

ARTICLE PROCESSING CHARGES

And why the term is misleading.

WHAT ARE ARTICLE PROCESSING CHARGES?

Article processing charges (APCs), also known as publication fees, are fees publishers sometimes charge to authors to make their work available Open Access.



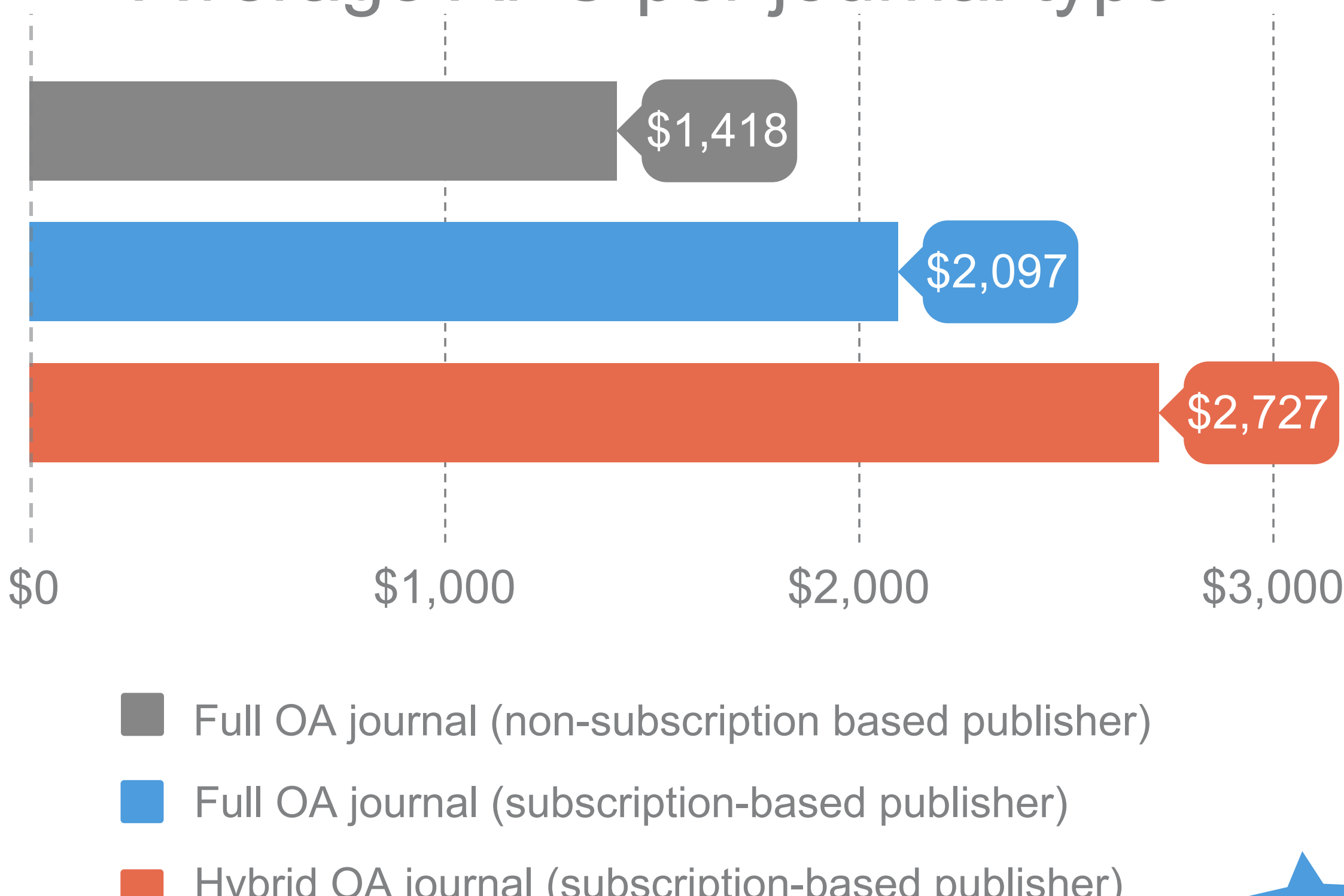
WHAT IS THE PRICE OF APCs ?

APCs range between \$8-\$3,900, but can often exceed \$5,000.

The average APC of full OA journals by OA publishers is \$1,418, while subscription-based publishers charge \$2,097 on average.

Hybrid journals are the most expensive with an average APC of \$2,727.

Average APC per journal type



Many full OA publishers do not charge APCs, and are subsidised through other means instead.

WHAT IS THE COST OF PROCESSING AN ARTICLE?

A study from 2016 found that 'an end-to-end scholarly communication solution can be provided exclusively by a combination of vendor services. Based on price data from 15 vendors, we found that the marginal cost of scholarly communication was between \$69 and \$318 per article.'



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

ARTICLE PROCESSING: COST

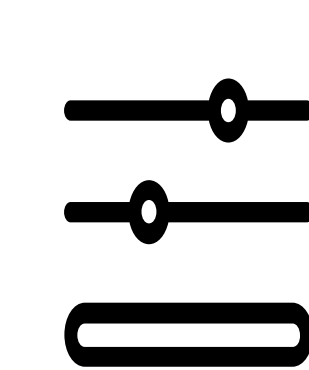
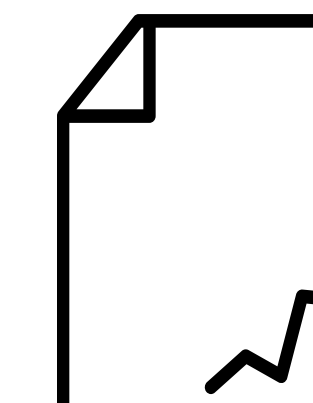
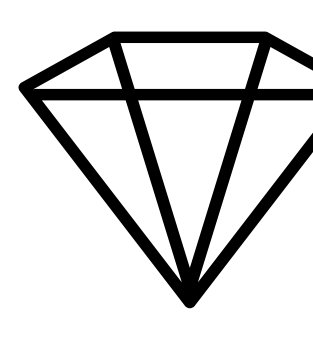
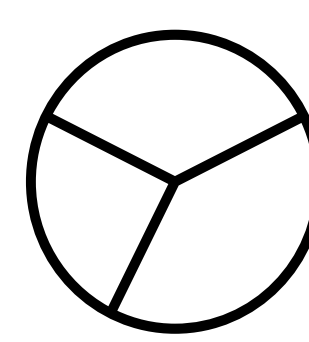
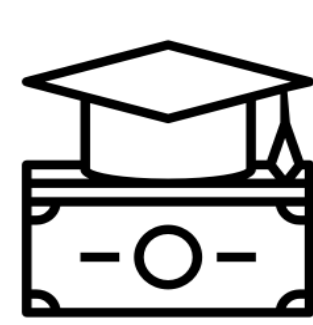
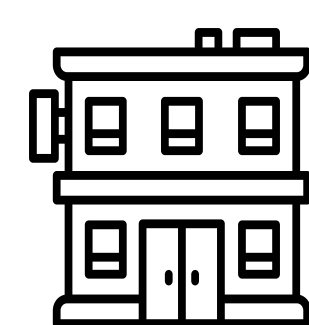


This is the expense a publisher incurs when processing an article.

The costs consist of **fixed costs** (e.g., platform maintenance, utilities) and **variable costs** (e.g., editorial work, typesetting)

The total cost is unknown in most cases, which stifles market competition.

If **volume** and/or **selling price** increase, production **costs** per article may decrease.



VS

ARTICLE PROCESSING: PRICE



This is what the author pays for the published article.

The price is determined by the **perceived value** to the author. (e.g., prestige, recognition)

Instead being based on costs, APCs often rest on the price & value, which are not sensitive to market forces.

If price < cost = publisher makes a **loss**; If price > cost = **profit**.

CONCLUSION

"Article Processing Charges" are thus 'an estimate of how much it would cost to **sustain the publisher's revenue stream** through 'APCs', which would be decoupled from the cost of article processing.'

If the true cost of publishing were publicly known, around 99% of the budget spent on publishing could be saved, or around \$9 billion a year - **while achieving 100% OA**.

