Interpreting the Shadows on the Elephant in the Room
Why Economic Arguments Fail to Explain Scholarly Communications

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ELife to charge APCs

This is really interesting. I like the way that the rationale for the pricing is laid out in detail #openaccess
twitter.com/eLife/status/7...

@Stefano Tonzani
@tonzani

@CameronNeylon @openscience Stuff costs money. If it's free, it will either fold in the future or it will have to start charging.

6:29 PM - 29 Sep 2016
Cameron Neylon
@CameronNeylon

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twitter.com/eLife/status/7…

Elizabeth Yates
@LibraryWriteHer

Yes: cost breakdown is fascinating & refutes myth that publishing is free. But APCs are not a sustainable model IMO.
twitter.com/CameronNeylon/…

6:44 PM - 29 Sep 2016
He who receives an idea from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me.

Thomas Jefferson
...knowledge is a club good
How do we sustain public-making?
How do we sustain the club?
Collective (Public-Like) Goods are difficult for large groups to provision.

Small groups can work together.

Large groups will fail except under specific circumstances.
An Economic Theory of Clubs

By JAMES M. BUCHANAN

The implied institutional setting for neo-classical economic theory, including theoretical welfare economics, is a régime of private property, in which all goods and services are privately (individually) utilized or
Institutions are the prescriptions that humans use to organize all forms of repetitive and structured interactions.
Culture is one of these institutions...
CULTURE

GROUP

ENVIRONMENT

Hartley and Potts (2014)
Cultural Science
Knowledge as a product of translation
ESOTERIC

Ludwig Fleck (1981 [1935])
Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact
Ludwig Fleck (1981 [1935])
Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact
So what does any of this have to do with economics of publishing...?
Will competition bring open access prices down?

- If A and B are equally prestigious and it is cheaper to publish in A than B, an author who has to pay the publication fees and has two papers to publish will generally want to publish both in A.
- This competitive force should drive author publication fees towards average costs.

Ted Bergstrom, photo of slide from *Watching Your Cards in the Big Deal Science Europe Meeting on Business Models in Scholarly Publishing*, Fair use asserted
How can we prevent APC pricing being tied to prestige?
Can we shift the behaviour of institutional underwriters?
ENVIRONMENT
1. Focus on community building
2. Support collective models
3. Define service requirements
4. Build infrastructures
Prestige ≠ Price
Build sustainable communities in an environment where public-making is good for those communities.
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Slides: http://www.slideshare.net/CameronNeylon/sustainable-futures-for-research-communication