



Open Library of Humanities

Executive Summary

The **Open Library of Humanities (OLH)** is a gold open access, peer-reviewed, internationally-supported, academic-led, not-for-profit, mega-journal, and multi-journal platform for the humanities. It is funded by a highly respected international library consortium of nearly 200 members, including the libraries of Harvard, Stanford, Cambridge, UCL, and the whole California university system and so has **no author-facing charges**.

Open access refers to peer-reviewed academic research that is available freely to read and re-use online. Gold open access means that this service is provided by publishers. This usually means that a new business model is needed as if the material is free to read, it cannot be sold as a subscription. Many publishers are implementing this through article and book processing charges (APCs and BPCs). These, though, are unaffordable in humanities disciplines.

The OLH works differently with a small contribution from a large number of libraries covering the costs of publication; a cost pool. The OLH thereby offers an extremely cost-effective solution for open access that means that no single institution bears a disproportionate cost. Participating libraries not only invest in a **community shared service** that would not otherwise be feasible but are also given a **governance stake** in the project.

Our goal is to ‘flip’ existing journals with a traditional subscription model to gold open access, thus freeing the large amounts of money that libraries now pay for access to academic publications. That money can be used for the contributions for the OLH to cover the costs of the gold open access of these journals. The more libraries that join the OLH, the more sustainable the system will be.

The OLH has been internationally recognised as an important development in open access for the humanities and for its innovative business model. The platform has initial funding from the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**. **David Armitage**, the Lloyd C. Blankfein Professor of History at **Harvard** writes that “there is hardly a more important project in train for scholarship in the humanities today”. **Kathleen Fitzpatrick**, the Head of Scholarly Communications at the **MLA**, notes the “crucial changes in the debate surrounding open access” that the project has already triggered.

There are two components on the platform. The **OLH Megajournal** is a new, trans-humanities journal, focusing on rigorous peer review and fast publication. Additionally, **OLH Journals** are existing publications that can join the model subject to approval by the academic and library boards. When journals with other subscription-based or fee-based publishers opt to leave their current

providers and join OLH, libraries will see direct cancellations and a transition to OA. This will eventually provide demonstrable and real savings to library budgets.

About the Open Library of Humanities

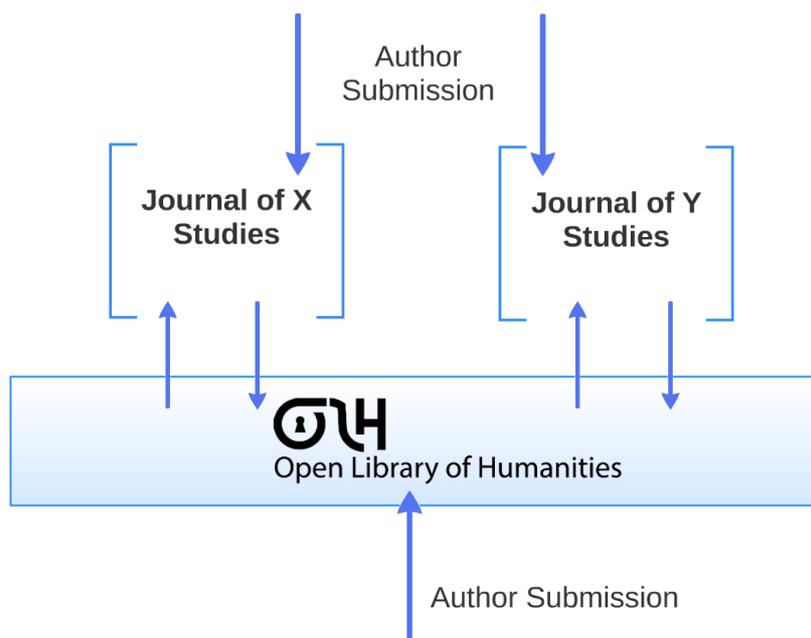
Background

In recent years, open access has come to dominate the scholarly communications landscape. The promise of freely readable and reusable research material finally seems possible in the digital environment. However, the proposition has been met with staunch opposition in the humanities disciplines, often on financial grounds. With an Article Processing Charge model for open access, it is feared that the different funding climate in these disciplines will lead to the inability of many scholars to pay.

First proposed in early 2013, the Open Library of Humanities aims to address these problems and to provide equitable open access for the humanities. With initial funding and support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the not-for-profit platform has an international support base and an innovative economic model that means there are **no author-facing charges** (and never will be) for our gold open access.

Components

The OLH has two components: a new megajournal; and a service infrastructure for existing journals to migrate to the platform.



The **OLH Megajournal** is a peer-reviewed (double-blind), quality-orientated, interdisciplinary journal that spans the humanities disciplines. The editorial process is overseen centrally, with expert “section editors” handling submissions as they arrive.

In addition, **OLH Journals** are existing journals that have opted to join the OLH (since the launch of the OLH platform in September 2015, there are 11 OLH journals that have either “**flipped**” from **subscription models** or have joined the platform as pre-existing open access journal titles). These journals maintain full brand autonomy and independence of review practice. We provide these journals with a platform for hosting content; a platform for accepting submissions and coordinating review; XML, PDF and HTML typesetting of articles; a dedicated editorial support manager; ongoing technical support and platform maintenance; digital preservation in the CLOCKSS archive; CrossRef DOIs for every article; membership of the Committee on Publication Ethics; and gold open access with no author charges. Admission to the platform is via a **rigorous selection process** involving our academic and library committees, as well as external academic review. Forthcoming programmes are to be announced in late 2016 to **bring society journals on board**, which will result in real cancellations for libraries and, therefore, a viable move towards open access.

Disciplinary Range

The OLH takes a broad, inclusive understanding of the academic humanities, from classics, religious studies & theology, modern languages and literatures through to political philosophy, musicology, critical legal studies, anthropology and newer subject areas such as critical theory and cultural studies, film, media and TV studies.

Platform Directors

The platform is coordinated and managed by Professor Martin Paul Eve (author of *Open Access and the Humanities: Contexts, Controversies and the Future*, Cambridge University Press 2014) and Dr. Caroline Edwards.

Academic Steering Committee

Extensive consultation has taken place with high-profile academics and librarians from our committees, including, but not limited to:

David Armitage (Harvard)

Marguerite Avery (MIT Press)

Robert Eaglestone (Royal Holloway)

Michael Eisen (PLOS)

Steven Engler (Mount Royal

University, Calgary)

Kathleen Fitzpatrick (MLA),

David Gauntlett (Westminster),

Catherine Grant (Sussex)

Eve Gray (University of Cape Town)

Cable Green (Creative Commons)

Gary Hall (Coventry; Open Humanities Press)

Robert Judd (American Musicological Society)

Robert Kiley (Wellcome Library)

Vicky Lebeau (Sussex)

Martin McQuillan (Kingston)

Nora McGregor (The British Library)

Bethany Nowviskie (University of Virginia)

David Palumbo-Liu (Stanford)

Oya Y. Rieger (Cornell; arXiv)

Ben Showers (Jisc)

Peter Suber (Harvard OA Project)

Melissa Terras (UCL Centre for Digital Humanities)

Sanford G. Thatcher (ex-Penn State UP)

Patricia Waugh (Durham)

Peter Webster (the British Library)

John Willinsky (Stanford)

James Willsdon (Sussex)

Jane Winters (IHR)

Technology and Standards

The Open Library of Humanities is built upon a **robust standardised platform that integrates with all major library cataloguing and discoverability systems**. The submission platform, developed by Ubiquity Press, is based upon PKP's Open Journal Systems, but has been extensively modified to accommodate the editorial flow that is needed in a highly-distributed, large-scale system. The source code for all of our modifications will be released under an open license.

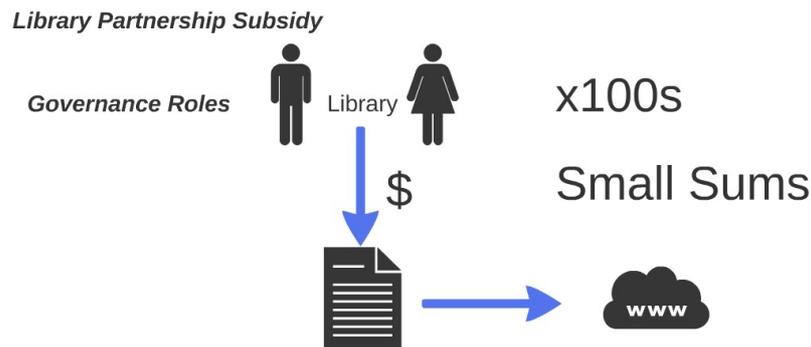
All OLH journals expose **OAI harvestable metadata** in NLM, MARC, MARC21, RFC1807 and DC formats. This includes title, author and content type. All journals implement full export to bibliographic management tools (Zotero translator etc.).

Furthermore, all OLH journals are intended to be fully accessible. This includes the use of **dyslexia-friendly fonts** and compliant markup to aid screen readers.

All OLH articles are **assigned CrossRef DOIs**, with **archiving and preservation provided through CLOCKSS**. We also offer our journals federated searching implemented by deposit of article-level metadata in the **Directory of Open Access Journals, Paperity, EBSCOHost**, and all OLH journals are currently being incorporated into the **MLA International Bibliography**.

Membership and Benefits

The OLH is a **charitable organisation** registered in the UK dedicated to not-for-profit open access publishing and is funded through a system called "Library Partnership Subsidies". We have no shareholders and all revenue goes directly to open-access publishing.



In this mode, rather than institutions bearing the whole cost when their researchers need to publish (as with open access through “article processing charges”), this model instead spreads costs across institutions; much like the advantageous aspects of the subscription model. Except, in this case, the results are made openly accessible.

The model is **extremely cost effective**, with a base cost of approximately €500 per article. This covers ongoing technological costs, staff costs, digital preservation, typesetting and other costs. When this is spread across institutions, articles become very affordable. At our current level of support from 185 library partners (on an average banding of €900) supporting the OLH’s publishing costs of 250 articles per year, this means that **each institution pays just €1.72 per open-access article**. This economy of scale improves as more institutions join.

Furthermore, because existing journals can migrate on to the OLH platform, institutions have a route to a transition for open access. **This means that as journals that were previously with commercial publishers move across and “flip” to open access, participating libraries should see direct cancellations, allowing a transfer of budgets into funding open access.**

Institutional Banding and Pricing

In order to allow institutions of all sizes to participate in the Library Partnership Subsidy model, we have banded prices according to size of institution.

FTE (Students + Staff)	Annual Price
10,000+	€1,500
5,000-9,999	€800
0-5,000	€600

If institutions wish to support the platform by paying more than the amount listed, as some have already done, this is welcome and possible.

How to Join

Prospective members should get in touch with Prof. Martin Eve, Director of the Open Library of Humanities, at: martin.eve@openlibhums.org or Saskia de Vries, at: s.c.j.devries@sampan.eu.

Institutional Benefits of LPS Membership

The primary institutional benefit is to **reduce the strain on library budgets** through a transition to open access. By supporting this transition in ways that work for humanities disciplines, institutions should see long-term benefits. All institutions and individual funding bodies who participate in the OLH Library Partnership Subsidy (LPS) are entitled to membership of the OLH Library Board.

The OLH Library Board (LB), in conjunction with the Academic Steering and Advisory Committee (ASAC) and the OLH Directors, determine the right of admission for new journals to the OLH platform. This, in turn, means that these three entities **collectively determine the year-on-year budget**. The boards, except in exceptional circumstances, discuss these matters and vote through online channels.

Proposals for **new journal admission** and/or budget increases to support publishing costs will be brought before the boards by the Directors on a maximum quarterly basis. The Directors, along with any other member of the LB, may give their opinions on the suitability of admission. Voting periods will last for a minimum of 14 days in each case. Every member of the LB, every member of the ASAC and every director will have one vote (in the case of institutions, this is one vote per membership subscription paid). Proposals will be carried if 60% of votes are in favour of the proposal under discussion. There is no level of required quorum.

An institution's seat on the OLH Library Board is tenable for the period of its paid membership. OLH Library Board members are entitled to a **yearly report** detailing the outputs of the project and the ways in which library funds are being spent solely to further the enterprise of open-access publishing.

Participating libraries are also **entitled to a listing on the OLH website**. It is clear that publishing is not a cost-free enterprise but often researchers/scholars are unaware that the library budget supports their activities.