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

Rushing to Revolution? Open Access Models for Humanities Journals
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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)
• OA journals from smaller publishers
  – Are not listed in DOAJ -> invisible (some)
  – Do not use a CC license (a vast majority)
    • No-one knows what they can do with the content
  – Have no listing in Sherpa/RoMEO
    • Self-archiving difficult
  – Have a financing model that does not scale
Are small OA publishers a problem?

• Single journal publishers publish nearly half of all OA journals
  – Earlier data suggest they publish more than 30 % of traditional journals
• Between 80 and 90 % of all publishers publish only 1 journal
• When we add those who publish 2 journals …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher size</th>
<th>Number of titles</th>
<th>% of titles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>14 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-49</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>6 %</td>
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<td>6-9</td>
<td>474</td>
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<td>2-5</td>
<td>1774</td>
<td>18 %</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4707</td>
<td>47 %</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9960</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
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<tr>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1,2 %</td>
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<td>2-5</td>
<td>665</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4707</td>
<td>85,0 %</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5540</strong></td>
<td><strong>100,0 %</strong></td>
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The Dutch landscape

- Traditional publishing (Ulrich’s 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher size</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>% of titles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200+</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-25</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totalsum</td>
<td>1386</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Open Access Publishing (DOAJ, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publ. size</th>
<th>Titles</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totalsum</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publ. size</th>
<th>Publishers</th>
<th>% of publishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Publisher size | Publishers | % of publishers |
----------------|------------|-----------------|
| 200+           | 3          | 3%              |
| 50-99          | 4          | 4%              |
| 10-25          | 3          | 3%              |
| 5-9            | 4          | 4%              |
| 2-4            | 11         | 10%             |
| 1              | 86         | 77%             |
| Total          | 111        | 100%            |
The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

- A service started in 2003 at Lund University Library (Sweden)
- The place to look for OA journals
  - Some are not listed
    - Invisible
  - Quality criteria
    - Non-listing should indicate low quality
  - Stricter inclusion criteria being implemented
    - Currently listed journals need to be re-accredited
    - Re-accreditation means you have to think through things
      - And spend time answering questions
    - Some quality journals could lose their listing because they don’t understand the importance or the consequences of not being listed
- The mechanism for free distribution of article metadata to important library services
  - Only 59 per cent of journals use this
    - The remaining 41 per cent – do not need/want readers?
  - Most important to smaller publishers
    - Large publishers will be included in library services anyway
Do small OA publishers deliver article level metadata to DOAJ?

- World
- The Netherlands
Creative Commons (CC) licenses

- Standardized, internationally understandable licenses
  - Translated into numerous languages
  - Exist in three versions:
    - Human readable
    - Computer readable
    - Lawyer readable
  - A number of options – which one is the best, may be discussed
    - My preference for CC BY – allows maximum re-use
- With such a license, everyone – including computers – know what use can be made of the content
  - A necessity for efficient and wide distribution
  - No-one goes hunting for a home-made license from a small publisher
    - Definitely not one in Dutch or Norwegian
    - Often impossible to find
    - Usually incompetently drafted, if you ask a lawyer
  - Large publishers will be included in distribution services anyhow
Do small OA publishers use CC licenses?

- The world
- The Netherlands
SHERPA/RoMEO

- A service from U of Nottingham/JISC
  - Free service
- Lists information about the self-archiving policies of publishers
  - No requirement for a specific policy
    - “No self-archiving permitted” is an acceptable policy for RoMEO
    - They don’t discuss or promote specific policies, they list them and make them available to others
  - Possibilities for setting specific conditions
    - Time – immediate, n months embargo etc. for various versions
    - Site – non-commercial, author’s, authors’ institutional etc.
- Used by various services to inform authors about self-archiving
  - An increasing necessity for authors to ensure they conform to funders’ OA demands
    - No listing in RoMEO -> risk of losing potential manuscripts
- Most smaller journals are actually very self-archiving friendly
  - They just seem to want to keep quiet about it …
SHERPA/RoMEO listings of OA journals

- The world
- The Netherlands
RoMEO and CC licenses

• A CC license could make a RoMEO listing less important
• A CC license should enable self-archiving
• But designating a journal as Open Access, e.g. by listing in DOAJ, does not necessarily enable self-archiving
  – There are many strange animals out there!
• Conflicting policies easy to find
Do OA journals not listed in RoMEO use CC licenses?

- World

- The Netherlands
All publishing in RoMEO (Toll and Open Access)

- The world
- The Netherlands
Article Processing Charges (APC)

- The commercial way of financing a journal
  - Charging per article via the authors
  - Other commercial income usually a supplement
    - Advertising
    - Sale of paper versions
- A scalable financing method
  - As costs grow due to volume, so do income
  - A financing model that makes you dependent on doing good work for your authors so that they will publish more with you
- Non-commercial financing
  - Support from owner, institution, third parties
  - Does not scale
  - Does not depend upon authors’ satisfaction
    - But on keeping on good terms with important decision-makers

- APC is not a sign of competence, but a financing model that makes it possible to acquire competence
Use of APCs for OA journals

- The world
- The Netherlands

Use of APC:

- No
- Yes

Publisher size:

- 1
- 2-5
- 6-9
- 10-14
- 15-19
- 20-49
- 50+

Use of APC:

- No
- Yes

Publisher size:

- 1
- 2-4
- 5-9
- 10+
Small journals

- Are not adequately competent when it comes to distribution
- Do not use free means of being distributed
- Do not use licenses that helps distribution
- Do not inform efficiently about their self-archiving policies
- Through this, they perform less well than wanted
  - For their authors, who need to attract readers
  - For their owners/institutions, who wants content disseminated efficiently

- This is a general picture, with numerous journals from small publishers that perform well
- This is not any indication of low scholarly/scientific quality!
What lies in the future?
A current status and near future

- Funders demand Open Access
  - Some prefer green, some gold
  - UK, NL «gold friendly»
  - Some financial mechanisms
    - But not fully developed
- Green OA is good for institutions
  - But does not finance journals
    - Could, over time, reduce income
- Traditional, subscription-based journals have a bleak future …
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 – away from print
  – Subscription income is declining
• Funder mandates will steer manuscripts towards OA journals
• So your journal needs to become an OA journal
• But the world needs no more stand-alone humanities or social science journal
Scaling

• Subscription and grant financing doesn’t scale
  – More manuscripts means less resources available per article
  – Fewer manuscripts creates the need for explanations
    • Or the need to lower standards
  – Article processing charges scale
    • The more work and costs, the more income
• 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
Size

• Journal or publisher size is important!
  – Big is beautiful!
  – Big means enhanced production and distribution competence and capabilities
    • It does not mean that content quality gets better!

• Size can be attained by
  – Joining a (large) (OA) publisher
    • The more journals, the better the competence
      – Within limits!
  – Creating a large journal with others
    • Not a journal for «my» community, but for many communities
    • Co-operation will also create increased competence
  – In both cases, you need income!
    • Donated work and resources do not scale!
Joining an OA publisher

• There are a number of mid-sized OA publishers
• In general, they are commercial
  – Some non-commercial university based ones are not
• Unless you can show them some income possibilities, they won’t touch you
  – They can’t, are they to survive
• Examples
  – Igitur (not very commercial?)
  – Co-Action Publishing
  – Ubiquity Press (both a publisher and a publishing service)
Mega-journals

- A new phenomenon starting 2006 with PLOS ONE
- Multidisciplinary (PLOS ONE covers the whole of Science and Medicine)
- Peer review
  - But not judging importance or novelty
- PLOS ONE and most others has a threshold model
  - Technically sound
  - Well enough written
  - PLOS ONE published more than 31,000 articles in 2013
- 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
  - 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? – will only be a supplement
• Donations?
A Dutch Mega-journal for the Humanities?

• For
  – Dutch subjects in any language
  – General subjects in Dutch
• Multidisciplinary
  – (Initially) based on specific subjects
    • Lacking journals or lacking capacity
      – New specialities
      – Older journals giving up
      – Or existing journals lacking sufficient capacity
    • 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
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 council
  – 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 a Dutch (or Flemish) institution
Goals (long-term)

- Financial viability
  - No (or strongly reduced) need for long-term direct support
  - Ability to accept non-funded manuscripts (waivers)
- A good market share – 200–500 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
  - XML-versions of articles
  - multiple versions like HTML5, ePub etc.
  - DOIs
  - OASPA membership
  - etc.
Who wants to join?

- This is a vision, not a project
  - Yet …
  - It should be led by (enthusiastic) 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
    - Time to do something new again?
- Where could money be found to explore this?
  - Needs an initial «investment» of money
More information about Open Access?

• The 9th Munin conference
  – [http://site.uit.no/muninconf/](http://site.uit.no/muninconf/)
  – 26th–27th November 2014 at UiT The Arctic University of Norway campus
• The annual conference on scholarly publishing at the University Library of Tromsø – usually with an OA angle
• All in English
• This year’s keynotes:
  – Geoffrey Boulton, Regius Professor of Geology Emeritus of the University of Edinburgh: *Open Data and the Future of Science*
  – Björn Brembs, professor of Neurogenetics at Universität Regensburg: *When decade-old functionality would be progress – the desolate state of our scholarly infrastructure*
  – Cameron Neylon, Advocacy Director at PLOS (Public Library of Science): *Managing the Transition to an Open Scholarly Literature*