

# Individual Giving Update for Preprint Services Fundraising

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From: **Nici Pfeiffer** | nici@cos.io

Tuesday,  
Nov 12,  
10:01  
AM

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Dear Paper Services,

The Preprints Steering Committee (PSC) and several preprint services, expressed concern over the donate button and occasional donation banners that exist across the OSF, including preprint services' pages. Visitors to the preprints pages might expect that their gifts are going toward the specific preprint service based on the location of the donate button. Funds received by clicking on those calls for donations support COS, and it is not COS's intent to cannibalize donations from our shared user base, while also not segregating preprint services users from the rest of the OSF platform users. PSC identified a need to understand how much is raised through gifts made from clicks on the donate button or banner from preprints pages. To address the committee's request, we have outlined the data on giving below.

We also are exploring some possible solutions. One of the items that we have been discussing is how to help users on OSF who want to support a specific preprint service to do that. We have an approach that can be implemented immediately, and we did some analysis to estimate how much revenue we have received in the past from online donations that might inform strategy and growth of this as a revenue source for preprints overall and each of the individual services.

## Directing Donations

When users are on a preprint page, there is a top navigation menu on every page for navigation across the service. That menu includes a “Donate” button. Also, periodically during the year, there are fundraising campaign messages that include a banner making a donation appeal. Clicking either of those leads users to this [page](#). There are many paths to this page, making it ideal for including solicitation for preprint service support.

As a test to see if users would be responsive to supporting specific preprint services, we would add a sentence to the existing top-line appeal [on this page](#):

*Your ongoing support is essential to keep OSF and open science moving forward. With every donation, you're helping to open up another data set, supporting another preprint service, accelerating the pace of research, and ensuring science remains open. If you are looking to support a specific preprint service, please click [here](#).*

That link would take visitors to a [list of services](#) with information about who to contact or how to donate to each. We would test this for the next 3-4 months, during peak year end giving, and monitor the frequency of clicks that redirect to the services' pages. If it's an effective way for services' to raise money, we will find a more permanent solution; if it doesn't work to drive support to individual services, we will remove it. Your feedback is welcome on whether you'd like your service to be listed to see if this is effective, and what information should be listed for making donations to your service. As a reminder, COS cannot legally accept donations for the preprint services, so we will need each service to designate a recipient for the support for each service. COS can be the recipient for OSF and OSF Preprints more broadly. Below is a mockup of the page we are describing:

Preprint Provider	Donation Page	Contact Email
INA-Rxiv		dasaptaerwin@outlook.co.id
psyarxiv		Bbrown6@ggc.edu
socarxiv	<a href="https://giving.umd.edu/giving/fund.php?name=socarxiv">https://giving.umd.edu/giving/fund.php?name=socarxiv</a>	philipncohen@gmail.com
lawarxiv		ph424@cornell.edu
earthArXiv		Thomas.Narock@goucher.edu
engrxiv	<a href="https://blog.engrxiv.org/donate/">https://blog.engrxiv.org/donate/</a>	bergdev@uwstout.edu
arabixiv		khaledmoustafa@gmail.com
LISSA		vicky.steeves@nyu.edu
paleorXiv		jon.tennant.2@gmail.com
FocUS Archive		meames@fusfoundation.org
MindRxiv		wendy@mindandlife.org
sportrxiv	<a href="https://www.patreon.com/STORKinesiology">https://www.patreon.com/STORKinesiology</a>	aaron@sportrxiv.org
frenxiv		khaled.moustafa@arabixiv.org
AfricArXiv		info@access2perspectives.com
ECSarXiv		Beth.Craanen@electrochem.org
nutrinxiv		ksburger@email.unc.edu
MetaArXiv		khoerberling@berkeley.edu
EvoEcoRxiv		s.nakagawa@unsw.edu.au
MediArXiv		pooley@muhlenberg.edu
BodoArXiv		guy.geltner@scholarlyhub.org
EdArXiv		akmontoya@g.ucla.edu
IndiarXiv		sridhar@openaccessindia.org
agrixiv		sridhar@openaccessindia.org

## Historical Data

For some context of our history of online giving for supporting OSF Preprints, OSF, and COS to date, we pulled the figures for individual giving donations in 2018. Our grand total of individual giving was \$92,405.59. About 40% of that was gifts through this online donation page whether they found it by clicking on an OSF banner, responded to an email appeal, found it on the COS site, or were directed there to donate such as personal appeals or gifts from meetings.

Source	Total Donations
<a href="#">COS.io/Email</a>	\$ 36,599.72
Non-website	\$ 55,805.87
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 92,405.59</b>

It is difficult to know the breakdown of funds raised by the way that users found the donate page because the donation service is a third party tool that is not on our site.

To try to piece together more about the origins, we looked at our Google Analytics data for which page those clicking 'Donate' in the navbar or on banners occurred. For comparability with the donation data above, we examined unique clicks from the preprints pages to the donate page in

2018. Of all 4,059 clicks on “Donate” from the OSF, 21.3% were from preprint pages.

Total unique clicks from all pages	4,059
Total unique clicks from preprint pages	864
% of unique clicks from preprint pages	21.29%

If we assumed that 100% of online donations came through clicks on “Donate” from OSF and that likelihood of following through on a donation were evenly distributed by which page they clicked from, then this would imply \$7,790.63 of total online donations (\$36,599.72) were associated with clicks that occurred from preprint services.

Of course, we know that users arrived at the donation page for many other reasons, such as the email campaigns and direct appeals, so we don’t know what portion of the \$36,599.72 of online giving came from “donate” clicks. One estimation technique is to use the industry standard for donation conversion from clicks which is 18% (see links below my signature). Using 18%, implies that \$1,402.31 in donations came from preprint pages in 2018.

Given all the unknowns, what we might conclude is a range estimate. By making it easier for users to identify specific preprint services that they would like to support, fundraising from 2018 suggests that the 26 services collectively might generate between \$1400 and \$7800 from the online donate buttons and banners. Presumably, the distribution of those donations across services would be influenced by the size and charitable capacity of the user base for each of the services.

Simultaneously, with a directed effort and pathways to make donations, the total funds raised via this mechanism for the individual services might increase. As such, if you would like to test whether this is effective, we will be pleased to add your service to the page described above.

Best,

Nici, Kevin, Brian and Lucy

\*Sources for 18% Industry Standard conversion rates on donations:

<https://www.nonprofitpro.com/post/digital-benchmarks-nonprofits/> (18%)

<https://101fundraising.org/2017/09/no-average-conversion-rate/> (15%)

<https://mrbenchmarks.com/words/evolve-or-die> (21%)

<https://npengage.com/nonprofit-fundraising/does-responsive-design-really-raise-more-money-for-nonprofits-infographic/> (9%)

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