



Open access and knowledge sharing: Reflections on the Pathfinder projects and Open Access Good Practice initiative

The following article provides a selection of reflections from a number of higher education institutions and their staff about participation in the UK-wide Pathfinder project scheme. These nine projects (comprising 30 institutions) form the core of the Jisc-funded Open Access Good Practice initiative. They have produced a wide range of outputs which endorse and encourage best practice when implementing open access across institutions. Each project has a blog where progress and outputs can be tracked. Details are listed at the end of this article.

Introduction

The Open Access Good Practice (OAGP) initiative is a community-led support programme which aims to develop and share best practice when implementing open access (OA) workflows, systems and procedures across UK higher education institutions (HEIs). As part of this programme, nine Pathfinder projects were established in 2014 to investigate different areas under the themes of advocacy; baselining and policy; structures and workflows; systems and metadata; and cost management.¹

Each Pathfinder project team was made up of staff from between two and five institutions who were tasked with not only investigating these different areas of OA, but producing and sharing with the HEI community resources which could help universities and their researchers more easily adopt OA. The Collaborative Institutional Assessment of Open Access tool (also known as CIAO) is a good example of the reach of Pathfinder outputs.² Created by the Making Sense of Open Access project, this benchmarking tool has been used by at least 50 UK HEIs to assess their readiness for OA compliance.

Over the last two years numerous events have been held across the UK as a way to disseminate the findings of the projects (details of which can be found on the individual project blogs). As Catherine Sharp (Open Access Funding Manager at UCL and project lead of the Pathways to OA project) acknowledges, the main intention of the scheme has been 'knowledge sharing, and bringing together different sections of the community'. In this regard, the OAGP mailing list (which has over 260 subscribers) and Twitter account have provided useful supplementary forums for the whole HEI community to discuss and share experiences, issues and findings.

As the projects come to a close, it has been important to assess the impact of the initiative. Below is a selection of thoughts and reflections from project members about their experience of participating in the programme.



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'As part of this [OAGP] programme, nine Pathfinder projects were established'

Has the programme had an impact on your approach to advocacy and researcher engagement?

As part of the Making Sense of Open Access Pathfinder project (led by Oxford Brookes University), Nottingham Trent University interviewed 50 researchers 'in order to gain a better knowledge of their understanding of OA, plus their attitudes and behaviours in relation to OA publishing'.³ It was hoped that this analysis would lead to 'more targeted and appropriate support'. Subsequently, Clifford Neal (Library Research Team Manager at NTU) reports, 'We've formulated a more formal dissemination and researcher engagement plan that has been agreed with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, which has placed a greater emphasis on a multi-pronged approach to communication and advocacy. This in turn has led to the introduction of OA drop-in sessions ... and the development of new OA support materials, such as postcards and flyers, and the creation of a short case-study video in conjunction with our marketing team.' Further, 'to alleviate researcher concerns around copyright and misunderstandings about the need to pay for OA, we have increased the amount of information provided on tools such as SHERPA/RoMEO and on the differences between green and gold OA. In response to the request to make our systems easier to use, further improvements to our institutional repository submission process will be introduced in the first quarter of 2016.'

Much of the work carried out by the Open to Open Access (O2OA) Pathfinder project (led by Coventry University) has been to prepare and support researchers at project institutions to comply with funder – and particularly Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE) – OA requirements. The development of an OA and research life cycle guide has been highly successful, with some 870 views since it was posted on their Research Support Hub.⁴ Highlighting the international reach of the project, the post was retweeted or favoured by colleagues in the UK, Spain, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia.

Jackie Proven (Repository Support Officer at the University of St Andrews and member of the LOCH Pathfinder project) notes that their advocacy strategy is now more formal, taking the approach of 'always scoping out a visit in advance with some background research on the School/discipline and a set of questions designed to find out what researchers needed. Based on experience and good examples from other institutions, we planned visits to Heads of Schools or Directors of Research in order to get senior buy-in, and then tailored advocacy presentations according to their input.' Through this approach, staff at St Andrews 'discovered a way to retain a single, simple message while appealing to disciplinary perspectives (e.g. defined easy-to-remember workflow steps for chemistry/medicine vs refined discussions on copyright permissions for arts/humanities)', all of which was built upon the 'act on acceptance' message.

What new processes have you adopted in order to manage OA-related costs?

Sonja Haerkoenen, Scholarly Publications Manager at Cardiff University, notes that participation in the GW4 Pathfinder project (led by the University of Bath) has encouraged institutions to share best practice for reporting and managing article processing charges (APCs). As a result, staff at Cardiff are 'planning to implement a different way of reporting [and] accounting for our APC payments, which we are positive will save time and therefore reduce administration costs'. Open Access Librarian Liz Holliday from the University of Bath confirms Haerkoenen's point by saying that the functional cost analysis of the APC payment process undertaken by the project partners 'allowed the four GW4 institutions to understand the costs and effort in each functional area of the payment process'.⁵ Outputs from the GW4 project concerning OA cost management have received much attention. The OA Reporting Checklist and Sample APC Payment Workflows for Institutions have been viewed 290 times with 75 downloads, while their review of the pre-payment and APC market has received over 300 views in total.^{6,7}

135 For Finlay Jones (University of Exeter's Digital Library Resources Developer) the greatest benefit of being part of the Pathfinder initiative has been the increased knowledge sharing amongst institutions. In particular he cites the UCL survey on APC fund management which Catherine Sharp (Pathways to OA) notes 'provided a snapshot of different institutional approaches to APC payment policies that should inform future funder policy discussions'.⁸ In addition, Jones hopes that his up-to-date summary of journal subscription offsetting deals will 'be useful for other institutions where the crossover between acquisition teams and OA teams could lead to confusion'. To date, his GW4 Offset Implementation Review has received around 300 views and 73 downloads.⁹ Indeed, Kathryn Smith (Research Engagement Librarian for Engineering and Science at the University of Bristol) believes that such work investigating the offsetting deals 'will be very helpful as institutions try and understand existing deals and as new ones are negotiated'.

Does your institution have an OA policy and how was this shaped by being part of the OAGP community?

Having an institutional OA policy helps in multiple ways: it provides a clear message to researchers about how their university expects them to engage with OA, and for support staff it helps when structuring advocacy sessions and answering enquiries. A number of institutions have said that it was helpful having the backing of the Pathfinder and OAGP initiative when approaching senior managers as it gave their requests validity. Jackie Proven notes, 'At committee meetings or steering group, we can cite the work of the project to lend stronger arguments.'

'Having an institutional OA policy ... provides a clear message to researchers'

Those taking part in the O2OA Pathfinder project believe that participation has helped improve internal OA strategies at partner universities, with research committees approving new university-wide OA policies as well as the procedural changes needed to support their implementation. The opportunity to baseline policies and procedures has been a useful feature of participation in the initiative. One institution in the O2OA project, for instance, 'benefited from being able to draw heavily on [a project partner's] OA policy when drafting their own'. This institution's policy 'is now in place and supporting their researchers' development and advocacy activities'.

Have you restructured any internal workflows or processes in order to accommodate OA requirements?

Kathryn Smith considers there to 'have been many outcomes [from the OAGP initiative] that are of use to the wider community, but the insights into the potential for improving processes in the partner institutions have been significant'. She continues, 'Assessing our own processes and seeing the processes in other institutions has allowed us to make changes to increase efficiency.' According to Liz Holliday, 'One institution has greatly reduced the reporting...; a second is working on improving compliance...; a third has negotiated with their finance service [to improve processes]; a fourth is employing a process improvement methodology to streamline workflows.' A staff member from the first institution that Holliday refers to details how they improved their internal reporting: 'We simplified our workflow ... and now report on an ad hoc basis instead of quarterly. We now share our OA spreadsheet with the finance team which has stopped duplication of work around data gathering, and reduced queries among the teams. We now create purchase orders within the library instead of asking a purchasing team to do so. This means we can respond in a more agile fashion to OA queries and problems with invoices, thereby reducing unnecessary e-mails.'

As part of the LOCH Pathfinder project, the University of St Andrews showcased their Lean activities around OA workflows in a case study which has had more than 200 downloads.¹⁰ Jackie Proven notes that the Lean methodology was particularly useful because 'it results in an embedded way of working' and encourages 'ongoing efforts to fix problems at the core

136 as they arise (e.g. meeting with finance colleagues to convince them we need to change the way we manage APC transactions ...). Other workflows at St Andrews have also been improved: 'We have now developed a "layered" approach to deposit, where basic records are created and author-accepted manuscripts sourced either by researchers or via this local mediation service, and then skilled library staff perform validation tasks.' OA support hubs have also been created and local administrative staff trained in basic OA knowledge and deposit skills. 'We were then able to employ a temporary member of staff to work explicitly on rolling out this type of support across other Schools.'

Emily Bennett, Research Outputs Manager at the University of Portsmouth and participant in the Making Sense of OA Pathfinder project, details how a change in workflow has increased their deposit rate: 'Every three months the Library manually compares Scopus to Pure (our CRIS) on an article-by-article basis to identify articles that are in Scopus but missing from Pure. We compile this as a report and send it to our Research Leads across the University, along with our central Research and Innovation Office and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research.' The first report from January 2016 indicated that 56% of the University's journal and conference articles (published after 2014) were in its CRIS. Two months later, the same report showed that the percentage of articles there had increased to 65% and that the new procedure was clearly working. 'Although this is not perfect,' Bennett continues, 'it is very useful to know that we are going in the right direction! Plus, because the report is on an article-by-article basis, it provides our Research Leads with a way of chasing researchers in their area.'

How has the project benefited the development of new OA systems and metadata standards?

Significant collaborative work has been done by the Pathfinder projects on developing new systems and metadata for OA. Participating institutions have also begun implementing and testing newly developed plug-ins and patches, adopted best practice approaches, and shared their experiences with the wider sector. The HHuLOA Pathfinder project (formed of the Universities of Hull, Huddersfield and Lincoln) has spent time examining the interoperability between the metadata application profile RIOXX and partners' repositories, and subsequently released to the community their findings as well as proposed practices.¹¹ The Glasgow-led End-to-End OA project (E2EOA) has designed and shared an EPrints code which the University of Southampton's Open Access Development Manager, Kate Walker, says will, amongst other things, 'help other universities to streamline their APC processes'.¹²

'collaborative work has been done ... developing new systems and metadata for OA'

Jackie Proven offers a useful overview of the work undertaken on the CRIS system, Pure: 'Some initial work was done by Edinburgh and St Andrews project partners, with input from other members of the Pure OA/Repositories working group. The OA spec – including metadata requirements – was also informed by work in other projects (e.g. the E2EOA Pathfinder project) and standards such as RIOXX. As part of the LOCH project we were able to bring together the system vendor and HEFCE ... to consult on the planned developments. The OA functionality has been developed further by the system vendor and is now rolled out to the UK user community.'

What else has participation in the OAGP initiative enabled your institution to do that it would not have been able to do or would have done more slowly?

For Joanne Marsh, Repository Development Librarian at Coventry University, 'Involvement in the project has given greater opportunity for us to work together, collaborate and benefit from sharing workload, knowledge and ideas.' She continues, 'The project provided the space to work with others in the university with different approaches and expertise. Development of a behaviour change/intervention tool provided an opportunity to develop

137 our thinking, advocacy, and approach to OA. And though we might have done the same things without this tool, I think we are better placed to target our efforts and plan support/ services, ensure OA requirements are met/understood, etc... Also the opportunity to work closely with other HEIs – sharing practice and developing tools/solutions together – would not have happened without the project.¹³ As Kate Walker notes, although certain project outputs may have been created whether or not the OAGP scheme existed, without the initiative participants would ‘not have been able to share them so easily’.

As part of their OA implementation work, the Northumbria and Sunderland Universities Pathfinder project designed a process for researchers to use in order to access their internal APC fund. David Young, Research Funding and Policy Manager at Northumbria and the project lead, notes, ‘We did this alongside and separate to the project, but the project enabled us to translate this process quickly into an online decision-making tool which we have used in advocacy in the University.’¹⁴ Further, without participating, Young believes ‘We would not have developed our OA cost modelling tool or shared our experiences in making an internal business case for funding for OA.’¹⁵ He goes on to show the benefit of knowledge sharing between institutions. ‘Northumbria has partnered with Sunderland University and both institutions are at different stages in terms of their implementation of OA policies and procedures. Sunderland has comparatively fewer resources to support OA and so they have gained by becoming a core part of the team and contributing to the project outputs, being exposed to good practice at a wide range of institutions. Some of this learning has been taken back and implemented at that institution.’

Have you adopted any tips or tricks used by the other participants which you can share?

Sharing innovative ideas and experiences about OA implementation has been one of the main benefits of the OAGP initiative. OA bookmarks and posters, dedicated Twitter accounts, and including links to your institution’s OA policy in your e-mail signature are some of the many simple but effective advocacy tools being used by Pathfinder participants. If you need to train staff in the basics of OA, Martin Wolf (Research Support Lead from the University of Liverpool) suggests looking at the openWorks toolkit for OA support staff which was ‘designed to help those colleagues primarily at smaller institutions who require a quick primer to get them up to speed with OA issues’.¹⁶

‘Sharing innovative ideas and experiences about OA implementation has been one of the main benefits of the OAGP initiative’

Jackie Proven imparts the importance of working closely with academic departments, tailoring advocacy approaches, and continually assessing progress: ‘We can show the difference in rates of deposit for Schools where we have had the most structured arrangements for support. The project work has allowed us to understand what works for each School, and particularly in two Schools where we developed strong relationships, they have had the highest compliance rate across the University.’

Staff at the University of Portsmouth are happy to share that they are now ‘analysing our open access generic e-mail box by “tagging” e-mails as they come in. This allows us to identify key issues and patterns of questions, and an increase in general interest in open access.’ ‘Or in other words,’ Emily Bennett reflects, ‘we’re not just blindly putting effort into raising awareness of OA. Instead, we’re continuously reviewing the impact our efforts are having and adjusting our strategy accordingly.’

Next steps

Only a selection of outputs have been referred to in this article, so to see the full extent please visit the individual Pathfinder project blogs. If you make use of any of the outputs at your institution then the projects would be very happy to receive feedback. At the time of writing, a series of end-of-project events, organized by theme, are being planned for the

138 summer of 2016 to showcase the work undertaken by participants. If you would like to find out more about these events or other OAGP news then please join the OAGP mailing list or follow the OAGP Twitter account.

Pathfinder projects

There is a blog for each project detailing the events that have been held and the outputs that have been released to the community as a result of the projects. Please find below a complete list of these Pathfinder projects, their related institutions and references to the blog sites:

- Open to Open Access (O2OA): Coventry University (lead), University of Northampton, De Montfort University¹⁷
- Northumbria and Sunderland (NUSU): Northumbria University (lead), University of Sunderland¹⁸
- Making Sense of Open Access: Oxford Brookes University (lead), Nottingham Trent University, University of Portsmouth¹⁹
- Pathways to Open Access: University College London (lead), Newcastle University, University of Nottingham²⁰
- GW4: University of Bath (lead), University of Bristol, University of Exeter, Cardiff University²¹
- HHuLOA: University of Hull (lead), University of Huddersfield, University of Lincoln²²
- LOCH: University of Edinburgh (lead), Heriot-Watt University, University of St Andrews²³
- End-to-End Open Access (E2EOA): University of Glasgow (lead), University of Southampton, Lancaster University, University of Kent²⁴
- openWorks: University of Manchester (lead), Edge Hill University, Liverpool John Moores University, University of Liverpool, University of Salford.²⁵

Abbreviations and Acronyms

A list of the abbreviations and acronyms used in this and other *Insights* articles can be accessed here – click on the URL below and then select the 'Abbreviations and Acronyms' link at the top of the page it directs you to: <http://www.uksg.org/publications#aa>

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Competing Interests

The author has declared no competing interests.

References

- 1 An overview of the projects and OAGP initiative can be found on the OAGP blog: <https://openaccess.jiscinvolve.org/wp/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 2 CIAO: <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/695b9555-c2f4-4aae-9107-176fa04531b4/1/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 3 The questions used in the interviews are available here: <http://sensemakingopenaccess.blogspot.co.uk/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 4 The research lifecycle guide: <http://find.jorum.ac.uk/resources/20118> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 5 Information about using functional cost analysis in your institution can be accessed here: <http://find.jorum.ac.uk/resources/10949/19986> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 6 The OA Reporting Checklist and Sample APC Payment Workflows: <http://find.jorum.ac.uk/resources/10949/20070> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 7 The pre-payment and APC market review: <https://gw4openaccess.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/a-review-of-the-literature-on-the-potential-wider-market-effects-of-pre-payments-on-the-apc-payments-market-v2-11.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2016).

- 8 The UCL survey results on APC fund management:
<http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/open-access/files/2015/12/Pathways-to-OA-APC-funds-survey-report-Dec-15.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 9 The GW4 Offset Implementation Review:
<http://find.jorum.ac.uk/resources/10949/20132> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 10 Details of the University of St Andrew's Lean review:
<https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/6430> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 11 HHuLOA's review of RIOXX:
<https://library3.hud.ac.uk/blogs/hhuola/2015/06/29/riox-review-and-proposed-practice/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 12 For more information about Glasgow's work on EPrints please see: McCutcheon V and Eadie, M, Managing open access with EPrints software: a case study, *Insights*, 2016, 29(1), 45–52; DOI:
<http://doi.org/10.1629/uksg.277> (accessed 17 May 2016).
- 13 A summary of the researcher needs assessment work conducted by O2OA:
<http://blogs.coventry.ac.uk/researchblog/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/12/O2OA-Needs-Assessment-report-FINAL-v2.pdf> (accessed 17 May 2016).
- 14 The homepage of Northumbria's online decision-making tool for researchers:
<http://northumbriauniversity.libsurveys.com/loader.php?id=ee085006dd685e37606384a3feb2b80> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 15 The cost modelling tool can be downloaded here:
<https://oapathfinder.wordpress.com/2015/07/06/cost-modelling-tool-now-available/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 16 The different parts of the openWorks toolkit can be downloaded here:
<https://blog.openworks.library.manchester.ac.uk/2015/08/18/toolkit-for-open-access-support-staff/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 17 O2OA project blog:
<http://blogs.coventry.ac.uk/researchblog/o2oa-blog-two/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 18 NUSU project blog:
<https://oapathfinder.wordpress.com/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 19 Making Sense of Open Access project blog:
<http://sensmakingopenaccess.blogspot.co.uk/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
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<http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/open-access/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
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<https://gw4openaccess.wordpress.com/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
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<https://library3.hud.ac.uk/blogs/hhuola/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 23 LOCH project blog:
<http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/loch/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 24 E2EOA project blog:
<http://e2eoa.org/> (accessed 26 April 2016).
- 25 openWorks project blog:
<https://blog.openworks.library.manchester.ac.uk/> (accessed 26 April 2016).

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