

Policy Statement and Call to Action on Open Access Publishing

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Informatics Europe Board

As a collective voice of academic Informatics departments, research labs and industrial members across Europe, Informatics Europe expresses growing concern over the current trajectory of Gold Open Access publishing models. While we support the principle of open access to scientific knowledge, we are alarmed by the increasing financial burden placed on authors and departments through high Article Processing Charges (APCs).

The Problem

Gold Open Access is a publishing model in which scholarly articles are made freely available to readers immediately upon publication. To enable this access, publishers charge authors — or their institutions or funders — a fee known as an Article Processing Charge (APC). While this model promotes unrestricted access to research results, it shifts the financial burden from readers to authors, exacerbating the questions about equity, sustainability, and commercialisation of academic publishing.

Driven by the objective of ensuring accessibility of research results to every potential reader, the Gold Open Access model is quickly getting imposed as the dominant route for publishing in Informatics and related fields. However, it raises serious concerns. First and foremost, escalating APCs, even by non-profit publishers — ranging from several hundreds to thousands of Euros per article — are creating a pay-to-publish environment that disadvantages researchers without access to substantial funding. Early-career researchers, institutions in less affluent regions, unfunded projects, and institutions or countries unable or unwilling to commit to high APCs or institutional "all-in" flat fees, face systemic barriers to publishing in reputable venues. This shift from profit-driven access to publications to profit-driven publishing does not solve the problem of the commercialisation of knowledge and undermines the academic mission of open, inclusive, and merit-based dissemination of research. While Gold Open Access publishing claims to make research freely readable, paradoxically it may restrict who gets to publish. The pay-to-publish model also risks exacerbating the issue of predatory journals and venues which prioritise profit over academic rigour and quality.

Our Position

Informatics Europe calls for a rebalancing of the scholarly publishing ecosystem to ensure that open access serves the public good rather than commercial interests. We advocate for:

- More reasonable and transparent APC pricing with a clear justification of publishing costs by all publishers.
- Support for alternative publishing models that do not rely on unacceptably high author-paid fees, in particular Diamond Open Access (free for both authors and readers, and often supported by academic institutions or public funding) and Green Open Access (self-archiving).
- Public and institutional investment in open access infrastructure that prioritizes equity and sustainability.
- Collective pressure by academic institutions, libraries, and funding bodies to negotiate fair and inclusive publishing agreements at costs that reflect the real cost of publishing, rather than supporting a profit-driven model indirectly funded by public money.
- A collective investment by the academic community to ensure the quality of Diamond Open Access publications through the application of rigorous and sustainable review processes.

We strongly believe that high-quality, peer-reviewed publishing can thrive under a diamond OA model when supported by public institutions and community governance. This model could serve as a blueprint for other organisations aiming to reduce financial barriers in scholarly communication

A Call to the Community

To foster a more equitable future for scholarly publishing in Informatics, authors and institutions should critically assess the value and cost of Gold Open Access venues and consider alternatives such as preprint servers, institutional repositories, and Diamond Open Access journals.

- Departments and institutions should establish funding mechanisms to support open access publishing, prioritising equity and impact.
- National and European stakeholders should collaborate to reform publishing models, ensuring that open access does not become a privilege of the well-funded.
- Individual academics should offer their competence and time to ensure the quality of the review processes in place in Diamond Open Access journals.
- The community at large should include the alternative publishing models in evaluations, promotions and funding frameworks.

We invite the broader Informatics community — researchers, educators, institutions, and policymakers — to join us in advocating for and supporting open access models that uphold the principles of openness, accessibility, fairness, and academic integrity.

Informatics Europe is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure that open access publishing evolves in a way that truly serves the global research community, building a resilient scholarly communication system — one that prioritises access, equity, and the advancement of knowledge.