

Tier	2021-2023 Medicine	2021-2023 Biology	2022-2024 S&T	2022-2024 S&T + 50% discount
Tier 1	\$39,488	\$38,147	\$15,563	\$7,782
Tier 2	\$24,036	\$28,157	\$11,651	\$5,826
Tier 3	\$19,229	\$24,234	\$10,185	\$5,092
Tier 4	\$12,877	\$20,316	\$9,011	\$4,506
Tier 5	\$8,241	\$14,614	\$7,893	\$3,947
Tier 6	\$5,666	\$10,692	\$6,189	\$3,094
Tier 7	\$4,121	\$8,199	\$4,827	\$2,413
Tier 8	\$2,747	\$5,702	\$3,437	\$1,718
Tier 9	\$1,717	\$3,564	\$2,410	\$1,205
Tier 10	\$1,030	\$2,138	\$1,690	\$845
Tier 11	\$687	\$1,426	\$950	\$475
Tier 12	\$343	\$713	\$500	\$250
Read	\$343	\$713	\$500	\$250
R4L	Automatic participation	Automatic participation	Automatic participation	Automatic participation

Same mechanisms for tiering as other CAP titles

50% discount on fees for duration of the pilot period (2022-2024)

Non-member fees held to \$3000 USD annually



Unique innovations built in



Redistribution of excess revenue

1

New approach to cost recovery and transparency

Expands community size to facilitate more equitable fee distribution (R4L!)

2

New approach to recognizing author contributions beyond lead author

Iterative development based on community consultation

3

Cards on the table approach to feedback from libraries/consortia

Failure is an option. Secondary revenue stream as a bulwark.

4

Altruism is good. Sustainability is better.

Introducing PLOS Global Equity

1

Address the challenge of geographic financial inequity

2

Identify costs we need to cover for each journal; identify institutions that publish in the subject areas; establish a fee structure that is reasonable for new titles

3

Increase or reduce the fees based on World Bank Lending Classification

4

Offer an equity contribution for institutions to support institutions in low and lower-middle income countries

Water

Climate

Global Public Health

PLOS Global Equity

Annual flat fee for unlimited publishing

	HIC	UMIC	LIC/LMIC	Optional equity contributions (unlimited)
Tier 1	\$6,000	\$5,400	\$2,100	\$1500
Tier 2	\$4,500	\$4,050	\$1,575	\$1500
Tier 3	\$3,750	\$3,375	\$1,313	\$1500
Tier 4	\$3,000	\$2,700	\$1,050	\$1500
Tier 5	\$2,000	\$1,800	\$700	\$1500
Tier 6	\$1,000	\$900	\$350	\$1500
Read	\$1,000	\$900	\$350	\$1500
R4L	\$0	\$0	\$0	

Equity Contribution:

Optional additional fee to add to annual fee for unlimited publishing that **REDUCES LIC/LMIC** fees the following year.

Fees are adjusted based on World Bank Lending Class:

<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>



PLOS Global Equity Titles

Join PLOS for a webinar on decolonizing global public health Tuesday Sept 28:

https://plos.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_b3wcTQb-RqeEwC8S7J5VbA

Read about why we launched these new titles:

<https://theplosblog.plos.org/2021/04/launching-new-journals-2021/>

Read about why we launched new models:

<https://theplosblog.plos.org/2021/05/open-for-submissions-part-2-models/>

Climate

EiC Emma Archer, Univ of Pretoria



<https://journal.s.plos.org/climate/>

Water

EiCs Jenna Davis, Stanford University and Pierre Horwitz, Edith Cowan University



<https://journals.plos.org/water/>

Global Public Health

EiCs Catherine Kyobutungi, Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa, and Madhukar Pai, McGill University



<https://journals.plos.org/globalpublichealth/>

Feedback from communities...

*I am absolutely thrilled to see PLOS Global Public Health come into existence! This journal coming to fruition is another testament to [Prof Pai's] and the other editors-in-chief putting into action one of the steps they've been saying needed to happen to **decolonize global health** and ensure equity.*

*Global south today is a crossroad. It is changing rapidly: both epidemiologically as well as demographically. **More research focus is required to explore indigenous knowledge**, and find solutions that are cost-effective.*

*I am excited about the new offering from PLOS, especially as Jenna Davis will be one of the Editors in Chief. Too often this area of work tries to fit in to other journals to ensure a high profile and wide audience. **I particularly like the format of specialist PLOS journals and the ethos behind PLOS** so it is great to hear that this journal is starting up soon.*

*I am also strongly **in favor of PLOS' scope and publishing principles** as it is the necessary response to the traditional flawed system of publication in the peer-reviewed journal sector.*

*I am aware of the challenges that researchers in LMICs face and the kind of guidance they would benefit from -- particularly from reputed journals such as the PLOS family of journals. **I am also aware of the imbalance in power that exists between researchers in LMICs and those working as gatekeepers** of knowledge in high-income countries (primarily journal editorial boards). I see PLOS Global Public Health as an excellent opportunity to do whatever little I can in order to change this landscape.*

*I am an advocate of strong research coming from LMIC by LMIC researchers. I **support the high standards of PLOS journals** and their mission to make science openly available.*



Flat fees for the SIX:

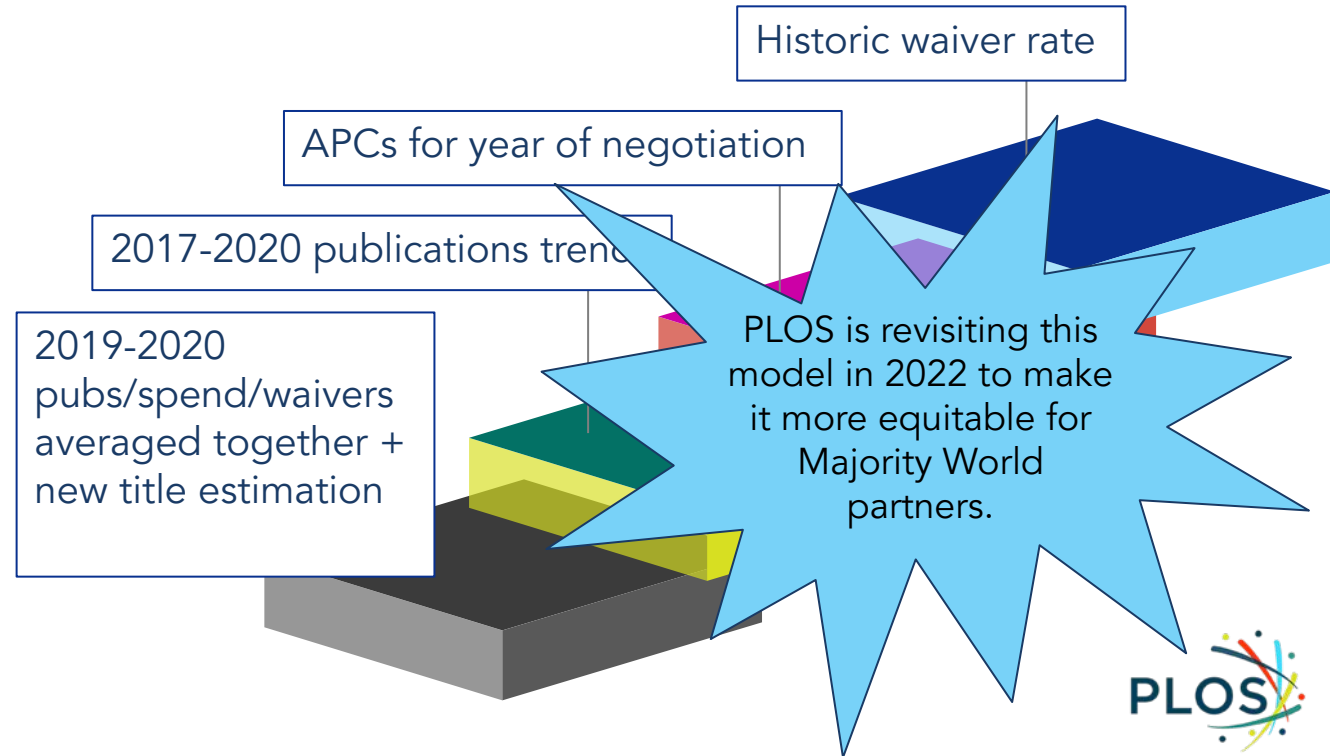
PLOS ONE, Genetics, Pathogens, Computational Biology, Neglected Tropical Diseases, Digital Health



EIC, Leo Anthony Celi, MIT

Legacy titles
require a different
model to
facilitate
unlimited
publishing...

PLOS Digital
Health joining
this model



Public partners

Visit the PLOS site and search by journal title to identify PLOS partners:

<https://plos.org/resources/for-institutions/institutional-account-participants/>

Institutional Partners

Open Access is not truly open without equitable opportunities to publish. To support authors from diverse research communities, funding backgrounds, and institutional requirements, all PLOS journals offer APC-alternative business models through institutional partnerships. Our various partnership models—Flat Fee Agreements, Global Equity partnerships, and Community Action Publishing membership—are tailored to the publication needs and regional economies of researchers and institutions in that field.

Institutions listed below have partnered with PLOS in one or more agreements to make Open Access more accessible to their authors.

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PLOS Biology

SEARCH PARTNERS

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As an author interested in publishing in a PLOS title...*APCs should not be a barrier.*

For publishing fee support you can:

1. Check and see if your institution has an agreement with PLOS that covers your publishing cost: <https://plos.org/resources/for-institutions/institutional-account-participants/> (search by journal). If not, we can reach out to your library for you. Email institutionalaccounts@plos.org. (If your library participates before you are accepted, you're covered)
2. If your institution is in a Research 4 Life country, your fees are waived.
3. If your funder is in a Research 4 Life country, your fees may be drastically reduced or eliminated: See our Global Participation Initiative at <https://plos.org/publish/fees/>
4. If none of the above apply, you can always apply for Publishing Fee Assistance (PFA). Details also at <https://plos.org/publish/fees/>



Thank you!

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