NISO Open Access Business Processes Charge and Work Plan
12 April 2024
Approved by the NISO Infomation Policy & Analysis Topic Committee May 7, 2024

Problem Statement

Significant portions of the scholarly communications ecosystem are currently transitioning from pay-to-read to open access (OA). The increasing adoption of open access policies and mandates has shifted business practices for associated stakeholders. Yet not all infrastructure, standards, and practices that have taken shape over past decades fit this new world. What's left in the absence of established best practices in the current landscape is a sundry assortment of individualized solutions in libraries and publishers which rely heavily on manual work and legacy workflows, systems, dashboards, invoices, and data.

In response, the development of best practices is needed to facilitate and catalyze a variety of established and emerging open access business models. Ideally, best practices would enable the operationalization of financial transactions, deal and policy compliance tracking, and related workflows to be optimized. This working group will develop a recommended practice to enable operationalizing OA business processes for authors, libraries, institutions, publishers, consortia, funding agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

I. CHARGE

1. **Project Goals *(defined as: broad, long term aim/vision/ambition)***
   - 1.1. Identify optimized open access business processes presenting minimal friction for all stakeholders.
   - 1.2. Identify key challenges in existing open access models and propose alternative best practices as solutions for emerging and future models of open access.
   - 1.3. Map OA business processes and the people, organizations and things involved in each step, and capture how these building blocks are connected by their metadata.

2. **Objectives (what we will be working on over the next months → will inform list of deliverables)**
   - 2.1. Discuss and identify standardized best practice open access workflows for business processes that reduce the time, effort, and cost that publishers, institutions, funders, and other stakeholders currently invest to operate and assess these workflows.
   - 2.2. Identify essential metadata elements and reporting metrics to enable these best practice workflows.
   - 2.3. Evaluate how business processes and the metadata produced can be optimized to work together with evaluation and assessment tools and metrics, including analytics.
   - 2.4. Recommend appropriate persistent identifiers (PIDs) and their use in the workflow.
   - 2.5. Identify what data stakeholders including libraries and publishers need to

process transactions, integrate systems, exchange information with partners, and report to various other stakeholders within the ecosystem.

3. Working List of Deliverables

3.1. A glossary of standard vocabulary and definitions that describes transactions, events and concepts associated with open access to support consistency in business processes.

3.2. (A) standardized schema(s) to facilitate operationalizing OA business processes with metadata elements (informed by glossary definitions); a definition of how they relate to each other; how they are constrained (required, unique, repeating values, value sets, re-use of existing vocabularies, etc); and how they may be represented in an encoding (json, xml, etc).

3.3. A report on current gaps in the infrastructure, which involves investigating the flow of publication and financial metadata across different systems (or lack thereof), conducted via a landscape analysis of current open access business practices.

3.4. Recommended tools and best practices that will enable and empower stakeholders to identify relevant and necessary metadata points required for assessment and evaluation of OA business models.

SCOPE

This Recommended Practice offers guidance and recommendations for standards for facilitating business processes for open access to research outputs across diverse publication formats and business models. It addresses every phase of the open access publication journey, encompassing the perspectives of researchers, libraries/consortia, publishers, and other stakeholders. While recognizing the inherent benefits of OA, this working group acknowledges the presence of systemic inequities within the current framework. However, it has been decided that addressing and rectifying these inequities is beyond the scope of our current objectives. We acknowledge the existence of other dedicated groups actively working towards resolving these issues.

Each stage of the open access process, spanning from submission and acceptance to publication, metadata collection and creation, reporting, communication, and payment procedures, is outlined as part of a recommended practice to support related business processes.

Phase 1 will focus on journals for metadata and workflow analysis, while Phase 2 will expand the scope to include books, preprints, proceedings, and other relevant forms of research output and publication. This sequential plan ensures a methodical approach to addressing the distinctive qualities of various scholarly output types, in order to provide recommendations for best practices for open access business processes.

Emphasizing the interconnectedness among researchers, libraries/consortia, publishers, funding agencies, and various intermediaries involved in the open access ecosystem (e.g., persistent identifiers, ILS providers, statistical entities, etc.), this Recommended Practice for business processes underscores the collaborative nature of open access.

II. WORK PLAN

1. General Timeline

Appointment of working group	November 2023
Approval and publication of charge and initial work plan	February/March 2024
Completion of information gathering	September 2024
Completion of initial draft recommended practices document	January 2025
Public comment period	April 2025
Responses to comments and publication of final NISO Recommended Practice (Phase 1)	June 2025