diamond
open access

How to flip your journal

A guide to more equitable publishing with Diamond Open Access

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INTRODUCTION

Diamond Open Access (Diamond OA) is a scholar-led publishing model in which content is made freely accessible to readers, under an open licence, at no cost to authors. Since the term 'Diamond OA' is relatively recent, it is sometimes seen as a novel and experimental form of publishing compared to other types of Open Access. However, the model itself has been around for much longer than its name: scholar-led, institutionally funded publishing was the default when the first electronic journals were started in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see e.g. Amiran et al. 1991, Moore 2020). Moreover, the model is the dominant form of Open Access publishing in many parts of the world, in particular Latin America and Eastern Europe (Bosman et al. 2021, Moutinho 2024). In Western Europe and North America, however, the early scholar-led beginnings of the Open Access movement have largely been superseded by commercial publishers working with article processing charges (Solomon & Björk 2012). This commercial takeover has been so successful that, to many Western researchers, the term 'Open Access' has become associated with expensive APCs and publishing practices that focus on quantity over quality (Andringa et al. 2024). Fortunately, recent years have seen renewed attention for the Diamond movement, with many high-profile cases of editorial teams leaving their commercial publishers and rebranding as Diamond journals, institutions and funders launching funding calls to help journals make the transition to Diamond OA, and many new Diamond journals being launched. In the Netherlands, a new Diamond Expertise Centre has been established in January 2025 to increase awareness and aid the transition to equitable, sustainable Open Access for everyone.
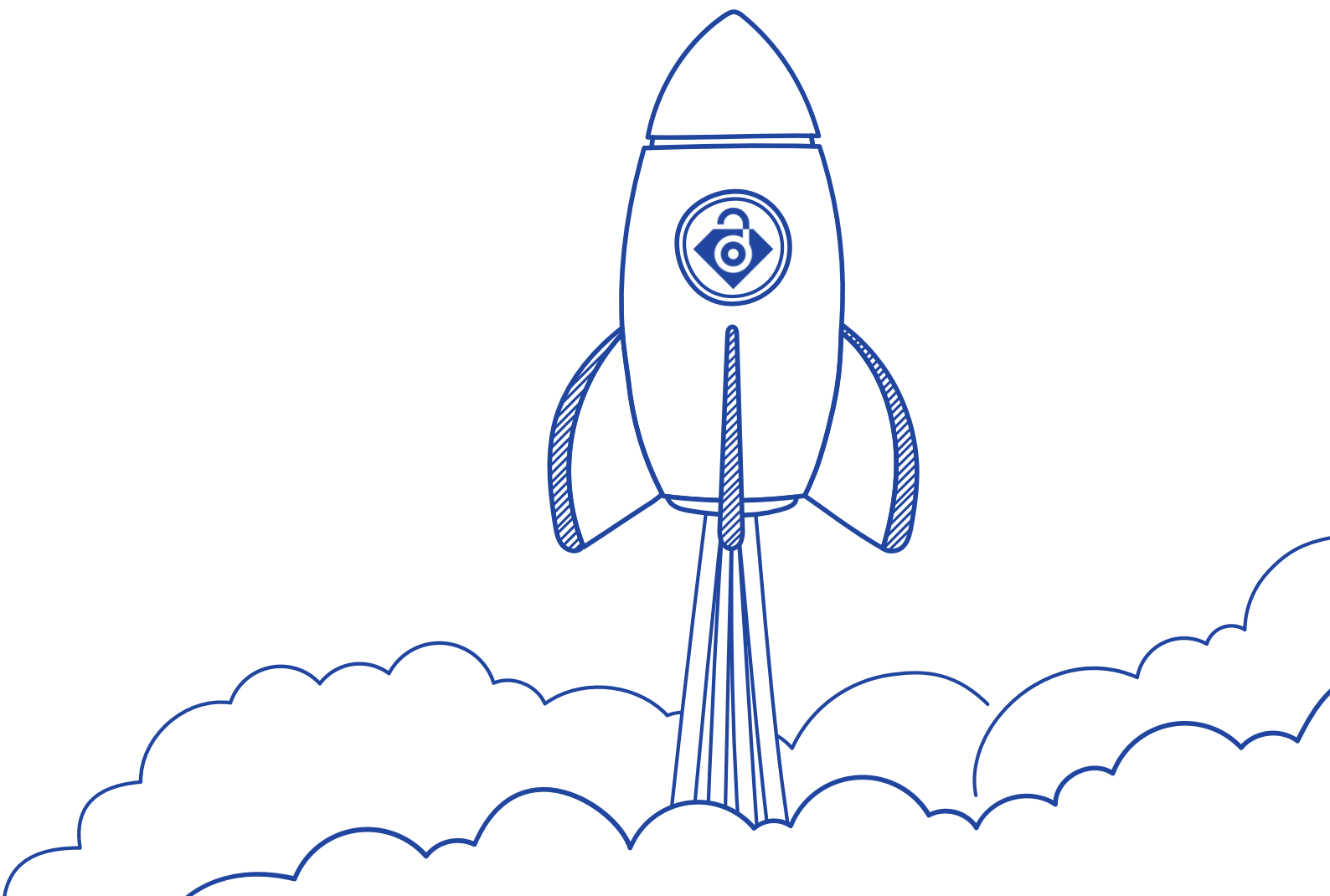
WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide has been written for all journal editors (in the Netherlands and beyond) who find themselves uncomfortable with the hold of commercial publishers over their journals. You may be worried that reading or publishing in your journal might not be financially accessible to colleagues without access to institutional funding. Perhaps your concerns are related to autonomy and governance: your publisher may be pressuring you to accept more articles, or is appointing editors without your say. Perhaps you are interested in implementing wider Open Science practices (such as open metadata, open peer review, or preregistration) that your publisher is unwilling to accommodate. Whatever your reasons for considering a transition (or 'flip') to Diamond OA, this guide will help you think through your motivations, figure out which Diamond model would work best for you, and guide you through the practical steps. The guide's authors all work in OA supporting roles and/or institutional publishing at Dutch universities and are involved in various national OA initiatives.

In line with the scholar-led origins of Diamond OA, many definitions of Diamond (e.g. Fuchs & Sandoval 2013, cOAlitionS, UNESCO, DIAMAS) emphasise its non-commercial, community-led nature. However, we acknowledge that many editorial teams are primarily interested in removing the APC barrier, and that there are ways to do this while still collaborating with a commercial publisher or platform (the Subscribe to Open model, for instance).

For the purposes of this guide, we therefore include some commercial initiatives under the wider Diamond umbrella, as long as they involve publishing content under an open licence and do not ask fees of either the author or the reader.

Conversely, while we encourage journals to seek funding or sponsorship to enable the complete elimination of APCs, we acknowledge that not every journal will be in a financial position to make the transition to autonomous and scholar-led without the support of some sort of APC system. Some scholar-led journals ask authors for a voluntary contribution (e.g. _Glossa_), others have adopted a trust-based system of no-questions-asked APC waivers (e.g. _Quantitative Science Studies_). Conversely, the freemium model (e.g. OpenEdition) involves optional fees for readers. While some of these models may not be Diamond under all definitions, they are compatible with the principles of Fair Open Access.

Since this guide is primarily aimed at editors affiliated with Dutch HE institutions, it specifically highlights Dutch publication platforms and university presses. While the overall message of this guide and much of the information in it apply regardless of editors' geographical locations, we encourage anyone from outside the Netherlands to approach their own Open Access librarians for local alternatives to the specific platforms and publishers discussed in this guide.

You are considering a flip – now what?

YOU ARE CONSIDERING A FLIP – NOW WHAT?

OWNERSHIP

Before you get started, you need to determine who legally owns the journal and its components. A journal can be publisher-owned, which is generally the case with large commercial publishers such as Elsevier and Wiley, or community-owned, usually by an academic society or a research institute, with the publisher only acting on that society's behalf. In the latter case, you (or the society) own the title, logo, and ISSN, meaning you can take your journal to another publisher relatively easily. However, ownership has multiple components: it is possible that you own the journal itself but not the archive, for instance. If you are currently (or have been in the past) a closed-access society-owned journal whose authors sign copyright transfer agreements, check whether the copyright was signed over to the publisher or to the society. Check also who owns the articles currently under review.

If you are editing a publisher-owned journal, it may be worth it to negotiate for better conditions with the publisher first. If you are primarily interested in lowering or eliminating the APC barrier for your authors, it may be possible to negotiate an Open Access model that works for your journal, for instance through Subscribe to Open or a liberal fee waiver system (such as recently adopted by Cambridge University Press). Publishers also have different and occasionally changing views on adopting Open Science practices like open peer review or open metadata.
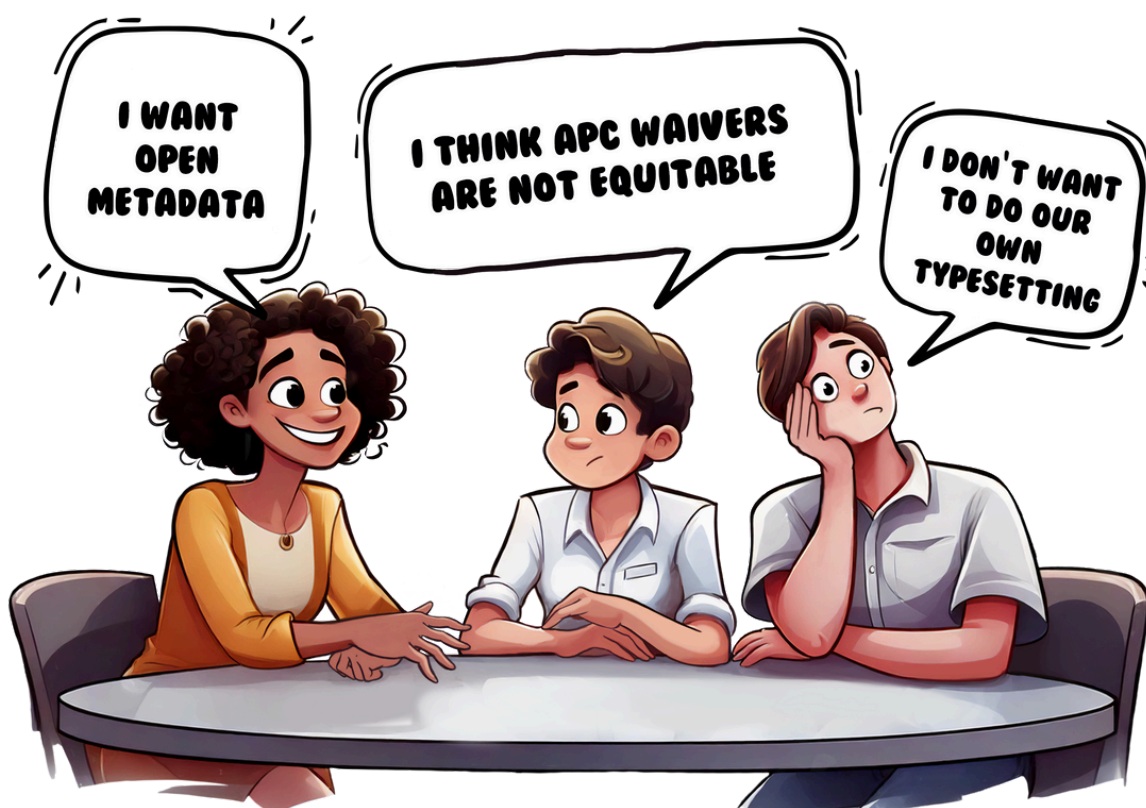In many cases, however, the only option for going Diamond will be to leave your current publisher. For a publisher-owned journal, this likely involves resigning from your current journal and starting a new one, although sometimes publishers will accept a buy-off.

SET YOUR JOURNAL'S PRIORITIES

A Diamond flip is already a big change, so it may be tempting to try and find a publishing model that allows the transition to be as seamless and unobtrusive as possible. However, Ludo Waltman, founding editor of *Quantitative Science Studies,* urges editorial teams who are between publishers not to "think too small": a flip may in fact provide a unique opportunity to get together with the editorial board to completely reconsider what sort of journal you would like to be.

- What aspects of Diamond OA are non-negotiable and why? Is it enough for you as a journal to be scholar-led and/or APC-free, or do you want to apply these standards to your publisher as well?
- How open do you want to be beyond Open Access? Preregistration, preprinting, open data, open metadata, open peer review? Do you extend similar standards to your publisher – for instance, are you OK with a publisher that uses proprietary journal management software or other non-open infrastructure, or do you want to insist on scholar-led and open source in all levels of production?

- If you have resigned from a publisher-owned journal: how important is it that you start a new journal? Might you achieve your purposes (better) through an entirely new model of scholarly communication, for instance by reinventing yourself as a Peer Community?[1]
- Tools such as HowOpenIsIt? and How Equitable Is It?, as well as the Diamond OA self-assessment tool developed by DIAMAS (registration needed) may help you identify what is important to your journal and which publishing models could be compatible with that.

TRANSLATE PRIORITIES INTO PRACTICAL STEPS

You will have plenty of options at your disposal for publishing your journal with a Diamond model, such as working with a publisher or a publishing platform or setting up a platform yourself using open source software. The matrix in Table 1 shows where the options discussed in this guide fall based on some of the priorities mentioned above, and functions as a reading guide to the rest of this guide. Based on the priorities set, calculate enough time to orient yourself on the possibilities available. Take time to talk to the managing teams, look into start-up and recurring costs, services provided and overall, where your journal would feel at home.

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1 This refers to the 'Publish, Review, Curate' model of scholarly communication, which is based on the concept of refereed preprints. A prominent PRC platform is PeerCommunityIn. Subject-specific PRC platforms also exist, such as Review Commons (biology) and MetaROR (metascience). Sciety.org has an overview of PRC communities. The topic goes beyond the purposes of this guide but is worth exploring and/or asking your local Open Access librarian about.

Priorities	Exclusively Diamond publishers and platforms (Diamond university presses, Diamond platforms)	Non-Diamond publishers and platforms (traditional publishers, mixed platforms e.g. Ubiquity, Scholastica)	Self-publishing with Open Source infrastructure
No (or only voluntary) APCs		You can ensure this for your own journal, but the publisher/platform as a whole does not operate on this principle.	
Scholar-led, autonomy, creative freedom		Generally yes for the platforms; for publishers, you may have to negotiate.	
Non-profit		Both non-profit and commercial parties operate in this category.	
Open infrastructures		Generally no.	
Editorial support, tech support, convenience	Depends; editorial services such as typesetting are generally included with the NUPs but not with the platforms.	More so for the publishers than for the platforms.	

Table 1: Journal priorities and routes to Diamond OA. The colour coding roughly indicates the extent to which this priority is met by the discussed routes and initiatives: green for routes that match the priority, red for routes that generally do not, amber when it depends on the specific initiative or publisher. Clarifications have been added where needed.

FINANCES

Various business models can underpin a Diamond OA journal. The most important figure to know in advance is the amount required to cover the costs to run the journal at a desired level. Keep in mind the yearly fluctuations such as varying article count and the necessary surplus needed for further development of software and such. More on funding can be found in the Costs and funding section of this guide.

TIMELINE

When making a schedule, take into account the termination clause in your existing publishing contract. Most of the time you will have to inform the publisher at least half a year prior to the contract end date, but it can be more or less.

Unless you have decided to self-publish, the new publisher or publishing platform will generally take care of the transfer of content, redirecting DOIs and URLs, requesting new ISSNs (when the title of a journal changes) and other practicalities.

DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

If your journal will become Open Access for the first time after the flip, it is important for your journal's visibility, as well as your and your authors' ability to access certain funding sources, to get listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). To get listed journals have to meet a number of conditions related to the quality and content of the journal website, the number of articles published and the peer review system. You can apply for DOAJ indexation when your journal has published at least 10 research articles in its new fully Open Access format, but we recommend starting to work towards DOAJ's application criteria right away – even if getting indexed in DOAJ is not itself a priority, many of its criteria represent best practices that will make your journal more attractive to prospective authors and supporters.

ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

One aspect of the flipping process that should not be underestimated is communication with all stakeholders. This can be internal stakeholders such as editors, the publisher and reviewers, but also external stakeholders such as readers, subscribers, authors and the academic community. It is important to ask these stakeholders for feedback on the flip. This will enable you to identify and address any existing concerns, but also to discover weaknesses in your planning. Transparency throughout the process and communication about the reasons for the flip are essential for acceptance and success.

Community engagement is particularly important if you are resigning from a publisher-owned journal and starting a new journal rather than flipping an existing title. In this case, the success of your new journal is likely to depend on the academic community's willingness to recognise the new journal as the de facto continuation of the old one. Many editorial teams in this situation have explicitly asked their community to withdraw their support and labour from the old journal, resulting in what is sometimes known as a 'zombie journal': technically functional, but without the life and soul provided by the support of a scholarly community.

Retraction Watch's Mass Resignations List documents past cases, with links to editorial teams' resignation letters and other communications around their resignation. This list may provide some inspiration and help you to pre-empt any negative spin from the old publisher.

At least as important is creating positive buzz around your new journal. A well-considered communication strategy is also worthwhile after the flipping process to increase the reach and reputation of your publication and attract more readers and submissions. Your team should actively promote new and timely content, calls for papers, and even calls for reviewers on a regular basis. There are many possible promotion outlets to explore, including social media platforms (for example Mastodon, Bluesky or LinkedIn), online researcher communities, publication blogs, podcasts, and RSS feeds or email alerts for your latest content.
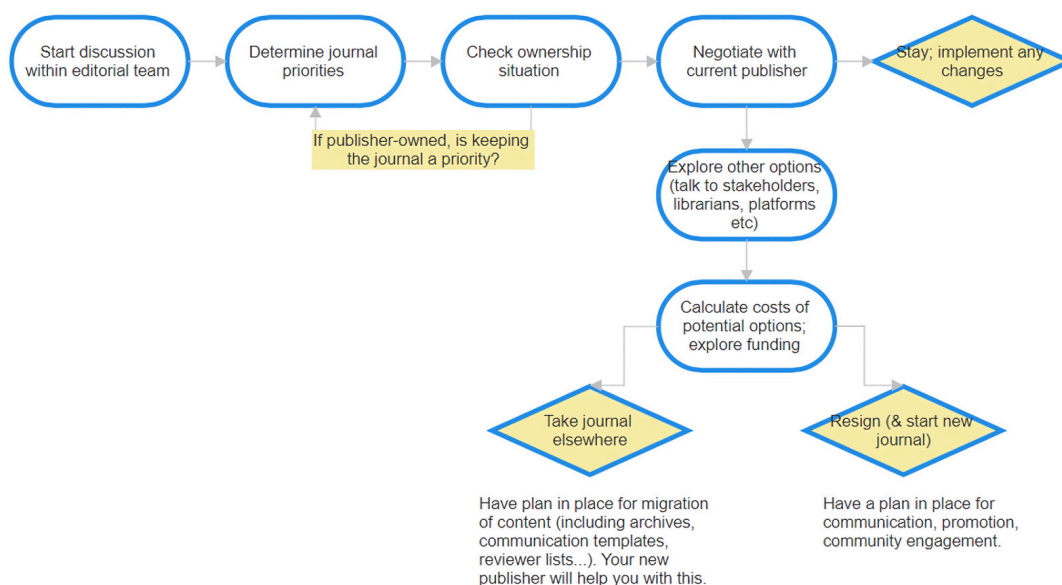

Figure 1: A summary of the preceding section in the form of a workflow diagram.

Routes to Diamond Open Access

WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL PUBLISHERS

Most traditional subscription-based publishers now offer options for Open Access publishing, even non-APC-based publishing. If you would like to lower or eliminate the APC-barrier for your authors but prefer the visibility and editorial support provided by a traditional publisher (or if you can't or won't leave your current publisher for whatever reason), it may be worth enquiring with your current publisher about the possibilities. If you have independent funding, for instance through society membership fees, you might be able to cover any APCs through that, or agree with your publisher on a flat fee based on the average number of articles published in your journal annually. If you don't have (consistent) access to funding, you may be able to join a 'Subscribe to Open' initiative. This model is seeing increasing uptake, with even large publishers such as Taylor & Francis and De Gruyter-Brill now offering non-APC-based publishing through S2O.

SUBSCRIBE TO OPEN

Subscribe to Open (S2O) is a subscription model that allows a publisher to convert journals from gated access to Open Access. Institutional subscription revenue is collected and, assuming all subscribers participate, the publisher commits to publishing that year's content OA. If participation is not sufficient – for example, if some subscribers delay renewing in the expectation that they can gain access without participating – then the content remains gated, only to provide access for those institutions that have paid for a subscription. Publishers sometimes offer incentives exclusive to contributors, such as input into the resource's governance or access to the journal's archive.

Strengths and weaknesses
S2O may be a good option for editorial boards who would like to eliminate paywalls and APCs, but who would still like the marketing, visibility, and editorial services offered by a traditional publisher. It is also a good option for journals who do not have access to their own funding sources, since the running costs of the journal will continue to be covered by the publisher.

S2O works best for established subscription journals with stable subscriber bases. In most cases, it would not be as well-suited to new subscription journals with growing subscriber bases, journals that experience significant subscription churn from year-to-year, and journals that depend on significant non-subscription revenue (from licensing, advertising, etc.).

A major downside of the S2O model is that continuing access is not guaranteed. If the subscription base drops below the threshold, for example caused by freeriders, the journal will revert to paywalled content. Editorial teams should discuss among themselves whether they find this risk acceptable and what they will do in case this happens.

Examples

An underline expansive list of publishers using the S2O model is maintained by the Open Access Directory. The list contains both commercial and not-for-profit publishers. The former are usually not transparent about when the funding threshold is met by the participating libraries, meaning these publishers can continue to make a profit off successful S2O journals, while the risks of the model are borne by the community who will lose access when the threshold is not met. If financial transparency is a requisite for the editorial board, consider publishing with a not-for-profit publisher.

A few not-for-profit publishers working with S2O are Edinburgh University Press, Liverpool University Press, and the European Mathematical Society press. A few for-profit publishers working with S2O are Amsterdam University Press, BioOne, Brepols, Berghahn, De Gruyter Brill, and Taylor & Francis.

OTHER PROGRAMMES

Several not-for-profit publishers have launched ambitious Open Access initiatives to help existing journals flip to OA while adhering to the principles of scholar-led and equitable. Examples are Cambridge University Press's Open Equity Initiative, aimed at converting CUP's journal portfolio to OA while ensuring APCs do not form a barrier for authors who cannot afford them, and MIT Press's Shift+OPEN programme, which allows both new and existing journals to adopt a Fair OA funding model with (relatively) low and transparent APCs.

CASE STUDY: QUANTITATIVE SCIENCE STUDIES

In 2019, the entire editorial board of the Elsevier Journal of Informetrics resigned to form a new society-owned, scholar-led journal, *Quantitative Science Studies* (QSS). Irked at first by Elsevier's buggy journal management system, founding editor Ludo Waltman started reconsidering the journal's affiliation with the publisher entirely, eventually concluding with the rest of the editorial board that Elsevier's closed practices and high APCs (both of which it was unwilling to change) were fundamentally at odds with the philosophy and contents of the journal itself. The new journal, QSS, is published by MIT Press, which is non-profit and has adopted several Open Science principles that are non-negotiable to the journal, including full openness of the metadata of the articles published in the journal. To Waltman, the collaboration with MIT Press offers the best of both worlds: an autonomous, scholar-led journal in line with Fair OA principles, but also all the advantages of a prestigious publisher name and a bespoke level of professional editorial support. However, after an initial three years in which the journal's running costs were fully covered by a large support grant from TIB, as of 2023 the journal needs to rely on APCs (waived on request) to financially sustain its publication model.

Meanwhile, the old Journal of Informetrics (JoI) is still up and running. Waltman is not very bothered by this: in a small research community like scientometrics it has been relatively easy to get the community to learn about and rally behind QSS, and even though JoI is still propped up by its impact factors and indexation by Scopus and Web of Science, Waltman is already seeing a marked decline in the quality of its published articles. In contrast, submissions to QSS have been of such high quality that the journal has had to reject very few of them – a good reminder that rejection rates are not a proxy for journal quality.

FULL OA PUBLISHERS AND PUBLISHING PLATFORMS

The publishers and platforms in this section have all been fully Open Access from the start. We focus here on publishers and platforms that offer non-APC-based publishing at least as an option. This includes fully Diamond presses such as the collective Netherlands University Presses, but also some commercial initiatives such as Ubiquity Press and Scholastica, which host both Diamond and APC-based journals.

NETHERLANDS UNIVERSITY PRESSES

The Netherlands University Presses (NUPs) are 'New University Presses' (also abbreviated 'NUPs'): academic presses maintained by the library of the institution they are affiliated with. In the Netherlands, the NUP label has been used for a group of university publishers since 2021. The NUPs operate under the banner of the Diamond OA model. While the NUPs are based at and funded by their own affiliated institutions, their collaboration allows them to pool knowledge and resources, improving the long-term sustainability of the Dutch NUP model. In this respect it is logical to intensify the already initiated collaboration between the existing NUPs and those institutions who want to embrace Diamond OA in the coming years.

Apart from publishing in Diamond OA, these institutional publishers further adhere to Open Science principles by using open-source software and having community-based governance. Most NUPs offer services towards the journals they host, such as registration of DOIs, similarity checks, copyright checks, indexing, editorial assistance, generation of file formats, standardized set of metadata management, promotion and marketing and long-term archiving. They also provide training opportunities and advice on publishing policy and best practice. As of the end of 2024, 50 journals are published by NUPs.

Strengths and weaknesses

The NUPs provide a high-quality and easily accessible platform for hosting journals with short communication lines towards their editors. Licenses, services and finances are fully transparent.

Although each press has its unique disciplinary focus and scope, inclusivity is central to all of them. Authors have freedom in starting and managing the journals which are relevant in their discipline. The scholarly quality of publications is leading, not their commercial potential; this means the NUPs often publish journals in small research areas or topics that are of little or no interest to commercial publishers, including journals with a regional focus. Similarly, under the Diamond model, scholarly quality is more important than whether or not the author has access to funding. These principles result in a highly diverse, high-quality journal portfolio.

However, under the NUP model, content is affiliated with the institution. This means that most NUPs only provide services towards researchers affiliated with the university they are based at. In addition, not all Dutch universities have their own university press.

University Press	Affiliated university	Supported content
Open Press TiU	Tilburg University	Books, journals
Radboud University Press	Radboud University	Books, journals
TU Delft Open	Delft university of Technology	Books, textbooks, journals
University of Groningen Press	University of Groningen	Books, textbooks, journals
Maastricht University Press	Maastricht University	Books, textbooks, journals
Leiden University Press	Leiden University	Books, textbooks

Table 2: Netherlands University Presses.

PUBLISHING PLATFORMS

The distinction between a full-fledged publisher and a publishing platform is sometimes murky. In general, publishers tend to be more involved in their journal portfolio and leave a more visible fingerprint on their journals; they may also offer more in terms of editorial services and the coordination of library funding. Platforms are generally more hands-off and mostly focused on providing editorial teams with the technical means to run their own journals through offering proprietary or Open Source journal management software and server space. Some combine both: Ubiquity Press for instance offers 'published journals' (full editorial service offered, obligatorily APC-funded, although the journal may choose to cover the APCs from other funding sources) and 'hosted journals' (access to Ubiquity's publishing platform with no editorial support and no APCs). In this section, we will highlight several prominent digital publishers/platforms and compare them on key points.

Fully Diamond platforms such as Openjournals.nl and SciPost play a critical role in the transition to Diamond OA. Although these platforms do not generally offer as much editorial support as a commercial publisher, they are well-suited for journals that value community-driven, cost-effective, and ethical publishing practices. Similarly, Open Library of Humanities operates following a fully Diamond OA model (optionally with voluntary APCs) but takes on more of a publisher role: it sources its own funding through a supporting libraries programme and involves a more extensive and competitive application process for journals that want to join.

As with the traditional publishers, for-profit digital publishers/platforms may also offer non-APC options, resulting in hybrid platforms that publish both Diamond and APC-based journals. Among these, the most notable is Scholastica, which is a for-profit platform that also allows journals to employ the APC model, but that has also been playing a relevant role in helping journals transition to a more sustainable and community-driven model. On the publisher side, there is the aforementioned Ubiquity Press (owned by De Gruyter).

Some platforms and digital publishers have a particular disciplinary focus. However, even if your journal diverges from the platform's current disciplinary scope, it is always worth approaching the platform manager to discuss your journal's potential fit. Many platforms and publishers start out in a particular discipline or geographical area but widen their scope over time (e.g. SciPost).

OPENJOURNALS

Openjournals.nl is a national platform and support team in the Netherlands that facilitates the publication of Diamond OA journals. It provides editorial boards with the tools and services needed to independently manage and publish their journals. The platform enables editors (1) to arrange and monitor the peer-review process of papers, including all correspondence and (2) to publish accepted papers, including registration and archiving.

Openjournals.nl does not function as a traditional publisher and offers a more limited range of services. Editors are expected to take on additional responsibilities compared to most traditional publishing models, but the platform facilitates workflows and enhances the efficiency of journal management.

Besides offering technical support, Openjournals.nl fosters collaboration among participating journals and supports a community-driven approach to scholarly publishing.

Journals hosted on the Openjournals.nl platform should be scholarly, have a solid peer-review process, adopt the Diamond OA model and be based in the Netherlands or Belgium. They must also be registered with the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) or be actively working towards registration.

The platform assists in the transition to Diamond OA by providing to editorial boards a configured and journal-branded publishing platform. Additional services include training for editorial teams, migration of previously published papers, URL management, and assistance with journal registration and indexing. Openjournals.nl also offers long-term archiving and organizes meetings, workshops, and webinars for participating journals to foster collaboration.

To cover operational costs, Openjournals.nl charges a one-time set-up fee and an annual hosting fee, which as of January 2025 are €1,000 and €2,000, respectively (excluding BTW/VAT). These fees are expected to remain stable, though they may be subject to change. Additional costs for typesetting and editorial support may arise, and the Openjournals.nl team provides guidance on available funding options from universities and academic organizations to deal with these expenses.

CASE STUDY: DUTCH JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

The *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics (DuJAL)* first went Open Access in 2019 while still being published by John Benjamins, a small commercial publisher. As the official journal of the Dutch applied linguistics society Anéla, they were able to cover all publishing costs from membership fees. However, since John Benjamins refused to adapt to their preferred continuous publishing model and kept selling print subscriptions (essentially double-dipping), *DuJAL* left the publisher in 2021. They considered one of the NUPs before deciding to join OpenJournals.nl, feeling that a nationwide platform would give them more visibility and reach, and offer more opportunity for journals and institutions to pool their resources. *DuJAL* has since become a passionate advocate for scholar-led Diamond OA (Andringa et al 2024). Editor-in-chief Sible Andringa notes that the cost per article is much lower at OpenJournals.nl than at their previous publisher (even though they have chosen to outsource typesetting to a third party) and lauds the complete freedom that comes with being your own boss, enabling the *DuJAL* team to experiment with various Open Science practices and new forms of scholarly communication, such as the publishing of conference posters.

Unfortunately, the process of leaving John Benjamins was marred by the publisher holding on to *DuJAL's* entire pre-2019 archive, even the issues that were published before John Benjamins acquired the journal. For now, Andringa and his colleagues have decided not to fight this, but the situation illustrates what editorial teams who want to split from a commercial publisher might find themselves dealing with.

OPEN LIBRARY OF HUMANITIES

The Open Library of Humanities (OLH) is a non-profit, scholar-led, Diamond OA publisher based at Birkbeck, University of London. Established in 2013, OLH supports over 30 peer-reviewed humanities journals, all employing a Diamond OA model. The platform operates under a unique library consortium funding model, which ensures equitable access to scholarly content and promotes the sustainability of community-owned publishing practices. Through this approach, OLH aims to challenge traditional commercial publishing models while fostering innovation in Open Access for the humanities.

Journals included in OLH must be well-established humanities-focused publications, ideally with an archive of at least five years. They are required to demonstrate strong peer review processes, such as single-anonymous, double-anonymous, or open peer review. In addition, the journals should be internationally recognized with diverse editorial boards, ensuring broad academic representation. OLH offers various services to support journals transitioning to or operating under the Diamond OA model. These include hosting on Janeway, OLH's open-source publishing platform, which integrates submission systems, peer review workflows, and article hosting, as well as ensuring compliance with international metadata standards for discoverability. OLH also provides editorial and migration support, including guidance on transferring back issues and training for editors on the Janeway platform. Furthermore, journals hosted by OLH benefit from long-term archiving and preservation through secure multi-server backups and collaborations with archival organizations.

Financially, OLH is sustained through a Library Partnership Subsidy (LPS), with over 340 libraries worldwide contributing to its operations. Membership fees are tiered based on country and institution size, starting as low as £750 per year at the time of writing of this guide, with higher-tier options available. This approach eliminates APCs and promotes global equity by redistributing funds to support institutions in the Global South. Since its inception, OLH has grown from hosting seven journals to 33 by 2024, publishing around 500 articles annually. Key journals on the platform include *The Comics Grid*, *Digital Medievalist*, and *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics*.

SCIPOST

SciPost is a non-profit, scholar-led, Diamond OA platform focused on scientific publishing. Established in 2016, SciPost provides a rapid and transparent peer-review process for high-quality research across multiple scientific disciplines. The platform operates under a full Diamond OA model and its mission is to challenge traditional publishing models by offering a sustainable, community-driven alternative that ensures open access to scientific knowledge and promotes fair and efficient publishing practices.

Journals and articles published on SciPost must meet high scholarly standards, and follow the open refereeing workflow and collegial decision-making processes to ensure quality and integrity. SciPost covers various scientific fields, including physics, chemistry, and astronomy, and is open to other disciplines under its expansion plans. SciPost provides a wide range of services designed to facilitate the submission, review, and publication of high-quality research. These include hosting on SciPost's in-house platform, which supports submission workflows, peer review integration, and publication of final articles.

The platform also ensures that articles meet international metadata standards for discoverability and indexing in global databases. SciPost offers editorial and technical support, including assistance with submission management and guidance on the platform's features. The platform is designed to support journals and individual articles with long-term archiving, ensuring that published research remains accessible in the future. Additionally, SciPost provides a collaborative community environment where researchers can share experiences and best practices through various discussion platforms such as forums and community report platforms. SciPost cannot migrate old content from previous issues (if that is the case) and is therefore recommended to journals that wish to "start afresh". For the journal to run a smooth peer-review process, it is recommended that at least 25 researchers should be ready to become Fellows (editors).

Financially, SciPost operates without charging APCs, relying instead on funding from various grants, donations, and institutional support. As a non-profit platform, SciPost prioritizes the redistribution of funds to ensure the sustainability of its open-access model via its PubFracs business model.

SCHOLASTICA

Scholastica is a platform designed to streamline the management and publication processes for academic journals, with a focus on supporting OA models, including Diamond OA. It offers a comprehensive suite of tools to manage the entire journal workflow, including manuscript submission, peer review, production, and online publishing within a fully hosted platform. Although Scholastica supports the Diamond OA model, the platform also accommodates journals that use the APC model to fund their operations.

The platform provides a range of services to support academic journals in all stages, from new launches to established titles moving to OA. Scholastica's features include customizable article templates, metadata export for indexing in major academic databases, and integrations with discovery services to improve the visibility of journal content. Moreover, Scholastica's services include fully hosted websites optimized for search engines, mobile devices, and accessibility. The platform integrates with major discovery services such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, PubMed, and Portico for indexing and long-term archiving. It also offers production tools for automated generation of JATS XML, HTML, and PDF formats, and provides migration support, including free import of back issues. Peer review management is managed with workflows for submission tracking, reviewer assignments, and editorial decisions, all accessible from a centralized dashboard for editors and reviewers. Finally, Scholastica includes built-in analytics for monitoring readership, geographic reach, and social media engagement, with public-facing metrics such as download counts and Altmetric integration.

Financially, Scholastica operates on a subscription-based model, with pricing based on the scope of services selected. Its goal is to make professional-grade publishing tools affordable for smaller academic teams and organizations. Scholastica has been used by journals like The Sedimentary Record, which transitioned from a print-focused model to a fully digital, Diamond OA journal.

UBIQUITY PRESS

Ubiquity Press is an Open Access publisher owned by De Gruyter that offers a flexible publishing platform for journals across all disciplines, with an emphasis on niche and underserved fields. It supports both newly launched journals and established titles transitioning to OA. Journals hosted on the platform must implement robust peer-review processes and comply with open-access standards such as Creative Commons licensing. Ubiquity Press provides a comprehensive set of tools for managing submissions, peer review, and production workflows, ensuring streamlined journal operations.

The platform offers fully hosted journal and book websites, along with integration into major discovery services like DOAJ, Scopus, and Google Scholar. It also provides long-term archiving through collaborations with CLOCKSS, Portico, and institutional repositories. Ubiquity Press supports a range of production tools, including automated generation of formats like PDF, XML, and ePub, as well as customizable templates for journal articles and book chapters. Built-in analytics and Altmetric integration enhance visibility and enable impact tracking.

Financially, Ubiquity Press offers both a full-service publishing model and a more cost-effective hosted option. The full-service model includes website management, indexing, and archiving, while the self-hosted option provides web space and software, allowing journals to retain control over editorial tasks. Ubiquity Press hosts over 100 journals and books, partnering with universities to offer customized publishing solutions. These offerings have supported the growth of community-driven publishing initiatives, helping journals expand their reach and impact. Dutch Diamond journals on Ubiquity include the Utrecht Law Review and the student-led Humanities journal Junctions.

PLATFORMS COMPARISON

	Platform or Publisher?	Business Model	Scope and Reach	Ownership	Services Offered
Openjournals.nl	Platform	Platform funded by grants, sponsorships, and set-up and annual hosting fee. No APCs.	Diamond OA journals in the Netherlands and Belgium.	National public platform.	Provides website configuration, hosting, training, migration support, indexing assistance, long-term archiving, and community collaboration.
Open Library of Humanities	Publisher	Publisher funded by a Library Partnership Subsidy. No APCs.	Humanities-focused Diamond OA journals worldwide.	Non-profit, scholar-led.	Full editorial and migration support, use of Janeway platform, indexing, training, and long-term archiving.

	Platform or Publisher?	Business Model	Scope and Reach	Ownership	Services Offered
Scholastica	Platform	Subscription-based platform. Cost depends on selected services. Some hosted journals require APCs.	OA Journals across disciplines, globally.	Private company.	Peer review management, hosting, productions tools, indexing integration, analytics, and optional workflow services.
SciPost	Platform	Fully funded by grants, institutional contributions, and donations. No APCs.	Diamond OA, journals in any field.	Non-profit, scholar-led.	Full hosting, open peer-review tools, indexing, archiving, and collaborative community environment.
Ubiquity Press	Publisher	Publisher offering flexible pricing for fully hosted or basic hosting services. Some hosted journals require APCs.	OA journals across disciplines, with a focus on underserved fields.	Private company.	Comprehensive editorial workflows, hosting, indexing, production tools, analytics, and both full-service and hosted options.

Table 3: A comparison of prominent digital platforms/publishers.

DO-IT-YOURSELF PUBLISHING

The publishers and platforms discussed in the previous section rely on software like Janeway (developed by the Open Library of Humanities), PubPub (developed at MIT, now run by the independent Knowledge Futures Group) or Open Journal Systems (OJS, developed by the Public Knowledge Project) to manage their workflow. Janeway, PubPub and OJS are all end-to-end, open-source journal management systems. As such, they can be freely downloaded, customized, and operated by editorial teams looking to use them to manage their journals. These tools are designed to support the full life cycle of academic journal publishing, from submission management to peer review, from production to publication.

For editors looking to have maximum control over their publishing workflows and reduced running costs, adopting open-source software independently can be an attractive option. This approach allows editorial boards to configure the journal's features, layout, and workflows according to the journals' specific needs. It also eliminates the need for long-term service fees, provided the editors have access to their own server space as well as the technical skills to manage hosting, updates, and maintenance in-house. However, it's important to note that such a 'DIY publishing' model demands a significant time investment and technical expertise to ensure that the workflows remain operational and that the journal management system operates effectively.

For many editorial boards, joining a publishing platform such as the ones described in the section above may be a more sustainable choice. Platforms like Scholastica, Openjournals.nl, or SciPost not only provide journal management systems but also offer all the relevant infrastructure and support. These platforms handle a broad range of activities for the journals, such as metadata curation, indexing in academic databases, digital preservation, and DOI registration. All of these are time-consuming activities that are, however, critical for enhancing a journal's visibility and ensuring long-term access to its content. These platforms often provide user training, technical support, and networking and collaboration opportunities for editors, reducing the administrative and technical burden on editorial teams.

As an intermediate option, you could consider subscribing to a hosting plan instead of hosting the software yourself. Both OJS and Janeway offer hosting services for a comparatively low annual fee. This will still involve doing much of the journal management yourself, but also involves some tech support as well as help with things like indexation and DOI registration. As of the moment of writing this guide, the situation at PubPub is somewhat unclear, although they write that they "hope to offer a free hosted version in the future".

For a more in-depth introduction and comparison of publishing platforms usable for self-publishing see Ball et al. (2023). An up-to-date overview is maintained at the IOI Infrafinder (filter by 'Publishing system').

CASE STUDY: JOURNAL OF TRIAL AND ERROR

Launched in 2019 as a Diamond OA journal from the start, the *Journal of Trial and Error (JOTE)* provides a platform for research that documents negative, null, or methodologically flawed results. Its mission is to lower barriers to publishing these unconventional findings, which are essential to combat positive publication bias but often face resistance due to reputational concerns or the competitive nature of academic publishing.

To achieve its mission, the journal adopted an independent approach, utilising PubPub, an open source platform developed by The Knowledge Futures Group, to host and manage its publishing workflows. Chair Stefan Gaillard praises the flexibility of PubPub, as well as the transparency and community engagement fostered by its unique features such as interactive annotations and open peer-review tools. Despite relying on PubPub for many aspects of the publishing process, the journal remains fully scholar-led, with editorial teams managing submissions and fostering relationships with researchers at conferences and labs to build its reputation. When asked about the challenges that his journal is facing, Gaillard mentions funding as a recurring hurdle. The journal has secured financial support through grants, such as the Erasmus Diamond OA Fund, and generates additional revenue by offering paid typesetting services. However, the effort to sustain a fully Diamond OA model remains ongoing, even with modern and customisable tools such as PubPub. Gaillard and his fellow editors at JOTE are an exemplification of the importance of accessible, transparent publishing for advancing Open Science. The Journal of Trial and Error serves as a compelling example of how innovative tools and scholar-led initiatives can redefine academic publishing.

Costs and Funding

EXPECTED COSTS

Transitioning or setting up a journal with a Diamond OA publishing model entails costs that can broadly be divided into fixed costs and variable costs. Fixed costs mostly correspond to staff and technical infrastructure required to host the journal (Table 4). Variable costs can fluctuate depending on the number of articles published, which can consist of registering a DOI for the article, plagiarism checks, copy-editing, layout, typesetting.

In a European study on Diamond OA journal 62% of journals reported an average annual cost of under $/€10.000 (Bosman et al 2021).

Route	Netherlands University Presses (NUPs)	Openjournals.nl	SciPost	Self-Publishing
Hosting costs	**None** for editors as it is covered by the press.	€2,000/year	**None** (covered by SciPost via the PubFracs business model)	Depends on the platform chosen. Option 1) **free** self-hosting option. Option 2) **paid** hosting that includes training. See overview here.
Variable costs (copy-editing, layout, typesetting)	Generally **none** for the editors as it is covered and organized by the press.	Needs to be arranged by editors	**None** (covered by SciPost). Help with lobbying for sponsorships is appreciated.	Needs to be arranged by editors.
Example of Journals	Yearbook for Ritual and Liturgical Studies	Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics	Migration Politics	Journal of Trial & Error Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics

Table 4: Estimation of publishing cost of a Diamond OA journal depending on publishing route chosen (Netherlands University Presses, Netherlands-based platforms or self-publishing).

REVENUE MODELS

Financial revenues are usually the primary concern in any conversation about transitioning subscription titles to Diamond OA. Journals that depend on subscription revenues will have to consider different funding options that they are not accustomed to and possibly seek additional alternative income streams to make a sustainable transition.

When choosing a funding model, or preferably a mix of revenue models, insight into the current costs is essential. Income should provide enough financial resources to engage a qualified editorial team (including succession planning), to provide state-of-the-art publication infrastructure (that is, editorial management software and publishing services such as continuous and long-term referencing and archiving), to enable issue scheduling, and to react fast to unforeseeable editorial challenges (Bosman et al. 2021).

Apart from monetary funding, consider how you might support your journal through in-kind contributions. Are your editors allowed to use their research or academic service time to work on the journal? Could you offer internship places to students in relevant programmes for study credit? Will your institution's support staff (such as secretaries and communication staff) be able to provide their services for your journal? Can you use your institution's physical and digital infrastructure for your editorial work? And conversely, what in-kind compensation can you offer your editors, reviewers and other volunteers to make their labour impactful and rewarding?

Funding Model	Overview	Eligibility criteria	Getting started	Examples
University, departmental or faculty funds. Library publishing programs or subsidies.	Financial support provided by the academic institution or by the library publishing program (e.g. NUPs).	At least one editor needs to be affiliated with the institution that has available funding.	Enquire with your OA librarian(s) and with the head of your department or faculty about relevant funds. Even if there is currently no local funding, this will make policymakers aware of the need for it and put your journal on people's radar.	UvA Diamond OA Fund EUR Diamond OA Fund
Grants and funders	Diamond OA is increasingly gaining attention and therefore grants towards transitioning a journal towards Diamond OA are appearing.	Depends on the grant.	Regularly scan or ask grant/OA officers to help you find grants for Diamond OA journals.	NWO Diamond OA call Shift+OPEN
Voluntary Article Processing Charges (APCs or donations)	Authors or (affiliated) institutions can provide financial support to cover the publishing cost.	It depends on the legal entity of the journal.	Have infrastructure to process and accept donations (transaction capability).	SciPost GLOSSA
Consortial funding and crowdfunding	Specifically for journals associated with a learned society it might be possible that some of the membership fees go towards supporting the associated journal.	The journal should belong to a society or there should be a strong connection between the journal and a society.	Check which requirements are necessary for the journal to meet to be eligible for consortial funding.	Open Library of Humanities (library partnership subsidy model) KOALA (consortium service) SCOAP3 Knowledge Unlatched

Funding Model	Overview	Eligibility criteria	Getting started	Examples
Society membership dues	Specifically for journals associated with a learned society it might be possible that some of the membership fees go towards supporting the associated journal.	The journal should belong to a society or there should be a strong connection between the journal and a society.	The society can redirect membership fees to cover the publication costs of the journal.	Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics
Subscribe-to-open	This is a type of Consortial Funding suitable for For editors of subscription journals that want to transition to Open Access without charging an article processing charge but while still charging subscription fees.	The journal needs to reach a minimum subscription threshold every year. Each year the quota needs to be met; if not, the articles will be published closed.	Discuss this possibility with the publisher and decide if the quota is reachable.	Amsterdam University Press
Freemium model	The pdf or the print issue is subject to a fee, while the online (HTML) version is available for free.	Technical infrastructure or printing service is needed.	Estimate if the expected revenue would be sufficient to justify such service.	OpenEdition Documenta Mathematica
Advertising**	Selling advertisements spots on the website or print/ article.	The journal needs to have a large or specialized readership to be able to sell advertising posts (Usually 1k+ visitors/month)	Determine the monthly average readership. Check eligible interested organisations for your readers. Contact candidates for add spots.	British Medical Journal (not Diamond OA model)

Table 5: Overview of possible sources of income to run a journal.

*This table has been adapted and expanded based on: https://blog.scholasticahq.com/post/road-to-oa-starting-flipping-journal/
** Please note that advertising in a journal is still allowed for DOAJ indexation. However, these best practices should be followed.*

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