

Opening the Future library membership subscription programme



Opening the Future is a collective subscription model that, through a cost-effective membership scheme, makes library funds go further: **achieving the dual objectives of increasing library digital book collections, and supporting Open Access.**

Background

CEU Press's *Opening the Future* **library membership subscription** initiative funds sustainable open access (OA) publishing while giving its member libraries access to world-leading research on Central and Eastern European history, the history of communism and transitions to democracy. In essence, academic library members pay a small annual fee to get **DRM-free, unlimited access** to a selection of the well-regarded backlist via the Project MUSE platform (**with perpetual access granted after three years**); the membership revenue is then used to produce CEU Press's new monographs which are openly licensed and freely accessible to anyone in the world.

Given the current global library environment and [existing budget pressures that have been exacerbated by the pandemic](#), a consortial model of funding like this promises a cost-effective solution for enhancing library collections with relevant research.

Covid-19 has thrown many aspects of university research culture into acute relief. As the reality of the virus dawned and campuses worldwide went into lockdown, publishers rushed to open their publications by removing paywalls. Physical collections became inaccessible and demand for openly accessible research skyrocketed. Many publishers made topical works and more general material openly available, through their own sites or collective platforms. In one example CEU Press made 279 titles open to anyone with internet access in March – June 2020 and the number of downloads during this period was remarkable. Reaching 129 countries with over 350,000 downloads it seems clear that there is an opportunity to reassess scholarly communication in the book publishing world.

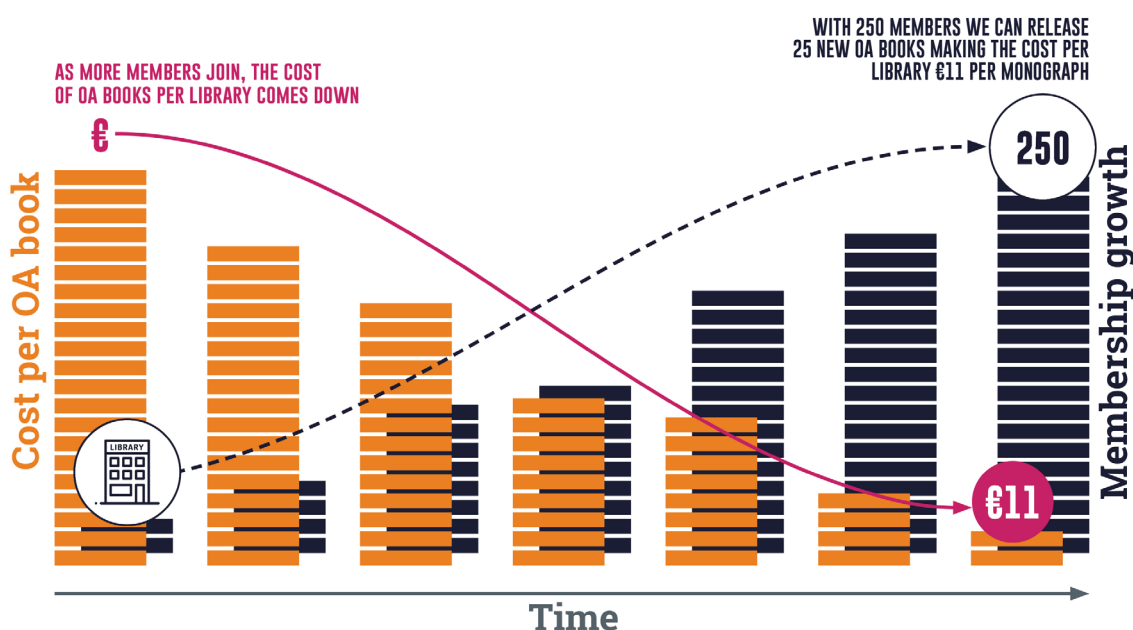
Building on library journal subscription models and successful book membership programmes, *Opening the Future* funds new OA books that will be available to anyone. **With small contributions from a large number of academic libraries, no single institution bears a disproportionate burden, and scholars and institutions around the world stand to benefit.**

Benefits to subscriber members

- 1.** The model has a number of characteristics in its favour, including pleasing library economics. For example, if an annual membership of €800 (approx \$950 USD) gives access to 50 backlist titles, and funds a further 25 OA per year, that yields a total of 75 books per year that are accessible (and growing every year).
- 2.** Being a member is better value than buying the same titles individually. For example, with €800 (approx \$950 USD) a library might be able to buy 4 – 6 eBooks on multi-user licences; for *Opening the Future* members the cost to a library would be only €32 (approx \$39 USD) per OA book once we reach our subscription targets.

3. At the expiry of their three-year membership, libraries will own the titles in perpetuity.
4. When the revenue target is met and the entire monograph frontlist is openly accessible, future membership fee rates can be lowered.
5. If the revenue target is exceeded, the surplus can go towards funding infrastructure projects devoted to enhancing open book dissemination.
6. No catches and no hidden fees - we believe the books in the packages speak for themselves. Members won't be asked to pay more on top of their annual fee to access 'more' or 'better' titles. Access to titles won't suddenly change; no bait and switch.
7. Titles included in the packages are selected based on recent download/usage figures in order to ensure they are relevant, current, and represent good value-for-money.

As membership grows, the cost per OA book goes down



Note: Cost modelling is based on an average membership of €800 per year (medium-size band pricing). Appraising the cost per book/ per library is only possible once we've had time to accrue members. This is a pilot project.

How much does it cost?

Library and institutional members are banded according to their size, as recognised by *Opening the Future* partners LYRISIS and Jisc. Based on these, annual membership fees are as follows:

Banding	Annual Membership Fee
High	€1,200 (approx \$1,425 USD / £1,000)
Medium	€800 (approx \$950 USD / £700)
Low	€350 (approx \$425 USD / £300)

Where can I find out more and how can an institution sign up?

More information and the sign up form is available on the website openingthefuture.net. You can also contact us on openingthefuture@copim.ac.uk if you have any questions not answered in our website FAQs.