PLATO: Fostering Diamond Open Access in Switzerland

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Overview of Presentation

1. About the PLATO Project

2. Achievements & Results

3. To consider for next steps: Swissness

4. Assumptions

1. About the PLATO Project

> «Platinum Open Access Funding» project (PLATO) is an initiative of six Swiss universities and co-financed by swissuniversities (2021-2024), to strengthen Diamond open access publishing in Switzerland

> Goal is to foster sustainable Diamond Open Access Publishing in Switzerland by
>> - providing an overview on journals and services (including gaps)
>> - community building
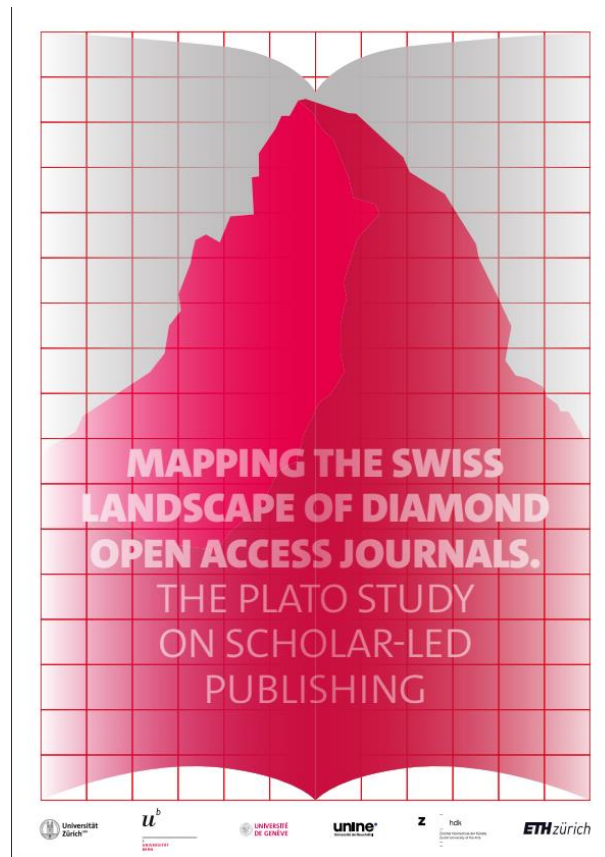>> - aligning with international initiatives

> Led by Dr. Daniela Hahn

2. Results of PLATO (overview)

- Gain in awereness for Diamond Open Access as scholarly open access publishing model

- Insights into the heterogenous and multi-lingual landscape of Diamond Open Access journals in Switzerland, their business models, challenges and opportunities

- First steps towards the creation of a Diamond OA network of institutions and journal editors

- Inclusion of Diamond Open Access in National Open Access Monitor

- Capacity building for Diamond Open Access as one focus of revised National Open Access Strategy (2025–2028)

2.1. Achievements & Results: Report

From April to September 2022, PLATO in collaboration with the Bern University of Applied Sciences has undertaken a study on the current landscape of Diamond OA journals in Switzerland, its scope, infrastructures, challenges, and opportunities.

- ➢ **186 Diamond Open Access journals** in Switzerland (2022) covering a wide range of disciplines and in various languages
- ➢ The journal editors often work with very **small budgets** and **rely on volunteer work performed** by researchers in their spare time.
- ➢ **Lack of advisory services** and information on best practices in areas such as indexing in databases, long-term archiving or providing metadata for articles.

MAPPING THE SWISS LANDSCAPE OF DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS.
THE PLATO STUDY ON SCHOLAR-LED PUBLISHING

2.2. Findings of the report: Challenges

- ➢ Financial sustainability & business models (including question of funding of platforms & services or funding of individueal journals? Or both? By whom?)
- ➢ Regarding expertise & cost effectiveness: Collaboration with publishing sector?
- ➢ Dissemination & Visibility
- ➢ Ownership & Governance of Journals
- ➢ Standards (formal, but also discipline-specific)
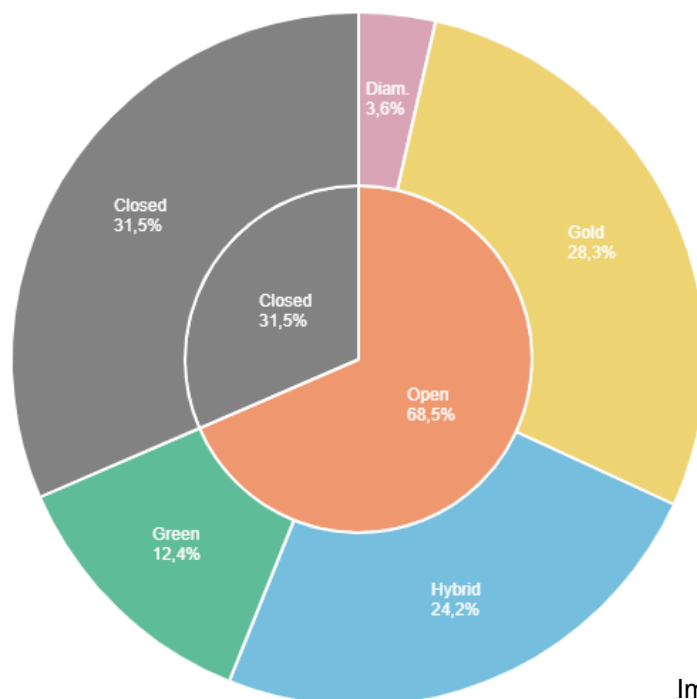- ➢ Need for quality control
- ➢ Etc.

2.3. A personal „case study" to the findings of the report

– In 2014 we founded the community driven journal „Informationspraxis" as a diamond OA journal

– Around 40 people from the field of library science and practice participated to the founding event and were ready to contribute as member of the editorial board, as peer reviewer, author etc.

– The work lay in the hand of 5-8 volunteers.

– Governance: association („Verein") in Switzerland.

– University library Heidelberg was ready to host the journal in OJS for free (thanks a lot!)

– We experimented with innovative formats as open peer review and technically with an automated conversion of Word documents into HTML, PDF and EPUB.

– The number of published articles grew, but declined in the last years. Also the circle of engaged people shrank. The work had to be done by 3-4 people in the end.

– After 10 years the founder generation is tired and the landscape has changed (more OA-journals). The editorial board decided to end Informationspraxis in 2024.

2.4. Achievements & Results: Visibility

Open / Closed ratio on national level (accumulated)

This graph shows the Open / Closed ratio of the collected journal articles published in Switzerland over the last five years (2020-2024).

- ➤ The national Journal Monitor has started in 2023 to also record the share of Diamond Open Access, based on the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ) in which journals can be indexed if they meet certain criteria.

- ➤ 69% OA, 31% Closed Access

- ➤ Share of 3.6% Diamond Open Access

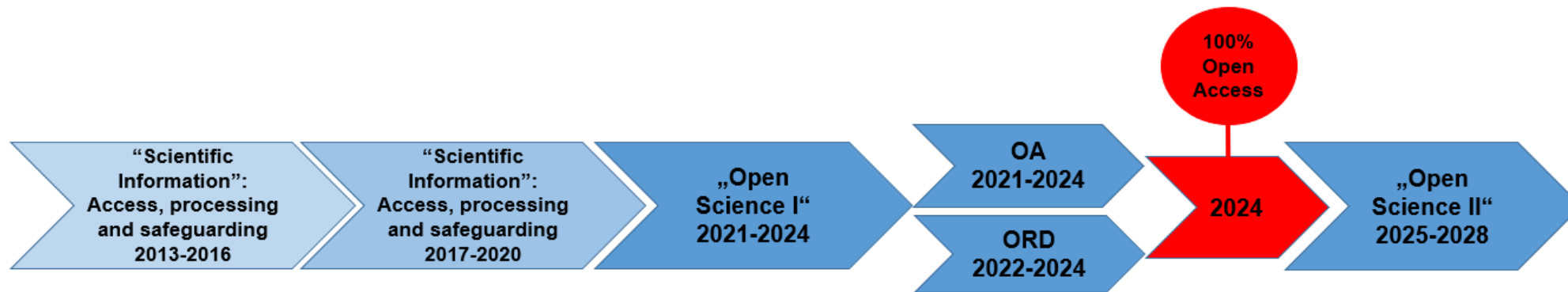Image source: Journal Monitor – Swiss Open Access Monitor (oamonitor.ch)

3.3. Awareness of different formats and approaches

➢ Contribution fees based on an institution's size and geographic location (f.i. contribution for Open Library of Humanties / OLH)

➢ Contribution fee to diamond publishers based on the proportion of publishing output – a model implemented by SciPost and SCOAP3; University of Amsterdam's approach which supports diamond OA journals with Euro 500 / article

➢ In-kind support from institutions, e.g. by providing institutional publishing infrastructure

➢ Support for non-profit infrastructure (PKO, DOAJ, via SCOSS)

➢ Subscribe to open approach to transition subscription-based journals to OA

Image source: A diamond in the rough: how to strengthen diamond open access? – The Publication Plan for everyone interested in medical writing, the development of medical publications, and publication planning

3.4. Achievements & Results: Revised National Strategy

- ➢ 100% OA missed

- ➢ Adherence to Open Science / Open Access, but not only in terms of numbers/shares

- ➢ Committment to equity and digital sovereignty/ownership

- ➢ Capacity building for Diamond Open Access as one important focus of revised National Open Access Strategy (2025–2028)

4. To consider for next steps: «Swissness»

➢ Long standing tradition of highly decentralized system with federal and cantonal HEIs

➢ Roles and responsibilites: Different mandate of funders SNF ≠ NWO (Netherlands) and FWF (Austria); Academies & Learned Societies

➢ Swissuniversities (Rectors' conference) provides start-up funding

5. Assumptions

➢ In the context of "Swissness", (financial) responsibilities and mandates need to be discussed: Costs shouldn't be born by universities alone (by supporting Diamond initiatives and providing institutional publishing infrastructures)

➢ Consider working with experienced service providers/publishers (not ruled out from the beginning, cost effectiveness)

➢ Involvement of communities will be key for issues of trustworthiness and quality

➢ National approaches with a focus on Learned Societies seem to be promising (Finland, Publish.OA.ie project).

➢ Greater alignement with international initiatives is key (OPERAS, DIAMAS, CRAFT-OA etc.)