



The State of Scholarly Communication

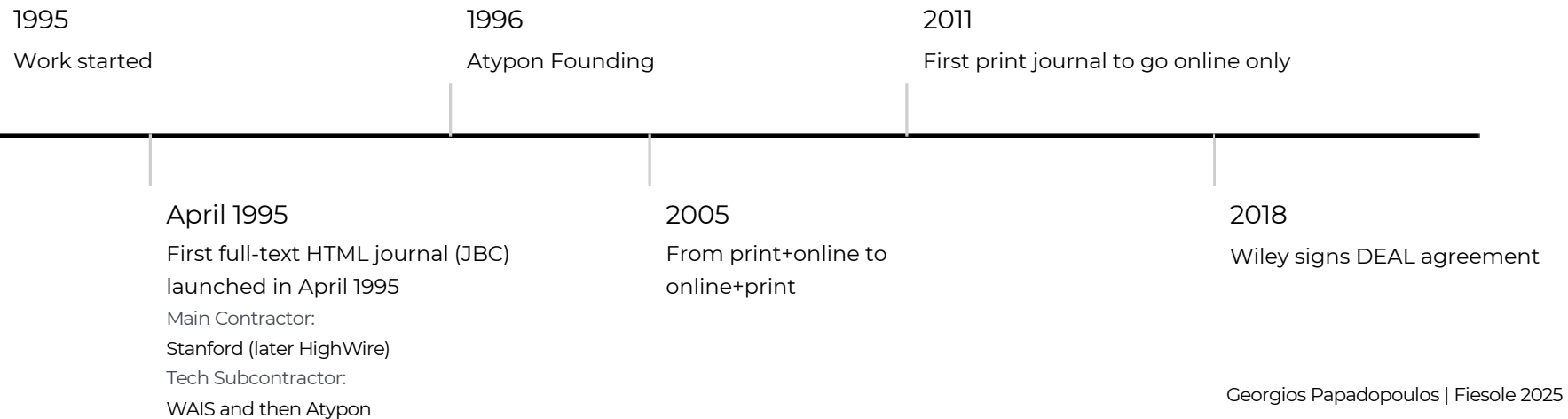
How did we end up here?

What could we have done differently along the way?

Why the current state does not suit the needs of the community



Timeline





How it started

Tension

Tension between the established & new unknown business model
What happens when there is unlimited access to the content?

Fears

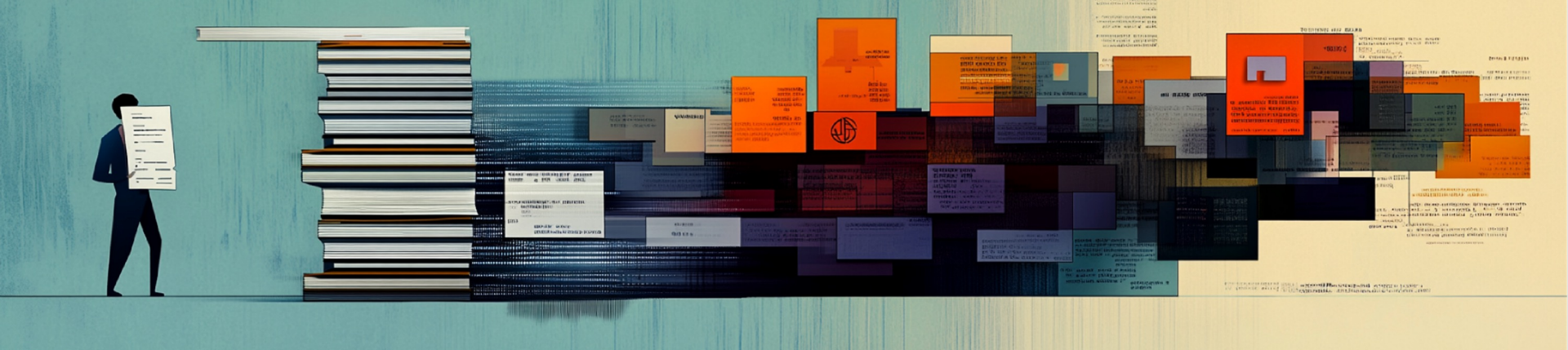
Print cannibalization
Loss of revenue
Added Cost

Online Access

Selling online access as a premium at extra cost

Struggle

Converting publishers one by one to online delivery



How it flipped

Publishers

Overcome fear of losing revenue

Users

Demand content online
Libraries have to buy online

Online Delivery

Becomes dominant
Print at a premium

Journal Branding

Online presentation dominant
Publishers invest heavily
Compete on online presentation and features



The sorry state of Scholarly Communication

Silos

We ended with 150+ vertical (silo) sites

Fragmentation

Users have to familiarize with each publisher's website features and interfaces, create accounts on each one and adapt to their peculiarities

Choppy UX

For the users, a choppy experience to get what they want



The Publisher POV

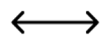
Premium website = premium journal

Show users all the features

Increase user attention

I want to stand out

Keep the user within



The Researcher POV

Impact Factor

Just the content please

All these buttons, very confusing

How do I do ABC?

What's new on XYZ journal site?



The Cross-site Services solution

Successes

Google Scholar

Scopus

CrossRef

ORCID

Altmetric

Failures

Several Digital Science tools

Atypon Connect, Scitrus

ResearcherApp

RedLink RemarQ



The Online Library Alternative

Online library hosts content from multiple publishers

One interface and feature set for all content

Online libraries compete on features, cost and user convenience

Superior to preprints because they retain journal branding and editorial value



I hold hope for online libraries

The business model flip from Reader-pay to Author-pay favors online libraries

Online site “featurism”: high cost with little marketing value

Acceptance that journal brand is unrelated to online presentation

Provisions

Publishers license content to multiple online libraries to avoid a monopoly

A monopoly could lower editorial standards without facing repercussions



The Silo whack-a-mole

As we demolish one silo, three are erected in its place
Silos used to face the readers; now they face the authors

The Author facing silos

Journal cascade

Journal cascade only allowed within publisher boundary

Editorial reviews

Reviews do not cross journal/publisher boundary

Waste of reviewer resources and author time

Author features / benefits

Author profiles & benefits scattered across publishing platforms

Georgios Papadopoulos | Fiesole 2025





How publishers can improve scholarly communication

Adopt a researcher-centric POV

Stop competing with more proprietary technology and walled gardens

Encourage platforms where you can collaborate with “competitors”

Adopt “What goes around comes around”: collaborate for the sake of researchers

Compete on being better editors

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