THE PROSPECTS OF FOR-PROFIT OPEN ACCESS IN PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE JOURNALS | A REPORT

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The OA working group (Sophia Crüwell, Chiara Lisciandra and David Teira) was established in November 2022 as a joint venture of the European Society for Philosophy of Science, the British Society for Philosophy of Science and the Philosophy of Science Association. Our goal was to study and discuss the transition to a so-called `Gold' *open access* (OA) regime in the main journals in our field.

Publishers are signing ***transformative agreements*** with different research institutions and funding bodies across the world. These agreements establish that the institution or funder makes a block payment in exchange for an annual quota of OA papers allowing their affiliated authors to publish OA in an agreed list of journals, at no extra cost to the individual author. Once this quota is exhausted, any author who wants to publish OA in those journals has to pay an Author Processing Charge (APC) [1].

In addition to these institutional transformative agreements, some publishers are planning to transition to an exclusively Gold OA regime, in which journals are exclusively funded by APCs. Gold OA journals have no paywalls and authors (or their institutions or funders) pay to get published[2]. Journals that have adopted the policy of becoming Gold OA are referred to as ***transformative journals.*** These journals remain *hybrid* as long as they provide authors with the option to publish under the traditional model or OA. Transformative journals commit to flipping to OA once around 75% of their annual output is published OA. At that point, all authors who wish to publish in these journals will be required to pay an APC.

Transformative agreements support transformative journals as they accelerate the process of meeting the 75% threshold by making it such that publishing Gold OA comes at no cost to the individual author.

In January 2023, the members of the OA working group contacted the editors of the 27 journals listed as relevant for the field of philosophy of science on the website of the *Philosophy of Science Association*–see the list on the link and in the Appendix to this report. The number of journals per publisher is as follows: Springer (10), Taylor and Francis (4), Wiley (3), Cambridge (2), and one each for Brill, Chicago, Elsevier, Episciences, Hyle publications, MIT, Oxford, and Sage.

[1] These agreements support *transformative journals*, defined as hybrid journals that are covered by an agreement to become a full open-access venue.

[2] In addition to Gold OA, there is a variety of types of OA. For instance, Green OA, refers to the situation where a commercial publisher allows authors to post a preprint version of the paper in a repository. In Diamond OA, journals publish papers OA at no cost for authors or readers, funded by a third party.

We asked the editors-in-chief two questions: 1) Did your publishers discuss any plans to transition to gold open access exclusively with you? If so, how would it work? 2) If the publishers did contact you regarding this matter, what is your view on the project?

We collected 22 answers. The **executive summary** is: *10 of the 27 journals have started the transition to Gold Open Access, although many editors are not aware of this shift, but they wouldn't support it, and many are actively against it.*

Transition to Gold Open Access

As of today, 25 of our 27 journals are publishing in a hybrid mode, releasing some of their papers OA for an APC and publishing the rest of them behind a paywall for subscribers, at no cost for authors. According to their editors, some major journals in the field (*Erkenntnis*, *Studies* and *Synthese*) are either in conversation with the editors about what will happen when they reach 75%, or have been told that they will start discussing full OA if and when the journal goes close to 75%. The specifics of this process are somewhat unclear, particularly regarding whether this change would still require the editors' consent or whether, in some cases, it might even happen automatically.

Studies and *Synthese* are probably the most prolific journals in our field: *Studies* has merged three previous journals (Studies A, B and C) publishing 141 papers in 2021; *Synthese* published 1519 papers in 2021-see detailed statistics on p. 4. For comparison, in the same year *Philosophy of Science* published 79 papers, the BJPS 48 and the EJPS (also published by Springer) 110 papers. The size of these journals signals how substantial the consequences will be should they flip to full 'Gold' OA. Springer appears to be the main publisher of journals relevant to the field of Philosophy of Science, editing more than a third of the journals in our list. 9 out 10 Springer journals are presented as transformative journals on their website (the only exception is Metascience). Notwithstanding this, *many of them have not been approached by the publishers to discuss the transitioning from hybrid to gold OA, even though such transition is implicit in the current model.* The editors of 5 journals are aware of the situation and will discuss the options when the time approaches, but they have not agreed on the transition yet. The editors of 4 journals, prior to our emailing them, were not even aware of this looming transition and what it would mean for their journal. The standardised wording on the Springer websites is quite explicit though:

> X is actively committed to becoming a fully Open Access journal. We will increase the number of articles we publish OA, with the eventual goal of becoming a fully Open Access journal. A journal that commits to this process is known as a Transformative Journal.

Elsevier (*Studies*) and Oxford have also contacted editors about the transition to Gold OA. Neither Wiley nor Taylor & Francis (respectively publishing 3 and 4 journals in our list) have contacted their editors in our list to discuss move to Gold OA so far.

Reactions from the editors in chief (EiC)

The EiCs of the journals that are aware of the transition are cautious about the process: there will be a discussion with the publisher before flipping to Gold OA. In three of these cases (*Studies, Erkenntnis, Synthese*), however, the publisher owns the header.

13 of the editors we contacted actively oppose the transition of a Gold OA regime. Moreover, all the editors at Springer are concerned with this policy. The main reasons listed are:

- The excessive cost for most authors: junior scholars, faculty from small institutions in the US, researchers from low GDP countries.
- The Balkanization of the field, creating a divide between well-funded authors publishing OA and everybody else.
- The exploitation of research budgets: if the most prolific/most highly cited journals transition into a Gold OA regime, it will create an incentive for authors to re-allocate an increasing fraction of their budgets to publish with them, compromising other research expenses (conferences, etc).
- It is not clear how the transition will serve the public good: is this a better option than the status quo (hybrid publication+OA preprint repositories) for research institutions?

List of journals contacted (by publisher)

Journal of the Philosophy of History	Brill
Philosophy of Science	Cambridge
Economics & Philosophy	Cambridge
The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science	Chicago
Studies in History and Philosophy of Science	Elsevier
The Journal of Philosophical Economics	Episciences
Hyle	Hyle Pub.
Perspectives on Science	MIT
Journal of Medicine and Philosophy	Oxford
Philosophy of the Social Sciences	Sage
Erkenntnis	Springer
European Journal for Philosophy of Science	Springer
Metascience	Springer
Biology & Philosophy	Springer
History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences	Springer
Biological Theory	Springer
Foundations of Chemistry	Springer
Foundations of Physics	Springer
Minds and Machines	Springer
Synthese	Springer
International Studies in the Philosophy of Science	T&F
Philosophical Psychology	T&F
Inquiry	T&F
Journal of Economic Methodology	T&F
Cognitive Science	Wiley
Mind & Language	Wiley
History & Theory	Wiley

Percentage of Gold Open Access papers published

According to Scopus Source Search. It is at best a proxy: a) it seems as if the category Gold open access does not have a homogeneous definition across the last three years; b) Studies A is the successor journal after the merge of Studies A, B and C. Notice that Springer has been the most successful publisher in subscribing transformative agreements with European funding agencies.

Synthese	2020	2021	2022
Papers published	267	1519	524
Gold	61	964	264
%	22,85	63,46	50,38

Erkenntnis	2020	2021	2022
Papers published	74	205	279
Gold	18	84	124
%	24,32	40,98	44,44

Studies A	2020	2021	2022
Papers published	78	141	133
Gold	5	29	30
%	6,41	20,57	22,56

EJPS	2020	2021	2022
Papers published	44	112	74
Gold	19	61	48
%	43,18	54,46	64,86

Summary of responses

Did you publishers discuss any plan to transition to gold OA?							
Transformative Journals				Non-Transformative Journals			
	YES	NO	NA		YES	NO	NA
Springer	4 - Erkenntnis - EJPS - HPLS - Synthese	4 - Philosphy & Biology - Biological Theory - Foundations of Chemistry - Foundations of Physics	1 - Minds and Machines	Wiley		2	1
Elsevier	1 - Studies			T&F		3	1
				Cambridge		1	1
				Chicago		1	
				Oxford	1		
				Epyisciences			1
				Hyle			1
				MIT		1	
				Sage		1	
				Brill		1	
				Springer		1	
Total 10				Total 17			

All editors who have discussed the plan with the publishers have been, have been told that they will discuss the details (whether, how, and when to implement it) later on.

All Springers' and Elseviers' editors are concerned with this policy.