Open authoring tools for open science production

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Scholarly communication is undergoing a revolution with the move to open access. This has opened new opportunities and also new challenges. One of the most problematic issues are the costs of publishing. Some of this may be excessive profits of some publishers, but another part are actual costs associated with typesetting and document conversion.

The open source Fidus Writer editor was created in 2012 with the goal to create a web-based semantic editor for academics that would not require manual typesetting. Since 2015 the GESIS Leibniz Institute and University of Bonn have been working on the “Open Scholarly Communications in the Social Sciences” project which has enhanced Fidus Writer and connected it with other tools: databases for citation retrieval and OJS to create an integrated peer-review process.

While several other projects have come into being simultaneously with Fidus Writer, their focus has been somewhat different: ShareLatex/Overleaf have focused on LaTeX users and is therefore not suitable for less technically-inclined scientists. Other editors are either not open source, not working as collaborative editors or do not provide the tools needed by humanists and social scientists.

In this session, we would like to lead a debate on where open authoring tools should go next: What more is needed for non-technical users to switch? And what should the organizational model be to ensure widespread distribution and continuous development?