Thoth Expands Team and Collaborations, Introduces New Services

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The end of the COPIM project and the subsequent launch of Thoth’s involvement in the new phase of Open Book Futures project\(^1\) have led to a variety of recent changes for us. With this blog post, we wanted to provide an update on what has been happening during the past few months, including new colleagues joining us at Thoth, lots of work on finalising the formulation of services that we are now rolling out to publishers working with Thoth, investigating closer connections with other key infrastructures, and more.

1. **A Growing Team**
2. **Expanding Open Infrastructure Collaborations**
3. **Launching Thoth Free and Plus Service Model**
4. **Next Steps**

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### A Growing Team

In 2022 we registered as a nonprofit Community Interest Company in the UK, with a staff consisting of Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei (director/CEO, from *punctum books*), Joe Deville (director, from *Open Book Collective*), and Rupert Gatti (director/CFO), Javier Arias (CTO), and Ross Higman (all from *Open Book Publishers*). Following the announcement that Thoth would play a vital part in the Research England and Arcadia-funded Open Book Futures project (05/2023–04/2026) through its involvement in three of the seven new Work Packages, Thoth has been growing.

During the transitory phase from COPIM to Open Book Futures, our team expanded with former COPIM project manager Tobias Steiner as COO, who has been employed full-time with Thoth since June 2023.

Over the summer of 2023, the team then worked to define a number of areas that would need to be developed further to ensure that Thoth can sustain its community-led and not-for-profit approach to open infrastructure. As part of that overarching work to establish a self-sustainable way to finance the upkeep of Thoth’s infrastructure, we hired Hannah Hillen as Metadata and Publisher Outreach Specialist in early October 2023. Amanda Ramalho followed suit as Thoth’s Representative for Latin America under a part-time consultancy agreement, assisting in Thoth’s aim to diversify its user base and develop a multilingual interface. For more information about our newest team members, please find Open Access Week interviews with Hannah here, and with Amanda here.

In October, we organised a hybrid, two-day cross-initiative workshop which was kindly hosted by OAPEN colleagues Niels Stern and Ronald Snijder at Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Den Haag, bringing together more than twenty members from the wider Open Book Futures consortium. During those two days, we discussed ways that the initiatives involved in the larger Open Book Futures project can establish more closely-aligned
approaches with regards to publisher- and library-facing outreach. All in all, this was a welcome opportunity for our growing team to meet Thoth, OAPEN and Open Book Collective colleagues in person and virtually.

![Fig. 1: OAPEN and Thoth teams at work: discussion of technical workflows between Thoth, OAPEN, and DOAB platforms during the second day of our The Hague workshop.](image)

In mid-December, we welcomed Brendan O’Connell as the newest member of our team. Brendan will be working closely with Ross and Javi to develop new Thoth features, while also supporting the ingest of metadata into Thoth.

Between June and December, Team Thoth also presented on the status quo and next steps, including the evolving Thoth Archiving Network, at a variety of international conferences, including the annual LIBER, OASPA, Open Access Tage, Charleston, and Munin conferences.

**Expanding Open Infrastructure Collaborations**

As part of the Open Book Futures project, Thoth continues its collaboration with a number of like-minded infrastructure initiatives, including the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) and OAPEN, the Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative (COKI)’s Books Analytics Dashboard project, the Public Knowledge Project (PKP), and Wikidata. The aim is to establish potential routes for integration with Thoth’s open metadata model and platform, while also thinking collaboratively about new ways to combine these open infrastructures.
In its continued effort to establish further partnerships with key open access book infrastructures, Thoth also became a member of the pan-European network OPERAS in November 2023, with Thoth members now participating in OPERAS’ Special Interest Groups (SIGs) on Multilingualism, Tools & Platforms, and the Open Access Book Network.

Additionally, Thoth was approved as a Crossref Sponsor in December 2023. This will allow individual publishers to sign up to Crossref membership directly via Thoth. For publishers who join Crossref via Thoth, their annual membership fees will be waived, and Thoth will step in to cover the per-DOI costs of DOIs registered by publishers through that sponsorship.

We hope that the Thoth sponsorship opportunity will help publishers to overcome the administrative burden that they usually face when seeking to register DOIs. With their metadata already available in Thoth, they will be free to directly use the Crossref-compliant XML output generated via Thoth’s export API to register DOIs themselves. Or, if they consider signing up to one of our paid-for service packages offered as part of Thoth Plus (see below), we can facilitate that registration on behalf of them.

The agreement with Crossref also highlights the underlying ethos of what we are trying to achieve with Thoth: we are putting in the legwork of making organisational and technical connections with distributors so that publishers don’t have to. This also includes ensuring that publishers do not have to sign up to services that will subsequently lock them into perpetual dependencies. In the context of Thoth’s Crossref Sponsorship, publishers are able to register for (or to keep) their individual publisher-specific DOI prefix (the initial 5-digit part of a DOI). In so doing, we explicitly refrain from locking publishers into a platform-specific DOI prefix, and thus support publishers keeping their infrastructural independence.

We invite small and scholar-led publishers interested in becoming Crossref members via Thoth’s sponsorship to get in touch with us via info@thoth.pub.

**Launching Thoth Free and Plus Service Model**

Much of the work happening over these past few months has been focused on getting the details of Thoth’s two-tiered pricing model in place, the general shape of which had been announced during the early phase of Thoth (cf. Gatti et al., 2022).
We are happy to say that the work on this has now been completed. Thanks to the extensive input received from our stakeholder community, we have identified an initial set of platforms and corresponding dissemination services that are now included in those initial package offers. Thoth is now working with a number of early adopter presses to roll out these services, while simultaneously seeking to engage more publishers.

For more details on the variety of metadata creation, management, dissemination, and archiving services, please refer to the specifics outlined in this accompanying blog post.

Next Steps

Particularly during the initial stages of launching our services, fine-tuning will be essential to streamline the variety of workflows and processes involved in getting OA books disseminated to the variety of platforms on our list. We look forward to collaborating closely with publishers who join us early on to enhance and optimize these steps as we progress.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be seeking to expand the number of publishers using Thoth for metadata management and distribution of their OA books. Closely connected to that, we are working to improve bibliodiversity in the field, and are thus aiming to extend the geographic and linguistic reach of Thoth’s user base beyond anglophone countries.

On the development side, this will also mean an extension of Thoth’s database and capabilities towards enabling the recording of parallel versions in a number of languages. Next to that, work is already in progress to enhance the interoperability with other open infrastructures, such as PKP’s Open Monograph Press, and the OAPEN Books Analytics Service project, which is being led by Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative (COKI). We are also working hard to improve our coverage of open metadata aggregators and are e.g. collaborating with Wikidata, and will, in the coming months, seek to establish integrations with OpenAlex and other open knowledge graphs such as OpenAIRE.

All in all, that means exciting times ahead!

If you are a publisher and would like to get in touch with us regarding the use of Thoth Free, or our variety of metadata, dissemination and archiving services under Thoth Plus, please don’t hesitate to send a quick email via info@thoth.pub.

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**Footnotes**

1. See Adema & Steiner, 2023 for an overview of the move we’ve had between those two major projects.
References

  https://doi.org/10.21428/785a6451.8ffabe1b