Is going solo a good idea?

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The size distribution of OA publishers
Size distribution – the numbers (2011-06-06)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher size</th>
<th>Publishers</th>
<th>Journals</th>
<th>Publishers</th>
<th>Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3397</td>
<td>3397</td>
<td>86.6 %</td>
<td>52.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>7.1 %</td>
<td>8.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>2.0 %</td>
<td>3.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1.1 %</td>
<td>2.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0.6 %</td>
<td>1.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.4 %</td>
<td>1.4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0.3 %</td>
<td>1.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.2 %</td>
<td>1.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.2 %</td>
<td>1.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.2 %</td>
<td>0.9 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>0.8 %</td>
<td>6.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>0.2 %</td>
<td>3.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>0.1 %</td>
<td>4.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>0.1 %</td>
<td>9.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3921</td>
<td>6446</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What seems to be the problem?

- Small-scale production is economically inefficient
  - Fixed costs divided on a small number of articles
  - No scope for division of labor, gaining expertise
- Either costly
  — or low technical quality (or both)
Publisher size and DOAJ – a (very) general picture

Larger publishers
- Deliver article level metadata
  - Increases distribution
- Publish a CC-license
  - Allowing harvesting and increased distribution
- Earn the SPARC Europe Seal of Approval

Smaller publishers
- Do not deliver article level metadata
  - Don’t get distribution through DOAJ
- Do not publish a CC-license
  - Cannot easily be harvested
- Do not earn the SPARC Europe Seal of Approval
Publisher size and advertising – the general picture

Larger publishers
• Use advertising as one of many sources of income (most of them)
• Use forms of advertising that has low costs to the publisher
• Use forms of advertising that minimizes problems with editorial integrity

Smaller publishers
• Prefer to be totally dependent on support from one source? (Most don’t have advertising)
• Use forms of advertising that is costly in terms of time spent on administration
• Prefer forms of advertising that easily will lead to (suspicions of) problems with editorial integrity
More differences …

Larger publishers
- Larger number of articles per journal per year
- Article design very competent
- Site design efficient
  - Use of space
  - Many hyperlinks
  - Advertising inconspicuous
  - Contact information good
  - Policies stated
  - Copyright/license info clear

Smaller publishers
- Smaller number of articles per journal per year
- Article design somewhere between quite competent and definitely incompetent
- Site design often inefficient
  - Abuse of space
  - Little hyperlinking
  - Abusive advertising
  - Contact information lacking
  - Policies missing
  - Copyright? License??
Even more ...

Larger publishers
- Use DOI for articles
- Ensure indexing of journals in various services
- Many article formats
  - PDF, XML, HTML, eBook coming

Smaller publishers
- DOing nothing
- Journals generally not indexed
  - Except by Google
- Only one article format
  - PDF or HTML
Is this important?

- In Open Access the perspective is turned around:
  - A traditional journal creates content for its readers
  - An OA journal disseminates content for its authors
- Anything that influences dissemination is therefore of critical importance to OA journals!
Why is the situation so?

- Small publishers/journals are often humanities/social science journals
  - The income side is small
  - Few resources available
- A large number of competences necessary
  - The editors are in possession of few of them
    - And the editorial team is small
  - Journals lack funding to buy what is needed
- Editors do not necessarily realize what is missing
  - To them, content is King
  - But on the Internet, context is Emperor!
What can (cheaply) be done?

- Co-operation is a generic, low-cost approach to problem-solving …
  - but seems to be an approach little used in academic circles
- Important to preserve editorial independence and integrity
  - But this is not achieved through operating OJS on your own!
  - Editorial work is weakened by using resources on technical and administrative matters
  - Financial difficulties and low distribution doesn’t help your editorial integrity or independence
What to do?

- Have someone else do the technical work on OJS (servers, installation, upgrades etc.)
  - Don’t do programming – use software as it is
  - Hosting can be bought – it is worth it!
- Find someone to help you with setup
  - Buy the help, if need be
- Listen to advice on what you should do
  - Don’t insist on learning everything by erring yourself
    (Learning through the errors of others is a sign of wisdom)
Organizing co-operation

- Institutions should organize this
- Creating central resources
  - Hosting software for journals
  - Competence on using the software
  - Competence on other technical or administrative aspects of operating an OA journal
    - DOI
    - Indexing – ISI, Scopus etc.
    - Inclusion in and delivering metadata to DOAJ
    - Policies
    - Licenses
    - Advertising – if desirable
- Cheaper in sum than creating competence per journal
  - Or more competent
  - In either case, more dissemination and quality for the bucks!
Examples

Five Norwegian universities/university colleges (their libraries)
- More institutions probably following suit
- Local competence centres
  - Hardware and software operation (all OJS)
  - Competence on software utilisation
  - Various levels of other services
- Hosting 3–5 journals each (currently, but ambitions to grow)
  - Relieving editors of the technical work
  - Freeing their time for editorial work
- Doesn’t solve all problems
  - But some of the small-scale inefficiency is alleviated
Resources for co-operation

- The PKP European Network – can be joined or followed: [http://pkp.sfu.ca/wiki/index.php/PKP_European_Network](http://pkp.sfu.ca/wiki/index.php/PKP_European_Network)