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# Shifting the Collection Development Mindset: Moving from Traditional Journal Subscriptions to Transformative Agreements

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## Moving from Traditional Journal Subscriptions to Transformative Agreements

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*This article discusses the experiences of two librarians at Montana State University in negotiating, executing, and managing seven transformative, or read & publish, agreements. The authors offer their perspectives of transformative agreements and share the hurdles and wins they have had along the way, to help others decide if these types of agreements make sense to implement at their own libraries.*

Much of the information and ideas about transformative agreements (TAs) between libraries and publishers is being driven by the experiences of very large academic institutions with high publishing outputs and enough staff to support such initiatives. For institutions with lower publishing outputs and less staffing, this is not an accurate comparison of how TAs might look at their own institution. However, smaller institutions should not immediately write off opportunities to implement TAs without first carefully considering the benefits of TAs instead of solely just the risks. The concept of TAs is not new, with European institutions having made strides since the mid-2010s in working with publishers to advance open access (OA) publishing and find sustainable financial solutions mutually beneficial to libraries, publishers, and their constituents.<sup>1</sup> Anecdotally, the stance of many in the profession, particularly those at US institutions, seems to be that TAs are not necessarily cost-neutral. Khoo notes that publishers continue to “drive further hyperinflation in the scholarly publishing market” by rapidly increasing the article processing charges (APCs) of prestigious journals. “In this market, a higher price [APC] is associated with higher prestige.” As authors continue to willingly pay APCs without question, this does little to lower journal subscription costs. Instead, it merely shifts the funds to a different pocket. TAs, while seemingly intended to stretch library budgets, may unintentionally support this hyperinflation. Kowaltowski, Oliveira, and Chaimovich write, “APCs have been climbing well above inflation and well above the estimated costs of running open access services . . . while APCs of \$4,000 are considered within the normal range.”<sup>2</sup> Although normalizing expensive APCs allows publishers to remain in control of journal subscription, APC, and potentially TA costs, TAs have the potential to expand the value of library journal subscriptions and create OA publishing opportunities for authors that may otherwise lack funding to cover APCs. TAs may provide more equitable opportunities for authors to publish their work openly in highly regarded journals that would otherwise be unobtainable due to the APCs.

At Montana State University (MSU) Library, there were several reasons why it made sense to explore TAs. These reasons include a stagnant collections budget at \$5.8 million each year since 2016 and the

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desire to further support existing OA initiatives across campus. Beginning in 2014, a \$50,000 fund to pay for APCs for affiliated authors was allocated from the MSU Library's collections budget.<sup>3</sup> The MSU Library has several memberships with organizations in support of OA and more sustainable scholarship, such as Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), the MDPI Institutional Open Access Program (IOAP), Open Access Button, HathiTrust, Lyrisis, DSpace, and more. When possible, the MSU Library contributes to various subscribe-to-open initiatives. Additionally, in 2015 the MSU Faculty Senate adopted a statement in support of OA in which they committed to "providing the broadest possible access to MSU's scholarly literature and research documentation."<sup>4</sup> With an existing record of making research more accessible through OA at MSU, TAs complement these existing endeavors.

The subsequent sections of this paper provide an overview of TAs, expanded reasonings why the MSU Library was compelled to move forward with TAs, the decision-making process used by the MSU Library when determining whether to enter a TA, and an overview of how TAs are being managed and marketed, along with usage and user feedback about the current TAs in place at the MSU Library.

## Literature Review

Although many components of transformative, or read and publish, agreements are the same as read-only subscription agreements, there is a shift in the knowledge required to negotiate and license resources. These agreements require a different mindset, expanded skillsets, and new workflows by both librarians and publishers.<sup>5</sup> When licensing a resource with both read access and a publishing component, one must understand copyright and APCs, among other things. In 2018, Pinhasi et al. wrote that "the negotiations preceding OA publishing agreements are very rarely straightforward . . . such as previous subscription and APC spend, historic research output by the participants' researchers, and the general terms and conditions of the license agreement."<sup>6</sup> Although libraries can still share best practices along with tips and techniques for negotiating TAs, the process will vary based on the unique preferences and requirements of individual institutions. Machovec writes that "with any contract, there will be unique characteristics to each, due to variations in what is being licensed, the characteristics of the customer, and changes in the prevailing licensing models."<sup>7</sup>

Changes to library staff workflows must be explored when determining whether it makes sense for a library to engage in a TA. Pinhasi et al. write that "OA publishing agreements have the potential . . . to [make] the transition to OA a successful outcome, however, [it] is largely dependent upon the thoughtful development and implementation of workflows."<sup>8</sup> There are several workflows for libraries to consider in the very early stages of TA negotiations, such as identifying staff responsible for managing approvals or denials of funding requests and viewing multiple publisher demos to be sure they understand the process of both the author and library.<sup>9</sup> Pinhasi et al. describe that the added value of libraries taking the time to learn and try out these processes "provide[s] an opportunity to flag potential issues and to consider a way forward" for both the publisher and library.<sup>10</sup>

Librarians must understand the value of TAs, explain that value, and incorporate it into their decision-making processes. Before TAs, when making decisions, usage data and cost-per-use were the prominent metrics used in collection assessment. As libraries shift their funds toward TAs, “tools are needed to provide underlying analytics both at the negotiating level [and] also for the ongoing implementation of new agreements.”<sup>11</sup> Fully understanding the value of TAs means the librarians negotiating these agreements must be familiar with APCs. Solomon and Björk address the complexity of APCs, writing “the APC market is complex and getting even more complex with full OA and hybrid APCs . . . with various discounts and fee structures for different types of publications.”<sup>12</sup> There are worries across the profession that the burden of paying for APCs out of collections budgets will become too much of a drain and be unsustainable in the long run. In a study by Lara, they found that “about 24% of the funding for APCs is coming out of library budgets, with 70% of the respondents indicating the funding for APCs at their libraries is coming out of the existing materials budget.”<sup>13</sup>

A change in mindset is necessary to undergo this work, not just to focus on or prioritize TAs. “Moving from subscription to authorship pricing will not be cheaper, it just realigns how the money flows.<sup>14</sup> As libraries move toward TAs, they must be prepared to justify the shift in their spending. TAs are beneficial for authors and researchers, institutions, and the broader field of information access by forcing publishers to be more transparent in their pricing models.<sup>15</sup> There is a considerable amount of literature that speaks to these benefits and that can be referenced when developing a narrative. Simmons, the director of publishing at the Geological Society of London writes, “OA publication widens dissemination and allows researchers and practitioners globally to utilize findings.”<sup>16</sup> Huffman shares that “we discovered one of the biggest benefits of transformative agreements is the addition of increased OA publishing opportunities. The availability of more scholarly OA articles to freely read and share should benefit many other researchers, organizations, businesses, and the general public<sup>17</sup> Heyman, the journal sales and transformation manager at The Microbiology Society notes that “with TAs comes the benefit of greater author inclusivity, particularly for early career researchers who have less access to funding.<sup>18</sup> However, Machovec notes that for North American institutions, despite these benefits, “the lack of [OA publishing] mandates has meant that libraries and consortia must pursue [TAs] based on their own beliefs about the value of such a publishing model.”<sup>19</sup>

If libraries choose to engage with TAs at their institutions, it is critical they promote the benefits to their library colleagues and to faculty across all departments. Webster, dean of University Libraries at Carnegie Mellon University, shared that “faculty were generally in favor of Open Access. While some faculty members are concerned about the sustainability of the ‘Read and Publish’ model, many still see a need to offset scholarly publishing costs through transformative agreements.”<sup>20</sup> It is important that libraries do their part to communicate the availability of OA publishing assistance as much as possible. At the MSU Library, there is a dedicated page on the library website that includes detailed information about each TA.<sup>21</sup> Contact information for the specific librarians who can assist with any issues or questions is included. Regular updates are sent to university news outlets, the idea being to socialize the agreements, allowing authors to become familiar with specific language in the OA realm and begin to

associate it with their library. Pinhasi et al. state “another important part of this step is to convey the message that there are no costs to authors should they choose to make their article OA.”<sup>22</sup> As with any communication, it is preferable to avoid industry jargon. When authors are shown wording, such as ordering and invoicing, it implies that they need to personally pay for the APC, which may prompt them to reject the chance to publish their work openly. This is especially important for publishers to consider when promoting TAs to potential authors.

Although it has been easy to work with larger publishers when negotiating and promoting a TA, they have more staff and resources to support the agreements and associated promotion, and they are more likely to impose article allowances than their smaller counterparts. Simmons, of the Geological Society, writes, “A concern [we] had . . . is that an uncapped TA may lead to an unsustainable increase in submissions. The data so far . . . suggests this is not the case and TAs have simply supported an institution’s usual output to become fully OA.”<sup>23</sup> In each of the agreements in place at the MSU Library, the number of articles allowed for OA publishing has matched that of previous publishing or come very close. The relationship between libraries and publishers is a very critical element of TAs. Both sides want to support this shift to OA information while still being fiscally responsible and financially profitable. Chesler, director of global sales at AIP Publishing, shared in a presentation that “the transition to Open Access is built on highly collaborative partnerships.”<sup>24</sup> In the same presentation, Chesler also shared that “throughout this process, it is the publisher’s duty to ensure no one is confused or misled by the transformative agreement under negotiation. This requires publishers to perform ongoing staff training.”<sup>25</sup> Machovec writes, “There is no single template for this publishing model and each publisher is approaching this change in different ways to mitigate their risks while keeping their subscribing libraries and institutions engaged.”<sup>26</sup> Although every publisher is developing their own unique approach to TAs, there is enough evidence to confidently state that, according to Anderson et al., “successful and sustainable models are characterized by transparency in pricing and data, simplicity, equitability and above all a transformation objective of achieving full OA.”<sup>27</sup> Publishers must collaborate with institutions and consortia of all sizes and recognize the mutual goals and limitations of each.

## Background

In the Spring of 2020, Cambridge University Press (CUP) approached the MSU Library with the annual journal package renewal. At the time, the library struggled with an ongoing flat materials budget and reviewed all journal renewals with serious scrutiny. Amidst negotiations between CUP and the library, CUP presented the library with its very first read and publish, or transformative, agreement. A year before, at the 2019 Charleston Conference, many conference sessions covered TAs. Following that conference, and with support from the dean of the MSU Library, TAs were explored more in-depth to understand if they were a viable option. It seemed as if only European libraries or very large US institutions and consortia were undertaking these types of agreements. At the Charleston Conference, Brundy from Iowa State University presented information about their new 2019 agreements with the Royal Society of Chemistry and Walter de Gruyter.<sup>28</sup> The California Digital Library (CDL) entered into a

read and publish agreement with CUP at the start of 2019.<sup>29</sup> In early 2020, many more large US institutions continued to successfully enter into these agreements. For example, Iowa State University negotiated deals with CUP, Oxford University Press, American Physiological Society, and the Association for Computing Machinery.<sup>30</sup> Ohio State University entered into an agreement with Taylor & Francis.<sup>31</sup> The University of Florida came to an agreement with Elsevier. The University of California (UC) began an agreement with Springer Nature.<sup>32</sup>

Although it seemed daunting to consider moving toward TAs, potentially getting more value out of publisher contracts without necessarily spending more money was enticing. MSU, defined as “large” by the Carnegie Classification System, has a strong history of supporting OA publishing for affiliated authors.<sup>33</sup> In 2014, the former collection development librarian and the scholarly communication librarian established an Author Fund consisting of \$50,000 to cover the APCs of eligible MSU authors each fiscal year.<sup>34</sup> This money, allocated from the library’s materials budget, consistently runs out early in the year since its inception. The MSU Faculty Senate also unanimously adopted a statement proposed by two MSU librarians in support of OA, published in 2015.<sup>35</sup> After the 2019 Charleston Conference, a group was formed to create a set of negotiating principles for information access.<sup>36</sup> The goal of the document, publicly available on the library website, is to communicate the library’s negotiating principles and practices on providing access to information. It seemed important that the MSU Library be proactive rather than reactive and put itself in a position to respond to the changing landscape of information access and TAs.<sup>37</sup> The success of the Author Fund, support of OA on the MSU campus by its Faculty Senate, and the creation of the negotiating principles helped set the stage for the implementation of TAs.

In spring of 2020, the MSU Library officially entered its first TA, a three-year contract with CUP, becoming the fourth US institution to do so.<sup>38</sup> Initially, the contract allowed for read access and a set number of articles, based on previous years’ publishing data, that could be published each year (year one = seven articles, year two = eight articles, and year three = nine articles). A few months into the agreement, CUP shared that they wanted to remove the limit to the number of articles that could be published as OA each year and allow for an unlimited number of articles to be published OA. Working with CUP to implement the first read and publish agreement at the MSU Library, and within the state of Montana, was seamless and easy to set up. The MSU Library now has seven active TAs in place with the following publishers: Cambridge University Press (CUP, 2020), Company of Biologists (COB, 2020), IOP Publishing (IOP, 2022), Rockefeller University Press (RUP, 2022), Royal Society of Publishing (RSP, 2021), Taylor & Francis (T&F, 2022), and Wiley (2023).

### **Decision-Making Process**

When deciding if it is worth entering a TA, analyzing datasets of the university’s publication history from resources such as Unsub and Web of Science was the main starting point. Seeing presentations and resources from much larger institutions where they were processing this type of data seemed to be the best way to determine whether to enter a TA. For example, at the 2022 NASIG conference, Staines

et al. shared data that institutions can gather and consider as they participate in TAs.<sup>39</sup> The data, although not an exhaustive list, included APC prices per publication, COUNTER R5 Master TR Usage reports for multiple institutions and publishers, articles with corresponding author and OA information, the disciplinary differences between schools, OA publishing patterns, APC values, APC prices by publication, Big Deal prices, changes in cost per use, evaluating publish and read together, and article type data. The presenters noted that data is not standardized from publisher to publisher. For example, corresponding author information may be required by one publisher but not another. The presenters shared that many types of data must be gathered from different sources.

Gathering and delving into huge amounts of data was not helpful because MSU publishes much less than larger US institutions with active TAs. Directly asking publishers to provide publishing data such as the number of articles published per year and the total amount of APCs paid by affiliated authors in those same years was just as effective. Relying on the publisher for this information was much more time-expedient than navigating and learning how to proficiently use more tools. As there are currently only two positions overseeing TAs at the MSU Library, this saved a lot of staff time. COUNTER reports are retrieved via institutional administrator accounts, specifically the TR\_J1 and TR\_J4 COUNTER reports. Once the total publication counts, the APC amounts, and the relevant COUNTER reports have been gathered, the data is considered alongside the publisher's TA proposal. Some of the questions used to make decisions include the following:

- Does the number of OA articles allowed per year align with institutional publishing history?
- Is there an article cap or is an unlimited number of OA publications allowed?
- Will authors retain copyright and have the option to deposit their paper into our institutional repository?
- Will the library have the option to review and approve/deny funding requests?
- What platform will be used to manage requests (for example, Oable, RightsLink)?
- Is the cost of the TA going to increase subscription fees by a significant amount?
- Will access to anything be lost (for example, perpetual access rights) in the move to a TA with this publisher?<sup>40</sup>
- What support does the publisher provide (for example, author workshops, library staff training)?
- How will the author be made aware of the agreement during the article publishing process?
- Can the library customize the email that the publisher sends to its affiliated authors?
- How much of the read usage was of content published during the subscription period (content published between January and December of 2023, for example) as compared with total usage of all content during the subscription period?

### **Management of Agreements**

The collection development (CD) librarian and electronic resources and discovery services (ERDS) librarian co-manage the TAs in place at the MSU Library. These positions approve or deny article

funding requests within all but one of the publishing systems. Both librarians have accounts to the systems used to see and approve article requests from institutional authors (RightsLink, Oable, and T&F's Research Dashboard). Although each publisher uses a different system, the workflow for approving requests is the same across the board with one exception. It should be noted that although these systems, for the most part, do the same thing, each one does take a bit to get used to—the easiest one to use thus far has been RightsLink. For all publishers except IOP, before approving a funding request, author(s) are contacted via email and asked to fill out the library's Author Fund Request Form.<sup>41</sup> This allows funding requests for the seven TAs to be tracked alongside unique Author Fund requests. By doing this, article funding requests received through these separate channels can be collated. Given the average number of article funding requests received weekly, the workload is manageable, and there is not currently a need to change to an unmediated workflow. It is beneficial for these two librarian positions to oversee this process to understand whether the money and time spent supporting TAs is paying off. As for IOP, they do not have a mediated process in place for libraries to approve or deny funding requests. They share a quarterly report via email that includes whether any articles were funded. Although a mediated process is preferred, a TA with IOP is beneficial to the MSU campus. After the quarterly report is received, any funded articles are added to the form on behalf of the author. Although approvals for articles with CUP are mediated, they also share a quarterly publishing report detailing article-by-article information, including whether an article has been published OA, a summary of the article-by-article data, and the cost of the APC.

### **Agreement Promotion**

Each time a new TA is signed, it is announced in a few different ways. For TAs with some of the larger, well-known publishers, like CUP, Wiley, and T&F, the librarians managing the agreements have worked directly with MSU News Services to write and publish news releases.<sup>42</sup> In addition, they worked directly with a director of communications from Taylor & Francis. T&F asked several questions about MSU, asked for quotes from both the CD and ERDS librarians and from the library dean, and asked for a picture of the MSU campus for their own press release.<sup>43</sup> The T&F-crafted press release was included in the MSU News Service release. In January 2023, all seven of the TAs were highlighted at the annual Library Open House, which is an event geared toward MSU faculty, staff, and graduate students along with interested community members.<sup>44</sup> Many of the people at the event were unaware of TAs generally and were even more unaware of the TAs the MSU Library has in place; however, they were quite receptive and excited to learn about them. Additionally, publishers' internal outreach methods have been effective. For example, publisher-led workshops were promoted to campus stakeholders as opportunities for them to learn about how a TA can benefit them. Library employees were provided with information about TAs via updates at all-staff meetings and organization-wide emails. The best marketing is word-of-mouth, when faculty who are recipients of OA funding through a TA share the details of their experience with their colleagues.



## Transformative Agreement Usage

Although the CD and ERDS librarians have not been inundated with funding requests from the existing TAs, they are providing good value to the institution. In total, between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2023, there were fifty-two funded articles from affiliate authors between all the agreements, resulting in \$145,124 worth of APC savings for affiliate authors (table 1). Wiley does not provide individual article APC data through Oable, so the APC costs for Wiley journals were retrieved from the Wiley hybrid OA price list.<sup>45</sup> The oldest agreement with CUP is the easiest to reflect upon. CUP representatives were consistently responsive and helpful throughout that critical first year of the agreement—nothing was overly complicated. And despite the transition to allowing for unlimited publishing throughout the agreement timeframe, there was an almost exact match of articles published OA to the capped amounts originally stipulated in the first version of the agreement.

As for the agreements where university researchers have not yet published any articles, the change in price (slightly higher or cost-neutral) to shift from a read-only subscription to a TA was insignificant and reflects MSU's support of OA publishing. When entering into these agreements, there is also an element of risk. Although the result of these TAs may not be what was wanted or expected, and there may never be an OA article published in COB or RUP, there is nonetheless value in supporting those publishers' long-term goal of transitioning to fully OA publishing.

Table 1. Transformative Agreement Usage

Publisher	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total APC Value
Cambridge University Press	7	9	5	1	\$56,349
Company of Biologists	0	0	0	0	
IOP Publishing				0	
Rockefeller University Press			0	0	
Royal Society of Publishing		0	0	4	\$9,520
Taylor & Francis			12	1	\$39,825
Wiley				13	\$39,430*

\*From July 1, 2020- June 30, 2023, the library funded 52 articles for affiliated authors among all transformative agreements, resulting in \$145,124 worth of APCs.

## User Feedback

The TAs in place at the MSU Library have not generated tremendous amounts of feedback from affiliated authors. The news releases shared across MSU communication channels did not result in any follow-up or direct inquiries. However, there were several positive email responses from authors who were alerted that their articles qualified to be published OA. These authors indicated that having funding available for OA publishing was appreciated. In addition to being available at no cost to them, authors shared that the process was easy, the availability of open access agreements would influence where they submitted their work, they are pleased to have their work available to wider audiences and more easily engaged with via social media, and finally, they were excited for their work to have a

broader impact. These reactions indicate a clear understanding and agreement of the importance of openly available research, and they illustrate how the campus is supportive of OA initiatives.

Other responses indicated confusion or lack of knowledge that TAs exist. The response was to share the library's website where all the TAs and their descriptions are listed along with further details about the specific agreements the authors would be participating in. In these few cases, the authors readily filled out the library's Author Fund request form and accepted the opportunities to publish their article openly.

## Challenges and Future Considerations

Although there was much that went right when implementing TAs at the MSU Library, there were (and still are) a few hurdles, albeit minor ones, along the way. Some of the challenges faced thus far include getting buy-in from constituents, navigating internal and external perspectives of TAs, publisher relationships, learning curves about how OA publishing works, technical difficulties, and trying to determine what the long-term impact of TAs on traditional collection development work might look like.

Explaining what exactly a TA is, and why it is valuable to both affiliate authors and colleagues alike, has proved to be tricky. Libraries have long been in the position to be creative, responsive, and responsible with minimal budgets. However, sometimes those responses are not understood or agreed upon by all, especially the users that will benefit from the solutions the most. As noted by a couple of affiliate authors, they were hesitant that the publisher was going to charge them to publish their article openly and did not realize it was an added benefit available to them via a library subscription, not an expense they needed to personally pay for.

The CD and ERDS librarians have navigated different institutional and consortium peer perspectives of TAs. Some were vocal about their interpretations of the value of TAs or disliked the terms a publisher proposed, such as article caps or pricing structures. The individual library must consider whether a TA stretches their materials budgets and decide how it adds value to their library, both tangible and intrinsic. The MSU Library belongs to a state consortium, made up of two larger universities, smaller satellite campuses, tribal colleges, community colleges, and a couple of private schools. Opportunities were sought to participate in a TA with other consortia members. Although that has not yet happened, going forward, there is still a possibility for collaboration. However, the challenges encountered thus far are that many of the other consortia members were either uninterested in TAs for many of the various reasons previously stated or their publishing numbers were low or nonexistent.

Librarians' jobs include working with publishers, not against them, regarding TAs. Publishers are colleagues—even though they are not in the “library”—because this work is codependent. It is in the interest of the profession and its constituents' interest to make the effort to consider TAs in the same way as other new purchases or subscriptions. The process libraries must go through to fit TAs into their

workflows is not groundbreaking. TAs can be viewed as a new product or resource that libraries are considering and do their due diligence to determine whether the TA is beneficial to their users.

Some publishers are more aggressive than others; even though there is excitement around TAs, they do not make sense for all libraries. The publishers that the MSU Library has worked with were thoughtful in their interactions, especially as TAs become more commonplace. There were a few experiences where there was not enough time to consider the terms of a TA and unreasonable deadlines to respond were given, some publishers have presented unreasonable pricing, and a few publishers outright refused to provide a TA as an option because the MSU Library did not fit their ideal TA customer mold. For example, one proposed agreement would have entailed a 10 percent annual increase, a capped article allowance, and a multiyear contract. Another publisher presented a TA with an expected two-week turnaround to review, negotiate, and sign the agreement.

Initially, understanding the “new” jargon that comes along with TAs—such as capped, uncapped, tokens, copyright, APCs, and Ringgold—was a lot to process. Both the CD and ERDS librarians are still learning their way around these terms and working to understand some of them. However, it is important for those negotiating TAs to understand these concepts to help ensure a smoother process during discussions with publishers.

Some publisher OA approval systems are easier to use than others. For example, there are not many automated requests for T&F authors—eligible MSU authors are sent direct emails to confirm that they want their article published openly. This is an extra, unexpected step in the process given the way other systems work. Additionally, several eligible authors never responded to these emails, and their articles were not approved for OA publishing. Although OA is beneficial, for ethical and licensing reasons it is not the library’s place to make the decision for an author. The library’s role is to make the user aware they have a choice. The publisher’s system is the very first way the author is notified if their library has a TA in place, which puts responsibility on the publisher to make sure their system is doing this well. Overall, certain publisher systems resonate with authors more successfully than others.

As the MSU Library continues to navigate the implementation of TAs with current and future publishers, down the road, it may or may not make sense for the CD and ERDS librarians to oversee and manage TAs. Because TAs have the potential to heavily change existing work and workflows, this is something to pay close attention to.

## Conclusion

The experiences of the MSU Library in implementing TAs have been overwhelmingly positive. Institutions of all sizes have the potential to benefit from having TAs in place; however, a library should consider the following points before implementing a TA:

- What email address will be used to receive funding requests approvals? Will more than one person get those updates?

- Will authors complete a separate form before approving a request? Will the publisher's system be the primary way to get statistics?
- Will requests be mediated or automatically approved in the publisher system?
- If the TA has a limited number of articles for each year of the subscription, how will the author be told that their request was declined?
- How will agreements be promoted to affiliate authors?

The thought of taking on more work can make it difficult to feel excited about the idea of TAs. However, as a team of two at the MSU Library currently managing seven TAs, handling them with minimal staffing is possible. Recently, the CUP TA was renewed for another three years, but it would not have been if the previous agreement was not successful with a manageable amount of work.

In reviewing the costs of previous journal package subscriptions and the costs of the TAs, the amount spent is not prohibitively higher for the latter model and, in some cases, is less now than previously. Consider that an institution is supporting the OA movement by engaging in and trying out a new type of collection development model. From the feedback received from MSU-affiliated authors, the library learned more about how OA is viewed and valued on the MSU campus. Support for open exists across campus, not just within the library. Had these TAs not been signed, this is feedback that never would have been received directly.

As more and more institutions of varying sizes begin to participate in TAs and share what they've learned, the inherent risk of trying something new becomes much less. Libraries are exceptional at detailed work, subscription management, and building goodwill and trust with users. Ultimately, although TAs as they currently exist might not be the perfect fit for all libraries and their respective users, they do afford another opportunity for libraries to continue to be involved in the OA arena and positively contribute to the move toward more open and equitable access to information for all.

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