

# Why force the OA transition now?

An economist's view

Jeff MacKie-Mason

University Library

Professor, School of Information and Professor of Economics

UC Berkeley

**14<sup>th</sup> Berlin Open Access Conference**

**3 December 2018**



## **It isn't normal:**

Most firms can't dictate terms and ignore consumer preferences

## **To force a transition:**

Need to understand what's different about big for-profit publishers, and how to overcome their advantage

# We aren't making enough progress

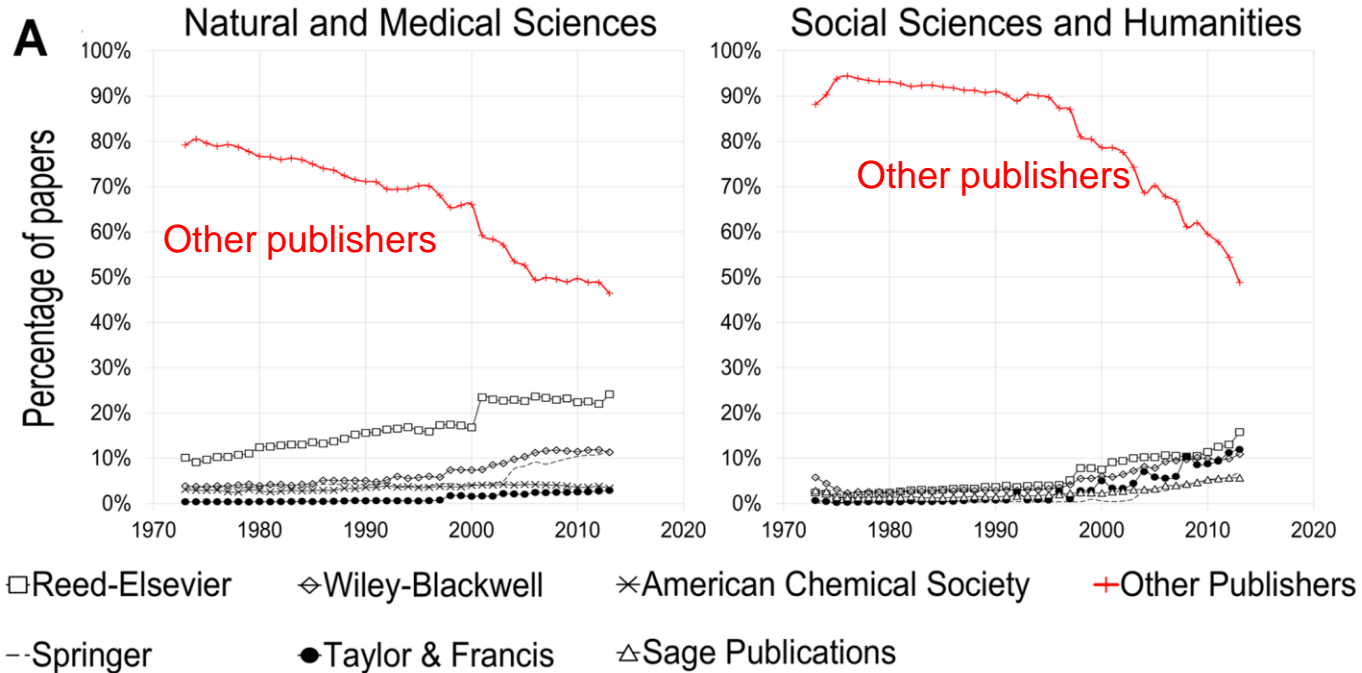


# Open access progress after 25 years: 6-11%

Open Access Publishing: Top Ranking Universities			
University	% OA	University	% OA
Johns Hopkins University	11.3%	University of California, Los Angeles	9.3%
Harvard University	11.0%	Rice University	8.9%
University of California, San Diego	10.6%	Columbia University	8.6%
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	10.6%	University of Pennsylvania	8.5%
Dartmouth College		<div>University of California, Berkeley</div> <div>9.9%</div>	
University of Washington, Seattle			
Duke University			
Washington University in St. Louis	9.9%	University of Chicago	7.8%
University of California, Berkeley	9.9%	Northwestern University	7.8%
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	9.8%	University of Virginia	7.7%
University of Southern California	9.8%	Carnegie Mellon University	7.5%
Cornell University	9.8%	California Institute of Technology	7.0%
Vanderbilt University	9.7%	Princeton University	6.9%
Yale University	9.5%	Georgia Institute of Technology	6.3%
Stanford University	9.3%	University of Texas at Austin	6.3%
Source: Web of Science (April 2016). Material covered: journal and review articles published in 2011-2015			

Analysis by Lokman I. Meho, American University Beirut

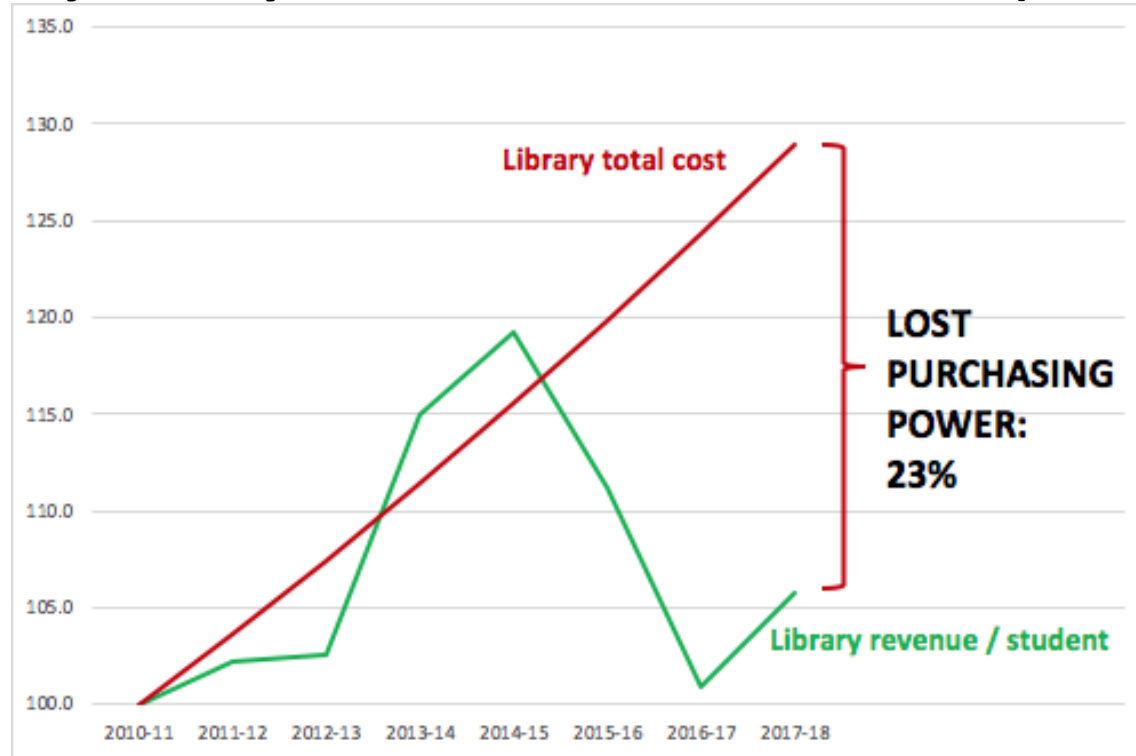
# Power increasing: Top 5 publishers, 1973–2013



# We can't afford to continue



# UC Berkeley Library cost vs. revenue / student (2010-18)



NB: Library cost index is wtd. avg. of labor and materials cost

# We have an opportunity *now*





# Why so little progress?

## Publishers don't want an OA business model

- With pay-to-read, they have monopoly power over readers
- With pay-to-publish, there is increased competition

**With monopoly power, they are able to refuse to change business model**

# But they are vulnerable, *now*

## Wherefrom publisher monopoly power?

- Authors give copyright → legal exclusive right to provide access

## We're having a moment: *access much less exclusive*

- OA (including pre-publication versions), and especially...
- Grey and black market servers

# Evidence of vulnerability

## Over 20 consortia & major universities have cancelled at least one Big Deal

- E.g., Germany, Sweden, CalTech, Florida State cancelled Elsevier

### Key: researchers *tolerant* because of alternative access

- E.g., Caltech: only 5% of user download demand has come to library for access assistance
- The other 95% satisfied directly by users

# We need more action, *now*



# **We cannot just sit by and watch the few and the brave**

**Germany, Sweden, Plan S: less than 10% of Elsevier revenue**

**Elsevier and others mounting legal and technical actions to stop pirates**

- If they succeed, they regain the market power to blockade transformation

# University of California has gone to the barricades

Big Deal contract expires 31 December

We have proposed a publish-and-read contract with N. American-compatible funding model

UC responsible for nearly 10% of US research publications

## We are far apart – stay tuned