

The Future of Bioethics Publishing: Principles, Platforms, and Practices

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Abstract

The way we publish shapes what we know and whose voices are heard. In bioethics, where discourse itself is a fundamental method, publishing practices must reflect core ethical commitments. This paper outlines a vision for the future of bioethics publishing rooted in three principles: true open access, a not-for-profit structure, and inclusive discourse. In this paper, we explore innovative solutions to ongoing challenges, such as the peer review crisis, editorial invisibility, and the dominance of monolithic knowledge models. We advocate for community-owned journals that treat publishing as a collective, reflexive, and discursive practice. The future of

bioethics requires publishing models that are as ethically sound as the work they aim to disseminate.

Introduction

Academic publishing is at a crossroads, facing serious ethical and practical challenges that undermine its mission of equitable knowledge dissemination. A handful of large for-profit publishers dominate the scholarly journal market – since the early 2010s, the top five publishers Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and Sage have controlled over half of peer-reviewed journal articles in indexes like Web of Science (Butler et al. 2023). In bioethics, many influential journals are owned by commercial publishers: for example, *Bioethics* is published by Wiley, *Journal of Medical Ethics* by BMJ, and *AJOB* by Taylor & Francis. This market power has led to exorbitant prices and profits. The push toward open access, while intended to broaden readership, has often taken the form of high article-processing charges (APCs) that simply shift costs to authors or their funders. One recent analysis estimated that from 2015–2018, researchers paid over \$1 billion in APCs to the “big five” publishers, significantly boosting their profit margins (Butler et al. 2023). Craig Klugman argues that *“open-access publishing might be better termed open-access reading, because now the publishing part is only open to those who can pay”* (Klugman 2024). Indeed, APCs range from roughly \$1,000 to over \$10,000 per article, pricing out many scholars. Most alarmingly, the APC-driven model creates perverse incentives: journals have a financial motive to accept and publish more papers (since each yields revenue), potentially compromising quality control (Klugman 2024). As Klugman notes, *“the more they publish, the more money the journals make. The potential for even reputable publishers to act like predatory outlets is strong and concerning”* (Klugman 2024; Butler et al. 2023). In short, commercialization has introduced biases that clash with the ethos of bioethics as a field committed to the public good.

Moreover, the current publishing ecosystem tends to amplify certain dominant voices and perspectives – primarily those from well-funded institutions in the Global North – while marginalizing others. Bioethics journals of high repute are often English-language, Western-edited, and subscription-based or APC-based, which means scholars from low- and middle-income regions or less elite institutions face barriers both in reading and in publishing. A recent survey of U.S. bioethicists found that the field’s demographic and ideological range is shrinking, warning of a continued narrowing of the field and its limited voices if systemic changes are not made (Pierson et al. 2024; Persad et al. 2025). When only a subset of voices can afford to publish or access bioethics research, the result is a mainstreaming of bioethical knowledge that may exclude diverse cultural perspectives, minority

viewpoints, and non-traditional epistemologies. In a discipline dedicated to examining values and justice in healthcare, such epistemic inequity is especially problematic.

Authors and readers also suffer from the inefficiencies of traditional publishing. The journey from manuscript submission to published article can be painfully slow – a recent analysis across major science publishers found the average submission-to-acceptance time is now about 149 days, and getting longer every year (Petrou 2025; Adam 2025). Much of this delay comes from overburdened peer review processes, where editors struggle to find willing reviewers. Peer review is in crisis across academia, and bioethics is no exception. Long delays, difficulty finding reviewers, lack of recognition, and concerns about inconsistency or bias plague the system (Aczel et al. 2025; 2021; Cheah and Piasecki 2022; Adam 2025; Smith 2009). The volume of submissions has exploded, but the pool of qualified reviewers has not kept pace. Journals now must send more invitations per paper to secure reviewers, as many experts decline due to overwork – a phenomenon dubbed “reviewer fatigue” (Publons 2018; Adam 2025). Global peer review labor in 2020 was estimated at over 100 million hours, representing billions of dollars of unpaid expertise (Aczel et al. 2021; Adam 2025). This system relies on good will, which is eroding as academic pressures grow. Reviewers, especially early-career scholars, receive little credit, and the process remains opaque: authors see anonymous comments, while readers see nothing. Although anonymity can help ensure impartiality and protect reviewers from retaliation, it also obscures accountability and recognition for reviewers’ contributions (Shah 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic further strained the system with surges in submissions. As invitations pile up, reviewers face burnout, and some fields report rising rates of scholars refusing to review (Adam 2025). The net effect is slower editorial decisions and sometimes superficial reviews. Meanwhile, authors often endure multiple cycles of submission and rejection at different journals, needing to reformat papers each time – an exercise in futility that wastes massive amounts of researcher time (Clotworthy et al. 2023). Clotworthy and colleagues calculated that *about* \$230 million worth of researchers’ working time was lost in 2021 alone due to manuscript reformatting for different journals, projecting up to \$2.5 billion in losses by 2030 if nothing changes (Clotworthy et al. 2023). This inefficiency is not just a nuisance – it represents a substantial drain on academia and delays the dissemination of knowledge.

Today’s dominant publishing model in bioethics (and beyond) undermines the very values it purports to serve. By monetizing uncompensated academic labor and prioritizing profit over access, it deepens global disparities and drains scholarly energy. Unsurprisingly, some scholars are now refusing to perform unpaid work for commercial publishers, signaling a growing pushback. For example, conservation scientist T. R. Shankar Raman publicly declared that he will no longer submit or

review for any Elsevier or Wiley journal, likening their business practices to “*unbridled corporate predation on captive academic prey*.” He notes that these companies treat the intellectual output of academics “*as if it was all their personal property*,” profiting from research that was publicly funded and reviewed by volunteers (Shankar Raman 2021). In place of this broken system, bioethics needs a publishing paradigm that treats knowledge as a public good, encourages diversity of thought, and operates sustainably for the academic community rather than extracting from it.

In the following sections, we articulate this vision in detail. We begin by outlining three core principles for a reimagined publishing model: (1) true Open Access that removes paywalls for readers *and* fees for authors, (2) a not-for-profit structure that reinvests in scholarship instead of shareholders, and (3) inclusive, pluralistic, significant and interactive discourse that actively broadens who and what is represented in bioethical debates. We then propose concrete reforms to peer review and editorial practices to address the current crisis of labor and quality. Finally, we consider governance and sustainability, outlining how a community-owned journal could be managed and funded, and issue a call to action for the bioethics community to co-create this future. The stakes are high: as bioethicists, if we care about justice, inclusion, and rigor in the content of our scholarship, we must also care about the vehicles through which that scholarship is published.

Core Principles for a New Model

True Open Access: balancing the voices by removing the price tag

A foundational principle for reimagining bioethics publishing is what we refer to as true open access. This differs from the prevalent “gold” open access model funded by APCs, which merely shifts the cost from readers to authors and thus perpetuates inequity, failing to qualify as genuine open access. Instead, we endorse what is often called Diamond Open Access, where neither readers nor authors pay directly (UNESCO 2023; 2024). Diamond OA is “*a community-driven, non-commercial model of scholarly publishing that removes financial barriers for authors and readers*” (UNESCO 2023). In practice, this means journals are funded through institutional support, grants, library consortia, or other cooperative means – treating publication as a public service rather than a market commodity (Bosman et al. 2021). This concept is also described as “fair open access” (Dellmann and Voigt 2024; FOAA 2023).

Freeing bioethics knowledge from paywalls and author fees is both a technical choice and an ethical one. Bioethics research often has direct relevance to public policy, healthcare practice, and societal debates on morality and justice. If articles are hidden behind paywalls, or if only wealthier scholars and institutions can afford to publish open access, one of the very goals of bioethics – to inform and include

broad publics – is undermined. The right to freely participate in the cultural life of a community, and therefore to access and produce knowledge, is a fundamental human right recognized as part of the open science ethos (United Nations General Assembly 1948). Early open access advocates framed it as an issue of justice: taxpayers fund much research, so the results should be available to all who seek to learn from it. This is even more salient in bioethics, which addresses issues of life, death, and well-being that concern diverse global communities. True open access can help democratize who gets to learn from and contribute to bioethical discussions, as it removes the exclusion of readers who lack subscription access – including practitioners in low-resource settings, independent scholars, and the general public. It also avoids creating a two-tier system of authors where only those with grant money or institutional APC funds can afford to publish their work widely, a phenomenon Klugman describes as making it so *“only researchers from well-resourced schools will be able to publish in the bioethics literature”* if APC trends continue (Klugman 2024). True open access is an ethical obligation for a field devoted to equity. Importantly, we specify *true* open access to emphasize that simply flipping to author-pay models is not a solution to the problem. While APC-funded open access increases readership, it introduces new inequities on the author’s side, as described above. A better alternative is the Diamond open access approach, where funding is secured through consortial or institutional means so that neither authors nor readers are charged. There are successful examples of diamond open access in other fields and regions that bioethics can draw inspiration from. For instance, Latin America has a long tradition of diamond open access journals supported by universities and government research agencies (the SciELO and Redalyc platforms have operated for over two decades with no fees for authors) (Debat and Babini 2020). The Open Library of Humanities (OLH) is another example in the humanities where a consortium of libraries pools funds to support a range of APC-free journals.

Within our field, we have nascent initiatives like Bioethics Open Research, a platform launched in 2023 by Taylor & Francis utilizing the F1000 model, which does not charge author fees directly for those with an affiliation or funding source (F1000 2022). What these models show is that it is possible to run high-quality journals without billing authors or readers, as long as the academic community and its institutions are willing to underwrite the relatively modest costs involved. A recent global study found that the median operating cost per article in a sample of diamond OA journals was around \$200, which is significantly lower than the typical APC at commercial journals (Science Europe 2022). While cost structures vary, the takeaway is that scholarly publishing can be economically efficient when profits and expensive marketing overhead are removed. The Fair Open Access Alliance – a group advocating for non-profit journal models, also known as cOAlition S – has suggested that an APC of no more than \$1,000 (and ideally much less) is sufficient to sustain a

journal when run on a not-for-profit basis (FOAA 2023; Dellmann and Voigt 2024). Many for-profit publishers currently charge far above this, indicating that much of the APC revenue is for profit, not for covering necessary expenses (Turner 2023; Butler et al. 2023).

Embracing true open access is particularly crucial for promoting global equity in bioethics discourse. Researchers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries often cannot afford journal subscriptions or APCs. By removing these barriers, a diamond OA bioethics journal would enable much greater participation from scholars in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and other underrepresented regions in scientific production. It would also mean that important bioethical research (for example, on local public health ethics, or on cultural perspectives on bioethical issues) could reach a worldwide audience without paywall restrictions. (UNESCO 2024). We envision the creation of a journal that welcomes submissions in multiple languages (with translation support, perhaps supported by AI tools), and that actively seeks out contributions from regions and communities that have been sidelined. True open access is a precondition for that inclusivity: if either reading or publishing comes with a price tag, the imbalance of voices will persist.

Not-for-Profit structure: one person's use of knowledge doesn't diminish another's

The second core principle is that the publication venture should operate on a not-for-profit basis, treating scholarly communication as a public good rather than a profit-generating enterprise. This structural choice enables many of the practices we advocate for, such as low costs, transparency, and community control. By “not-for-profit,” we mean that any revenue or funding received is used solely to maintain and improve the journal and related community services, with full transparency, rather than being paid out as dividends or excessive executive salaries. A non-profit publishing structure could take the form of being housed within a university, university consortium, scholarly society, or an independent non-profit organization or cooperative owned by its community of contributors.

Knowledge production and dissemination have classic characteristics of a public good – they benefit society at large, and one person's use of knowledge doesn't diminish another's. However, when private companies enclose academic journals behind paywalls and monetize them, they convert this public good into a club good or commodity. This has led to an imbalance where universities (and taxpayers) pay multiple times: first to fund research, then to buy back the published results via subscriptions or APCs, effectively enriching publishers who added relatively little value. We've already noted how APC-driven models incentivize volume over rigor. Similarly, for-profit publishers have been found to prioritize lucrative topics or regions (e.g., special issues that drive citations, or catering to authors who can pay)

in ways that might skew the field's development. A not-for-profit model would let mission, not margin, drive decisions.

In practical terms, a community-run, non-profit journal can set policies that align with scholarly ideals: for instance, accepting papers based on quality and contribution alone, not potential to sell reprints or attract news attention; issuing corrections based on ethical considerations without concern for brand damage; and investing in things like plain-language summaries or translations that improve public understanding. In this case, the measure of success would shift from financial growth to metrics like readership, citation of work in policy, diverse authorship, and educational impact. A not-for-profit journal should also embrace transparency in its operations and finances. One persistent complaint about commercial publishers is the opacity of their pricing and costs. Libraries and authors are often in the dark about why an APC is, say, \$3000 or what portion of that goes to actual editorial services versus marketing or profit. In a community-owned model, the annual budget could be public, detailing expenses such as website hosting, copy-editing, indexing, etc., and sources of income or support. Community members would then see exactly what it takes to run the journal and could hold the leadership accountable for any inefficiencies. This transparency builds trust (Spitale et al. 2024; Germani et al. 2024) and can also serve as an educational example to counter the myth that publishing *must* be expensive.

Moreover, any surplus – for example if fees are collected for supplements or if grant funding exceeds costs – would be reinvested into the journal or related scholarly initiatives. This might include subsidizing conference workshops, funding junior scholar awards, improving the platform's features, or expanding outreach (as well as, potentially, pay reviewers). The key is that the value generated by the community stays in the community. This is in stark contrast with for-profit publishers whose profit margins often exceed 30–40% – money extracted from academia to enrich shareholders (Larivière et al. 2015). Those margins are essentially the monetized unpaid labor of researchers. In a non-profit scenario, we can instead reward or recognize that labor. For instance, we might be able to offer honoraria for editors, or invest in tools that make their work easier, like software for reference checking, or AI assistance (Shankar Raman 2021).

For-profit structures introduce subtle (and sometimes overt) ethical compromises in publishing. Editors at commercial journals may feel pressure (even if unspoken) to consider the journal's impact factor and marketability when deciding on submissions, because those affect profits. Major publishers increasingly use transformative agreements that negotiate APC discounts or waivers with specific institutions or consortia. While these deals expand access for affiliated researchers, they create a two-tier system where authors at well-resourced universities publish at little or no cost, while those at less-funded institutions must pay full APCs. These

practices, though beneficial to participating institutions, perpetuate inequities for those who cannot afford to publish open access, effectively privileging some voices over others (Klugman 2024; Butler et al. 2023). In bioethics, where normative arguments and critical essays are common, one worry is that commercially driven outlets might favor views or topics that attract citation (e.g., hot-button issues in U.S./UK contexts) over niche or radical perspectives, thereby reinforcing a canon and limiting pluralism. A non-profit journal can more boldly pursue pluralism and experiment with content without worrying about alienating advertisers or subscribers. For example, it could publish more scholarly debates, commentary, or interdisciplinary articles. We claim that a not-for-profit organizational structure is the backbone that supports all other reform measures. It creates the conditions under which true open access is financially feasible, editorial practices can prioritize ethics and quality over volume, and innovations can be driven by community needs rather than by what sells. As Klugman put it, the bioethics community could “*boycott the commercial, for-profit publishers and work on developing high-quality, nonprofit outlets*” as a solution to the current exclusionary system (Klugman 2024). We wholeheartedly agree with Klugman.

Inclusive discourse: democratizing who speaks, how, and to whom

Removing financial barriers to publishing for scholars from low- and middle-income settings, or from less well-funded institutions (e.g. via APC waivers or discounts), is a welcome and necessary step. However, such efforts aimed at lowering costs for some, without challenging the system as such, should not be thought as a way for traditional publication models to gain further validation rather than evolving in response to innovations like those proposed in this paper.

Secondly, scholars from less well-established academic environments often face challenges throughout the publishing process, not only related in relation to costs. In many cases, weak academic publishing cultures contribute to these difficulties. This includes, for example, the (in)ability to recognize and avoid questionable editorial practices such as predatory publishing. Encouragingly, initiatives such as mentorship programs and writing workshops for early-career researchers are gaining traction (Gutiérrez et al. 2021). Supporting excellence through empowerment measures should remain a priority, as doing so would be a disservice both to these scholars and to science as a whole.

Non-academic publishing formats, such as commentaries, narrative blogs, and science popularization projects are gaining prominence worldwide (Goodes and Broadley 2022). However today, in most fields, the majority of published work still originates from a narrow group of publishing houses, countries, and academic institutions, as outlined before. That said, institutional evaluations and validation

continue to reinforce established hierarchies based on publications through traditional publishing models and outlets. Therefore, our proposal to change the publishing system needs to be embedded within a broader systemic change; this should encompass a change in the culture of institutional evaluation, which to date largely stems from the traditional publishing system

Beyond Monolithic Knowledge

Academic publishing often treats articles as static, finished products, presenting knowledge as fixed and finalized. We propose a different philosophy: publishing as an ecosystemic conversation. Furthermore, traditional journals often impose uniform structures rigid IMRaD (introduction, methods, results, and discussion) formats, or a narrow focus on analytic essays, or empirical studies. While rigor is essential, this can stifle creativity and marginalize exploratory or dialogical work. A good bioethics journal would instead embrace a plurality of forms, emphasizing that ethics is a conversation, not a canon.

We would encourage diverse formats: dialogues between opposing viewpoints, reflective narratives, short provocations introducing bold new ideas, and multimedia pieces incorporating audio or video. Open peer commentary, modeled on the *American Journal of Bioethics*, would allow target articles to be published alongside multiple commentaries and author responses, turning publication into a dynamic debate. Submissions flagged as “Conversation articles” could automatically trigger this process, creating clusters of discourse rather than isolated articles.

To extend dialogue beyond the page, we envision integrating webinars or panel discussions linked to published articles, with recordings accessible through the platform. Moderated online annotations, such as through Hypothes.is (Hypothesis 2023), could enable collaborative commentary and teaching notes, transforming static archives into living knowledge repositories.

In short, our publishing model reimagines academic journals as forums for ongoing, participatory discourse: a platform where publication marks the start of a conversation, not its conclusion.

Technical and Structural Innovations

Based on what discussed so far, an ideal bioethics journal should match its ethical ambitions with fit-for-purpose infrastructure. Below are some actionable and practical points for shaping a new publishing system in line with the discussion above.

Formatting

The most fixable pain point is formatting. As previously discussed, researchers collectively lose vast amounts of time reshaping manuscripts to idiosyncratic styles (Clotworthy et al. 2023; Kozlov 2023; Jiang et al. 2019).. A “free-format” first submission (single PDF/Word, XML-formatted, basic structure only) removes this tax. Only after acceptance would house style be applied, assisted by automated reference checks and plagiarism screens in the background.

Peer Review

An ideal bioethics journal would couple light-touch intake with fast review cycles (e.g., internal decision in ~1 week; external reviews in 2–3 weeks when sent out), and it would treat publication as iterative. Publish the first citable version quickly, then layer open reviews and versioned updates.

For a field built on argument and critique, it is a missed opportunity that reviews are not part of the scholarly dialogue. Several innovations could make review more constructive. For example, an open peer review: review reports and reviewer identities are published with articles, as in *BMJ*, *eLife*, and Bioethics Open Research. This increases accountability, promotes collegial feedback, and allows reviewers to receive public credit (Ross-Hellauer et al. 2017; Ross-Hellauer 2017).

Hybrid models: a reviewer consortium in which scholars commit to a set number of reviews annually, or reciprocal review systems where submitting authors agree to review others’ work. These approaches spread the workload and foster shared responsibility (Gallo et al. 2014; Walker and Rocha da Silva 2015; Morey et al. 2016).

Post-publication peer review: articles are published quickly as preprints and then continuously reviewed in public. *AJOB*’s Open Peer Commentary demonstrates the value of open debate. Community commenting functions could further expand participation beyond two or three referees (Tennant et al. 2017; Ross-Hellauer 2017).

We also advocate for academic credit for reviewing via platforms like ORCID or Publons; in line with this, a 2025 study found that 83% of researchers believe that greater recognition and career incentives would improve the peer review system (Murphy and Thomas 2025). The goal is to treat peer review as integral to scholarly dialogue, not merely a gatekeeping hurdle.

(Re)valuing Editorial Labor

We argue that editing is a scholarly contribution that should be valued and credited, and for which appropriate training should be envisioned. Editing involves intellectual and creative work: selecting, curating, and refining arguments. Editors could contribute signed, citable reflections for each issue and receive explicit

acknowledgment on articles they substantially shaped, similar to how book or special issue editors are credited.

Also, cases like the *Lingua* board's resignation and creation of *Glossa* (Rooryck 2023) and the founding of *Quantitative Science Studies* after the *Journal of Informetrics* board left Elsevier (Singh Chawla 2019) show that academic communities can successfully run high-quality journals. These examples highlight that value lies in editorial and peer review labor, not corporate ownership.

We can cut costs by reclaiming editorial processes under a non-profit structure. We can also align practices with academic values, and prioritize substance over journal branding. Recognizing editors with credit and voice will likely attract dedicated individuals to contribute and elevate the quality of the whole publishing system.

Technical platforms and hosting

Technically, the most sustainable route for community owned and operated journals is an open-source infrastructure such as OJS/Public Knowledge Project (PKP 2025), with multilingual front-ends, robust APIs, and modular extensions for semantic search, recommendation, and interactive content. Hosting under university/library stewardship safeguards independence; a modern reader UI (mobile-ready, accessible, fast) maximizes reach. The architecture should support multimedia (audio narratives, short video explainers) and article-level metrics without third-party analytics or advertising networks to generate revenue or track reader behavior. A practical example of this approach is the University of Zurich's HOPE platform (Universitätsbibliothek Zürich 2025), which offers an independent, open-access publishing environment managed entirely within the academic community.

Governance and sustainability

To sustain diamond open access, the journal needs sustainable, distributed funding. First, universities and libraries can pledge annual contributions, following models like the Open Library of Humanities or SciELO. If 30 institutions each contributed a modest amount on a sliding scale, annual operating costs could be met. Second, organizations such as the International Association of Bioethics or EACME could provide financial or in-kind support through publicity, meeting spaces, or special issue collaborations, while maintaining editorial independence. Third, open science funders often support diamond OA infrastructure. Grants can help cover initial platform development and staffing for the first few years, with the goal of transitioning to stable funding. Finally, a voluntary membership program could allow interested individuals to donate, providing flexible funds for sustaining editorial work.

Operating costs for a lean, scholar-led journal are surprisingly low compared to commercial publishing. The OA Diamond Journals Study, conducted by Science Europe and cOAlition S, surveyed 1,619 journals across disciplines and found a median cost per article of approximately USD 208, with more than 60% of journals reporting annual operating budgets below USD 10,000 (Becerril et al. 2021). The Open Library of Humanities (OLH) provides a concrete example of what collective funding can achieve. Its library consortium sustains dozens of humanities journals through a shared funding pool, demonstrating that a networked model can provide stability for multiple scholar-led publications without resorting to author fees (Eve and Edwards 2015). Extrapolating from these figures, a bioethics journal publishing 30–50 articles annually could likely operate on USD 15,000–25,000 per year, depending on infrastructure choices and volunteer labor. This is dramatically lower than the fees charged by commercial publishers. In other words, the annual cost of running an entire scholar-led journal could be equivalent to the revenue from just 5–10 articles at commercial rates.

A note on AI, impact and integration

A note on the role of AI: if used judiciously, AI can reduce drudge work and widen access: language polishing for non-native writers; draft translations to/from English (human-checked); citation integrity scans; lay summaries and audio narrations for readers. But AI must be assistive, not adjudicative. Recent reporting underscores both promise and risk as AI enters peer review and editorial workflows (Naddaf 2025). Policies should discipline AI use and require disclosure in line with emerging standards (Porsdam Mann et al. 2024), forbid sending confidential manuscripts to unsecured third-party tools, ensure human sign-off on all public content, and monitor for bias.

As AI lowers the friction of text production, writing may become faster than reading, driving a surge in submissions while human attention to the literature, the ultimate scarce resource, remains fixed or even declines. The result could be an expanding imbalance between what is written and what is meaningfully read, reviewed, or cited. Differential access to commercial generative-AI platforms may in fact reinforce existing inequities in global knowledge production. Moreover, because commercial systems draw unevenly on accessible and digitized sources, they arguably amplify existing linguistic and epistemic asymmetries, privileging voices already dominant in the global research corpus while preventing the emergence of those from less-represented regions and languages.

Conclusion and Call to Action

The way bioethics is published is relevant as it actively shapes which voices are heard, which debates gain legitimacy, and what counts as ethical knowledge. Current publishing systems, dominated by commercial interests, prohibitive APCs, and fragmented governance structures, often contradict the very values that bioethics seeks to uphold. They restrict access, marginalize underrepresented perspectives, and slow the circulation of ideas through opaque and inefficient processes.

We have outlined a vision for a different future: community-owned, diamond open access journals that treat publishing about bioethics as a collective ethical practice, rather than a market commodity. This model embodies a form of collectivization of the means of knowledge production, shifting control from corporate publishers to the scholarly community itself. Built on inclusivity, transparency, and sustainability, it integrates innovative peer review, open data, and flexible, multimedia formats to promote dialogue, rather than relying only on static, standardized formatting outputs. Realizing this vision requires collective action. The initial steps must be deliberate but pragmatic: launch a pilot issue to test workflows and demonstrate value, build a diverse coalition of editors, reviewers, and institutions to guide governance, and secure seed funding from universities, scientific societies, and open science funders.

The alternative, i.e. accepting the status quo, means preserving a system that privileges well-funded voices and perpetuates inequities. Bioethics, as a discipline devoted to justice, has a responsibility to model the values it advocates. To critique systems of healthcare and research while remaining complicit in exploitative publishing would be a profound irony.

We call upon colleagues, institutions, and allies to co-create this future. Whether through submissions, editorial work, financial support, or advocacy, every contribution matters. Together, we can build a publishing ecosystem that reflects the diversity and dynamism of global bioethics, ensuring that our field's intellectual outputs are free to access, inclusive in scope, dialogic, and accountable to the communities they serve. The challenge is big, but the opportunity is greater. We have the possibility to strengthen bioethics as a discipline, and to offer a model for other fields grappling with similar inequities in publishing.

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