

Review of: "[Commentary] To Publish Scientific Journals: For Some, the Big Business of the Century"

Leire Kortabarria

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The author advocates for APC-based journals to pay a stipend to reviewers, given that these reviewers are now freely and generously contributing to those publishers' business model, while getting nothing in return and, to make matters worse, being put under an ever increasing strain. However, the real point that the author seems to want to make goes beyond that, and is clearly expressed in the last couple of paragraphs: that, in his opinion, "Having to pay to publish scientific articles is a scandal of enormous proportions". The current scientific publication model is based on charging authors for having their work published in open access, thus removing the fee from the readers (who formerly had to pay a subscription in order to access the knowledge) and transposing it to the authors. These authors are often, but not always, supported by a larger project or by an institution that can provide financing for their publications, and in fact a budget for publications is often preprogrammed in many scientific research projects. So it would be reasonable to think that this model is here to stay. This confronts us with the reality that scientific publishing is science and dissemination of knowledge, but, on the other hand, it has also become business. As in many other fields of creation (which a scientific article can partially be considered), talent, validity and interest of the research findings and conclusions, originality, and in general having something to say have been displaced, in many instances, as side considerations by sheer force of business-making, the extreme example of this being the predatory journals that the author mentions. As a result, a work model has been implemented where the main goal is to make a product that sells well. From this point of view, yes, reviewers would be part of the work force that manufactures this product, and would be entitled to a reward. However, is that what we are discussing here? Or is it the questioning of the original objectives of scientific publication?