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Advancing Open Monograph Opportunities at UC: November 2025 Public Report

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Authors

Uziel, Lidia

Mitchell, Erik T.

Bennett, Miranda

et al.

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Advancing Open Monograph Opportunities at UC

Final Report for Public Distribution - November 2025

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of California (UC) Libraries *Advancing Open Monograph Opportunities at UC* report provides a comprehensive strategic framework for advancing open access (OA) monograph publishing across the University. It recognizes that UC, as a global research leader, is uniquely positioned to influence the future of open monograph publishing by fostering sustainable, equitable, and high-impact models that align with the University's mission of research excellence, equity, and public service. This report, which was developed through a multi-track open monographs initiative launched by the UC Libraries in Spring 2025,¹ builds on the foundation of the [2018 Pathways to Open Access toolkit](#).² While that earlier work analyzed open models, frameworks and strategies broadly, this 2025 analysis addresses the distinct challenges and opportunities associated with OA monographs and supporting UC authors at scale.

The landscape of OA monograph publishing remains highly fragmented, marked by a diverse array of publisher types, persistently high production costs, limited economies of scale, uneven infrastructure development, and a proliferation of business and funding models that are still emerging, experimental, or in pilot stages. These challenges are especially pronounced in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (AHSS), which account for roughly two-thirds of UC-authored monographs. Unlike Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) publishing, AHSS relies on a heterogeneous ecosystem of commercial, scholar-led and small non-profit mission-driven presses. This ecosystem includes multilingual outputs and often relies on non-commercial business models.

In this context, the UC Libraries-endorsed recommendations outlined in this report (see Key Recommendations and Strategies immediately below) emphasize that UC must adopt a **model-agnostic, portfolio-based investment strategy** that combines multiple approaches tailored to disciplinary needs, publishing market dynamics, and broader structural realities. This strategy should not only enable UC authors to make their scholarship openly available but also strengthen the global OA monograph ecosystem by advancing **bibliodiversity, community ownership, and sustainability of the publishing ecosystem**.

The recommended strategic framework described herein is a model-agnostic investment strategy—an approach acknowledging that at this time, there is no single solution capable of supporting the diversity of business and publishing practices that characterize the OA monograph publishing ecosystem. UC's investments should therefore encompass a spectrum of models, including Book Processing Charge (BPC)-based approaches, Diamond OA publishing models such as library membership, Subscribe-to-Open (S2O) models, freemium, as well as library consortial and crowdfunding models, delayed/embargoed models, and investments in open, community-owned infrastructure.

This strategy is guided by a set of shared principles that reflect UC's values: alignment with UC scholarly activity, principles of scholarly excellence, fiscal responsibility, transparency, bibliodiversity, and community stewardship. It builds on the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) [classification](#)

¹ For additional information on the multi-track Advancing UC Open Monograph Opportunities project scope, [see supplemental material included with the eScholarship-deposited copy of the public report](#).

² For additional information, see: [Pathways to Open Access: Choices and Opportunities](#) by Maria Gould, Office of Scholarly Communication, University of California, July 26, 2018.

[framework](#), which organizes the OA monograph publishing and business models according to real-world investment opportunities and current practices. The Working Group developed [a values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#)—rooted in these principles—to assess potential investments, ensuring consistent, transparent, and evidence-based decision-making across the UC system.

The following four recommendations are intended to help UC navigate key challenges in the OA monograph landscape, including financial sustainability, equity, and systemic fragmentation, while making investment decisions.

Key Recommendations and Strategies:

1. **Prioritize Investment in BPC-based OA monograph initiatives that are closely aligned with UC scholarly activity**

UC Libraries should invest in OA monograph initiatives across commercial and scholar-led publishers and selectively support the opening of UC-authored backfiles that are closely aligned with UC scholarly activity—specifically, those that support UC-affiliated authors in publishing their work or provide content that is highly used in UC research, teaching, and learning.

Strategic approaches includes:

- **Development of innovative and affordable funding models:** Create scalable, predictable BPC funding mechanisms that balance cost control with UC’s mission to expand the reach of UC-authored scholarship.
- **Establish a systemwide, UC framework for BPC-based models:** Shared Content Leadership Group (SCLG) and Project Transform Working Group (PTWG) should lead a coordinated UC systemwide framework for eligibility, funding, and publisher engagement.
- **Invest in opening frontlists and backfiles:** Prioritize frontlist OA publishing to support new scholarship while selectively opening high-value backfiles through complementary funding.

Intended impact:

- Expand global reach and visibility of UC scholarship.
- Ensure equitable OA publishing opportunities for UC AHSS authors.
- Achieve financial sustainability through diversified funding and predictable annual costs.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships with mission-aligned publishers.
- Reinforce UC’s role as a leader in shaping a sustainable OA ecosystem.

2. **Support a range of Diamond OA Models and Free-to-Read Publishing Models**

UC Libraries should support a diversity of Diamond OA monograph initiatives and free-to-read publishing models that either enable UC-affiliated authors to publish their work or provide content of high value to UC research, teaching, and learning. These models advance UC’s

values of equity, openness, and bibliodiversity by removing user and author-facing fees and promoting community-driven, non-commercial publishing ecosystems. Investments should prioritize initiatives that amplify underrepresented voices, support multilingual and regional publishing, and foster community-driven, non-commercial infrastructure.

Strategic approaches includes:

- **Prioritize core Diamond OA and Free-to-Read models:** Focus investment on proven, mission-aligned approaches such as Library Membership Programs, Subscribe-to-Open (S2O), and Freemium approaches.
- **Cautious consideration of funding models:** Participate with caution in models requiring pooled or one-time library contributions such as Library Consortial and Crowdfunding models.
- **Invest highly selectively in transitional and embargoed OA models:** Support smaller scholar-led or university presses as a transitional step toward full OA, but avoid commercial delayed OA programs that lack transparency or reinvestment in open infrastructures.

Intended impact:

- Provide content of high value to UC research, teaching, and learning. Promote multilingual and cross-disciplinary publishing aligned with UC research priorities.
- Advance equity, openness, and bibliodiversity by eliminating both author- and reader-facing fees.
- Expand global access to scholarship while promoting bibliodiversity and support independent, scholar-led, and community-owned publishers.
- Ensure fiscal transparency, accountability, and sustainable reinvestment in open infrastructure.
- Reinforce UC's leadership in shaping a more inclusive, sustainable, and open monograph publishing ecosystem.

3. Support University Presses' Open Access publishing initiatives

UC Libraries should strengthen partnerships with university presses—supporting BPC-based, Diamond, and other emerging OA models—to advance scholarly excellence, equitable access, and global dissemination of research. University Presses are trusted stewards of peer-reviewed scholarship and play a central role in the academic publishing ecosystem, and in particular scholarly monograph publishing. Supporting their transition to open access directly aligns with UC's mission to make high-quality research open, affordable, and sustainable.

Strategic approaches includes:

- **Invest in strategic University Press partnerships:** UC Libraries should invest in OA monograph publishing across models—whether BPC-based, Diamond or other emerging models, building on current UC Libraries open monograph pilots with UC Press, Duke University Press, and Oxford University Press.

- **Support Multi-Press Collaborations and Shared Platforms:** Given the dispersed nature of OA monograph publishing, UC should pursue collaborative partnerships with multiple presses and third-party platforms to scale access and efficiency.

Intended impact:

- Expand global access and impact of peer-reviewed monographs authored by UC scholars.
- Ensure disciplinary balance, especially in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
- Strengthen partnerships with trusted university presses.
- Support press-led innovation and financial sustainability in transitioning to open models.
- Advance systemwide collaboration through scalable, shared models and multi-press agreements.
- Reinforce UC's role in transforming the academic publishing ecosystem through mission-aligned, high-quality OA partnerships.

4. Invest in Open, Community-Owned Infrastructure and High Standards OA Monograph Initiatives

UC Libraries should invest in two complementary areas:

- Open, community-owned, and non-commercial infrastructure that underpins OA monograph publishing; and
- OA initiatives—both BPC-based and Diamond—that meet robust standards for access, discoverability, and sustainability consistent with existing standards in research libraries.

These investments will strengthen the foundation for a sustainable, equitable, and globally connected open-access ecosystem.

Strategic approaches includes:

- **Sustain and expand investment in open, community-owned infrastructure:** UC Libraries should continue supporting open, non-commercial infrastructures and initiatives that promote diversity and ethical publishing practices and align with the University's mission of research excellence, equity, and public service (e.g., DOAB, OAPEN, Open Book Collective, Thoth).
- **Invest in OA initiatives meeting high standards for access and sustainability:** UC should prioritize publishers and platforms that demonstrate technical excellence, open licensing, metadata standards, discovery and dissemination mechanisms, and digital preservation commitments—examples include MIT Press Direct-to-Open, UC Press Luminos, and Open Book Collective.

Intended impact:

- Strengthen the global OA infrastructure that underpins equitable, interoperable monograph publishing.
- Enhance discoverability, metadata quality, and long-term preservation through investment in open infrastructures and platforms like DOAB, OAPEN, Open Book

- Collective, Thoth, and KCWorks.
- Empower community-governed and scholar-led initiatives that promote bibliodiversity and inclusivity.
- Ensure transparency, accessibility, and sustainability through open licensing, trusted repositories, and usage reporting.
- Establish UC as a cornerstone of a resilient, open, and interconnected scholarly communication ecosystem.

Recommended next steps

This report emphasizes the need to leverage UC's existing [UC Libraries Advisory Structure \(UCLAS\)](#)³ to implement and monitor OA monograph investments. As part of the UCLAS, the [SCLG](#)⁴ and [PTWG](#)—which currently oversee systemwide collections, transformative agreements and existing, systemwide open monograph pilots—should continue to serve as the primary decision-making bodies for OA monograph investments. SCLG and PTWG already hold primary responsibility and have the required expertise for evaluating systemwide funding opportunities, ensuring alignment with UC's strategic priorities, and applying the established evaluation framework to guide collective decision-making.

³ The UC Libraries Advisory Structure (UCLAS) provides the framework for coordinated collaboration among the ten UC campus libraries and California Digital Library (CDL). Governed by the UC Council of University Librarians (CoUL), UCLAS advances shared services, strategic planning, and operational alignment through ongoing, functionally organized groups rather than temporary project teams. This structure supports unified progress in priority areas including collections and content, open access, digital preservation, and open scholarship.

⁴ The UC Libraries Shared Content Leadership Group (SCLG) is charged by the Council of University Librarians (CoUL) to make decisions for the University of California in the areas of UC-wide collection development and management, open access, licensing, and stewardship across all formats, ensuring strategic value and alignment with UC priorities. As part of the UC Libraries Advisory Structure (UCLAS), SCLG coordinates shared collections and content efforts that serve and impact all campuses.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Purpose

The University of California (UC) holds a long-standing commitment to the pursuit of open, equitable and immediate access to research and the scholarly record, where author, reader and researcher rights and interests are upheld. In furtherance of this shared commitment, the UC Libraries developed the 2018 [Pathways to Open Access](#) landscape analysis and toolkit to support individual and collective library decision-making to achieve large-scale open access publishing transformation. This 2025 follow-up analysis and report, *Advancing Open Monograph Opportunities at UC*, addresses the distinct challenges and opportunities of open monograph publishing at scale and where the ecosystem enables bibliodiversity, community ownership, and sustainability. While initially written for a UC audience, this public version of the analysis, evaluative framework and recommendations is released to support and contribute to broader dialogue, experimentation and action.

2.2. Charge and Team Members

This report was developed through the multi-track Project to Advance Open Monograph Opportunities at UC (2024-2025).⁵ Launched in Spring 2025, this multi-track initiative builds on the 2018 *Pathways to Open Access* toolkit—which analyzed open models, frameworks and strategies broadly—to address the distinct challenges and opportunities of open monograph publishing and to support UC authors at scale. Through the Project, two distinct but coordinated tracks of work were carried out in FY 2024/25. Track A focused on piloting open monograph publishing models directly with selected publishers, using earmarked funds to test approaches and gather early evidence about costs, workflows, and author experiences. Track B centered on conducting a comprehensive landscape analysis and developing strategic recommendations to inform future systemwide investment and support, and resulted in the completion of this report.

The two tracks operated in parallel, with the practical insights emerging from Track A helping to shape the longer-term strategic planning in Track B, ensuring that both efforts remained aligned and complementary. Track A was led by the UC Libraries Project Transform Working Group (PTWG), which managed engagement with publishers and implementation of the pilots. A dedicated, time-limited Track B Working Group⁶ was convened to carry out the landscape review, examine a wide range of OA monograph publishing models and infrastructures, and recommend the most promising pathways for UC.

The Track B charge ([shared as supplementary material with this public report](#)) included a detailed SWOT analysis of open monograph models, data-driven assessments of UC authors' publishing patterns, and consultations with key stakeholders such as UC Press, library groups, and faculty committees. The team evaluated current publishing frameworks, funding models, and systemic

⁵ For additional information on the multi-track Advancing UC Open Monograph Opportunities project scope, [see supplemental material included with the eScholarship-deposited copy of the public report](#).

⁶ Track B Working Group members and the authors of this report: Lidia Uziel, UCSB (co-Chair); Erik Mitchell, UCSD (co-Chair); Miranda Bennett, CDL; Bryan Kehr, UCSD (Project manager); Michael Ladisch, UCD; Scott Stone, UCI; Allegra Swift, UCSD; and Erich van Rijn, UC Press.

challenges while identifying opportunities to enhance UC's support for open monographs. This analysis also documented existing strategies at both the local and systemwide levels, as well as those implemented by non-UC institutions, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the landscape. The ultimate goal was to develop actionable recommendations that aligned with UC's broader open access ambitions and addressed the scholarly communication needs of faculty, students, and researchers.

In development of this report, the Track B Working Group consulted with the UC Council of University Librarians (CoUL), Shared Content Leadership Group (SCLG), PTWG, systemwide Academic Senate UC Committee on the Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) and UC provost-charged Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASAC), as well as other UC-wide governance groups.

2.3. Methodology

The working group employed a structured and multi-faceted methodology to achieve the objectives outlined in the charge, focusing first on conducting a comprehensive landscape analysis (Objective 1) and subsequently developing actionable recommendations (Objective 2). The methodology was designed to ensure a thorough understanding of the open monograph publishing landscape, both within the UC system and in the broader scholarly communication ecosystem. This approach integrated research, data analysis, stakeholder consultation, and strategic evaluation to provide a robust foundation for decision-making and future investments.

For Objective 1, the team began by defining evaluative criteria to guide the landscape analysis. This included identifying key dimensions of open monograph publishing, such as funding models, policy frameworks, and disciplinary focus areas. This work was completed through four sub-groups:

- Subgroup 1: Research current models and initiatives for open monograph publishing and funding, including the policy landscape of OA books
- Subgroup 2: Data Analysis of UC Monograph Publishing
- Subgroup 3: Gather Input on Current UC Libraries Open Monograph Investments
- Subgroup 4: Consultation with UC Press and Strategic Partnerships

The sub-groups conducted extensive research into current open monograph publishing models and initiatives, examining funding mechanisms like "subscribe to open" and multi-payer models, as well as institutional policies supporting open access. Subgroup 1 led the landscape assessment of OA monograph business models, including publishing and funding mechanisms and the broader policy landscape.

Subgroup 1 performed a comparative in-depth analysis of existing and emerging OA monograph funding and publishing approaches,⁷ defined in alignment with the University of California's *Pathways* framework as overarching conceptual models or infrastructures for achieving open access. The analysis encompassed the strategies implemented by publishers, content providers, and supporting institutions to advance and achieve OA approaches. Following OAPEN's classification of business models for OA books (OAPEN, 2024b), the two key models examined were the Book Processing

⁷ Cf. See Appendices below.

Charge (BPC) /Open Access Fees model and Diamond Open Access models, along with their associated funding mechanisms—including Freemium, Subscribe to Open (S2O), Library memberships, Library consortium (“Institutional crowdfunding”), Crowdfunding, Institutional subsidies/New University Presses (NUP), Library/Institutional publishing, and University Presses—which represent specific strategies for implementing and achieving each approach with different associated funding mechanisms.

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was structured around five evaluative assessment criteria: financial and long-term sustainability, stakeholder collaboration, scalability and adoption, policy alignment, and equity and bibliodiversity. These criteria were defined based on the initial findings from the literature review and the collective scholarly communication expertise of Subgroup 1 members. Recognizing the varying priorities and perspectives within the scholarly publishing ecosystem, this analysis was conducted through the lens of three primary stakeholder groups: libraries, publishers, and authors/the broader scholarly communication community. This stakeholder-informed approach enabled the group to surface differentiated systemic challenges and opportunities associated with each model and helped to articulate their systemic challenges and opportunities with greater clarity.

Subgroup 2 undertook a data-driven analysis of UC monograph publishing patterns grounded in data pulled from the GOBI and Scopus platforms. While the dataset generated by Subgroup 2 is not representative of all UC author publishing, it provided a meaningful window into publishers, topical categories and publishing volume.

Subgroup 3 studied current UC Libraries’ investments in open monographs, including local and systemwide initiatives, and the criteria used to guide these investments. Subgroup 4 focused on consultation with UC Press.

The full working group also engaged in targeted consultations with key stakeholders to share findings throughout the process and get feedback. This included input from the UC Press and consultations with the SCLG, UCOLASC, SLASIAC and other UC-wide governance groups.

For Objective 2, the working group transitioned to strategic visioning and recommendation drafting, building on the findings from the input of the four subgroups convened to complete Objective 1. This phase began with the affirmation of guiding principles and values to ground the recommendations and inform an evaluative framework. The team evaluated strategies to advance open monograph publishing and reading opportunities for UC authors, considering financial models, sustainability, and alignment with UC’s broader open access goals. Recommendations were ranked and consolidated into a proposed roadmap, outlining short-, medium-, and long-term opportunities for action. The team also drafted a plan for action, ensuring continuity and alignment with the UC Libraries’ strategic priorities.

2.4. Scope, Definitions, and Terminology of OA book models

While the term “monograph” is well-understood in theory, its application in practice varies across publishers, often based on criteria like market expectations or subject specialization. Some books intended as monographs may gain broader appeal—being adopted in coursework or resonating with general audiences—blurring the line between academic monographs and trade publications. In light of

these nuances, the group adopted a flexible but focused definition: scholarly books written by academics for academic purposes. Throughout this report, the terms “monograph” and “book” are used interchangeably, with any potential ambiguities clarified where relevant.

As a result, and for the purposes of this study, an open-access monograph is defined as a long, academic, and peer-reviewed work focused on a single topic—typically authored by a single scholar, but also encompassing peer-reviewed edited collections by multiple authors, book chapters, critical editions, and other long-form scholarly works made available online under an open access license (such as a Creative Commons license), at no cost to the user and without registration requirements. This definition, drawn from various studies (Brown, et al., 2023; DOAB, n.d.-c), reflects a pragmatic approach that acknowledges the complexities and variations in how monographs are understood across different countries, disciplines, and publishing contexts.

In carrying out this study, Subgroup 1 adopted the terminology and classification of open access book business models provided by the OAPEN’s Open Access Book Toolkit (OAPEN, 2024a). While acknowledging that multiple definitions of open access exist—such as green, gold, diamond, hybrid, bronze, and others—the group found that these general OA categories, often borrowed from journal publishing, are not well suited for the detailed analysis of business, funding, and publishing models specific to OA monographs.

For example, while the “gold” model refers to open access publication in a journal (with or without author-facing fees) and “green” refers to article deposit in an open access repository, these distinctions offer limited insight into how open-access book publishing is actually financed and operationalized. Similarly, terms like “diamond” (OA without author fees), “hybrid” (immediate OA for individual articles after author fees alongside articles only accessible through a subscription), and others—such as bronze, grey, and black—may be useful shorthand in broader OA discussions but fall short when evaluating the specific mechanisms by which OA books are funded, produced, and disseminated.

In contrast, the adopted OAPEN/DOAB framework offers a structured and practical classification based on how open-access book publishing is actually carried out. This includes models such as Book Processing Charges (BPCs), institutional subsidies, library membership programs, library consortia, freemium approaches, Subscribe-to-Open, and delayed or embargoed OA. These categories focus on the funding flows, stakeholder roles, and operational realities of OA book publishing, making them more effective for analyzing current practices and emerging trends. The group prioritized OAPEN’s terminology and framework because it provides a more nuanced and applicable lens through which to assess the diversity of models currently shaping the OA monograph ecosystem. This approach also aligns more closely with how both publishers and libraries are engaging with open-access books on the ground.

In addition to the specific business models outlined in OAPEN/DOAB framework, the subgroup decided to incorporate two additional categories into the existing classification for the purposes of this study: University Presses and Library/Institutional Publishing. This decision was made to reflect the distinct characteristics and funding mechanisms associated with these two models, which, despite several overlaps, are not fully captured within the existing typology.

University presses, particularly those embedded within academic institutions, often operate under hybrid funding structures that include a combination of university subsidies, sales revenue, endowments, external grants, and other models (such as Author-Facing Fees or Diamond models). Their publishing missions, governance structures, and institutional commitments distinguish them from commercial or purely mission-driven independent publishers. Similarly, library- or institution-based publishing programs—many of which have emerged as part of scholarly communications or digital initiatives—rely on internal university support and infrastructure. They often prioritize open access as part of their institutional mission and do not operate on commercial cost-recovery models.

Including these two models in the study allowed the subgroup to better account for the full range of pathways through which open access for monographs can be achieved and sustained. Their unique positioning provides additional insight into how institutional support, non-commercial priorities, and scholarly values can shape sustainable OA publishing strategies.

3. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

To effectively assess the landscape of open-access monograph publishing, it is essential to begin with a presentation of key facts and figures from the literature review that illustrate the current state of the field. This foundational overview sets the stage for a more in-depth examination of existing OA approaches, including their systemic challenges and opportunities.

3.1. Fragmented Global Landscape

Following a thorough literature review, it becomes evident that gaining a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the global open access monograph publishing ecosystem remains a significant challenge. This is largely due to the lack of large-scale, cross-cutting studies that examine OA monographs across diverse types of publishers, languages, and regions. While several valuable regional analyses—such as those sponsored by OPERAS-EU and various European research initiatives (Arasteh & Blake, 2024)—offer important insights, they focus predominantly on OA book publishing in Europe or specific EU countries. A more expansive perspective is not represented in existing studies. In part, this is due to the fact that many existing pathways to sustainability for monograph publishing are heavily dependent upon sales to individuals as evidenced by the continuing sale of print copies of many monographs (Brown, et al, 2023). In addition, while the literature review identified several studies focusing on OA journal publishing in North America, it did not uncover any systematic assessment of the OA monograph market in the region—an important gap that, if addressed, would significantly inform this study. The DOAB continues to serve as a leading and trusted source for understanding the current state of OA book publishing, particularly for North American and European book publishers.

As of March 2025, DOAB listed over 93,000 academic, peer-reviewed books from 822 individual open-access publishers, with content distributed through 224 aggregator platforms or individual publishers' websites, in 112 languages (Directory of Open Access Books [DOAB], n.d.a). Approximately 54,917 of these titles—accounting for 59% of the total—were published in English. According to DOAB's inclusion criteria, all listed publishers must have published peer-reviewed books

under an open license, typically a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. However, it is important to note that DOAB does not provide a comprehensive inventory of all existing open-access book titles. The directory intentionally excludes institutional publishers, textbook publishers, and non-academic or non-scholarly publishers, particularly those that do not implement peer review. As reported on the DOAB's website (DOAB, n.d.b), DOAB has experienced significant growth, with the number of listed titles increasing by more than 70% over the past five years.

3.2. Financial Sustainability and Bibliodiversity Challenges

A growing body of literature on open-access books highlights a core challenge: how to develop sustainable funding models that allow OA monographs to become a standard part of scholarly publishing, rather than remaining marginal, one-time projects or grant-dependent endeavors (Maron, 2023; Sherer, 2023). While the need to move beyond pilot initiatives is widely acknowledged, no single model has emerged as a universally viable solution. The current landscape remains fragmented and transitional, characterized by ongoing experimentation with approaches such as crowdsourced funding, consortial support, subscribe-to-open, and library membership programs. None, however, has been adopted at scale across regions or disciplines.

Financial sustainability is a key challenge. Monograph publishing, particularly at established university presses, has been under financial strain for decades, and it is against this backdrop that business models emphasizing open access are being implemented. But the transition to OA models, while often yielding less revenue per title for publishers, does not fundamentally alter the cost structure for monograph publication. Monographs are expensive to produce and distribute, particularly because many monograph publishers have professional, in-house editors, and marketing and promotion staff—features of the system upon which faculty and tenure and promotion committees have come to depend. Scale does little to alleviate these challenges. Beyond the challenges of the profitability of monograph publishing, library collections budgets for monographs have been reduced steadily over time with a very small percentage of library collections spending directed to the acquisition of new monographs as a part of overall collections spending.

The literature increasingly emphasizes that a viable OA monograph publishing model must account for disparities and bias among institutions and publishers, especially benefiting well-funded research universities and publishers over the under-resourced universities and publishers (Grady, et al., 2025). The BPC/Open Access Fees model, in particular, is widely criticized for being inequitable and financially unsustainable long term. BPCs are often prohibitively expensive—ranging from \$7,000 to over \$15,000—disproportionately benefiting well-funded researchers while excluding many scholars in the humanities and social sciences who have limited access to funding. A major concern raised in the literature is the threat to bibliodiversity—the richness and variety of scholarly publishing in terms of language, geographic representation, disciplinary scope, institutional size, and publishing format (Adema, et al., 2024). Bibliodiversity is essential for fostering a resilient, inclusive, and representative scholarly ecosystem. Over-reliance on market-based OA models risks favoring dominant academic languages (particularly English), research areas with greater access to funding (often STEM fields), and larger commercial publishers. This could marginalize publications in local languages, niche or underfunded disciplines in AHSS, and independent, scholar-led, or regional presses that serve specific academic or cultural communities. Without intentional support for bibliodiversity, the shift to OA risks narrowing rather than broadening global scholarly communication. The UKRI example is

often cited as evidence of systemic funding shortfalls: with £3.5 million allocated annually for OA books and average BPCs around £10,000, the cost of publishing all eligible titles exceeds available funds (Eve, 2018). The lack of transparency in BPC pricing further complicates trust and decision-making for libraries and funders.

In response, international efforts increasingly support non-commercial, community-led alternatives. UNESCO's 2021 *Recommendation on Open Science* advocates equitable access to scholarly outputs, including journals and monographs, through funding models that remove financial barriers for both authors and readers (UNESCO, 2023). Building on this, the *Global Diamond Open Access Alliance*, launched in 2024, champions the Diamond OA model—free to publish and free to read, community-led, and non-profit (UNESCO, 2024). The Alliance is supporting Regional Diamond Capacity Hubs⁸ to champion collaboration, resource sharing, and local adaptation of best practices, particularly among under-resourced and scholar-led publishers.

These developments reflect an emerging global consensus: to ensure a viable and inclusive future for open-access monographs, sustainable funding must go hand in hand with a commitment to bibliodiversity—protecting the plurality of scholarly voices, formats, and communities that shape the global research landscape.

3.3. Symbiotic Relationship Between Print and Open Access Monographs

Another important aspect that studies consistently highlight is the symbiotic relationship between print and OA monographs. The literature review demonstrated the existing resilience of print sales within the open-access publishing model, challenging widespread assumptions about the dominance of digital formats. Contrary to fears that OA would cannibalize print revenue, research shows that the two formats often operate in a complementary rather than competitive manner (Blankstein, 2022). Scholars in the humanities and social sciences, in particular, continue to value print editions for sustained reading, teaching, and reference, even as they benefit from the discoverability and convenience of digital versions. When asked, as described in the Springer Nature survey of more than 2,500 academic book authors, whether it was important for their book to be available in print, 83% of non-OA book authors and 73% of OA book authors agreed or strongly agreed that this was important (SpringerNature, et al., 2019). At the same time, a majority of authors also support the principles of open access: many agree that all future scholarly books—whether monographs or edited collections—should be made available via OA, reflecting a growing consensus around the need for both accessibility and format flexibility in scholarly publishing. This dual engagement suggests that OA can significantly enhance a book's visibility, citation rates, and global reach without diminishing demand for physical copies.

The 2023 Ithaka S+R *Print Revenue and Open Access Monographs* study on university presses, produced in collaboration with the Association of University Presses, offers compelling evidence supporting this perspective (Brown, et al., 2023). It found that nearly all reviewed OA monographs generated at least some revenue from print and ebook sales, with close to 30 percent earning over \$10,000. On average, OA monographs brought in \$16,909 in revenue - primarily from print sales—with modest additional earnings from priced digital editions on platforms like Kindle. While the

⁸ Cf. Global Summits on Diamond OA: the inaugural summit that took place in [October 2023 in Toluca, Mexico](#), and the second summit took place in [Cape Town in December 2024](#).

study concluded that print revenue (and also premium formats of ebooks) *can* generate significant revenue for publishers, the study did not compare the revenue generated from all sources by paid access scholarly monographs with revenues from all sources of open access scholarly monographs. It should also be noted that the average sales were quite a bit higher than the median sales—the median revenue generated from sales of print and premium ebook formats was just \$8,799 per title. While the study concluded that print revenue (and also premium formats of ebooks) can generate significant revenue for publishers, the study did not compare the revenue generated from all sources by paid access scholarly monographs with revenues from all sources of open access scholarly monographs. Similarly, the market research report, *Open Access Book Publishing 2024-2028* (Simba Information, 2025), reinforces this trend reporting that print editions of OA monographs from select commercial vendors generate significant revenue, averaging \$17,000 per title. This revenue stream is largely attributed to academic and institutional demand, the growing use of print-on-demand technologies, and enhanced discoverability through OA platforms. Approximately 30 percent of titles reviewed earned over \$10,000, further underscoring the enduring financial relevance of print.

At the same time, other research studies and industry reports (Crow, 2014; Crow 2021) have documented a long-term decline in monograph sales, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Despite this, much of the publishing sector continues to operate within a print-based model. The *Ithaka S+R* study notes that over the past two decades, monograph sales have steadily decreased, and with profit margins already razor-thin, many publishers see developments like OA as a threat to financial viability (Brown, et al., 2023). However, the same report offers a more nuanced view: it concludes that OA titles not only generate substantial print revenue but also contribute meaningfully to digital revenue streams, contradicting the assumption that OA inherently erodes sales.

Beyond financial considerations, the benefits of OA in terms of global dissemination and scholarly impact are also well documented. A growing body of research affirms the OA citation advantage. One particularly illustrative example comes from Mithu Lucraft's analysis on the *LSE Impact Blog* (Lucraft, 2023). Her study found that OA monographs were downloaded on average 10 times more than non-OA titles and received 2.4 times more citations. Additionally, OA titles reached more geographically diverse audiences, demonstrating their role in expanding the reach and influence of scholarly work. The Springer Nature white paper findings demonstrated that immediate OA significantly increases and diversifies readership across disciplines and regions (SpringerNature, et al., 2019). The report found that OA books reach more countries and display higher geographical diversity of usage than non-OA titles. They are particularly effective in expanding access in low- and lower-middle-income countries, thus supporting more equitable participation in scholarly discourse. Books with geographic terms in their titles often show enhanced usage within those regions, a trend especially notable in Latin America and Africa, where local engagement with OA content appears strong.

Together, these findings make a compelling case for the adoption and support of open-access monograph publishing. Rather than threatening traditional formats or business models, OA broadens access, enhances scholarly visibility, and supports more diverse and equitable knowledge dissemination. When supported by thoughtful and flexible funding strategies, OA monographs can be both impactful and financially viable, serving the needs of authors, publishers, libraries, and readers around the world.

3.4. Evolving Policy Landscape and Regional Contexts

The global policy landscape for open-access monographs is undergoing a significant transformation, with a growing number of funders and national research organizations implementing policies that explicitly include monographs and long-form scholarly publications. Using the [ROARMAP advanced search](#), we found that the number of OA policies referencing books or book chapters more than doubled between 2017 and 2025, rising from 245 to 454 globally (Ferwerda, E., et al., 2017). Many of these are now formal mandates, reflecting the momentum behind integrating OA monographs into the broader open science ecosystem.

Inclusion of monographs in OA policies is most prevalent in Europe, including national level mandates that have emerged in some countries (eg, Belgium, France, Germany, Serbia, Slovenia have national level policies) (OAPEN, 2024b). In addition, several funders in Europe, including in the Netherlands, Austria, Norway, Ireland, Portugal, and the UK, require OA for scholarly monographs and book chapters (European Science Foundation, 2021). In most EU countries with open access book policies, the primary funding institutions include ministries of education, research funding organizations (RFOs), and research-performing organizations (RPOs). In some cases, charitable organizations, such as the Volkswagen Foundation, also support open-access book publishing.

The Council of the European Union (CEU) issued a set of prescient conclusions and recommendations (Council of the European Union, 2023) that are especially relevant to the current environment of “unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education” (AAC&U, 2025). The recommendations are aligned with the [UC Open Access Policies](#) and the UC’s [Guidelines for Prioritizing Transformative Open Access Agreements](#) stressing the importance of author rights retention and immediate open access to the university’s scholarship. Where the CEU diverge is in support of open access monograph and multiformat publishing with an emphasis that costs should not be borne by the author or readers of any format (p.5). In addition, the importance of investing in infrastructure, digital and innovative tools and capacities is highlighted within the recommendations. Especially salient are the passages:

EMPHASISES that scholarly publishing should support essential principles of academic freedom, research integrity and scientific excellence, as well as maximum accessibility and reusability of research results, while also supporting research communities and their transdisciplinary collaboration, and **UNDERLINES that the scientific practices for ensuring reproducibility, transparency, sharing, rigour and collaboration are important means of achieving a publishing system responsive to the challenges of democratic, modern and digitalised societies.** (p.5)

Enhancing trust and ensuring high quality, transparency and integrity in scholarly publishing (p.8). **UNDERLINES** that academic freedom encompasses the right to freely define research questions, choose and develop theories, gather empirical material, employ academic research methods, question accepted wisdom and bring forward new ideas, and entails the right to share, disseminate and publish the results thereof, including through training and teaching, and **STRESSES that any restriction of these practices is a threat to academic freedom and to research integrity.** (p.6).

Funding mechanisms to support OA vary depending on national contexts, shaped by historical, political, and economic factors. France, for example, has a National Plan for Open Science, coordinated by the Committee for Open Science under the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Funding for open-access books resulting from publicly funded research can be secured through the national [Open Science Fund](#). In addition, government support strongly favors the development of Freemium models—such as the one adopted by the [OpenEdition](#). Similarly, in Germany, the German Research Foundation (DFG) operates an open-access publishing program that provides grants to cover the costs of open-access books, which has greatly contributed to the development of the BPC-based model. Additionally, the DFG indirectly supports open access publishing by contributing to university publication funds. ([OAPEN, 2024 Dec.](#))

In several countries where ministerial or government open access policies are absent or where open access strategies do not specifically address books or funding, national research funders can take the lead in developing policies and funding mechanisms for open-access books. Notable examples include UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in the United Kingdom, the Dutch Research Council (NWO) in the Netherlands, the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), the Research Council of Norway, and the Research Council of Lithuania. For example, in January 2024, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) introduced an [OA policy](#) mandating open access for monographs, book chapters or edited collection within 12 months of publication, allocating [£3.5 million](#) annually to support compliance, which has greatly contributed to the development of the BPC-based model. This funding is specifically intended to cover publishing costs, including non-author-facing charge routes to compliance. However, the REF Steering Group announced in August 2024 that, in response to sector concerns and the challenges facing the sector, there will be no open access mandate for long-form outputs in REF 2029. (Research Excellence Framework (REF), 2024)

Latin America's approach to OA monographs is built on decades of public investment and community-led infrastructure; however, the OA monographs are not consistently included in national mandates. Initiatives such as [SciELO Books](#), (which is part of the [SciELO network](#) and provides a platform for open access monograph publishing, supporting books in multiple languages and across disciplines) and [CLACSO](#), the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, demonstrate how collaborative, non-commercial publishing models can thrive without relying on BPCs and promote Diamond OA models (SciELO, n.d; SciELO, 2023; CLASCO, n.d.). These platforms promote access to high-quality research in multiple languages, often focusing on locally relevant scholarship and underserved disciplines. This approach aligns with a growing international consensus that OA should serve not only dissemination goals but also equity and inclusion.

In Africa, open-access book publishing remains underfunded but is gaining traction through regional efforts and international partnerships. South Africa's National Research Foundation mandates OA for publicly funded research (McKenna, 2024c), and the African Open Science Platform ([AOSP](#), 2025) advocates for broader adoption. While monographs are not consistently included in national mandates, institutions across the continent are experimenting with OA book publishing, though financial constraints remain a major barrier.

Asia presents a varied picture, and the current lack of comprehensive research studies makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions across the region. China has invested in OA through national repositories and university initiatives, though monographs are not yet part of national policy. India and Japan promote open educational resources and journal publishing but lack national monograph

mandates. In South Korea and Taiwan, university presses have begun piloting OA book projects, supported by institutional or government funding. (McKenna, 2024a)

Both Australia and Canada lack a unified nationwide OA mandate for monographs, but they have implemented open access (OA) policies through their major funding agencies, which include monographs and other types of long-form scholarship (McKenna, 2024d). The Australian Research Council (ARC) and Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) support open book publishing.

In contrast, the United States, despite progress in OA for journal articles and data, lacks a national OA monograph mandate. While the 2022 OSTP *Nelson Memo* (Nelson, 2022) reinforced a commitment to immediate open access for federally funded research, monographs are not yet explicitly included. Nonetheless, the U.S. federal government is gradually expanding open access policies for monographs, with agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) offering grants for open-access books through initiatives like the recently concluded [Humanities Open Book Program](#). However, actions at the federal level by the current administration indicate that programs like this may not continue or be as robust as they have been. Reductions in federal funding to support OA monographs would disrupt a major source of U.S.-based philanthropic funding.

The scholarly publishing landscape for monographs is diverse, encompassing both large and small publishers, commercial and non-profit entities, as well as university-based and independent publishing outlets. Policies and mandates are still lacking, and while they develop, they must account for the varied challenges that different sectors face in transitioning to open access. This is particularly critical given disparities in funding distribution—while some universities struggle with substantial deficits, others benefit from significant endowments, affecting their ability to support open access publishing.

3.5. Institutional Investment and Library-Led Open Access Monograph Publishing

The landscape assessment underscores that there is no single pathway to sustainable OA monograph publishing, but rather an evolving ecosystem that integrates community-owned infrastructure, university press collaboration, and institutional capacity-building. In parallel with supporting open, community-owned, or publicly funded non-commercial infrastructure, there is a growing trend among research libraries to invest in and expand their internal capacity for open access monograph publishing. Such investment helps to build sustainable alternatives to commercial publishing pathways, reinforce the public mission of the university, and advance equity in knowledge creation and dissemination.

Library publishing in the United States was established as a scholar-led and community owned community of practice a little over a decade ago (Library Publishing Coalition, n.d.). The Library Publishing Coalition has sought to address the question, “are library publishers merely a platform or do they provide the level of services necessary to support quality academic publishing?” by knowledge sharing, research, and skill building to support the library publishing community in providing services beyond hosting. However, this question still stands as library publishing programs can be under-supported at their home institution making it difficult to provide beyond basic platform hosting. Author perception and tenure and promotion criteria that equate value with more established and recognizable publishers are also obstacles to participation in library publishing. This is not to say that there is not progress being made, as there has been a growth in partnerships to address support

needs and program sustainability. Entire continents (Liu, et al., 2024; Claassen, 2024) are finding value in building their own infrastructure to support their authors who've been blocked by exclusionary practices in the "Global North." Library publishers in the United States, in turn, have been able to find ways to support scholars and academic institutions in war torn regions (Inefuku, et al., 2023) as well as academics under siege in their own country (Fitzpatrick & Eve, 2025; Fitzpatrick, 2025).

Library/Institutional Publishing programs that provide academic monograph publishing vary in staffing and service levels, business models and revenue streams, organizational structure and support, format/output support, and use a variety of platforms from open source to commercial publishing platforms.

Pressbooks is the predominant platform, alongside institutional repository platforms, used by members of the [Library Publishing Coalition](#). Pressbooks is used to publish textbooks, scholarly monographs, syllabi, fiction and non-fiction books, white papers, and more in multiple formats including MOBI (for Kindle ebooks), EPUB (for all other ebookstores), and designed PDF (for print-on-demand and digital distribution). Promising use case examples include:

- The UC Berkeley Library Scholarly Communication and Information Policy Office has hosted their own instance of [Pressbooks](#) that is included in their promotion of their multimodal approach to [advancing open access monographs](#). UCB has extensive policies and procedures to guide their program and document their efforts in annual reports (2023-2024 Report: [Driving open access article and book publishing](#))
- The [UW Press and UW Libraries publishing services](#) offer [Manifold Scholarship](#), a digital book publishing platform created by University of Minnesota Press. Manifold is unique as it serves as a digital text platform with chapters like a traditional text with the added ability to incorporate media, visualizations, gaming, and more along with the text.
- [Cardiff University](#) utilizes [Ubiquity](#) platforms to publish their monographs using Diamond open access or BPC business models following their well documented [policies and procedures](#). The governance and review are facilitated by an editorial board composed of Cardiff University academic staff with diverse, established experience of Open Access publishing, PhD student representatives from the University, and members of the [University Library Service](#) who manage Cardiff University Press' operational aspects.
- [Michigan Publishing](#) at the University of Michigan combines approaches to round out their program and provides book hosting services on [Fulcrum](#). UM promotes the impact of their approach, much like UCB, communicating how their sustainable digital scholarship publishing benefits the humanities and born-digital publishing contributes to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Virginia Tech combines a publishing program and their university press ([VTP&P](#)) and leverages Ubiquity Press, Manifold, and Pressbooks as their main open-source digital publishing platforms to deliver scholarly monographs, multimedia projects, and open educational resources.

Several of these use cases are funded in part by external granting bodies such as the Arcadia Foundation, the [United Kingdom Research & Innovation \(UKRI\)](#), and many operate through partnerships across the campus. UC Berkeley Library and Michigan Publishing are adept at

communicating the impact of their publishing programs and support for advancing OA publishing have on their academic community and the public. These particular library publishing programs are notable in the array of services and discipline spanning publishing opportunities they provide through staffing, funding streams, flexible business models, transparent and legible policies, open infrastructure and community-based, open-source publishing platforms.

It is important to note that the [UC Publishing Services \(UCPUBS\)](#)—[a strategic collaboration between UC Press and the California Digital Library \(CDL\) eScholarship program](#)—offers a unique model of mission-aligned publishing that integrates professional editorial services, library-based infrastructure, and open dissemination. UCPUBS offers a broad range of publishing solutions aimed at supporting the traditional and open access publishing needs of editorially independent publishing programs within the UC system. This is achieved by leveraging the Press’s expertise in book production/reissuing out-of-print books combined with eScholarship’s expertise in open access journal publishing and repository solutions for course materials, reports, manuals, open educational resources, conference and symposia proceedings, and preprints. This partnership enables several high-quality, editorially independent open access publishing models, some of which have no fees (via eScholarship) while others involve recharging departments and research units only for professional service expenses incurred, e.g. copyediting, typesetting, editorial project management (via UC Press).

Both the UC Press and CDL are independently committed to supporting open access scholarly publishing. In addition to UCPUBS, [UC Press Luminos](#) is the press’ membership-based open access publishing program for monographs. [eScholarship](#) is a leader within the growing national trend of library-led publishing models, as seen at institutions like the [University of Michigan \(Michigan Publishing\)](#) and [Virginia Tech \(VT Publishing\)](#), which emphasize scholar-centered services, non-commercial infrastructure, and a commitment to bibliodiversity. Demand for eScholarship services, particularly its open access journal publishing, continues to expand; at present, eScholarship publishes over 90 academic journals.

3.6. Assessment of UC author publishing trends and UC Libraries investment in OA monograph programs

As part of the broader landscape review, the team conducted an initial assessment of UC author publishing trends and current UC Libraries’ investments in open access monograph programs. This work was designed to offer a general sense of the scale of monograph publishing by UC authors and to identify the types of OA models already supported across the system.

The analysis relied primarily on GOBI and Scopus records, which provided a useful directional snapshot but included incomplete and inconsistent metadata—most notably gaps in author-affiliation information. As a result, the data represent only a partial view of UC-authored monograph output and should not be interpreted as comprehensive. Even within these limitations, the review indicated that UC authors publish several hundred monographs annually across diverse disciplines and publishers, highlighting the importance of sustainable, mission-aligned OA publishing pathways.

The team further documented a range of existing investments across UC Libraries, including support for community-owned infrastructure, collective funding models, and UC-led publishing capacity through eScholarship. These efforts demonstrate a continued commitment to expanding equitable and non-commercial options for monograph publishing, though local investment patterns vary by campus.

This assessment was developed to support internal planning and does not constitute a full accounting of UC publishing activity or expenditures. Additional work is needed to strengthen data sources and reporting mechanisms to enable more robust future analysis.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT OPEN MONOGRAPH APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

4.1. Two, primary models: Book Processing Charge (BPC) / Open Access Fees and Diamond Open Access models

In open access publishing, different models have emerged to fund monographs, each with its own approach to covering publishing and/or reading costs. Two widely used models are the BPC / Open Access Fees model and the Diamond Open Access model (which includes different funding mechanisms as described below), both of which aim to support the dissemination of scholarly work while addressing financial considerations in different ways (2024a).

The BPC / Open Access Fees model involves a one-time payment, which can range from \$585 - \$21,640 per book (Pinter, 2018) (although typically the average BPC varies significantly by the publisher, ranging from \$6,920 to over \$15,000 per book, reflecting the differing scales and cost structures within the book publishing industry) (Simba Information, 2025), and depending on the publisher. Publishers employ different methods to calculate the level of BPCs. Commercial publishers who engage in OA book publishing tend to cover the total costs of publication through the BPC, while many university presses will calculate the BPC based on the costs to produce the digital file. At present, there is not enough understanding of how the costs of OA books might differ from closed books and how that might influence the pricing of a BPC (Ferberda, et al., 2017). The cost of the BPCs is often covered by research grants, university subsidies and subventions, institutional funds, library collection budgets, or, in some cases, individual authors. The model is commonly used by commercial and large university presses and provides a structured approach to funding OA monographs. However, access to funding varies across institutions and disciplines, which can shape how different researchers engage with this model.

The Diamond OA model takes a different approach by making monographs openly available without requiring authors to cover publication costs. Instead, funding comes from a range of sources, including library consortia, academic institutions, scholarly societies, government programs, and philanthropic contributions. This model distributes costs across multiple stakeholders and integrates into existing library and institutional support structures in ways to create a scalable and financially viable approach to OA monograph publishing. According to OAPEN's *Business Models for Open Access Book Publishing* (2024),⁹ the Diamond OA model encompasses a variety of strategies, representing different business models and funding mechanisms:

- **Freemium:** A version of the ebook is made open access or freely available at no charge to the author; the free access is subsidized by other revenue sources, such as sales of other e-formats, print sales, and/or library membership fees.

⁹ For more details on Diamond OA funding models, see: [OAPEN \(2024\). *Business Models for OA Book Publishing*](#).

- Subscribe to Open (S2O): Libraries subscribe to or purchase specified collections of closed-access books, which may include backlist titles. When a sufficient number of libraries have committed and a set target is reached, the subscription fees / sales revenue are used to fund open access for newly published books.
- Library membership: Libraries or other institutions pay an annual membership fee to a publisher that underwrites some costs of making books open access; the member institution and/or its authors may receive additional benefits such as discounts on book processing charges (BPCs).
- Crowdfunding: Individuals pledge funds to make a book open access; once enough individuals have confirmed participation and the target amount is achieved, the book is made open access.
- Library consortium ("Institutional crowdfunding"): Libraries pledge a fee towards making a collection of books open access, covering some or all of the costs between them. Once enough libraries have confirmed participation and the target amount is achieved, the collection is made open access.
- Institutional subsidies/ New University Presses (NUP): An institution subsidises publication at an open-access press based at or associated with the institution. BPCs may not be required or may be discounted; academics based at the institution may receive additional discounts or BPC waivers.

The complexity of OA Diamond business models lies in the fact that they can be adopted by any publisher (type, size) and may account for anything from a small portion of their output to the entirety of their monograph program. Additionally, publishers may adopt multiple Diamond OA models simultaneously for different titles. Variations in these models are also shaped by the specific context of the traditional monograph publishing practices from which they emerge.

Diamond OA models are increasingly used by non-profit, scholar-led, university presses and mission-driven publishers, thereby preserving bibliodiversity. Additionally, it promotes multilingual and regional publishing initiatives, expanding the reach of non-English scholarship. These Diamond OA models are increasingly adopted internationally by publishers, which enhances inclusivity. Both the BPC and the Diamond OA models reflect different strategies for supporting open-access monograph publishing, each with its own considerations for authors, publishers, and institutions. As open access continues to evolve, discussions around funding models remain central to the broader landscape of scholarly publishing.

4.2. SWOT Assessment - Book Processing Charge (BPC) / Open Access Fees and Diamond Open Access models

The OA Monograph Group conducted SWOT analyses for the different OA monograph support models from the perspectives of key stakeholders: libraries/funders, publishers, and authors. Below is a summarized analysis for the two models of OA monograph support.

The BPC Model

Strengths

- Funding is a one-time commitment per title, allowing for budget flexibility.
- The model directly supports a portion of institutional authors, enabling funders to align support with institutional priorities.
- By visibly supporting affiliated authors, libraries can enhance their institutional profile and reputation. This support may also positively influence authors' perceptions of OA publishing, particularly in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Weaknesses

- A complex model to implement and requiring a great amount of investment in staffing and infrastructure. Requirements include drafting policies, verifying eligibility, monitoring publisher compliance, processing payments, communication and mediation, initial and ongoing outreach, education, and individual author consultations.
- BPCs can be expensive on a per-title basis, making large-scale support financially challenging for funders.
- The model often favors well funded institutions, raising concerns about equity in scholarly publishing.
- Not all authors can take advantage of the funds due to numbers of authors and high costs of BPCs.
- High costs may compete with other essential library services, such as collections or other services.
- The time between funding approval and payment may span multiple fiscal years, complicating budget planning.

Opportunities

- The high cost of BPCs could be mitigated through cost-sharing with other institutional units (e.g., Offices of Research or Provosts), departmental contributions, author grants, or philanthropic funding.
- Libraries might negotiate BPC discounts through agreements with publishers.

Threats

- As with all models, the primary threat is ongoing uncertainty in funder budgets and library staffing levels and turn-over
- Library reputation and OA publishing perception can be harmed as prospective authors are turned away due to changes in policies or funds being depleted, put on hold, or closed.

The Diamond OA Model

The Diamond model encompasses a variety of funding strategies, including Subscribe-to-Open, library membership models, and crowdfunding.

Strengths

- Many Diamond models require relatively modest contributions from funders and offer flexible funding structures.

- Models such as library consortia or institutional subsidies promote systemic transitions to OA and can support publishing at scale.
- By including non-affiliated authors, Diamond models better address equity in scholarly publishing.
- Many Diamond Open Access models foster bibliodiversity by supporting a wide range of voices, disciplines, and languages, while promoting the sustainability of scholarly publishing through community-governed, non-commercial infrastructure that ensures equitable access for both authors and readers.

Weaknesses

- These models often do not directly benefit authors affiliated with the funding institution.
- Funders or authors typically lack influence over title selection.
- Library/funder support for Diamond OA models is mostly invisible to the campus community.
- There is a risk of “double-dipping,” where institutions financially support Diamond OA initiatives while also purchasing the same titles.

Opportunities

- Funders can prioritize Diamond models that offer clear benefits to their own authors, helping to align support with institutional goals.

Threats

- As with the BPC model, the principal threat remains the unpredictability of funder budgets and library staffing levels and turn-over.

5. VALUES, CRITERIA & EVALUATIVE FRAMEWORK

The landscape work in this report highlights a broad and evolving array of options for investments. To support the advancement of OA monograph investment, the working group drafted the [values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#), based on community standards and aligned with the UCOLASC [Declaration of Rights and Principles to Transform Scholarly Communication](#). This tool is intended to assist UC libraries decision makers in evaluating the different publishers, programs, and initiatives but could be adopted beyond the UC. The [values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#) follows the [Core Values and Criteria guiding data collection and analysis](#) document drafted by this working group and incorporates the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) criteria (not public yet), [Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association \(OASPA\) principles](#), and the UC [Non-commercial topics for Project Transform negotiations](#). Not included but possibly useful is the [FORCE11 FSCI](#) community developed [Scholarly Communication Infrastructure Checklist](#) intended to serve as a starting point for values-based discussions with potential vendors and service providers of scholarly communications infrastructure.

The [Core Values and Criteria guiding data collection and analysis](#) inform the recommendations in the next section of this report and the [values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#) is a method for aligning the library's core values with evaluative criteria when reviewing investment options. The framework is organized by criteria under sections drawn from values statements and best practices that can be applied across business models, initiatives, and programs. Several sections are interrelated; for

example bibliodiversity values in topic C will benefit UC authors in topic A. The column A “points possible” is intended to support weighting the application and evidence of the different criteria. For example, if a publisher exhibits strong evidence of ethical business practices and not merely a vague statement or no evidence at all, the higher the score in column B “points earned.”

Within the UC, the collection development and acquisitions groups, [UC Libraries SCLG](#) and SCLG-charged [Scholarly Transformation Advice & Review \(STAR\) Team](#), can refine and apply this set of criteria when making system-wide OA monographs investment decisions. Similar stakeholder groups at other universities making OA monograph investment decisions can refine and reuse these criteria according to their values and priorities.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. General Recommendations

There is no single business model that can comprehensively support open access monograph initiatives and publishing, nor is there one that can be deemed optimal across all contexts. Each model carries its own set of strengths, limitations, opportunities, and risks—reflecting the diversity of disciplinary practices, institutional capacities, and funding environments that define the scholarly landscape.

Given the complexity of the open access monograph ecosystem—particularly in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (AHSS), where funding streams are often fragmented and uneven—a one-size-fits-all solution is neither feasible nor desirable. A robust, equitable, and sustainable publishing environment depends on the coexistence and coordinated support of multiple models, each tailored to serve specific scholarly needs and communities. Given the fact that there is no single model, this report recommends that UC Libraries prioritize high-impact investments in each of the four recommendation areas:

Table 1: Summary of investment recommendations by models and impact

#	Investment type	Priority	Anticipated impact
1	BPC-based models	UC Scholarly activity aligned	• Expand the global reach and visibility of UC-authored monographs through new OA publishing and selective backfile openings. • Provide equitable OA publishing opportunities, especially for AHSS authors less served by journal-based agreements. • Achieve financial sustainability via diversified funding sources and predictable annual costs. • Strengthen strategic partnerships with mission-aligned publishers. • Reinforce UC’s leadership in shaping a sustainable OA publishing ecosystem.
2	Diamond OA and Free-to-Read models	UC scholarly aligned and high-impact scholarship	• Provide content of high value to UC research, teaching, and learning • Advance equity, openness, and bibliodiversity by eliminating both author- and reader-facing fees. • Expand global access to scholarship while supporting independent, scholar-led, and community-driven presses. • Promote multilingual and cross-disciplinary publishing aligned with

			UC research priorities. • Ensure fiscal transparency, accountability, and sustainable reinvestment in open infrastructure. • Position UC as a leader in equitable and collaborative transformation of scholarly communication.
3	University press collaborations	UC Scholarly aligned activity and high-impact scholarship	• Strengthen partnerships with trusted university presses (e.g., UC Press, MIT, Michigan, Oxford, Cambridge, Duke). • Ensure disciplinary balance, especially in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. • Deliver immediate benefits for UC authors through open publication and long-term access to their works. • Support press-led innovation and financial sustainability in transitioning to open models. • Advance systemwide collaboration through scalable, shared models and multi-press agreements. • Reinforce UC's role in transforming the academic publishing ecosystem through mission-aligned, high-quality OA partnerships.
4	Community owned non-commercial infrastructure and High Standards OA Monograph Initiatives	Infrastructure used by UC scholars, Discoverability, sustainability, and interoperability	• Strengthen the global OA infrastructure that underpins equitable, interoperable monograph publishing. • Enhance discoverability, metadata quality, and long-term preservation through investment in platforms like DOAB, OAPEN, Open Book Collective, Thoth, and KCWorks. • Empower community-governed and scholar-led initiatives that promote bibliodiversity and inclusivity. • Ensure transparency, accessibility, and sustainability through open licensing, trusted repositories, and usage reporting. • Establish UC as a cornerstone of a resilient, open, and interconnected scholarly communication ecosystem.

We recommend that the UC Libraries choose to support a wide range of existing open access monograph publishing models and initiatives (list is not in a ranked order):

- [Recommendation 1](#) - We recommend prioritizing investment in BPC-based OA monograph initiatives with a variety of commercial and scholar-led presses, that are closely aligned with UC scholarly activity—specifically, those that support UC-affiliated authors in publishing their work or provide content that is highly used in UC research, teaching, and learning.
- [Recommendation 2](#) - We recommend supporting a variety of Diamond OA monograph initiatives and free-to-read publishing models—specifically, those that support UC-affiliated authors in publishing their work or provide content that is highly used in UC research, teaching, and learning.
- [Recommendation 3](#) - We recommend investing in University Presses' Open Access publishing initiatives, supporting publishers that use BPC-based, Diamond or other emerging OA models.
- [Recommendation 4](#) - We recommend investing in A) open, community-owned, non commercial infrastructure supporting OA monograph publishing, and B) in OA monograph initiatives, both BPC-based and Diamond models, that meet robust access, discoverability, and sustainability standards aligned with the expectations of research libraries.

The University of California is uniquely positioned to lead by example through thoughtful, strategic investment across this diverse range of approaches. Doing so will reinforce UC's long-standing commitment to open scholarship and bibliodiversity, while also contributing to the creation of a more inclusive, community-driven future for scholarly communication.

6.2. Recommendation 1 - We recommend prioritizing investment in BPC-based OA monograph initiatives with a variety of commercial and scholar-led presses that are closely aligned with UC scholarly activity—specifically, those that support UC-affiliated authors in publishing their work or provide content that is highly used in UC research, teaching, and learning.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Commitment to scholarly quality:** Selected initiatives should demonstrate a strong commitment to high-quality scholarly output, including peer review, editorial transparency, and adherence to publishing ethics consistent with standards set by DOAB and OASPA. Initiatives should be assessed using the [values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#) and should pass the SCLG collection development review, and, where applicable, a verification by the UC STAR team to ensure quality and integrity.
- **Support for UC authors:** Preference should be given to initiatives that deliver measurable benefit to UC-affiliated authors (e.g., high UC-authored output), taking into account findings from Subgroup 2 on author publishing patterns.
 - UC's BPC program should make the Libraries' investment in open access visible and meaningful to campus communities, while ensuring equitable participation across campuses that vary in scholarly output and disciplinary focus. Priority should be given to initiatives that particularly benefit AHSS authors, who are less likely to gain from journal-based OA transformative agreements that are prevalent in STEM.
 - Preference should also be given to initiatives with a high level of UC systemwide community engagement, such as active participation of UC-affiliated scholars on advisory or editorial boards, which strengthens alignment with UC's academic mission and values.
- **Financial sustainability and diversified funding:** Because BPCs are high (\$7,000–\$15,000 per title), UC Libraries should establish clear eligibility criteria and evaluate funding sustainability before implementation. A mix of funding sources—including library budgets, research grants, university subventions, and philanthropy—should be pursued to maintain long-term viability.
- **Strategic publisher engagement:** UC should focus on publishers that meet defined OA and ethical standards, with priority given to those producing the highest volume of UC-authored books (e.g., Springer, Taylor & Francis, Cambridge, Oxford, UC Press). Engagement with these publishers should aim to secure discounted BPCs, improved metadata, preservation, and usage tracking.

- However, approximately two-thirds of UC-authored monographs are published in the AHSS disciplines. Unlike journal-based OA transformative agreements that primarily serve STEM disciplines, AHSS publishing is highly diverse—spanning multiple disciplines, publishing practices, and publisher types. This disciplinary heterogeneity and market fragmentation make it technically and operationally unfeasible to implement equitable and scalable BPC-based transformative agreements across the publishing sector. Any UC-wide BPC strategy must therefore recognize these structural differences and adopt flexible, discipline-sensitive approaches that can accommodate a wide range of publishing environments.
- BPCs fund only the production of individual titles and do not support essential publishing infrastructure such as editorial oversight, peer review, administration, digital preservation, or platform maintenance. UC’s BPC strategy should therefore account for broader sustainability needs—especially for scholar-led and under-resourced presses and for publishers in emerging fields of study or from less resourced regions—by promoting models that strengthen the entire publishing ecosystem (cf. Recommendation 2 related to Diamond OA publishing models).
- **Preservation and discoverability:** Whenever possible, UC-authored open access monographs should be archived in eScholarship, to enhance discoverability, access, and preservation of UC scholarship and to create opportunities to highlight UC Libraries’ investment in the OA publication of these works.
- **Decision-Making and Implementation:** The PTWG/SCLG, as the designated decision-making body for UC Libraries’ collections and content—including transformative agreements—should oversee and manage systemwide investments in BPC-based OA models and opening backfiles.
 - All decisions should employ the existing [values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#) for OA monographs to ensure consistency, transparency, and accountability.
 - PTWG/SCLG should also determine which OA monograph pilot efforts should be adopted as long-term strategies for UC Libraries.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC APPROACHES:

STRATEGY 1.1. — UC Libraries should develop innovative and affordable BPC-based funding models

Because Book Processing Charges (BPCs) represent a significant financial investment, UC Libraries should develop innovative, scalable, and affordable funding models to make support for OA monograph publishing more sustainable and predictable over time. These models should balance fiscal responsibility with UC’s commitment to expanding the reach and impact of UC-authored scholarship.

To strengthen the long-term sustainability of BPC support, new models should be informed by pilot projects conducted in 2025 and 2026. Beginning in Summer 2025, two pilot projects—implemented

with the University of California Press and Duke University Press—test new approaches for opening both UC-authored frontlist and backlist monographs. Using central UC Libraries funding administered through the California Digital Library (CDL), these pilots aim to establish a framework that can guide future UC investments in BPC-based models.

The pilots will explore and assess several key design features:

- **Annual payment model:** UC will provide participating presses with a fixed annual, upfront payment. This payment will ensure that any UC author contracting with the press during that year may elect to publish their monograph open access upon publication, removing financial barriers and streamlining the process for authors.
- **Support for backlist titles:** If annual funding exceeds the cost of newly published UC-authored monographs, the remaining funds will be allocated to open previously published UC-authored backlist titles, extending the reach and accessibility of established UC scholarship.
- **Predictable and balanced investment:** This model ensures stable and predictable annual expenditures for UC while providing participating presses with reliable revenue streams. UC will receive full value for its investment each year, with the balance between new and backlist titles adjusted according to the volume of UC author output.

Results from these pilot projects should inform the refinement and scaling of future UC BPC models, including the development of shared eligibility criteria, assessment frameworks, and potential partnerships with other university presses and mission-aligned publishers. Lessons learned from these efforts will guide UC Libraries in advancing a financially sustainable and equitable system for supporting open access monograph publishing at scale.

STRATEGY 1.2. — UC Libraries should develop a Comprehensive Framework for BPC-based OA Models

Building on the work of the existing UC Libraries open monograph pilots, the PTWG/SCLG should design a comprehensive, systemwide framework to guide decision-making, application processes, and funding distribution for BPC-based open access (OA) monograph models. This framework should ensure consistency, transparency, and equity in how UC authors access BPC support and how UC Libraries allocate financial resources.

Core components of the framework include:

- **Eligibility criteria:** Establish clear and transparent requirements defining which authors, disciplines, and publisher types qualify for funding. Criteria should include limits on BPC amounts, eligibility of edited volumes, and consideration of factors such as discipline, author career stage, and alignment with UC's OA values.
- **Publisher partnerships:** Pursue strategic partnerships and negotiated agreements with publishers to secure BPC discounts, cost-sharing arrangements, or inclusion guarantees for UC-authored titles. Such arrangements could build on existing models, such as UC Berkeley's agreement with Springer.

- **Joint support for publisher initiatives:** Investigate models that combine publisher OA programs with discounted BPCs or guaranteed inclusion of UC-authored books, such as the University of Michigan Press [Fund-to-Mission](#) Model.
- **Campus collaboration and cost sharing:** Establish strategies for engagement and cost-sharing with campus units (e.g., academic departments, Office of Research, and Office of Academic Affairs) to co-fund or allocate faculty publication subventions for OA monographs.
- **Staffing and operational structure:** In consultation with subject matter experts, design staffing models and implementation workflows across UC Libraries to support:
 - Policy development and coordination
 - Application review and approval
 - Financial disbursement and reporting
 - Outreach, education, and guidance by scholarly communication librarians on individual campuses

This coordinated framework will establish a sustainable, transparent, and equitable approach to supporting BPC-based OA publishing across the UC system. By integrating financial oversight, policy alignment, and campus collaboration, it will enhance accountability, ensure efficient use of funds, and amplify the visibility and impact of UC-authored open access monographs.

STRATEGY 1.3. — UC Libraries should invest in opening frontlists and backfiles to increase the impact and accessibility of UC research.

As a matter of principle and responsible stewardship, UC should prioritize investments in frontlist publications—supporting the creation of new open access monographs that advance current scholarship, maximize visibility, and ensure immediate and sustained global impact. Funding newly published titles directly supports the production of original research, reinforces UC’s leadership in open knowledge dissemination, and aligns with the system’s commitment to equitable access and scholarly innovation.

While frontlist OA publishing should remain the primary focus, selective investment in opening backfiles may be warranted when supported by external or complementary funding sources—such as grants, philanthropic contributions, or faculty subventions through campus Offices of Research or Academic Affairs. Opening backfiles extends the lifespan of existing scholarship, enhances long-term accessibility, and amplifies the global reach of UC-authored monographs that continue to hold academic relevance.

Although monograph usage overall has declined, the measurable impact of OA monographs underscores the value of such investments: open access titles are downloaded ten times more often, cited 2.4 times more frequently, and reach geographically and disciplinarily diverse audiences. Evidence from the Springer Nature white paper and similar studies demonstrates that OA publishing substantially broadens readership, deepens engagement, and contributes to more equitable global knowledge exchange.

To operationalize this strategy, UC Libraries should pursue a balanced, data-informed approach that integrates frontlist and backfile initiatives:

- **Frontlist investment:** Prioritize support for new UC-authored monographs through direct OA publication or through collective funding models with partner presses.
- **Selective backfile opening:** Undertake targeted backfile initiatives only when supported by alternative funding streams and when titles demonstrate continued scholarly value and relevance.
- **Pilot implementation:** a backfile-opening model should be informed by the existing UC Libraries open monograph pilots, and the data from the pilot with Oxford University Press (2025–26): UC will make an upfront payment to open a defined number of eligible UC-authored books, determined through negotiated criteria that may include author employment status, campus representation, subject diversity, publication date, and rights feasibility.

This two-pronged strategy—prioritizing new OA publishing while selectively opening impactful backfiles—will extend the reach and influence of UC research, preserve the scholarly record, and reinforce UC Libraries’ role as a leader in advancing equitable access to knowledge.

[6.3. Recommendation 2 - We recommend supporting a variety of Diamond OA monograph initiatives and free-to-read publishing models—specifically, those that support UC-affiliated authors in publishing their work or provide content that is highly used in UC research, teaching, and learning.](#)

KEY PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Potential to Advance Bibliodiversity and an Equitable OA Monograph Future:**
 - Initiatives should actively **promote bibliodiversity** by supporting independent and scholar-led publishers, and content that spans disciplinary, geographic, linguistic, cultural, and institutional boundaries. Particular emphasis should be placed on community-driven efforts that amplify underrepresented voices and diverse methodologies. By investing in programs that embody both transformative potential and DEI principles, UC reinforces its commitment to reshaping scholarly publishing in alignment with values of openness, equity, and global scholarly exchange.
 - **Fostering collaboration** among publishers, institutions, infrastructure providers, funders, and nonprofit organizations to strengthen open and equitable publishing networks.
 - **Scholarly Integrity and Sustainability:** Importantly, publisher business models should uphold the integrity of scholarly publishing by maintaining a clear separation between editorial decision-making and commercial interests. Supporting such initiatives ensures that UC’s investments align with principles of fiscal responsibility, openness, and long-term sustainability in scholarly communication.

- **Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency:** To ensure responsible stewardship of library resources, initiatives should offer clear and regular disclosure of revenue streams, operational costs, and pricing models. Cost structures must be reasonable relative to the scholarly value delivered, with pricing maintained at or below industry standards and avoiding excessive annual increases.
- **UC Engagement and Strategic Alignment:** UC Libraries should prioritize investments in Diamond OA programs that fulfill **at least one** of the following key principles:
 - **Institutional relevance:** Align closely with UC teaching and research priorities, supporting a broad range of disciplines and addressing systemwide academic needs.
 - **Scholarly participation:** Actively engage UC scholars in editorial, governance, or peer review roles, reflecting shared academic leadership and community involvement.
 - **UC-authored output:** Publish a significant number of works by UC-affiliated authors, thereby maximizing the visibility, accessibility, and impact of UC research.
- **Governance and Decision-Making:** The Shared Content Leadership Group (SCLG) should continue to lead systemwide investment decisions for Diamond OA publishing, applying the established [values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#) for OA monographs to ensure consistency and accountability.

Targeting Diamond OA initiatives that meet these criteria will allow UC Libraries to strengthen equitable and sustainable open scholarship while amplifying the visibility, impact, and global reach of UC research or providing reading access to key scholarly resources.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC APPROACHES:

STRATEGY 2.1. — UC Libraries should prioritize support for the following Diamond Open Access and free-to-read models: Library Membership Programs, Subscribe-to-Open (S2O), and Freemium Models

The **Library Membership model** is used by a broad range of publishers—including small-to-medium-sized, scholar-led, and non-profit presses—enabling sustainable OA publishing through shared investment in open, community-owned infrastructure which aligns closely with UC's values around equity and innovation. By paying an annual membership fee to a publisher that underwrites some costs of making books open access, libraries can strategically redirect existing collection expenditures to support open access content while removing Book Processing Charges (BPCs) as a barrier for authors.

- UC campuses are already participating in several library membership programs such as Open Book Collective, Open Book Publishers, Punctum Books, University of California Press (Luminos).
- However, it is important to note that some smaller presses using this model can sometimes be narrowly scoped in terms of disciplinary coverage, leading to unintentional exclusivity. Future

investments should be guided by ongoing analysis of who benefits, how inclusive the model is, and how well it supports the broader UC mission.

Subscribe-to-Open (S2O) is a pragmatic, cost-effective model that is financially efficient and often cost-neutral to library collections budgets. Libraries subscribe to or purchase specified collections of closed-access books, which may include backlist titles. The subscription fees are then used to fund open access for newly published books.

- UC Libraries already support several S2O initiatives, including the Opening the Future program with Central European University Press and Liverpool University Press, and other presses using this model (MIT Press, University of Michigan Press).
- Continued and expanded investment in this model should be guided by the number of UC-authored titles, the alignment with UC's research profile, and the potential for collective impact across disciplines.

Freemium Model(s) is a free-to-read model where a version of the ebook is made open access or freely available at no charge to the author, while the free access is subsidised by other revenue sources, such as sales of other e-formats, print sales, and/or library membership fees. Often, these models support digital scholarship and innovation, multilingual editions, open peer review, experimental formats and publishing.

- Several publishers, such as OECD, Open Book Publishers, OpenEdition, Open Humanities Press, Punctum Books, are using this model by offering open digital editions alongside affordable print versions.

Investing in all these models in a strategic and proactive way will bring several important benefits. It will reinforce UC's leadership in advancing a more equitable and sustainable scholarly communication ecosystem. It will also ensure long-term support for a variety of scholarly presses, platforms, and publishing communities essential to the flourishing of global research and knowledge production.

STRATEGY 2.2. — UC Libraries should cautiously consider the following Diamond Open Access models: Library consortial models and Crowdfunding models

While we recommend that UC Libraries support a wide range of the existing Diamond OA models, we also encourage careful evaluation and due diligence when considering support for the following models:

Library consortial model is a model where libraries pledge a fee towards making a collection of books open access, covering some or all of the costs between them. Once enough libraries have confirmed participation and the target amount is achieved, the collection is made open access.

- Several publishers, such as De Gruyter, Knowledge Unlatched, Transcript, KOALA, Jisc's Open Access Community Framework, and LYRASIS' Open Access Community Investment Program, are using this model, but we recommend approaching it with caution.
 - Most initiatives under this model focus on opening already published backlists and frontlists, with limited opportunities for new OA publishing without BPCs.
 - Some initiatives such as Knowledge Unlatched (2012) and more recent efforts such as Koala (2021), demonstrate both opportunities and risks for expanding access to

scholarly books. While KU has contributed to bibliodiversity, it has also faced criticism for over-commercialization of content and the aggregation of open access titles without editorial oversight—leading some research libraries to withdraw their participation.

Crowdfunding model is a model where libraries pledge fees to make a book open access; once enough individuals have confirmed participation and the target amount is achieved, the book is made open access. We recommend that crowdfunding for open access monographs—such as title-level or collection-based campaigns—should be approached with caution.

- While these models offer flexibility and typically require smaller one-time investments, they rarely result in a large number of UC-authored books and offer limited institutional influence over title selection. This model can be, however, valuable when focused on specific, high-impact titles or collections that align with UC’s values—such as underrepresented topics, languages, or urgent public scholarship.
- Given the labor-intensive nature of managing individual title investments, UC’s participation in crowdfunding should be highly selective, time-bound, and mission-aligned. Best used as a supplementary mechanism during budget uncertainty, these short-term, low-cost contributions can expand access without long-term commitments. UC should support these models selectively—prioritizing initiatives that align with UC’s core values:
 - Investments should be contingent on transparent governance, long-term content sustainability, and clearly defined communication strategies that enhance campus engagement and usage visibility.
 - Programs must include contractual language ensuring access, metadata quality, and equitable inclusion.

STRATEGY 2.3. — UC should invest in transitional and embargoed/delayed Open Access models (whether Diamond or BPC-based) when led by scholars or university presses, and avoid engagement with commercial publishers that use delayed OA models

Embargoed or delayed open access models—such as JSTOR’s *Path to Open* or delayed freemium or BPCs programs—offer a transitional pathway for smaller university presses and scholar-led publishers that are not equipped to shift fully to immediate OA. These models typically restrict access for a defined period (12 to 36 months) before making titles openly available. While imperfect, they may serve as a practical stepping-stone in the broader movement toward open monograph publishing.

We recommend that the University of California consider targeted, model-aware support for embargoed or delayed OA publishing, but only in select cases where the publisher demonstrates alignment with UC values—such as scholarly quality, bibliodiversity, transparency, and mission-driven operations. We recommend:

- Supporting transitional participation by smaller scholar-led or University Presses: For smaller university presses or scholar-led publishers with limited infrastructure or financial runway, delayed OA models may be the only viable entry point into OA publishing. Supporting these models can enable gradual participation while reducing risk around immediate revenue loss—especially in the absence of robust alternatives.

- Avoiding engagement with commercial presses using delayed OA: We do not recommend support for embargoed/delayed OA models hosted by commercial publishers. These arrangements often raise issues around double or triple dipping (where in some cases, libraries pay first for a print version, and/or for immediate digital (and closed) access and later again for a delayed OA version), lack pricing transparency or clear reinvestment in the open publishing ecosystem.
- Use consortial programs for scale and predictability: When supporting delayed OA titles, UC should prioritize engagement through multi-title programs like JSTOR's *Path to Open* or Knowledge Unlatched. This helps spread risk, increases predictability, and avoids the administrative burden of one-off, title-by-title negotiations.

While not ideal as a long-term strategy, embargoed/delayed OA models may serve a necessary transitional path in UC's support for open monographs—particularly when applied with care, selectivity, and strong alignment to UC's mission of equity, access, and scholarly excellence.

6.4. Recommendation 3 - We recommend supporting University Presses' Open Access publishing initiatives

KEY PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- Strong commitment to **scholarly excellence and ethical publishing practices**:
 - Selected initiatives should demonstrate a strong commitment to high-quality scholarly output, including peer review, editorial transparency, and adherence to publishing ethics consistent with standards set by DOAB and OASPA. Initiatives should pass the Shared Content Leadership Group's (SCLG) collection development review, and, where applicable, a verification by the UC STAR team to ensure quality and integrity.
- **Priority Criteria**: Preference should be given to initiatives that meet at least one or more of the following criteria:
 - **UC-authored output**: Publish a high volume of UC-authored books, ensuring that UC's scholarly output is widely accessible and benefits directly from systemwide investment.
 - **UC community engagement**: Demonstrate strong UC community engagement, through active participation of UC-affiliated scholars on editorial or advisory boards, or in peer review and governance roles, reflecting shared academic leadership.
 - **Systemwide relevance**: Address systemwide research, teaching, and learning **priorities**, by supporting disciplines and areas of study that meet the broad and diverse needs of UC campuses.
- **Governance and Decision-Making**: SCLG, as the designated decision-making body for UC Libraries' collections and content, should be responsible for leading systemwide investment in University Presses' open access publishing initiatives—regardless of the business model employed—using the established [values, criteria, and evaluative framework](#) for OA monographs to guide decision-making and ensure accountability.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC APPROACHES:

STRATEGY 3.1. — UC Libraries should invest in strategic University Press partnerships independently of the model they use and building on current pilots such the existing UC Libraries open monograph pilots

Investing in open access (OA) monograph publishing through university presses is a natural extension of UC's values—supporting scholarly excellence, global impact, and public good. This investment should extend across publishing models, whether presses use Book Processing Charges (BPCs), collective funding models, or emerging diamond OA strategies. What matters most is the mission alignment and the UC's commitment to “making it easier and more affordable for UC authors to publish open access.” (Office of Scholarly Communication, n.d.).

- University presses are among the most trusted and respected stewards of scholarly communication. They specialize in rigorous peer-reviewed monographs that define disciplines, support tenure and promotion, and engage both academic and public audiences. Their editorial practices and subject expertise are usually aligned with the research mission of the University of California. Moreover, many of these presses—including UC Press, MIT, Oxford, Cambridge and Michigan—are leading important OA monograph initiatives that reflect both innovation and integrity.
- Based on the existing UC open monographs work, pilot projects have been developed with UC Press, Duke University Press, and Oxford University Press. Future expansion or adaptation of the pilot projects is expected to focus on collaboration with university presses, with the intention to benefit both libraries and presses.

STRATEGY 3.2. — UC Libraries should support partnerships with university presses through multi-press collaborations and third-party platforms.

Because few presses—beyond Oxford and Cambridge—publish large numbers of UC-authored monographs, a flexible, multi-pronged strategy is essential.

- The fragmentation of monograph publishing, including the separation of publishing, sales, and hosting infrastructures, underscores the need to engage third-party platforms.
- When participating in these collaborations, it is essential to negotiate discounted BPCs or full coverage arrangements for UC-affiliated authors to maximize the impact of UC's investment and ensure equitable support for its scholarly community.
- As an example, through OA monograph pilots, UC Libraries is sponsoring the opening of UC-authored monographs in the Big Ten Open Books program, a partnership between the Big Ten Academic Alliance and the presses of the Big Ten universities.

6.5. Recommendation 4 - We recommend investing in A) open, community-owned, non commercial infrastructure supporting OA monograph publishing, and B) in OA monograph initiatives, both BPC-based and Diamond models, that meet robust access, discoverability, and sustainability standards aligned with the expectations of research libraries.

KEY PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Collaborative and Strategic Partnerships:** Effective initiatives foster strategic partnerships among publishers, institutions, infrastructure providers, funders, and nonprofit organizations, working collaboratively to remove access barriers and broaden the reach of scholarly content.
- **Academic Leadership and Governance:** Priority should be given to initiatives led by scholars with a proven track record of publishing and experts in governance roles—such as advisory boards, editorial boards, or boards of stewards—ensuring academic credibility and leadership.
- **Bibliodiversity and Community Ownership:** Initiatives should actively promote bibliodiversity by supporting community-owned infrastructures. Particular emphasis should be placed on community-driven efforts that amplify underrepresented voices and diverse methodologies.
- **Metadata Quality and Discoverability:** Initiatives should ensure high-quality metadata to support seamless integration into scholarly ecosystems, making content easily discoverable through library-integrated systems, indexing services, and OA directories. Persistent identifiers (e.g., DOIs registered via Crossref) must be used to ensure long-term traceability and citation.
 - Initiatives that commit to addressing known issues with monograph metadata (e.g., author affiliation) and to advancing open metadata in alignment with UC Libraries' endorsement of the [ALA Core & ICOLC Joint Statement on the Metadata Rights of Libraries](#) and CDL's signing of the [Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information](#).
- **Reuse, Accessibility, and Interoperability:** Additionally, platforms should support reuse and reproducibility through features such as text and data mining (TDM), open APIs, and adherence to accessibility standards.
- **Sustainability and Long-Term Preservation:** From a sustainability perspective, initiatives must provide content under open licenses—preferably Creative Commons—with terms that support rights retention, reuse, and machine-readable access. Content should also be deposited in trusted digital repositories with industry-compliant usage reporting to guarantee long-term preservation and accessibility.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Finally, publishers should offer transparent and efficient workflows for authors, libraries, and other stakeholders, along with industry-compliant usage reporting (e.g., COUNTER), to ensure accountability and facilitate informed decision-making. Supporting such initiatives aligns UC's investment with long-term values of openness, impact, and infrastructure resilience.

- **Governance and Decision-Making:** SCLG, as the designated decision-making body for UC Libraries' collections and content, should continue leading systemwide investments in:
 - open, community-owned or publicly-funded, non-commercial infrastructure that supports OA monograph publishing
 - open access publishing models that support access, discoverability, and sustainability standards

SCLG should apply the existing values, criteria, and evaluative framework for OA monographs.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC APPROACHES:

STRATEGY 4.1. — UC Libraries should continue and expand investments in open community-owned or publicly-funded non commercial infrastructure supporting OA monograph publishing

UC libraries local and systemwide investments in open community-owned or publicly-funded non-commercial infrastructure are critical to supporting a global OA environment that reflects UC's values. Examples of libraries with publishing programs or a combination of investment in initiatives, platforms, and services can be found in the Landscape Review section (3.5. Institutional Investment and Library-led OA Monograph Publishing). Examples of approaches in this strategic area include UCB's [Advancing Open Access Monographs](#) and [UMich Publishing](#), both of which combine investments in infrastructure, platforms, and resourcing publishing programs. Refer to the Landscape

Library/Institutional Publishing programs that provide academic monograph publishing vary in staffing and service levels, business models and revenue streams, organizational structure and support, format/output support, and use a variety of platforms from open source to commercial publishing platforms (Pressbooks, Manifold, Ubiquity Press, Fulcrum, Samvera Hyrax 3.6.0, bepress Digital Commons, and Open Monograph Press). Several of these platforms offer complementary strengths, including media-rich publishing, editorial governance models, and integration with university presses.

Other example investment Open Access publishing initiatives such as the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), OAPEN, the Open Book Collective (OBC), and recently [KCWorks](#) provide shared services for discovery, aggregation, and long-term preservation.

These infrastructures:

- Enhance global discoverability and indexing of OA books, including those authored by UC scholars or published via UC-supported programs.
- Enable smaller publishers to thrive through cooperative models, thereby enriching the diversity of scholarly voices and editorial approaches.
- Provide a foundation for a Library/Institutional Publishing programs with direct support for campus authors.
- Support assessment of the impact of OA monographs, including those by UC authors or published via UC-supported programs.
- Help fulfill UC's broader commitment to open knowledge ecosystems, public scholarship, and global access to research.

UC Libraries should assess and strategically invest in one or more open-source or community-based publishing platforms to advance a sustainable, systemwide approach to library-led open access monograph publishing. Among the options in active use across higher education, Pressbooks stands out as the most widely adopted platform for library publishing programs, offering flexible support for textbooks, monographs, and multimodal scholarship in multiple digital and print formats. Evaluating these options in light of UC's infrastructure, staffing capacity, and publishing goals would enable a coordinated investment that enhances the visibility, equity, and sustainability of UC-authored scholarship. By combining internal capacity-building with external infrastructure support, UC can position itself as a cornerstone of a resilient, equitable, and community-governed publishing future, advancing not only the interests of its own faculty and students but also those of the global scholarly community.

STRATEGY 4.2. — UC should invest in OA initiatives that support access, discoverability, and sustainability standards

To advance robust, sustainable open access monograph publishing, UC should prioritize investment in initiatives that meet high standards of access, discoverability, and long-term preservation. This includes platforms and publishers that provide high-quality metadata, persistent identifiers like DOIs, and integration with library systems, indexing services, and directories such as DOAB and OAPEN.

- Initiatives like MIT Press's *Direct to Open*, UC Press's *Luminos*, and other University Presses as well as initiatives like the *Open Book Collective* exemplify models that pair technical excellence with mission alignment—offering books under Creative Commons licenses, supporting TDM and open APIs, and ensuring long-term preservation through services like CLOCKSS or Portico.
- An example of infrastructure supporting this work is Thoth, an open-source metadata platform developed through the COPIM project. Thoth enables small and scholar-led OA presses to create and disseminate rich, interoperable metadata across multiple standards (ONIX, MARC, JSON), facilitating seamless integration into library systems and global discovery platforms. It also supports DOI registration and multilingual metadata, ensuring that OA books are both citable and visible. By using Thoth, publishers can significantly enhance discoverability, reduce reliance on commercial intermediaries, and align with the values of bibliodiversity and equitable access.

From a strategic perspective, these types of investments reinforce UC's commitment to openness, equity, and scholarly impact. They provide scalable pathways for rights retention, inclusive publishing, and infrastructure resilience. Prioritizing platforms that offer COUNTER-compliant usage reporting, transparent workflows, and sustainable financial models ensures that UC not only supports access to knowledge but also helps shape the future infrastructure of scholarly communication.

7. CONCLUSION

There is no single business model capable of comprehensively sustaining open access monograph publishing across all disciplines, institutions, and funding environments. Each model—whether based

on BPCs or Diamond OA models—brings its own set of strengths, limitations, and risks, reflecting the complexity and diversity of scholarly practices, particularly within the arts, humanities, and social sciences. In this landscape, a one-size-fits-all solution is neither feasible nor desirable. A robust, equitable, and sustainable publishing ecosystem depends on the coexistence of multiple approaches, each responsive to distinct scholarly needs and communities.

We recommend that UC Libraries adopt a model-agnostic investment strategy that supports open access initiatives aligned with UC's open access principles and scholarly activity; prioritizes sustainable, equitable, and community-governed models; favors open, publically-funded and community-owned infrastructure; and, where BPCs are involved, secures discounts or full coverage for UC-affiliated authors from non library collection funds. In doing so, UC can lead by example, advancing both open scholarship produced by UC authors and bibliodiversity while shaping a more inclusive, resilient future for scholarly communication.

By adopting a model-agnostic investment strategy, UC strengthens the sustainability of open access monograph publishing while directly supporting UC authors in making their work openly available. Backing diverse funding models—grounded in mission alignment, scholarly value, and transparency—advances public scholarship, fosters innovation, and secures the future of long-form research in the humanities and social sciences. This approach not only meets immediate needs but also positions UC to shape a more open, resilient, and inclusive scholarly landscape. Through this leadership, UC reaffirms its core values: excellence, equity, and the democratization of knowledge for the benefit of all.

8. ANNEXES

8.1 Values, Criteria and Evaluative Framework template: [See supplemental material](#) included with the eScholarship-deposited copy of the public report.

8.2 UC Libraries Open Access Monographs “Track B” Landscape Analysis Working Group Charge: [See supplemental material](#) included with the eScholarship-deposited copy of the public report.

8.3 Advancing Open Monograph Opportunities at UC project scope: [See supplemental material](#) included with the eScholarship-deposited copy of the public report.

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