

The Revolution Won't Be Paywalled

A Manifesto for Scholarly Commons

"The peer review crisis is real—but it's a symptom of economic exploitation, not a crisis of scholarly practice."

The Problem Is Clear

The scholarly publishing system extracts billions from publicly funded research through unpaid labour:

We Provide:

- The research (publicly funded)
- The peer review (unpaid, 3+ hours per review)
- The editorial work (unpaid or £1,500/year)
- The institutional prestige
- The academic legitimacy

They Provide:

- Server hosting (~£500 per article)
- Copy-editing (~£300 per article)
- 37% profit margins
- Paywalls to our own work

The Mathematics of Extraction:

- **Elsevier:** £2.3 billion profit (2023), 37% margin
- **Springer Nature, Wiley, Taylor & Francis:** 30%+ margins each
- **The "Big Five":** Control 50% of all research output
- **These profits:** Higher than Apple, Google, or Microsoft

This isn't a publishing model. It's wealth extraction with a scholarly veneer.

The Revolution Demands

1. Knowledge as Commons, Not Commodity

Research funded by the public belongs to the public. Scholarly communication is infrastructure—like water, roads, electricity—not a profit center for monopolies.

2. Scholar-Governed Infrastructure

We have the expertise. We provide the labour. We create the legitimacy. We can govern our own publishing systems.

Diamond Open Access isn't hypothetical:

- Journal of Machine Learning Research: £6.50/article
- Quantum (physics): £489/article, no profit
- These work. We just need to scale them.

3. Redirect Existing Funds

The money is already in the system—it's just going to shareholders instead of scholars. UK universities spend hundreds of millions on subscriptions and APCs annually. That money could fund:

- Diamond OA infrastructure
- Institutional repositories
- Scholar-governed platforms
- Preprint servers
- Preservation systems

4. Prestige Is a Social Construct We Control

"Nature or perish" is a choice made by research assessment frameworks, not an immutable law. We assigned prestige to commercial journals. We can reassign it to scholar-owned venues.

5. Make Board Resignations the Norm

When NeuroImage's entire editorial board walked away from Elsevier (2023), it worked. When editors took Journal of Informetrics to independence, it worked.

If you're editing for £2,000/year while your journal makes millions for shareholders, **walk**. Take your editorial board, your reputation, your pipeline—and build scholar-owned alternatives.

The Revolution Is Practical

Individual Actions:

- Prioritize Diamond OA venues when publishing

- Refuse to review for journals with APCs > £1,000 or subscriptions > £2,000
- Serve on editorial boards for non-profit journals
- Deposit preprints before journal submission
- Advocate for Plan S/UK Concordat compliance in your institution
- Support early career researchers facing "publish in Nature" pressure

Institutional Actions:

- Redirect subscription budgets to Diamond OA infrastructure
- Support institutional repositories and preprint servers
- Reform assessment criteria to value impact over journal prestige
- Fund scholar-led publishing initiatives
- Negotiate hard with commercial publishers (or walk away)
- Join coalitions like SPARC, COAR, cOAlition S

Sector Actions:

- Funders mandate Diamond OA (like Wellcome Trust)
 - Professional societies reclaim journals from commercial publishers
 - Learned societies invest in open infrastructure
 - Research assessment frameworks decouple quality from journal brand
 - National governments fund scholarly infrastructure as public good
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The Revolution Is Now

The knowledge is ours.

The expertise is ours.

The legitimacy is ours.

We've been giving them away. We can stop.

| The revolution won't be paywalled.

The revolution will be open. 

How to Endorse This Manifesto

We don't ask you to sign. We ask you to act.

Show your support by:

Share & Amplify

- **Repost and share** this manifesto on social media using [# ScholarlyCommons](#) [# TRWBP](#) [# DiamondOA](#)
- **Link to it** from your institutional website, blog, or email signature: bit.ly/TRWBP
- **Present it** at departmental meetings, conferences, and workshops
- **Cite it** in your work on scholarly communication and open access

Adapt & Remix

- **Create your own version** - All content is CC-BY 4.0
- **Translate it** into other languages
- **Customize it** for your discipline, institution, or region
- **Use the graphics** from our resources page

Take Action

- **Publish in Diamond OA venues**
- **Refuse exploitative review requests**
- **Advocate for institutional change**
- **Support scholar-led initiatives**

Your endorsement is your action, not your signature.

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