



Sara Rouhi,
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How PLOS uses Dimensions to validate next generation Open Access agreements

Sara Rouhi is the Director of Strategic Partnerships at [PLOS](#), a nonprofit Open Access (OA) publisher. During our webinar [Using Dimensions Publications and Grants Data to Validate Transformative Agreements](#), Sara shared how PLOS views the evolution of the global Open Access publishing landscape, what role transformative and Open Access publishing agreements have in this evolution, and how PLOS relies on [Dimensions](#) data to uniquely inform their related strategies.

The rapid transition to Open Access & OA publishers

Many scholarly publishers are rapidly transitioning to Open Access publishing by signing 'transformative agreements' with academic institutions that would previously purchase traditional journal subscriptions. At the same time, Open Access publishers like PLOS are also striving to ensure that lack of research funding does not become a barrier to publishing in Open Access journals by establishing 'Open Access publishing agreements' directly with institutions. Regardless of the different nuances of these agreements, all players in the discussion need access to high-quality historical data to successfully create, evaluate and negotiate them.

The unique contribution of Dimensions data

While there are few, if any, organizations that can claim to have perfect data, the goal should undoubtedly be to strive for a level that is as good as possible. "Data underpins and supports the discussions, the agreements and of course the metrics for success following an agreement," says Sara. She continues, "at PLOS, we combine data from our own internal sources together with external data sources like Dimensions - which give us the crucial, broader view of the market place outside of PLOS alone."

How does Dimensions support PLOS?

"PLOS relies on Dimensions for baseline data about institutions and their funding sources for agreement discussions but also for internal business analytics," notes Sara. She adds, "Dimensions Analytics is particularly easy to use for non-analysts like myself who want to get in, get a specific question answered (like who is the most frequent funder of a specific country or institution), and get out quickly."

PLOS understands that subject matter experts need to dedicate their time to more significant impact analysis tasks. Accessing a database like Dimensions Analytics that already provides analytical views - layered on top of the data itself - means that many questions can be answered by the PLOS team at all levels.

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Dimensions provides the metrics to measure success

“At PLOS, our metrics for the success of OA publishing agreements relate to increased submissions and publications from existing markets and subject areas, as well as new target markets and subject areas we want to build. Dimensions is useful for the “before and after” picture, providing both typical journal metrics but also alternative metrics,” explains Sara. KPIs like publication levels, citation data, new geographies or subject area footprints, and alternative metrics can all be benchmarked using Dimensions.

Answering the PLOS team’s toughest questions

The PLOS team is focused on growing the trend in pure gold Open Access publishing. There are several strategies to do this, but understanding which institutions, schools and researchers are already active in pure gold Open Access is critical. Also, Dimensions uniquely provides funding data, specifically on active grants, allowing publishers to identify future volume of possible articles, as well as identify possible new authors and reviewers. The Dimensions analytical views rapidly answer questions for the PLOS team like:

- Who is active in Gold Open Access publishing?
- Which journals are preferred by which authors?
- Which institutions have the highest amount of pure Gold Open Access output?
- Which researchers would be suitable to invite as reviewers to PLOS One?
- Which (collaborating) institutions might be responsive to ‘transformative agreements’ based on their publication output trends?

How has Dimensions informed the PLOS data ecosystem?

“Using Dimensions data together with PLOS internal data, the PLOS team can build a broader, more powerful picture of activity beyond PLOS alone,” explains Sara. She adds, “we can understand what authors are doing when they are not publishing with PLOS - and knowing this greatly informs the overall PLOS strategy.” The robust visualizations and trend analysis views are not only simple and easy to create, but they help the PLOS team to establish baselines for KPIs, inform discussions around ‘transformative agreements’ and support the metrics for success once those agreements are up and running.

Finally, Dimensions is a database that is accessible to all. “We love how non-data specialists can answer a multitude of questions, saving valuable PLOS resources like time and subject matter expertise,” notes Sara. Ultimately, Dimensions Analytics also proves to be a useful “generalist” resource to the non-analyst and an important building block of a strong data ecosystem, vital for any publisher’s success.

Are you interested in learning how Dimensions can benefit your organization? Please contact us via www.dimensions.ai/contact-us/ and we’ll be in touch soon.