

**UiT**

THE ARCTIC  
UNIVERSITY  
OF NORWAY

# Oh No – Not Yet Another Small, Stand-Alone Humanities Journal!

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Jan Erik Frantsvåg  
Open Access Adviser  
University Library  
UiT The Arctic University of Norway





# Why not?

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- This may not be the whole truth about all such journals, but a general impression (backed by some analyses) is that
  - Small journals are good at:
    - Quality assuring content
    - Creating communities
  - They are not good at:
    - The technicalities of publishing and distribution
    - Typesetting and design
    - Open Access
    - Economics
    - Sustainability
      - Often dependent on one person's enthusiasm and energy
  - They often have financial difficulties



# Examples of «non-professional» behaviour

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- Journals from smaller publishers do not have a policy listed in Sherpa/RoMEO (a vast majority)
  - The source of information about self-archiving policies
  - Where authors having a funder mandate to adhere to, look to see if they can publish in a journal
  - Most smaller journals are actually very self-archiving friendly
- OA journals from smaller publishers
  - Are not listed in DOAJ -> invisible (some)
  - Listed, but not depositing article level metadata (a majority)
  - Do not use a CC license (a vast majority)



# Present status in the Nordic countries

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- About 500 Nordic journals
  - From a data set from early 2012 over journals accredited in the Norwegian system for financing HE institutions
  - Will probably still give an accurate enough picture
- Most of them published by small publishers
  - At least 177 published stand-alone
    - Publisher info lacking for 109 journals – probably also small publishers
  - Only 15 publishers publish 5 or more journals (a total of 135 journals)
  - Small publishers generally publish small journals (in terms of articles per year)
  - Few subscribers to a normal journal



## Present status in the Nordic countries cont.

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- Open Access
  - 38 publishers publish a total of 44 OA journals
    - This number is probably much larger today
  - Only 3 publishers publish more than 1 OA journal
    - The institutional publishing services are rather invisible, because they don't count as publishers
  - Even the largest publishers publish few OA journals
- Conclusion: Nordic journals are small, subscription based and published by small publishers or by themselves



# The top of the list

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Publisher	Number of journals	Open Access?		Total
		Yes	No	
Universitetsforlaget		1	30	31
Novus Forlag			13	13
Tapir Akademisk Forlag			10	10
Aarhus Universitet		2	7	9
Taylor & Francis			9	9
Fagbokforlaget			8	8
Göteborgs universitet			8	8
Uppsala universitet			8	8
Routledge			7	7
Lunds universitet			6	6
Københavns Universitet			6	6
Co-Action Publishing		4	1	5
Nordicom		1	4	5
Linköping University Electronic Press		3	2	5
Museum Tusulanums Forlag			5	5
Syddansk Universitetsforlag			4	4
Umeå universitet		1	3	4
Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien			4	4
Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Inc.		1	2	3
Universitetet i Oslo			3	3
Arkeologisk museum i Stavanger			3	3
Aarhus Universitetsforlag			3	3



# National policies

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It looks like all Nordic countries are steering journals towards OA

- NOP-HS supports OA
- Norwegian Research Council supports OA and would like to make Gold OA the model
  - We're waiting for a financial model
- The Danes say Open Access should be the model
  - Support?
- The Finns say Open Access should be the model
  - They are trying to find models to support a transition
- The Swedes don't care – they won't support journals any more ...
- And internationally more and more research funding bodies demand results to become Open Access

# Need to re-orient the models

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- Subscription-based financing is increasingly difficult
  - Stand-alone journals and small publishers squeezed by the size of the big deals
  - The public is turning towards electronic media
  - Subscription income is declining
- National or Nordic level grants will be directed towards Open Access
  - Or disappear
- Funder mandates will steer manuscripts towards OA journals



# Scaling

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- Subscription and grant financing doesn't scale
  - More manuscripts means less resources available per articles
  - Fewer manuscripts creates the need for explanations
    - Or the need to lower standards
- New fields need new journals
  - Or new space in old journals
- Science – even humanities and social sciences – grows
- Some fields could need the possibilities inherent in e-only publishing



# Mega-journals

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- A new phenomenon starting 2006 with PLOS ONE
- Multidisciplinary (PLOS ONE covers the whole of Science and Medicine)
- Peer review
  - But not necessarily judging importance
- PLOS ONE and most others has a threshold model
  - Technically sound
  - Well enough written
  - PLOS ONE published more than 23,400 articles in 2012
- Well suited to present negative results
- Well suited to subjects of low interest in mainstream journals

# HSS mega-journals?

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- They exist!
  - In the UK
- Humanities Directory and Social Sciences Directory
  - <http://www.humanitiesdirectory.com/index.php/humanitiesdirectory>
  - <http://www.socialsciencesdirectory.com/index.php/socscidir>
  - A commercial enterprise
  - A few issues have been published (started 2012)
- Open Library of Humanities
  - <https://www.openlibhums.org/>
  - A not-for profit collaboration between scholars
  - No articles published yet ... (started 2013)



# Why Megajournals in the Humanities?

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- More robust than small journals
  - Few manuscripts in one field will be balanced by manuscripts in other fields
  - Not dependent upon any single person
- E-publishing gives new opportunities
  - Embedding sound and video
  - Colours are cheap
  - Pictures, illustrations, tables
  - Enclosing data sets with the publication
- Continuous publication
  - No need for the next issue to have your paper read
- Increases visibility
  - The larger the journal, the more important for indexing services
- Size increases competence and efficiency



# Financial needs of a megajournal

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- Editorial work (and peer review) donated by researchers
  - As usual ...
- Technical work and platform must be paid for
- Copy-editing, proofreading, typesetting must be paid for
- Such a journal needs financial income!



# Finding income

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- Grant support from various sources
  - Including in-kind donations from institutions
  - But needs real cash!
- Article processing charges (author-side payments, APC)
  - Scales with the number of articles
  - Increasing number of institutions have set up funds or other mechanisms to pay for this
- Sale of versions? (OA to HTML, sale of PDF, ePub etc.)
- Advertising?
- Donations?



# A Nordic Mega-journal for the Humanities

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- For
  - Nordic subjects in any language
  - General subjects in Nordic (i.e. Danish, Swedish, Norwegian) languages
- Multidisciplinary
  - (Initially) based on specific subjects
    - Lacking journals or lacking capacity
      - New specialities
      - Older journals giving up
      - Or existing journals lacking sufficient manuscripts
    - Fields needing the new capabilities of e-only publishing
  - Flexible
    - Adding subjects/fields as the need arises and resources become available
  - An editorial team per subject field
  - An international editorial board
- Accredited on level 1 in the Norwegian system

# It needs

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- Editors who want to convert their existing activities to fit this model and take part in a start-up project
  - Or to start up new activities within such a framework
- Groups of scholars who need new publishing venues
  - Or the possibilities e-publishing brings
- Long-time (3–5 years) financial backing from
  - Research councils
  - NOP-HS
  - Larger institutions
- A commitment to fund APCs
  - From the HE/research community in general
- Technical support
  - Publishing has a lot of technologies embedded
- Management
  - Exploiting commercial income sources
- A base at an institution in a Nordic country





## Goals (long-term)

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- Financial viability
  - No (or strongly reduced) need for long-term direct support
  - Ability to accept non-funded manuscripts
- A good market share – 500–1000 articles per year
- Good standing as a good journal for authors
- Indexing by Web of Knowledge and SCOPUS
  - Acceptable levels of citation
- High number of downloads from outside HE
- Follow the industry standards



# Who wants to join?

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- This is a vision, not a project
  - Yet ...
  - It is not my project, it should be led by editors
- If you find the idea interesting, let us talk and explore possibilities
- Talk to colleagues
- Think through your needs
  - Not your habits ...
  - The traditional journal of today was a radical break with traditions when the first ones came in 1665
- Where could money be found to explore this?
  - Needs an initial «investment»

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Jan Erik Frantsvåg

[jan.e.frantsvag@uit.no](mailto:jan.e.frantsvag@uit.no)

(+47) 77 64 49 50

(+47) 995 06 207

