Site license price adjustments for NPG-owned journals with open access options

Nature Publishing Group offers a number of options for authors wishing to publish with us, from open access-only journals such as Scientific Reports, to subscription journals including Nature, and hybrid journals which offer both subscription and open access content. This is because we understand that one size can’t fit all, and that scholars from different disciplines and geographies have very different needs.

The industry is in a state of transition, as the costs associated with publishing are shared between library subscriptions, university departments and funders’ budgets. A common concern is that more than one party may end up paying for the same hybrid journal content twice (or ‘double-dipping’), via subscription and APCs. It is important for us as a community to figure out how we sustainably and transparently offset the costs of open access article processing charges for hybrid journals. We know this is a real challenge for institutions, funders and publishers and we’re examining how we might make things easier.

The site license list prices of our NPG-owned hybrid journals are based solely on subscription content volume. We do not ‘double-dip’ by factoring open access content in the site license price.

It is our current policy that NPG-owned journals whose subscription content changes by more than 10% when comparing the previous two years will have their site license price adjusted. For example, our 2015 price adjustment, set in 2014, is based on the change in subscription content for 2012/13.

This means that our site license prices more accurately reflect the quantity of subscription content customers pay for. For example, our 2014 prices of NPG-owned titles included two price decreases; the site license price of Cancer Gene Therapy was reduced by 16%, and the price of Genes and Immunity was reduced by 14%. It is worth noting that price changes will also reflect any other annual price increases taking place that year.

Prices of NPG-owned titles may also rise if the title has previously seen its subscription price decreased because of the adjustment policy. The percentage of subscription content may change depending on a number of factors, including changes in submission rates and uptake of open access options.

We have had this policy since 2010, and we keep it under review. We’re committed to working with the library community to create sustainable and transparent long-term pricing policies which are compatible with library budgets.