

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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STM response to Joint COAR-UNESCO Statement on Open Access

STM notes the recent [joint statement by COAR-UNESCO](#) on the developing nature of open access to the scholarly literature.

STM views all sustainable models that increase access as welcome in assisting the work of scholars (see our previous statement at <http://www.stm-assoc.org/public-affairs/resources/publishers-support-sustainable-open-access/>) and we are concerned that such declarations uninformed by evidence are counterproductive to the common goals of scholars, funders, and publishers. It is odd that the COAR-UNESCO statement starts by acknowledging that “there is no one-size fits all” solution to open access and then proceeds to advocate a uniform approach. Innovation will not come from restricting competition to only one business model.

Pay to publish models, singled out for criticism in the COAR-UNESCO statement, are unfairly criticised on grounds of restriction of publishing to funded authors, supposed concentration of the publishing industry and unsupported claims that it could all be achieved 40% cheaper.

STM has been at the forefront of getting access for scholars in the world's less developed nations through working with UN agencies on the [Research4Life](#) collaboration programmes, [ARDI](#), [HINARE](#), [AGORA](#), and [OARE](#). Discussions of how this might be extended to paid open access authors have already been held. Most publishers operating the APC model already offer waivers for authors who cannot afford to pay.

At the last count there were more than 5,000 scholarly publishers servicing author needs, with six or seven accounting for 50% of the papers published globally each year (See the [STM Report 2015](#)). This reflects similar market share distributions in other industries.

Reducing costs is an inherent part of the functioning competitive market that exists in the STM sphere. However, even the studies to which the statement refers do not anticipate a 40% reduction in costs (See the [STM response to the MPDL White Paper on the Open Access Transition](#)). Providing the innovative services that authors now require cannot be done without significant investments, as new entrant open access publishers such as PLoS have discovered. The proliferation of new publishers and publishing outlets belie the statement that new entrants and models are disadvantaged in the current environment.

STM has worked consistently with a wide range of stakeholders on the challenges of widening access and will continue to do so. UNESCO has a crucial role to play in leading a balanced debate around access to scholarly literature and we call on them to consider the valuable input of publishers in a fully inclusive way.

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Notes to Editors

- 1) [STM](#) is an international association of over 120 scientific, technical, medical and scholarly publishers, collectively responsible for more than 60% of the global annual output of research articles, 55% of the active research journals and the publication of tens of thousands of print and electronic books, reference works and databases. We are the only international trade association equally representing all types of STM publishers – large and small companies, not for profit organizations, learned societies, traditional, primary, secondary publishers and new entrants to global publishing.