

The potential effect of making journals free after a six month embargo

A report for the Association of Learned, Professional and Society Publishers [ALPSP] and The Publishers Association

May 2012

This report has been prepared by Linda Bennett of Gold Leaf

Executive Summary

1. This report documents the results of a survey carried out to obtain a significant body of information on how the acquisitions policies of libraries might be affected by an across-the-board mandate to make journals articles free of charge six months after publication.
2. A short question was e-mailed to approximately 950 libraries throughout the world. The aim was to obtain a set of representative responses from librarians at the different types of library served by academic publishers, while at the same time focusing particularly on obtaining replies from librarians at the world's most prestigious academic libraries. Allowing for bouncebacks, etc., it is estimated that the question reached approximately 800 librarians.
3. The question was: ***If the (majority of) content of research journals was freely available within 6 months of publication, would you continue to subscribe? Please give a separate answer for a) Scientific, Technical and Medical journals and b) Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Journals if your library has holdings in both of these categories.***
4. 210 replies were received, giving an approximate 26% response rate. 159 of the respondents were from HEI libraries worldwide; 15 were from corporate libraries; and the remaining 36 were from government, medical, specialist, college and school libraries. 44 of the HEI respondents' institutions appear in the THE Top 100 list and 99 of them appear in either the THE or the ARWU Top 500 list.
5. Analysis of the results was carried out for the sample as a whole, and further broken down by type of library / region. They are summarised in the table below, which also appears in Section VI of this report:

Library group	STM continue to subscribe	STM cancel	STM cancel some journals	AHSS continue to subscribe	AHSS cancel	AHSS cancel some journals
Whole sample	56%	10%	34%	35%	23%	42%
HEIs worldwide	56%	8%	36%	32%	24%	44%
World Top 100 HEIs	61%	0	39%	42%	14%	44%
World Top 500 HEIs	62%	3%	35%	35%	19%	46%
North America HEIs (all)	50%	10%	40%	33%	20%	47%
ARL libraries	59%	3%	38%	41%	12%	47%
UK HEI libraries(all)	63%	3%	34%	28%	19%	53%
UK Russell Group	75%	0	25%	46%	7%	47%
HEIs in Europe (not UK)	56%	7%	37%	38%	21%	41%
HEIs in Australia and New Zealand	53%	10%	37%	49%	40%	11%
Corporates	60%	10%	30%	50%	20%	30%

6. Respondents were invited to take the opportunity to flesh out their answers with further comments if they wished. This attracted a large body of further information. They said that they valued timeliness or currency of information; that academics would often be involved in taking the decision on whether or not to cancel a journal; that a large number of publisher-added attributes are valued, especially peer review, hard copy, archival preservation, bibliographical support, general 'hygiene' factors such as editorial work and proof-reading, and cataloguing and discovery service support.
7. They said that usage statistics are often used to help determine whether or not to cancel a journal, but most respondents said that they are usually appraised in tandem with other variables.
8. The respondents were particularly concerned about the lack of reliability in the long term of institutional repositories or journals published entirely by open access. They were also concerned that the Inter-Library Loan service would cease to operate as it does at present if a six month embargo were introduced.

9. There were many comments on library funding and publisher remuneration. It is important to recognise that these are two separate issues. Many respondents referred to budget cuts and consequent cancellations that are not directly related to the prices that publishers charge; however, some respondents clearly did link their squeezed financial situation to publishers' prices, particularly with what they regarded as unreasonable annual price increases. Some said that their budgets were not especially squeezed, but that they had cancelled some of the more expensive journals on principle.
10. The following conclusions have been drawn: that an across-the-board mandate would have a material effect on libraries' subscriptions; and that the impact on all publishers' revenues would be considerable. HEI libraries would be impacted by the collapse or scaling down of academic publishing houses. The world's most distinguished research institutions would be impacted most, since published outputs are essential for the work carried out by their researchers. The results indicate that STM publishers would fare better than AHSS publishers. Overall, STM publishers could expect to retain full subscriptions from 56% of libraries; AHSS publishers could expect to retain full subscriptions from 35% of libraries. STM publishers could expect 10% of libraries to cancel subscriptions altogether, and AHSS publishers could expect 23% of libraries to cancel subscriptions altogether. STM publishers could expect reduced (or no) revenues from the remaining 34% of libraries; AHSS publishers could expect reduced (or no) revenues from the remaining 42% of libraries. Most publishers would be obliged to review their portfolios; and a substantial body of journals, especially in AHSS subjects, would cease or be financially imperiled.
11. It is strongly recommended that no mandate is issued on making all or most journal articles available free of charge after a six month embargo until both libraries and publishers have had time to understand the issues better and have together taken steps to explore alternatives to a fully open access publishing model which could be mutually attractive.

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A note on numbering: Paragraphs 1 – 42 (Sections I – V) have been numbered consecutively. The numbering sequence has been started again for paragraphs in Sections VI and VII.

I. Introduction

1. This report was commissioned by the Association of Learned, Professional and Society Publishers [ALPSP] and The Publishers Association. It follows a straw-poll survey commissioned from Gold Leaf by ALPSP in March 2012 in order to obtain sample information on how the acquisition policies of academic libraries might be affected by an across-the-board mandate to make journals articles available free of charge six months after publication. The ALPSP survey¹ obtained responses from thirty-four libraries worldwide. The results from this small sample suggested that such a mandate would have a significant impact on publishers' revenues, especially in the fields of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences [AHSS] publishing. ALPSP and The Publishers Association therefore commissioned Gold Leaf to conduct a larger, more statistically significant survey, to include corporate and specialist libraries as well as academic ones, in order to obtain more robust results on what the likely impact of a six months' embargo might be.

II. Methodology

2. The same methodology was used as for the ALPSP pilot survey. A short, informal question was e-mailed to senior librarians² at 950³ libraries worldwide. The target respondents were not chosen at random. The aim was to obtain a set of representative responses from librarians at the different types of library served by academic publishers, while at the same time focusing particularly on obtaining replies from librarians at the world's most prestigious academic libraries⁴. The question was therefore sent to a large sample of the 500 libraries serving the world's top academic institutions, a large sample of the North American

¹ This survey has not been published; however, all of the information that it contains is included in the present report.

² For the most part, the responses received from academic libraries were from acquisitions librarians or collection development librarians. Some principal librarians also responded. At smaller libraries and corporate and specialist libraries, respondents were more likely to be the principal librarian. Three consortium managers also gave responses.

³ This figure includes the sixty libraries originally contacted for the ALPSP pilot.

⁴ Partly because these are the largest disseminators of scholarly publishing, partly because they are the publishers' most significant single group of clients.

Association of Research Libraries⁵ [ARL]; all of the libraries serving the UK Russell Group⁶ universities; and all of the representatives of the Council of Australian University Librarians⁷ [CAUL]. Other academic librarians throughout the world were also contacted, together with the librarians of approximately 100 corporate, government and specialist libraries. The world's top 500 academic institutions were identified by consulting two of the more respected published 'league table' lists, the THE 'Top 400' list⁸ and the ARWU 'Top 500' list⁹. Two lists were chosen, because all of the university ranking lists work to different criteria, and therefore show different results (though the THE and ARWU lists are broadly in agreement about which universities constitute the World Top 100). As a general observation, each list omits some institutions of great distinction because they do not match the criteria¹⁰. Some of the libraries that fell into this category were also contacted.

3. The question was e-mailed to approximately 650 of the target respondents on Wednesday 25th April, with the request to respond by Wednesday 2nd May. The remaining target respondents were e-mailed on Sunday 29th April, with the request to respond by Friday 4th May¹¹. A reminder was sent to non-responders in the first group on the afternoon of Wednesday 2nd May¹². Recipients were therefore asked to respond within between eight and five working days. This was quite a demanding request. Tribute is paid to the substantial body of librarians who spared the time to meet the deadline, many of whom also supplied very comprehensive replies.

Allowing for bouncebacks and out-of-office replies, it is estimated that the e-mails reached approximately 800 target respondents¹³. The survey was closed at 5 p.m. on Friday 4th May.

III. The question

4. The question was set out as follows:

Dear X [each contact was addressed by name]

As the chair of the research committee of the Association of Learned, Professional and Society Publishers [ALPSP], may I ask you a quick question?

⁵ <http://www.arl.org/>

⁶ <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/>

⁷ <http://www.caul.edu.au/>

⁸ <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2011-2012/top-400.html>

⁹ <http://www.arwu.org/>

¹⁰ Some famous business schools and some institutions that offer a limited range of subjects (though not medical schools) are therefore excluded from these lists.

¹¹ The question was sent out on two separate days because further target respondents were being identified in the interim period.

¹² It would have been unreasonable to 'chase' the second group, as the survey was closed on 4th May.

¹³ It is difficult to give an exact figure, because some delayed messages iterate university e-mail systems for a considerable period of time before finally being pronounced 'undeliverable'.

To reassure you, I shall be asking librarians working in different environments in a number of countries this question, and shall of course treat all your responses with strict confidentiality – i.e., your contribution will remain anonymous in the short report that I shall write. The report will be used to help to determine the future directions that the learned / academic publishing industry takes. The question is:

If the (majority of) content of research journals was freely available within 6 months of publication, would you continue to subscribe? Please give a separate answer for a) Scientific, Technical and Medical journals and b) Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Journals if your library has holdings in both of these categories.

A yes or no answer is fine; but if you would like to include a short statement as to your reasons, that would of course be very much appreciated. If you could reply by Wednesday 2nd May, that would be extremely helpful; but if this is too short notice and you need more time, I should still be very grateful for your response.

I do hope that you will feel able to help with this, as the existence of learned publishers depends on understanding what librarians want. Thank you in anticipation for your response.

Best wishes,

Linda Bennett

As the e-mail clearly states, a strict undertaking was made not to identify either the respondent or his or her institution. Great care has been taken during the compilation of this report to ensure that all the respondents remain anonymous.

IV. The respondents

- 210 replies were received, giving an approximate 26% response rate¹⁴. The respondents' countries and the types of library in which they work are described in **Table One**.

Table One: Profile of Respondents		
Country	Type of institution / organisation served by library	Number
Australia	Corporate	2
	Higher Education Institution	13
	Independent School	2
	Government	3

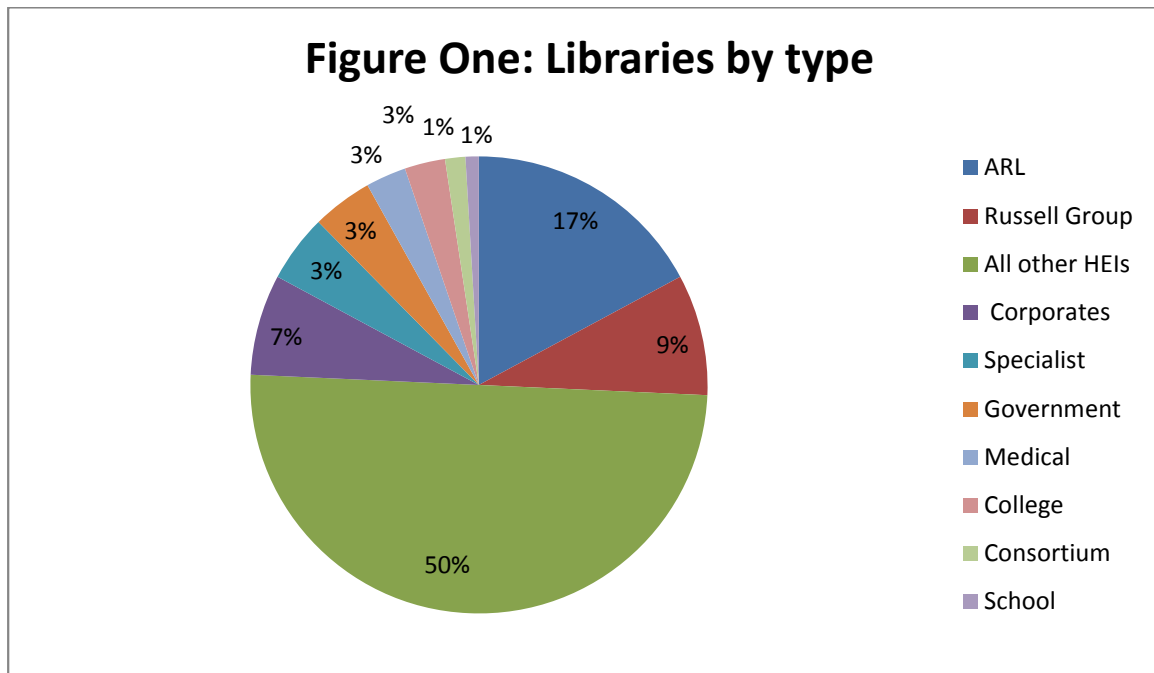
¹⁴ Unsurprisingly, the response rate was not uniform worldwide. For example, more than 150 e-mails were sent to contacts in Asia, and only eight responses received, giving a response rate of approximately 5%. No responses were received from Japan or India, although these are both important markets for UK academic publishers. Only three responses were received from Central / South America (though fewer prospects were contacted in these regions).

	Medical	3
	Specialist library	2
Belgium	Higher Education Institution	1
Brazil	Higher Education Institution	2
Canada	Corporate	1
	Higher Education Institution, ARL member	8
	Higher Education Institution, not ARL member	6
	Virtual University	2
	Government	1
China	Higher Education Institution	6
China	Specialist library	1
Czech Republic	Reply from small consortium manager*	1
	Higher Education Institution	1
	Specialist library	1
Denmark	Higher Education Institution	3
	Specialist library	1
Finland	Higher Education Institution	3
France	Higher Education Institution	2
Germany	Higher Education Institution	4
Greece	Higher Education Institution	1
Hungary	Higher Education Institution	1
Israel	Reply from consortium manager*	1
Irish Republic	Higher Education Institution	4
Italy	Government	1
	Specialist library	1
Korea	Higher Education Institution	1
Mexico	Virtual University	1
Netherlands	Higher Education Institution	7
Norway	Higher Education Institution	5
New Zealand	Corporate	3
	Higher Education Institution	6
	Government	2
	Medical	1
Pakistan	Higher Education Institution	1
Russia	Higher Education Institution	1
Slovenia	Medical	1
Spain	Higher Education Institution	5
Sweden	Higher Education Institution	6
Switzerland	Higher Education Institution	1
	Reply from small consortium manager*	1
United Kingdom	Corporate	6
	Higher Education Institution, Russell Group	17
	Higher Education Institution, 'Old', not Russell Group	7
	Higher Education Institution, 'New', not Russell Group	9
	Virtual University	2
	College	5
	Government	1
	Medical	1
	Specialist library	4
United States	Corporate	1

	Higher Education Institution, ARL member	30
	Higher Education Institution, not ARL member	3
	College	1
	Government	1
International	Corporate	2
	TOTAL	210
*Consortium responses were not generally sought, as it was thought that responses from individual libraries would give a more accurate picture. None of the large library consortium managers or representatives was contacted.		

6. Of the total of 159 HEIs from which responses were obtained, 99 (62%) appear in either the THE Top 400 list or the ARWU Top 500 list; and 75 (75%) of these appear in both lists. 44 (44%) of them appear in the THE Top 100 list; 41 (41%) of them appear in the ARWU Top 100 list. Some of the world’s greatest academic libraries participated.

Figure One illustrates the proportion of each type of library in the sample.



V. Findings

V.a. General observations

7. As well as responding to the basic question posed in the e-mail, many of the 210 respondents accepted the invitation to flesh out their replies with additional information. Some of these replies are extremely detailed and comprehensive; and some respondents also consulted colleagues in order to prepare them. As the narrative responses total approximately 17,000 words, an attempt has been made to summarise them in **Section V**

under topic headings. The respondents have provided measured, often subtle assessments which repay reading in full. To quote them out of context could easily distort the true meaning of the comments, though every effort has been made not to do this. Readers of this report are asked to adopt the same approach. In order to preserve anonymity, the responses are referred to by a number allocated to them (which simply reflects the order in which they were received).

8. More than one respondent commented on the simplicity of the question, and said that they were unable to provide a simple answer. Several gave 'it depends' responses to the question. Where this was the case, whether or not they would be likely to cancel some journals (clearly such respondents would not cancel them all) has been carefully assessed on the basis of their longer reply.
9. Of the 210 replies, four did not answer the basic question. An ARL librarian (85) refused to take part in the survey and said that the library should not be contacted again about this topic¹⁵; a medical librarian (86) said that the library had ceased all subscriptions; and two HEI librarians (122 and 142) said that their budgets were completely devolved to faculty, so any decisions made to cancel subscriptions would not be taken by them¹⁶. The analysis which follows therefore draws on the responses received from the remaining 206 libraries.

¹⁵ This was the only such response received.

¹⁶ Some other respondents also emphasised the influence of faculty on decisions to subscribe or cancel – see Section

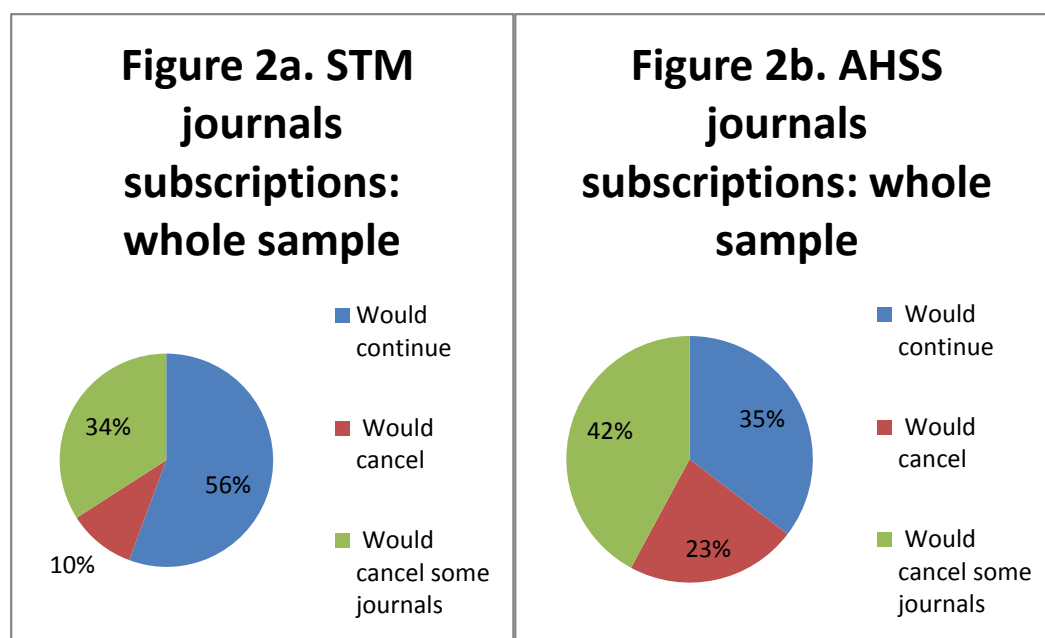
V.b. Headline results

10. **Headline results.** Of the 206 respondents, 90% (185) replied about journals holdings in STM subjects and 86% (178) replied about journals holdings in AHSS subjects¹⁷.

Of the total sample of respondents who replied about STM holdings, 56% said that they would be likely to continue their subscriptions unchanged if a six month embargo were in operation; 10% said that they would definitely cancel; and 34% said that they would probably cancel some journals.

Of the total sample who replied about AHSS holdings, 35% said that they would be likely to continue their subscriptions unchanged if a six month embargo were in operation; 23% said that they would definitely cancel; and 42% (75) said that they would probably cancel some journals.

Figure Two below illustrates these results.



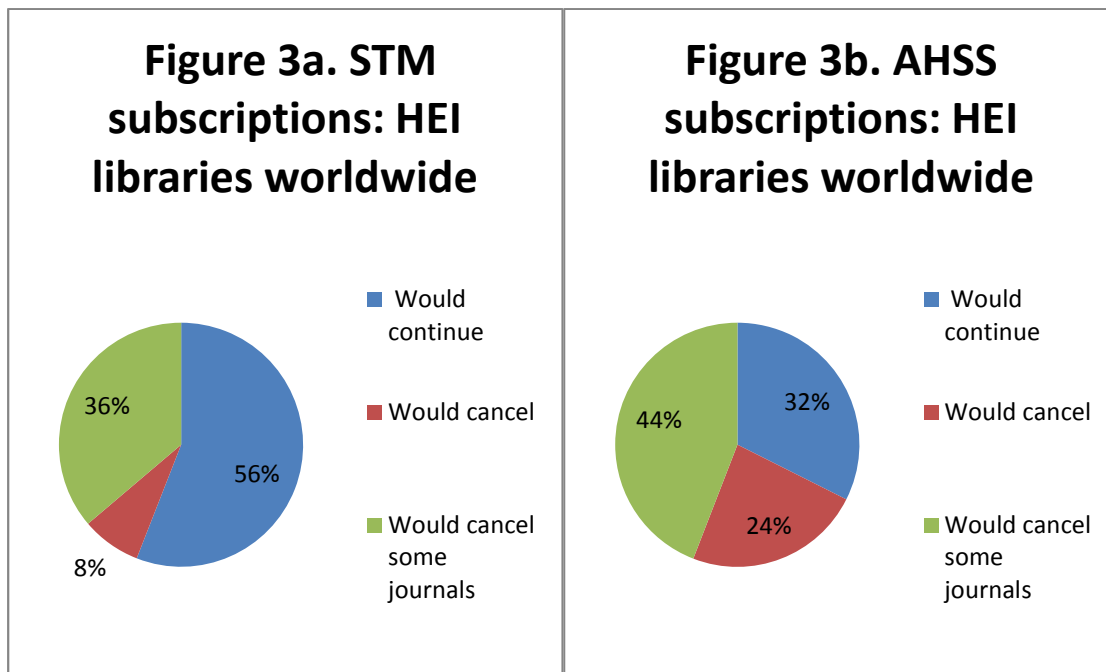
11. What this headline data cannot reflect – since no specific figures were asked for (and almost certainly none could have been supplied at this stage) is the relative extent of the likely cancellations. In the main, respondents on STM journals holdings who said that they would probably cancel some journals indicated that the cancellations that they made would be quite selective; whereas the majority of respondents on AHSS journals holdings who said that they would probably cancel some journals indicated that the cuts that they would make would be deep – some indicated that to continue to subscribe would be the exception rather than the rule.

The following sections break the findings down into groups, by library type and by geographical region.

¹⁷ Some of the respondents must also have holdings in either STM or AHSS, but did not answer the question for these categories.

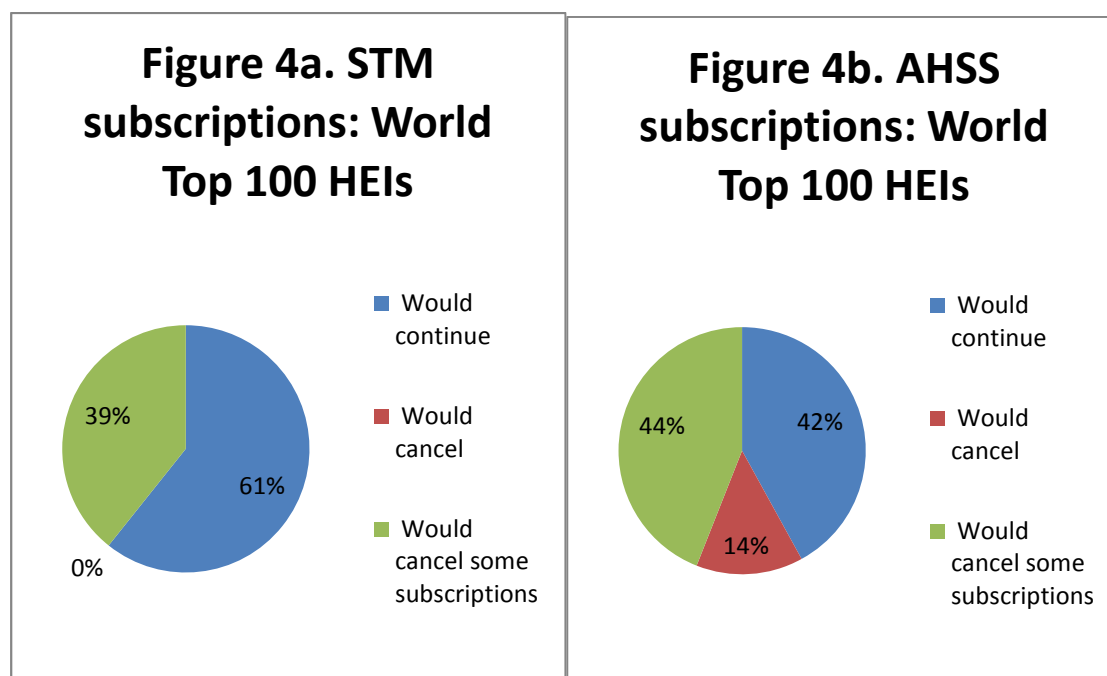
V.c. HEI libraries worldwide

12. Of the 159 HEI libraries worldwide that gave responses on journals holdings, 56% said that they would continue to subscribe; 8% said that they would cancel; and 36% said that they would cancel some journals. Of those that gave responses on AHSS holdings, 32% said that they would continue to subscribe; 24% would cancel; and 44% said that they would cancel some journals. It will be noted that there is little difference between these percentages and the percentages for the whole sample. **Figure Three** below illustrates the results from the respondents from HEI libraries worldwide.



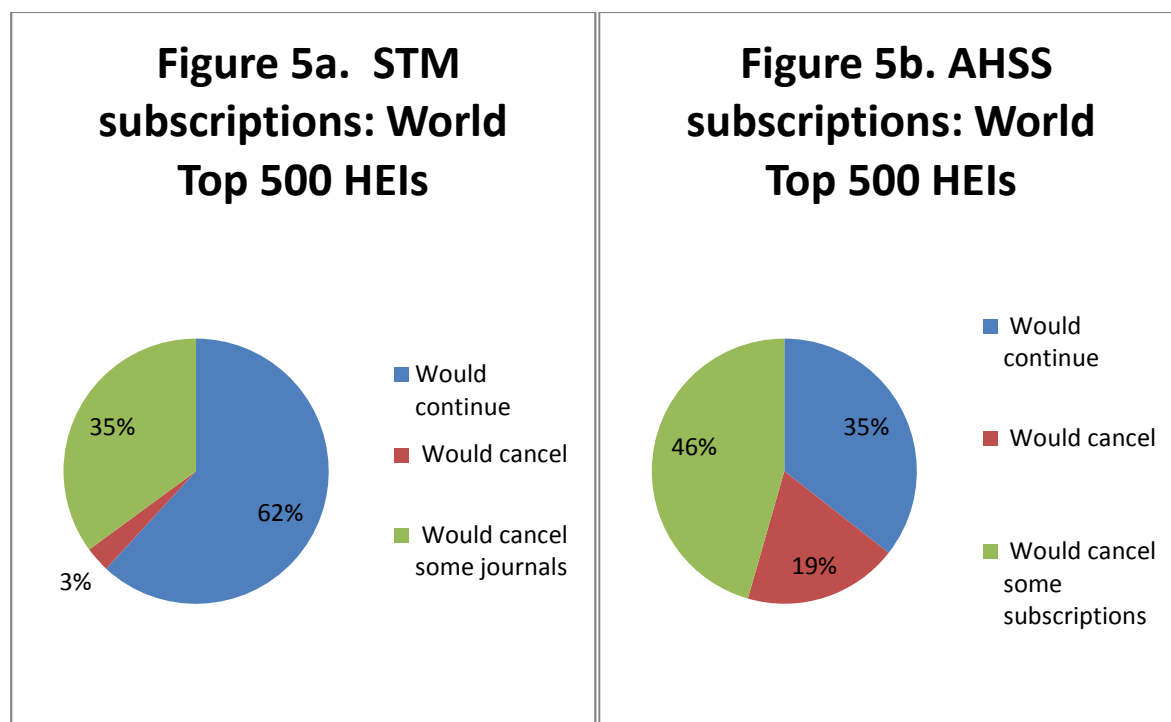
V.d. World Top 100 HEI libraries

13. **Figure Four** below illustrates the results from the respondents from the 44 HEI libraries whose institutions feature in either the THE or the ARWU Top 100 lists. (As already stated, the first 100 institutions listed by each are broadly similar). It will be noted that there is a considerable increase in the number of respondents from this group who say that they will continue to subscribe: 61% said that they would continue to subscribe to STM journals (5% more than for the entire HEI group) and 42% said that they would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals (10% more than for the entire HEI group). None of the Top 100 said that they would cancel STM journals completely, but 39% (3% more than for the entire HEI group) said that they would cancel some STM journals. 14% of the Top 100 said that they would cancel AHSS journals completely (10% fewer than for the entire HEI group); and the same percentage (44%) said that they would cancel some AHSS journals.



V.e. World Top 500 HEI libraries

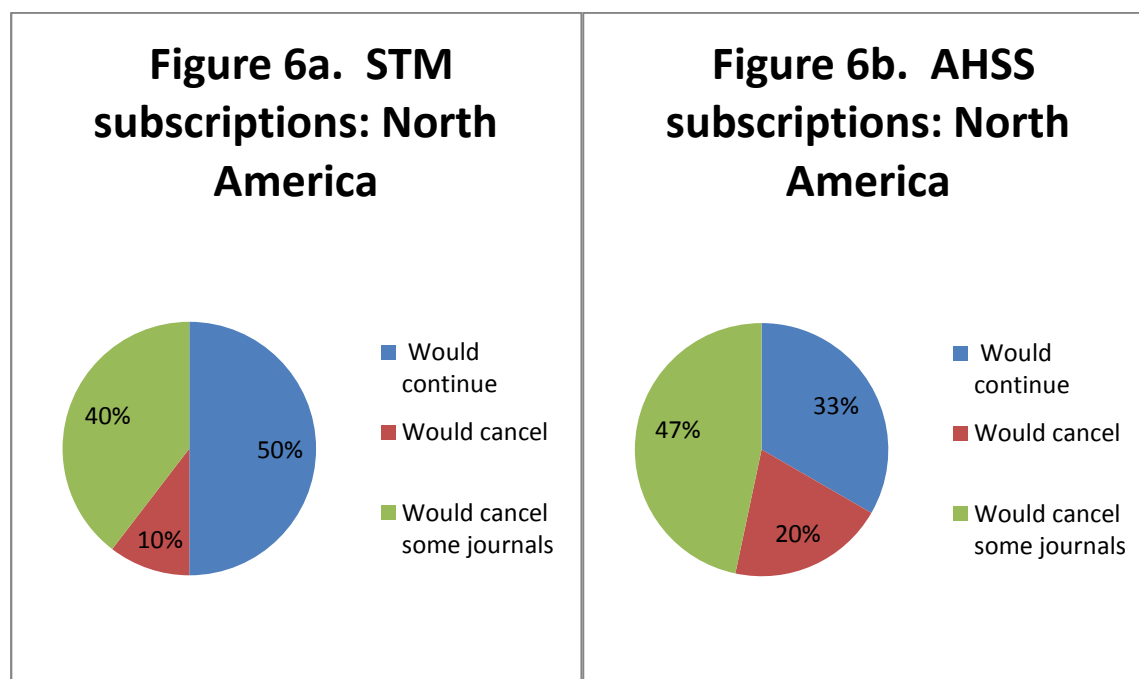
14. **Figure Five** below illustrates the results from the respondents from the 99 HEI libraries whose institutions feature in either the THE 400 or the ARWU Top 500 lists. (As already mentioned, these lists diverge considerably after the first 100 institutions listed, though most of the institutions of the libraries in the sample still appear in both. When the institution only appears in one of the lists, it has still been included.) It will be noted that the percentage of respondents in this group who said that they would still continue to subscribe to STM journals was slightly higher than for the Top 100 alone (62% as opposed to 61%); but that a small number (3%) of libraries in this group said that they would cancel STM journals completely. 35% said that they would cancel some STM journals. The percentage of libraries in the Top 500 who said that they would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals is considerably lower than for the Top 100 alone (35% as opposed to 42%); and more also said that they would cancel AHSS journals completely (19% as opposed to 14%). 46% said that they would cancel some AHSS journals.



V.f. North America

(i) North American HEI libraries (all)

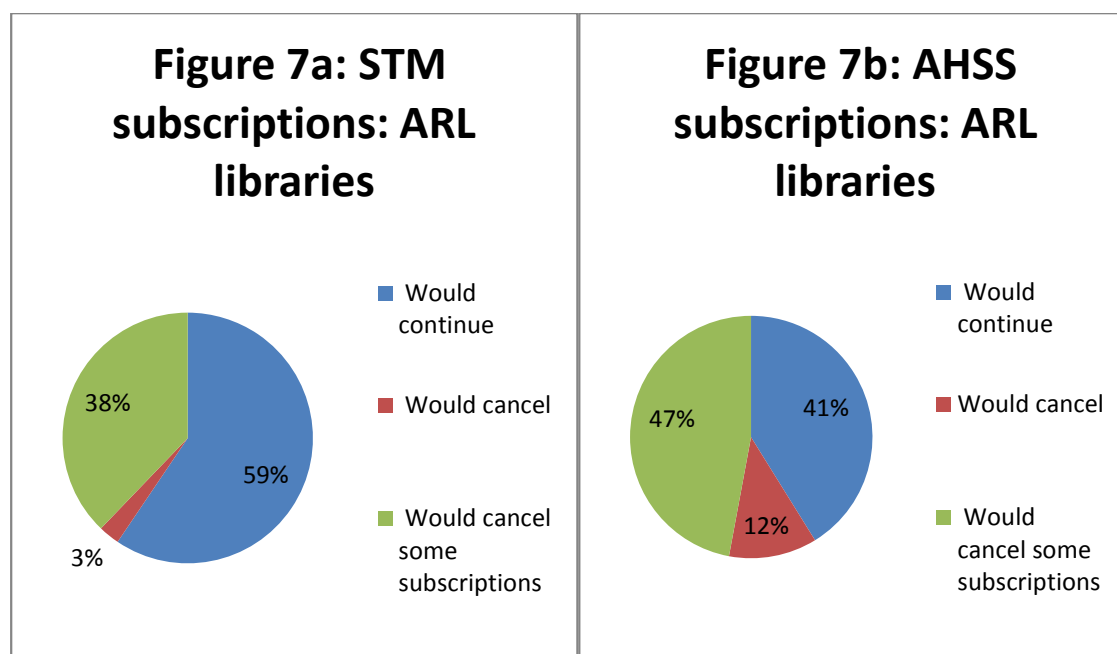
15. **Figure Six** below illustrates the results from 48 of the 49¹⁸ respondents from HEI libraries in North America (i.e., from both Canada and the USA, from both ARL libraries and non-ARL libraries). It will be noted that the percentage of respondents from these libraries who said that they would continue to subscribe to STM journals is significantly lower than the average for HEIs worldwide (50% as opposed to 56%); and that 10% (as opposed to 8%) said that they would definitely cancel STM journals. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who said that they would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals was slightly higher (33% as opposed to 32%) and the percentage who said that they would definitely cancel was significantly lower (20% as opposed to 24%). These results are perhaps a little surprising. 40% said that they would cancel some STM journals, and 47% said that they would cancel some AHSS journals.



¹⁸ The forty-ninth declined to give a response to the question.

(ii) ARL Libraries

16. **Figure Seven** below illustrates the results from 37 of the 38 respondents from the ARL libraries¹⁹. It will be noted that these results almost match the results from the World Top 100 libraries, though the ARL libraries are slightly less likely to subscribe. 59% of the ARL respondents (as opposed to 61% of the World Top 100 respondents²⁰) said that they would continue to subscribe to STM journals, and 3% (as opposed to none) said that they would cancel altogether. 38% said that they would cancel some STM subscriptions. 41% of the ARL respondents (as opposed to 42% of the World Top 100) said that they would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals; and 12% (as opposed to 14%) said that they would cancel AHSS journals completely. 47% said that they would cancel some AHSS subscriptions. It will be noted that the ARL libraries showed significantly more commitment to continuing to subscribe than the total group of North American HEIs (59% as opposed to 50% for STM journals, and 41% as opposed to 33% for AHSS journals).



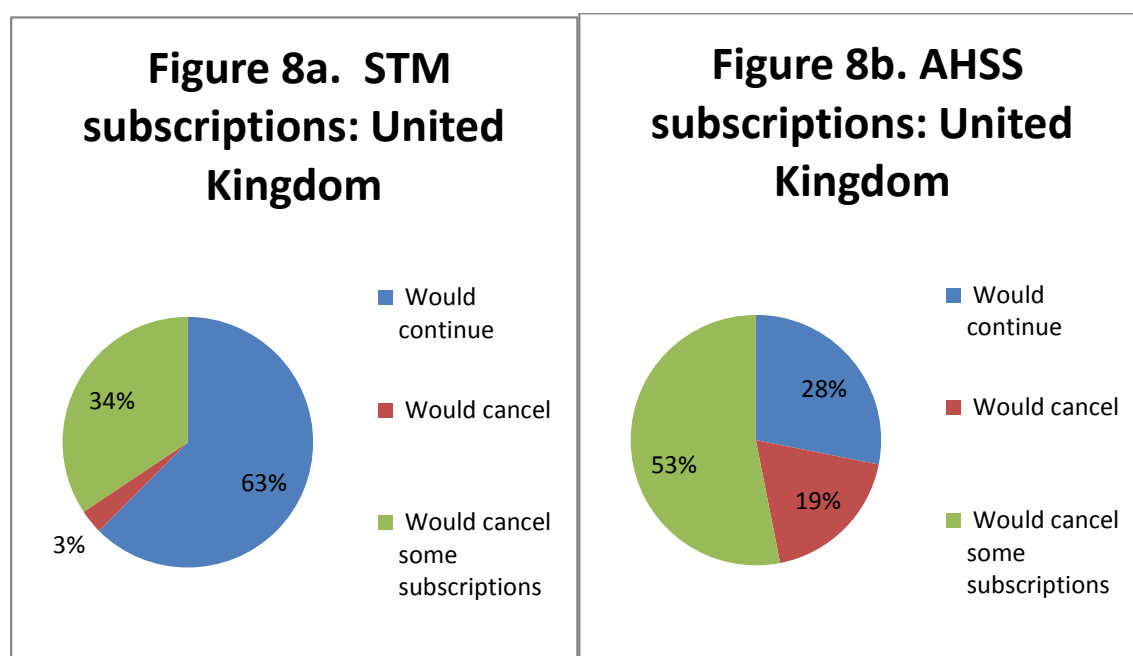
¹⁹ The 38th declined to give a response to the question.

²⁰ The World Top 100 lists of course include a substantial number of the ARL respondents.

V.g. United Kingdom

(i) HEI libraries (all)

17. **Figure Eight** below illustrates the results from 33 of the 35²¹ respondents from HEI libraries in the United Kingdom. 63% of the UK HEI respondents said that they would continue to subscribe to STM journals (more than from the World Top 100²² group or the ARL group), though a small percentage also said that they would cancel STM journals completely. 34% said that they would cancel some STM journals. The figures for AHSS journals were, however, lower than for the other groups. Only 28% said that they would continue to subscribe, and 19% said that they would cancel AHSS journals completely. 53% said that they would cancel some AHSS journals.

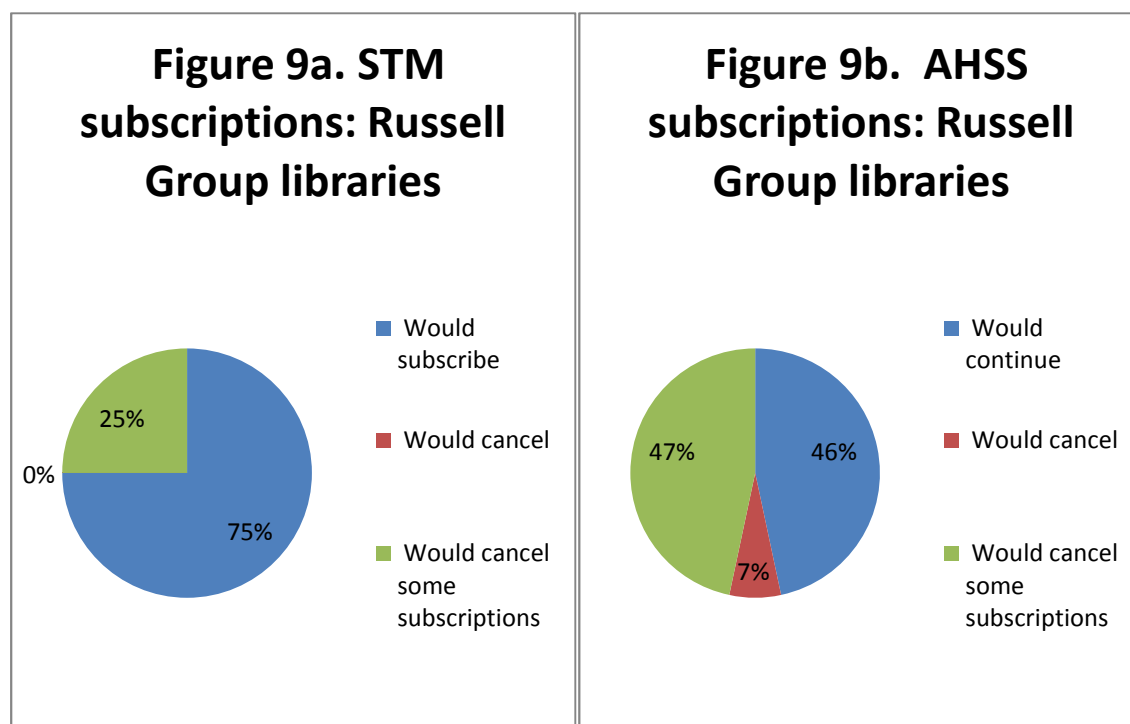


²¹ The other two said that their budgets were entirely devolved to faculty.

²² The World Top 100 lists of course contain a substantial number of UK libraries.

(ii) Russell Group libraries

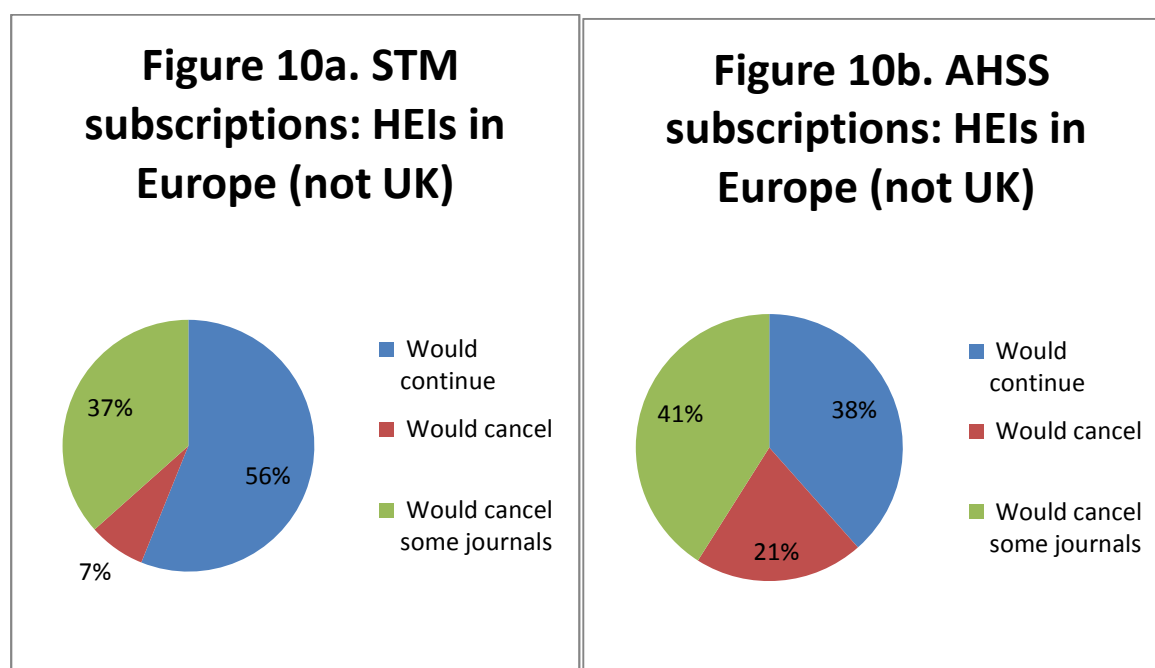
18. **Figure Nine** below illustrates the results from the 17 respondents from the UK Russell Group libraries²³. It will be noted that, in terms of continuing with subscriptions, these are the most likely to continue subscribing of any of the groups. 75% of the Russell Group respondents said that they would continue to subscribe to STM journals, and none said that they would cancel completely. 25% said that they would cancel some STM journals. 46% said that they would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals, and 7% said that they would cancel completely. 47% said that they would cancel some AHSS journals.



²³ Most of the institutions served by these libraries feature in one or both of the World Top 100 lists.

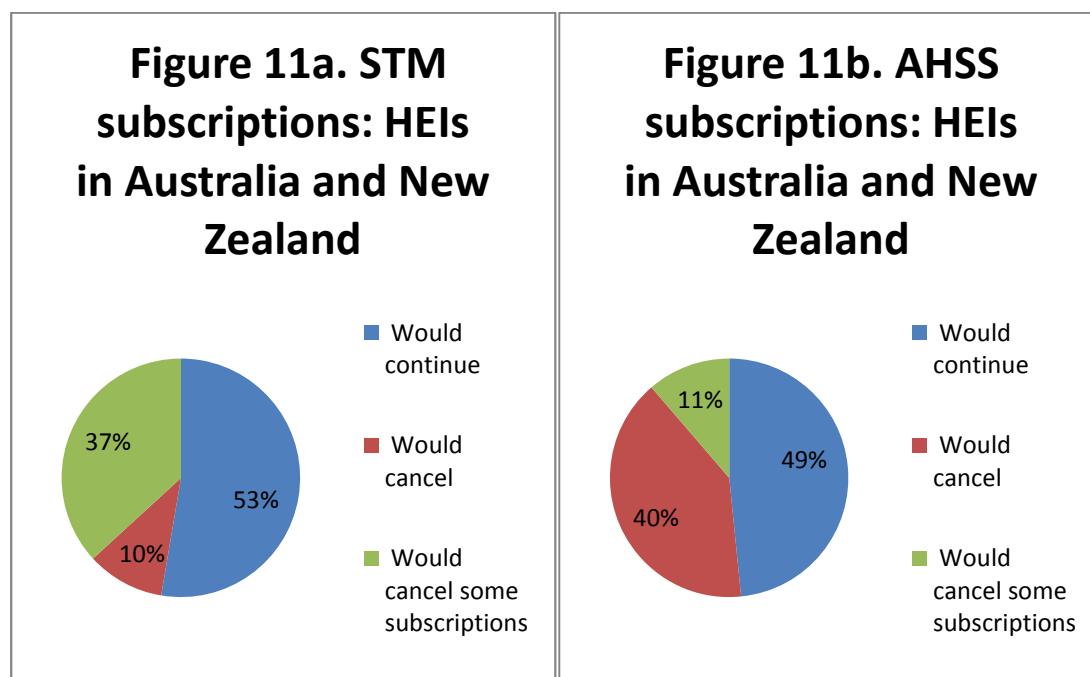
V.h. Europe excluding the UK

19. **Figure Ten** illustrates the results from the 44 respondents from Europe, excluding the UK. The pattern of the results from this group is close to that of the HEI libraries total sample group (**Figure Two** above) for STM. In each case, 56% of respondents said that they would continue to subscribe to STM journals; of the European group, 7% (as opposed to 8%) would cancel completely; and 37% (as opposed to 36%) would cancel some journals. 38% of the European group respondents said that they would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals (higher than for the other groups except the ARL group and the Russell group), but 21% said that they would cancel completely (the highest figure for all HEI groups except for Australia and New Zealand and the total sample). 41% said that they would cancel some journals.



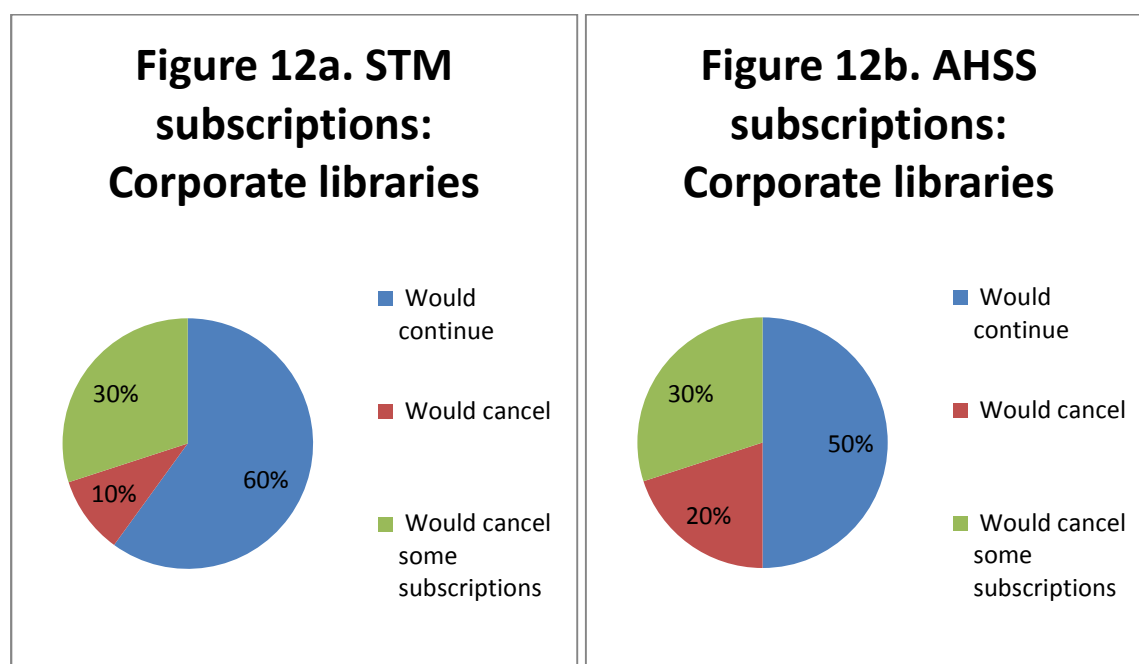
V.i. Australia and New Zealand

20. **Figure 11** below illustrates the HEI results from respondents in HEI libraries in Australia and New Zealand. The STM results are close to those for HEI libraries worldwide (see Figure Two): 53% of the respondents said that they would continue to subscribe (as opposed to 56%); 10% said that they would definitely cancel (as opposed to 8%); and 37% (as opposed to 36%) would cancel some journals. For AHSS journals, the responses from Australia and New Zealand were more polarised than from other groups of respondents: 49% said that they would continue to subscribe (more than the next highest figure, 46% from the UK Russell Group libraries), but 40% said that they would definitely cancel (more than twice as many than most of the other groups, and almost twice as many as the HEI libraries worldwide average of 24%). Consequently only 11% said that they would cancel some journals.



V.g. Corporate libraries

21. 15 corporate libraries responded to the survey²⁴. As they all serve specialist communities, some did not subscribe to both STM and AHSS journals. **Figure 12** below illustrates their responses. It will be noted that for both STM journals and AHSS journals the percentage of corporate libraries who said that they would continue to subscribe was higher than for the whole sample (60% as opposed to 56% and 50% as opposed to 35% respectively). Taking into account their specialist nature, this was not surprising. More surprising perhaps was the average or above average percentage who said they would cancel altogether (10% for STM journals, the same figure as for the total sample, and 20% for AHSS journals, not far behind the 23% of the whole sample). For both categories of journal, 30% said that there would be some cancellations.



V.h. Other groups

22. The other groups represented in the sample are so small that individual analysis of their responses would not be meaningful. However, it is perhaps worth mentioning that of the six medical libraries that took part in the survey, one has already cancelled all STM subscriptions, one said that it would cancel, three would cancel some journals, and only one medical library respondent said that subscriptions would continue. Of the nine government libraries that took part in the survey, four would continue to subscribe to STM journals, 3 would definitely cancel and two would cancel some journals; and 5 would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals, one would definitely cancel, and one would cancel some journals (two did not subscribe to AHSS journals).

²⁴ The response rate from corporate libraries was relatively low: in the region of 10%.

V.i. Additional comments

(i) Timeliness or currency

23. The reason most frequently given by the respondents for continuing to subscribe to journals was timeliness of access or currency of publication. 52 respondents²⁵ (most but not all from HEIs) emphasised the importance of up-to-date information for researchers and other library users. Some respondents from the most prestigious, research-led institutions made it especially clear that currency is a compelling reason to continue to subscribe: “A great university needs a great library. A competitive, leading academic institution like ours would not risk our mission by cancelling either STEM or Social Sciences / Humanities journals that faculty want. We need to give faculty their required articles on their desktop without delay. We put a lot of time and resources into making that happen.” (150).

24. Other respondents adopted a more measured ‘it depends’ approach to timeliness, saying that it is especially or more important in research areas considered a priority by the university (e.g., 13, 105, 106, 141). Most but not all comments about timeliness and currency relate to STM journals. Delays in gaining access to AHSS journals are generally (but not always) considered less important. At least thirty respondents stated that this was the prevailing view at their institutions. Here is a typical comment which reflects the view of many respondents: “Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences would be the first to go in budget cuts; but there would be exceptions in both categories: we might cancel some STM journals; and we might keep some AHSS ones.” (68).

25. One respondent pointed out that AHSS articles typically earn their prestige some time after publication, which would make it difficult for librarians to decide to buy them after a short embargo period: “There simply isn’t the emphasis on timeliness in [AHSS] research areas. Indeed, an article will hardly have begun to earn a reputation at the six month pointsuch availability after a six-month embargo would, however, make it much harder to justify new title subscriptions in these disciplines and much easier to cancel titles that are only marginally related to current research and teaching needs.”(148).

(ii) Academic / other user influence

26. Respondents from HEI libraries who would consider cancelling journals because they had become available free of charge after a six month embargo period often said that they would consult academics before making their final decision. Several said that while some academics would be happy not to have access to new publications, others wouldn’t (e.g., 24, 144, 145, 199). Both academic and corporate librarians made the point that user needs change, and subscriptions will be changed accordingly (e.g., 31, 107, 150). One respondent supplied an example: “If the content of research journals was freely available within 6 months of publication, we would look at our portfolio

²⁵ No percentages are given in this section, because all of the additional responses were on topics selected by the respondents themselves – i.e., no direct question relating to anything but the six month embargo was put to the whole sample. It would therefore be misleading to represent them in percentage terms. That so many respondents selected the same topics on which to provide further information makes these comments a very powerful contribution to the survey.

and perhaps stream [the journals] into levels 1-3 in order of importance (1 being a critical title that we would need to subscribe to). This system would involve a much closer liaison with the academics than at present, i.e., a systematic approach title by title etc. In addition the research profiles of the university are always changing – what is important in terms of bringing research funding one year is not necessarily as important the next year - e.g., our journal *Nanotoxicology* was absolutely essential to an award winning academic in 2009-11, but she has now moved on, and although the department is still in operation, the impetus has shifted to another area of research.” (178). Two UK respondents mentioned the importance of considering the Research Excellence Framework [REF] before deciding on cancellations (11, 139). One respondent suggested that a six month embargo would deter faculty from continuing to support expenditure on subscriptions, especially as they have devised informal ways of sharing research: “I fear that the six month period is too short to deter cancellation, especially since social software connecting colleagues enables widespread sharing and only one individual needs to have current access for everyone.” (162)

(iii) Attributes added by the publisher that are valued

27. Although the single question asked by the survey did not suggest in what form journals articles made available after a six-month embargo might be supplied, or the extent to which they would be supported by ancillary features, most of the respondents who chose to comment on this assumed that attributes currently added by the publisher, some of which they regarded as essential, would not be included in the free version. This was obviously an area of considerable concern to them. Some respondents raised the spectre of the full published version not continuing at all, and said that this would cause major problems for library holdings and consequently for library users.

- (i) **Peer review.** Several respondents mentioned peer review explicitly (e.g., 11, 79, 128, 144). References to peer review were also implicit in more general comments about quality assurance (e.g., 159), and the many references to ‘prestige’ journals. These are two example comments: “Author versions (i.e., ‘green’) are NOT as acceptable as ‘gold’ journals to our academics, and until a recognised peer review process is recognised and an ID system [is] established for ‘gold’ versions, publishers have a key role.” (128). “A shift to a different model would require a fundamental shift in thinking and policy. While we are highly supportive and active promoters of open access, there are many real and perceived barriers to overcome. For instance, promotion, tenure etc., is still premised on publication success; publication in the traditional, peer reviewed model. That’s not to say that these paradigms are immune to change.” (79).
- (ii) **Hard copy.** Several respondents mentioned that they still wanted or needed print copies of journals, and assumed that the free version would only be available electronically (e.g., 48, 64, 90, 144, 149, 153, 179).
- (iii) **Archival preservation.** Some libraries are concerned about both their own role as guardians of archives, and the continued existence of a comprehensive publishers’ archive. They are sceptical about the possibility of maintaining either types of archive in an Open Access environment. Some comments: “I would speculate that our conception

of our archival or preservation role would lead us to maintain subscriptions – assuming subscriptions were a means to archival rights and would help ensure that resources for preservation were available.” (66). “Archival and legal issues must be clearly defined. Our researchers rely on trustworthiness and e-only is still not in a state of the reliability that a printed archive has. For example: even our scientists do not want us to dispose of printed journals, when we have perpetual archival rights. Confidence must still grow.” (90). “I am always dubious about how long free web resources will be made available. It is no good to us if they disappear in 10 years’ time.” (149).

- (iv) **Institutional repositories.** Another assumption made by some respondents was that the six-month-embargoed articles would principally be made available via institutional repositories. “You cannot be sure that the author will republish his or her article in an open repository.” (193)
- (v) **Bibliographical issues.** Concern about a variety of bibliographical issues was another area in which some respondents thought that either libraries would be unable to perform to existing standards or publishers would cease to maintain current standards in an open access environment: “The effectiveness of our bibliographical indexes would be reduced if we didn’t have access to current issues.” (89). “My answer [that the library would cut down on AHSS subscriptions] assumes the following: that the open access content is usable via current technology with bibliographic metadata; that its provenance can be proven and that it remains accessible in the long term.” (143).
- (vi) **General comments** about the value added by publishers included: “Continued subscription ... is likely to depend on the subject, and on other factors (including value added services [unspecified] from the publisher.” (124). “I would be concerned about the lack of quality assurance, editing, proof-reading if the journal was free.” (159). “If the majority of titles were freely available after 5 months [sic], we would look at the cost of individual articles so perhaps selectively purchasing current articles. In addition, we would look to value added so I would imagine in a mostly freely available environment, publishers would increase their value added features and if those were attractive to our faculty, we would consider subscribing.” (200).
- (vii) **Inter-Library Loan [ILL].** As the previous example illustrates, many respondents said that they would take advantage of a six months embargo to cancel some journals and supplement any shortfall with Inter-Library Loan purchases. However, some respondents doubted that the Inter-Library Loan service would continue to operate as it does at present if the six month embargo were introduced. “Another factor would be ILL availability: could we still get content if we didn’t subscribe any longer? If a change of this nature also involved a shift to more restrictions on resource-sharing across institutions, it would represent a step backward.” (37). “My response might be different if the on-demand, copyright clearance and ILL mechanisms were to change. In this new scenario, would on-demand pricing change, would the copyright clearance threshold of articles requested leading to the need to subscribe change, and how would ILL work if far fewer libraries were subscribers?” [154]

- (viii) **Cost of absorbing 'free' materials.** One respondent pointed out that although materials may be acquired free of charge, there is still a cost attached to cataloguing them and placing them within a collection so that they can be discovered effectively by users. Publishers provide these services. Not all libraries have the resources to carry them out if the publishers' records are not available. (88).

(iv) Library funding and publisher remuneration

28. Comments on library funding and publisher remuneration are explored together in this section, because some respondents have linked them with each other. However, taking all of the comments received on these topics together, it is suggested that often they should be treated as two separate issues. This is an important point from both the librarians' and the publishers' perspective.

29. Many respondents refer to budget cuts and consequent cancellations that are not directly related to the prices that publishers charge. The following are some examples: "Given the dire financial straits we are in, we would definitely cancel. We have already cancelled subscriptions where the material is available free after 12 months". (7). "In the time of ever squeezing budgets, any reduction in costs is welcome and appreciated. However, this approach would differ, depending on the wealth of the individual libraries and the topicality of the given field of interest." (8). "We have such budget restraints that I could not justify buying something that we would be able to get free in 6 months." (45). "As a government professional, I am finding increased restriction in access to library subscriptions, as government cuts simply make it impossible to continue subscribing. I therefore have far less access to vital sites, even through our central library service. We simply cannot afford the fees." (46). "We have been facing huge budget cuts and we are trying to adjust to the new financial reality which is here to stay for a long time, unfortunately. And of course whatever our policies are now might have to change drastically if things do not improve." (53). [Whether or not to cancel] "depends on the financial situation". (95). "On the other hand, the economic recession forces people to cancel subscriptions and preserve the freely available content somehow, even if it is illegal." (104). "My experience of Open Access is that it is not that great. In my personal opinion, the response you will get from others will differ depending on the nature of the organisation. I would imagine that organisations at the forefront of medical research would indeed continue to subscribe (assuming the subscription price is deemed to be "affordable", which is an interesting question in these times of constraint). Other organisations, where research is not the primary motivator, might not continue subscriptions. However, having said that, I would imagine that the latter types of organisations have already started to cancel due to the unaffordability of the current model (I am thinking e.g., NHS). I can only imagine that this process will intensify as the public purse continues to be squeezed further..." (121).

30. On the other hand, some respondents chose to link their squeezed financial situation with publishers' prices, and particularly with what they regarded as unreasonable annual price increases. It should be stated (since one of the few editorial amendments made to the information recorded is to have removed the names of the individual publishers who have been criticised) that only two publishers have been named in this context, and one of these has only been named once. Comments include: "A ... number of our journals are now so expensive that I (and indeed many of my colleagues in other libraries) have been busy cutting journal subscriptions to a minimum). Indeed

I myself carried out a survey of expensive journals, asking my ABTAPL colleagues to let me know who was intending to cancel/continue subscribing to journals costing over £100 per year. The results made very depressing reading as we were all cancelling large numbers of titles.” (96). “This is the first year we've had to actually cut journals to be within our budget (before it was not being able to order everything we want). So I would think carefully about subscribing. It would depend entirely upon the journal. Some have such important content for our users, and the price is reasonable, we would continue to subscribe. If the prices are outrageous (X and Y publishers, etc.) we would highly recommend that we not subscribe. We would, of course, like to have immediate access so that researchers and students could have the newest material and we would strive to do this if at all possible.” (130). “We know too that our budgets cannot sustain the relentless increase in subscriptions that we see year on year. We just don't get those increases and it's certainly not clear why they are justified. We, at this university, have already had one complete review of our holdings and are prepared to make further rounds. We are looking critically at usage data of journal titles so that we can explain to faculty how the titles are used for both research and teaching and across faculty. We are looking at cost per download. I would expect that any university that loses student numbers in the new environment will have to cut its journals. We are also cutting staff in line with the Labour government ELQ policy.” (139). “While in the recent past smaller institutions like mine have enjoyed the luxury of accessing “big deal” packages of journals (generally) affordably via consortia, the larger institutions are signalling a move away from supporting possibly any of those arrangements.... Such deals will likely fall apart and return us all to a pick and choose process in which only the essential will remain licensed, with a new possibility of pay for use at the article level as well as open access. Whether or not subscribing to particular journals within 6 months of publication will be essential will be entirely institution-specific within that developing context.” (157). “..I believe the question of subscription must be broader in context. The question is one of funding and/or sustainability and/or the economic model.” (166).

31. There were also some respondents whose funding had not been stretched, but who said that they are still beginning to view some publishers' prices critically: “So far, my university has been very successful in maintaining almost all journal subscriptions deemed relevant for us. We did have cancellations, but these were more like tidying up the closet every now and then. We mostly cancelled marginal journals in out-of-focus fields. With a 6-month embargo, I think it is obvious that in future rounds of subscription audit the balance might tip the wrong way for a number of relatively marginal journals, or - at least as important - journals with high prices or unfavourable cost-content ratios. This will differ of course between disciplines. Right now, I would hypothesise a simple continuum, with a relatively low risk for high-quality/high-impact/reasonable-price STM journals and a relatively high risk for many journals from the humanities, with the social sciences (from harder to softer) in between. But in any field, it would be most risky for overpriced, low-impact journals.” (189).

32. One such respondent would continue to subscribe to AHSS journals in preference to STM ones, because the former are more modestly priced: “Probably not [subscribe] for the STM journals because publishers like X are asking an awful lot of money for their subscriptions for many years. We still need to buy monographs but the price for journal subscriptions is draining these budgets. We will prolong our Arts and Humanities subscriptions because they have reasonable prices.” (63).

33. Finally, considerable awareness was shown that open access publishing still involves costs for the publisher, and there was consequent wariness of abandoning a pricing model that keeps publishers

in business. It is the actual prices, rather than the model itself, that some librarians wish to criticise: “It’s likely however that as the open access titles are identified we’ll have to consider cancelling subscriptions as library budgets tighten. The model that you are suggesting seems a bit problematic in that it disregards the fundamentals of open access. If the goal is to truly provide access for free then the initial content should be offered as free content without delay. This is complex considering publishers have to make a profit in the end some cost must be absorbed by the publishers and libraries, so ideally the best business model would include bettering pricing of content for libraries and the ability for publishers to maintain some profit.” (194).

(v) Business models

34. Despite the final quotation in the paragraph above, however, many librarians would like to have the opportunity to take advantage of new business models, and / or increased flexibility of the existing ones. There are many comments on business models, both existing ones and emerging ones. At least one example of each type of business model commented on or suggested is quoted below²⁶:

35. “The question does not take account of the author pays model – in my view this is win-win for publishers and the academic community.” (11). “The current dire state of affairs has been caused by both publishers and librarians. There is a lot of emotion on both sides. I am a big O/A advocate, but in no way do I naively believe that ‘information should be free’. I do believe that if academic publishers were to view libraries as partners, rather than consumers. There could be ways that lower and more sustainable subscription prices could support open publishing, and everyone would win.” (16). “O/A is not yet sufficiently robust to rely on it as a consistent delivery method. Still, I hear faculty talk about getting content from non-academic delivery methods – open internet content, PubMed, etc. I don’t think we have a clear solution yet.” (17).

36. “We would expect the subscription to reflect the value of the latest six months, and not the costs of providing the whole journal on O/A; so our enthusiasm would depend on the model. We give O/A models very close attention. There is a raft of new pricing models emerging which are not necessarily in the library’s best interest.” (22). “If the title was of lower value (i.e., marginal) we would most likely wait 6 months. If urgent a small micro-payment would be our escape card for specific titles.” (29). “What would happen to publications sold through aggregators, who are obliged to impose a one-year embargo?” (32).

37. “The major issue for all of us involved in scholarly communication is that publishers of all kinds recognise that the world of electronic journal production and dissemination is vastly different from the old world of paper production and distribution - and begin to develop business models and pricing structures accordingly. Then we would have a sensible context for the discussion of open access models and issues.” (92). “Because of the need for relatively immediate access to publications (in preprint as week as final versions), we would be very unlikely to cancel subscriptions to journals

²⁶ The Chair of the CAUL Consortium, who was one of the respondents to the survey, also offered this link to CAUL’s briefing paper on Open Scholarship <http://www.caul.edu.au/caul-programs/open-scholarship/open-scholarship-resources/briefing-paper>

for which the (majority of) content was freely available within 6 months of publication. Rather, we would subscribe for immediate access and appreciate the long term free access. A number of journals, such as Harvard Business Review, have an embargo period for all but direct subscriptions. In this case journal aggregators can provide access to articles, but only after 12 months. We find that our researchers' and academics' needs must be met by direct subscriptions as well as access through aggregator services. This does on occasion lead us to question why we are paying for access to titles 5 or more times through different services." (116). "It is too early to tell whether post-prints in repositories will be an adequate substitute for the published version, since there are still relatively few publications available in this form. However, there is still a preference for the published version in most cases, so there will still be a market for the added value this brings - but not at any cost. It would help if subscriptions were at a sensible level so that we could afford to pay for the subscriptions in the first place; the effect of the price rises over the last few years has been to squeeze the purchase of books, not to justify higher budgets; certainly our Vice Chancellor has been reluctant to increase expenditure on library resources just to pay publishers for unreasonable increases. This has resulted in only modest increases in budgets, which have been used to buy books." (120).

38. "We currently subscribe to journals in both [STM and AHSS]. We would continue to subscribe because our purchasing decisions are based on the need for access to the most current information and issues of these journals. We also fully support the content of research journals being made available openly as soon as possible, say within six months. For the benefit of our authors and organisation we would like to see any research articles authored or co-authored by our staff made available on open access after a short but suitable embargo period, but we would also like the opportunity to store a digital copy in our institutional repository with appropriate acknowledgement to the publisher and without having to use a preprint. We are encouraged by the model Cambridge University Press uses, where there is a twelve month embargo, but where we are allowed to make an original copy available through our IR. This is a good starting place, but a shorter embargo would be better and wouldn't impact on what we currently purchase." (131). "No for the rest [subscription to non-core journals] - IF - easy pay-per-view for the current content were available for the remainder. That is, if we could integrate direct client access to pay-per-view via our openURL resolver such that they only get to order things we really don't have any other way - i.e., not paying for articles that have become open access or where we may have via an aggregator or direct. Not for want of wanting to support publishers, but we manage public funds and need to do so as cost-effectively as possible." (135). In our case we would have to consult with faculty whether to switch to Open Access - our information resources budget comes via faculty (many universities are top-sliced, though). I would expect to see discussions about how new types of publishing, such as blogs and podcasts, can be used by academics in their proposals for career development. We also need to have licences which encompass the wider range of student body through partnerships, etc., and need to be able to do different things with the materials, especially relating to teaching in Virtual Learning Environments, etc." (139).

39. "I would very much like to find a business model that supports Learned Societies without locking publications behind high subscription walls." (142). "We're looking for smaller big deals from the monolithic publishers, which I believe is going to be our focus for the next 5 years." (150).

(vi) Usage statistics and other factors used to determine whether to continue to subscribe

40. Eleven respondents mentioned usage statistics specifically as one of the variables that would be taken into account when deciding whether or not to cancel. Some cited usage statistics as only one of several factors. Some suggested that the decision would rest largely on 'good' usage statistics: "Usage stats would have most influence on decision. There is evidence that users find alternatives from other materials subscribed to if we cancel." (4; see also 54 and 73). "We would even consider cutting titles with a 12 month embargo. Budgets were cut by 10% last year, 28% this year, and are expected to be cut a further 5% - 7% next year. We would, however, take account of usage statistics." (10). "In the event of a reduction in budget, where cancellations would be necessary, it is far more likely that borderline usage titles that offer open access after 6 months would be cancelled as opposed to similar borderline titles that do not offer any backfiles free of charge." (60).

41. Some respondents cited usage statistics as only one of several factors: "If content of research journals was freely available [online] within 6 months of initial publication, there would be a variety of factors that we would have to consider when determining whether to continue a subscription or not to an individual title or package of titles. Such decisions would be made at the individual journal or subscription package level. The first factor is the importance or relevance of the published materials in a particular journal (or journal package) to students and faculty at our institution and especially the relevance of the most current material (six months in your scenario). Local usage in a variety of forms would typically be the first measure of relevance, article downloads, cited references from local authors, locally authored papers. Local faculty input would assist us in retrieving information about the need to have access to the rolling file of the most recent six months. And more generalised measures of usage, such as impact factors, cited half-lives, SJRs, eigen factors, etc. can also be factors. Another factor relates to the durability of the free content. Material posted to durable and respected third party archive or repository might be more trusted to continue providing access to material in perpetuity than an individual publisher, but in either case, the publisher could change their policy and leave the library without some content unless [the library] were able to re-subscribe to content. It should be inescapable that the chief factor in any journal subscription / cancellation decision on whether we would admit it or not, relates to cost." (110). "Along with a title being available within 6 months of publication, we would also look at usage data. If we could extract data which inform us of how often the most recent 6 months are used, then we would look at that also. Having said that, we have used the fact that a journal is freely available within 6 months or a year of publication as a criterion in deciding whether to subscribe to a new title or not. Where we have been in a position to add a new journal title but had more suggestions than the budget would allow, we have used this as a criterion for prioritising." (145). "We have librarian subject specialists (STEM & HSS), who would be the decision makers for titles in their discipline. Most of our journals are purchased through 10-campus consortial agreements, and in many cases are for those notorious bundles in HSS and STEM disciplines. Plus, I doubt all campuses would be OK with the six-month embargo, even if content was free. Related to the above, not all journals are treated equally, many factors come into play - core journals, contributors from this university, curriculum, usage stats, etc." (156).

VI. Conclusions

1. The main purpose of the survey was to determine whether or not an across-the-board mandate to make journals articles available free of charge after publication would have a material effect on libraries' subscriptions. The results of the survey indicate very clearly that it would.
2. The impact on all publishers' revenues would be considerable. The results indicate that STM publishers would fare better than AHSS publishers. Overall, STM publishers could expect to retain full subscriptions from 56% of libraries; AHSS publishers could expect to retain full subscriptions from 35% of libraries. STM publishers could expect 10% of libraries to cancel subscriptions altogether, and AHSS publishers could expect 23% of libraries to cancel subscriptions altogether. STM publishers could expect reduced (or no) revenues from the remaining 34% of libraries; AHSS publishers could expect reduced (or no) revenues from the remaining 42% of libraries.
3. From the information collected, it is not possible to determine which publishers would be hardest hit; but almost certainly small publishers of all kinds (commercial, learned society and those with single or only a few journals), especially those who do not engage in other types of publishing (books, online e-book collections, databases, educational software, etc.) would find it most difficult to accommodate the sudden withdrawal of revenues, and some would undoubtedly cease to exist. Most publishers would be obliged to review their portfolios; a substantial body of journals, especially in AHSS subjects, would be financially imperilled. Some publishers would almost certainly take the decision to close down or be obliged to withdraw from the market.
4. The extent of the cancellations would vary by type and prestige of the library and by region. Publishers whose customer base is particularly strong in certain library groups or regions would be affected accordingly. The following table summarises the findings that are given in detail in Section V:

Library group	STM continue to subscribe	STM cancel	STM cancel some journals	AHSS continue to subscribe	AHSS cancel	AHSS cancel some journals
Whole sample	56%	10%	34%	35%	23%	42%
HEIs worldwide	56%	8%	36%	32%	24%	44%
World Top 100 HEIs	61%	0	39%	42%	14%	44%
World Top 500 HEIs	62%	3%	35%	35%	19%	46%

North America HEIs (all)	50%	10%	40%	33%	20%	47%
ARL libraries	59%	3%	38%	41%	12%	47%
UK HEI libraries(all)	63%	3%	34%	28%	19%	53%
UK Russell Group	75%	0	25%	46%	7%	47%
HEIs in Europe (not UK)	56%	7%	37%	38%	21%	41%
HEIs in Australia and New Zealand	53%	10%	37%	49%	40%	11%
Corporates	60%	10%	30%	50%	20%	30%

5. It will be seen from the table above that the libraries likely to retain the highest number of subscriptions are the world's most prestigious HEI libraries. It is apparent from the significant body of comments that they and other HEI libraries have provided that the continued existence of a robust academic publishing industry is of great importance to them. HEI libraries generally would suffer from the collapse or scaling down of academic publishing houses. The world's most distinguished research institutions would suffer most. The continuation of a healthy publishing industry is essential for the work carried out by their researchers.
6. Making publications free after a six month embargo is not the only factor that libraries would consider before deciding on whether or not to continue to subscribe. Timeliness / currency of publication is valued by some (but not all) libraries in some (but not all) subject categories. Whether a library continues with certain subscriptions may depend on the areas of interest of researchers at the university that it serves. At many institutions, faculty will have an important influence on whether journals are cancelled or not. Usage statistics also play a prominent part when decisions are being made, though most of the respondents who mentioned them said that several other factors – e.g., numbers of article downloaded, cited references, etc. – would usually be taken into account as well.
7. Publishers provide many attributes that are valued by the respondents to the survey. These include peer review, provision of hard copy when it is needed, archival preservation, helping to maintain bibliographical standards and the provision of bibliographical records, general quality assurance (editorial work, proof-reading, etc.) and assistance with placing items in the library's catalogue. Respondents said that they feared the loss of these attributes if publishers could no longer afford to provide them, or indeed ceased to exist.
8. There was concern that the Inter-Library-Loan service currently supported by publishers would no longer be viable.

9. A key concern was that journal articles themselves might be 'lost'. Several respondents voiced concern about the unreliability of finding and / or keeping material sourced through institutional repositories or completely open access journals. Some said that their experiences with open access to date had been disappointing.
10. Library funding and publisher remuneration both featured prominently in the responses. Sometimes but not always they were linked. It is important to distinguish that the squeeze that is currently taking place on many libraries' budgets and publishers' revenues are two separate issues. Some respondents said that they would have to make cuts in journals subscriptions because of cuts in library budgets; some respondents said that they would cancel some journals because the price hikes had been too high, even though they still had the budget to buy them; and some indeed said that they felt that they were squeezed financially at least in part because of publishers' prices. A small group of publishers was mentioned specifically in this context. Only two publishers were mentioned by name. One respondent said that the library would be no better off if it took advantage of 'free' publications after a six-month embargo, because its budget would be cut accordingly. Another respondent said that although the library might not wish to use the six-month embargo in order to cancel, pressure would be put on it by university administrators to do so. It is important therefore to recognise that while many librarians would take advantage of the availability in repositories of journals on short embargoes to cancel some journals and therefore ease the pressure on budgets, this does not mean that most prefer open access publishing per se.
11. Taking the sample as a whole²⁷, the 200+ librarian respondents to this survey expressed the feeling that fully open access journals should not be the norm until consequences and alternative models were better studied. However, some are unhappy about the current prices that they have to pay for (some) journals. The dissatisfaction expressed by these respondents takes two main forms: approval of the current business model but disapproval of the price levels that have been reached; and disapproval of the current business model, accompanied by the suggestion that publishers and librarians should work together to explore a range of new business models that offer more flexibility. Those who mentioned 'big deal' subscriptions said that they had outgrown their usefulness. There were some tentative suggestions that more informal ways of publishing should be explored – e.g., via blogs, social networks, etc. However, the emphasis on maintaining quality was paramount.

²⁷ There were, of course exceptions; but they belong to a small minority.

VII. Recommendations

1. It is strongly recommended that no mandate is issued on making all or most journal articles available free of charge after a six month embargo until both libraries and publishers have had time to understand the issues better and have together taken steps to explore alternatives to a fully open access publishing model which could be mutually attractive.
2. The librarians who contributed to this survey have themselves said that it asks a simple question, but that the issue that needs to be addressed is complex. They have themselves raised topics which should be investigated more fully with more detailed research. Many of the librarians who contributed to the survey have offered to be contacted again, and to help further. It is recommended more in-depth research is undertaken, and that the issues that should be further explored should include:
 - How decisions to renew or cancel a subscription are made.
 - How academics and other library users influence decisions.
 - The budgetary implications for libraries if they choose to rely largely or mainly on open access models.
 - Prestige of individual journals / publishing brand names, and how the attributes added by publishers influence views on this. How is prestige measured? In connection with this, how valuable is peer review, and how can it be improved?
 - Journals published by open access only: what is liked about them, and what are their shortcomings?
 - Repositories – how they are used, where they fall short. What is the library's role in maintaining them, and what effect does this have on the overall future role of academic libraries?
 - The cost of ancillary services, such as provision of bibliographical records and search and discovery facilities, to the library if it has to provide them; and the logistics of how the library would supply these without support from the publisher.

In addition to requesting further help from the libraries who have participated in the current survey, a larger response from corporate librarians and librarians in emerging markets (China, India, other Asian countries, South America) should be sought.

Linda Bennett
Gold Leaf
May 2012