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

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Why not?

- 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

- 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

- 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.

- 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

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

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

- 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

- 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

- 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?

- 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?

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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)

- 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?

- 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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