



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

# OJS is not enough

Presentation at the PKP 2019 Conference, Barcelona

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

# OJS

- A powerful publishing tool
- Designed for electronic publishing
  - Good workflow capabilities
- Functionality that supports Open Access-publishing
- Plug-ins for communication with OA services and infrastructures
- Much used by smaller and scholar-led publishing activities

# What does the OA landscape look like?

- OA publishers are many, but small measured in the number of journals they publish
- Can they be competent?
  - When it comes to publishing and technology
- Can they be efficient in an economic sense?
  - Economies of scale

Table 4. Publisher size statistics.

Publisher Size	No of Publishers	No of Journals	Percentage of Publishers	Percentage of Journals
1	4446	4446	80%	36%
2	522	1044	9%	8%
3	187	561	3%	5%
4	108	432	2%	3%
5	69	345	1%	3%
6–10	137	1029	2%	8%
11–20	70	1019	1%	8%
21–50	33	1002	1%	8%
51–100	4	293	0%	2%
>100	10	2179	0%	18%
	5586	12,350	100%	100%

Frantsvåg, Jan E.; Strømme, Tormod E. 2019. "Few Open Access Journals Are Compliant with Plan S." *Publications* 7, no. 2: 26. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications7020026>

# Problems for editors

- Used to the paper world
  - Lot of thinking need to be re-learnt
- Limited understanding of Open Access
  - No understanding of the infrastructures of OA
- Generally not technology-wise
  - Exceptions exist, but as exceptions
- No idea about economics
  - They don't have financial funding, either

# What can we observe?

- A large number of journals not listed in DOAJ
  - Crawford: 5,988 (2015)
  - A DOAJ listing is a sign of acceptable scholarly and OA quality
  - A DOAJ listing is also a distribution tool for metadata
- Those listed in DOAJ still lack or are weak on a number of quality aspects

# Plan S requirements (the original ones)

Non-APC publishers	Small (1–5 journals)	meet 1.1 of 4 technical criteria on average
	Large (>100 journals)	meet 3.5 of 4 technical criteria on average
APC publishers	Small (1–5 journals)	meet 1.6 of 4 technical criteria on average
	Large (>100 journals)	meet 3.8 of 4 technical criteria on average

- Significant differences between small and large publishers
- Some difference between non-APC and APC publishers

# But also

Non-APC publishers	Small (1–5 journals)	meet 1.9 of 3 policy criteria on average
	Large (>100 journals)	meet 1.7 of 3 policy criteria on average
APC publishers	Small (1–5 journals)	meet 2.4 of 4 policy criteria on average
	Large (>100 journals)	meet 3.0 of 4 policy criteria on average

- If we look at policy criteria, we find that there is not much difference between large and small, and APC journals and non-APC journals
- So it is on the technical side the problems lie.

# What are the technical problems?

- Lack of DOIs
  - Which also reduces dissemination of metadata
  - OJS helps with assigning DOIs, and submitting to CrossRef
  - But one need to understand why and how – and have the money
  - Many small journals have no financial economy, and cannot pay bills
- Lack of long-term preservation arrangements
  - Even if PKP offers an easy, free solution
- No machine-readable full-text format
  - Fully understandable! XML is not for amateurs!
  - Will be costly, and need financing
- No embedded license info in text files
  - Lacking for 46 per cent of journals



# Why?

- Publishing entails a number of important competences
- Scholar-led publishing is led by scholars
  - They are very competent, but probably not in publishing
  - There is a huge cost associated with acquiring the necessary competence
    - Time is money! Or costs to other activities, or family life ...
- The average OA journal is APC-free, published alone and has few articles
  - The cost of competence has few articles to be divided between
    - i.e., the model is very expensive per article
  - And no income to buy competence with
  - Not being competent also has costs!

# The future

- Plan S relented and the final criteria were less demanding
- But: Plan S will be evaluated in 2024. Clear signs that the criteria softened now will be toughened up from 2025 – most are already recommendations
- Meaning: Very few small, scholar-led/institution-based journals will be compliant in 6 years from now
  - While Plan S may have grown to become more important
- The demise of scholar-led publishing, unless something is done!

# Solutions?

- More APC-based scholar-led publishing?
  - Allows outsourcing of competence-demanding activities
- More and better tools, esp. regarding XML
- Larger publishing entities?
  - More resilient entities
  - Allows costs to be spread over more articles
    - Economies of scale
  - But what scale is needed?
    - Probably rather large – 50+?
- Institutional willingness to provide better funding!
  - And to enter into inter-institutional publishing arrangements to create large entities

# Questions?

- Remember to keep a look-out for the Munin conference
- This year's next week in Tromsø 27-28 November
  - <https://site.uit.no/muninconf/>
- But there will probably be one next year in November, too
- The Munin Conference is an annual conference on scholarly publishing and communication, primarily revolving around open access, open data and open science

Thanks for listening!