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ADVISOR REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Heard on the Net

The New Deal May be No Deal

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With contributions from:

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With the advent of the worldwide financial downturn a decade ago, many libraries, in particular many medium-to-large academic research libraries in North America, found they could no longer afford the escalating costs associated with big deal journal packaging from major academic, commercial publishing houses. The results from the initial round of cancellations were scaled down versions of big deals. The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) has a tracking mechanism of big deal cancellations which can be found here: <<https://sparcopen.org/our-work/big-deal-cancellation-tracking/>>. There are currently around 30 instances noted on their spreadsheet, indicating where deals were reduced or switched over to ordering specific titles as requested/needed by faculty in North America. In addition, SPARC has also added where negotiations from big deal packages have failed worldwide.

Jacob Nash & Karen McElfresh note in their 2016 article “A Journal Cancellation Survey and Resulting Impact on Interlibrary Loan” there was, in fact, little to no impact on Interlibrary Lending of content that made up their big deal cancellation. (DOI: <10.3163/1536-5050.104.4.008>). This study appears to be indicative to what many others have reported once they lose their big deal. There does not appear to be a significant upswing in ILL once a deal ends or is significantly reduced.

One of the biggest concerns is whether walking away from package deals from the major academic scholarly commercial publishers will create faculty backlash and erosion of goodwill between academic librarians and the communities with which they work. No one has yet undertaken a study to explore these impacts. Have faculty chosen to work at other institutions due to the lack of scholarly content at the Universities where cancellations have occurred? Has there been attrition of faculty at these institutions? Or have faculty just found other means of access to content? Daniel Himmelstein and others’ article in *eLife* seems to indicate, this may be the case. (DOI: <10.7554/eLife.32822>)

Given this fear and often great concern, my goal became to listen to librarians from Germany and Sweden about their consortial decisions regarding the biggest publisher in the mix, Elsevier. Bibsam, a consortia for Swedish academic institutions was unable to reach an agreement with Elsevier, and their content access ended July 1, 2018 for all content published after this date. For Germany, the lack of a renewed DEAL contract has resulted in a cascading loss of access among higher education institutions and research institutions. In both Germany and Sweden, it is still very early days with their non-renew-

al of Elsevier deals. For Germany, a few research institutions continue to have access to content up through the end of 2018. In addition, their previous contracts supply perpetual access for the years to which they were subscribed, so backfile access for numerous titles has been retained. My two interviewees are Irene Barbers (IB), who is Head of Acquisitions, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Zentralbibliothek/Central Library, and Lisa Lovén (LL), Librarian, Licensing Coordinator, Stockholm University Library, Stockholm University. Both responded to four questions posed by me.

Do you think the landscape of scholarly literature is changing for the better and if so, can you provide examples?

IB: Scholarly publishing is defined by various interest and stakeholders. It has to serve the needs of the scientific community and of the public, and it is at the same time an industry that is determined by the specific laws of its market. This has led to controversial views and it is fascinating to see the current developments of business and access models, and the discussion about the publishing process itself. Critical voices claim that scientists should take the business into their own hands instead of working in the traditional way with publishers. One interesting example is SciPost (<<https://scipost.org/about/>>), a publishing platform lead and organized by scientists, and adhering to Fair Open Access principles with a nonprofit business model. This is perhaps not the only way how scholarly publishing can work, but I am optimistic that more openness can help to achieve sustainability and quality and that the community can benefit from the diverse developments in ideas for scholarly publishing models.

LL: It does seem like the landscape of scholarly literature is changing into something better due to increased collaboration between libraries and different stakeholders. While we have been looking into funding for opening up access to academic sources, we have been forced to scrutinize costs and workflows to improve them and making them easier to use. The focus of library services has been turned from acting as the provider of information to trying to attract the user of information, which is a significant development. We have also seen some change regarding harvesting and opening up access to metadata. New databases such as OAPEN, DOAB, DOAJ, and other similar services challenge libraries to update their content discovery methods and library systems as they can no longer rely on sales representatives from publishers to suggest purchases. We can, on the other hand, not just rely on Google Scholar taking care of the content selection for us either, which helps to shine some light on how we organize information and show users how they can trust information from different sources.

This process is far from mature yet, but it may end up with libraries having to put more emphasis on teaching information literacy in the future and by that strengthening the status of libraries (and librarians) as an invaluable part of the research process.

What has been the greatest achievement accomplished by your institution since the loss of the Elsevier deal?

IB: At this point in time we do not know; the deal is lost already. But since the loss of access to Elsevier content for the majority of German academic institutions, we have seen that the support among the library community is really excellent. There is a great solidarity with the DEAL negotiation goals. Perhaps even more remarkable is the feedback we are receiving from many researchers who not only express that they can cope with the loss of access but also tell us they are declining to review for Elsevier, try to avoid publishing with Elsevier or even step back from being editors in Elsevier Journals.

LL: I would say that our greatest achievement was that we decided to use the money, otherwise spent on subscription costs with Elsevier, to fund publishing in fully Open Access journals. And that this decision was not delayed, but rather quickly made (between our Library Director and Vice-chancellor, both of them part of the negotiation team with Elsevier, so maybe not that surprising) and communicated already the end of June. At Stockholm University we think the transition towards open science is too slow and using the “Elsevier-money” on fully Open Access journals is another step towards the target of 100% OA.

Also, when handling requests for funding, we have tried to make it as easy as possible for our researchers. No application form, they just need to ask us by sending a simple e-mail to: <openaccess@su.se>. If the article meets the criteria, i.e., corresponding author affiliated with Stockholm University, to be published in a fully Open Access journal (listed in DOAJ), we take care of the APC invoice (no price caps). There are quite often pieces of information missing on publishers’ APC invoices (like DOI or journal title or even the fact that this is an Open Access fee), but when collecting invoices from authors we don’t expect them to debate the design of the invoice with the publisher. There are other forums for that discussion, for now we’re just happy to get our hands on the invoice and spend the money as decided.

Quite a few other Swedish HEIs are talking about doing the same, most recently, Linköping University are now doing the same (<<http://www.bibl.liu.se/aktuellt-pa-biblioteket/1.747063?l=en>>) which is really promising.

What has been the greatest challenge at your institution since losing current access to Elsevier content?

IB: We are one of the few libraries in Germany who at the moment still have access to their subscribed Elsevier journals (with the exemption of Cell Press Journals) as our contract is running through to the end of 2018. So we are one of the institutions that are supporting those without access in terms of document delivery rather than having to deal with lost access ourselves. We had prepared ourselves for an increased demand for articles from other libraries, but contrary to what one would perhaps expect, the demand is surprisingly low!

LL: Again, I must mention the “Open Access fund” since the greatest challenge has been to communicate the offer to our researchers and make them aware of this possibility. There are about 1,700 doctoral

students and 5,000 staff at Stockholm University, and it is not that easy to reach all of them, but we are planning to repeat the message through different channels. It is still early days and the offer came out during the holiday season, only two months ago. Now with the new semester and our planned communicative actions we hope to increase the number of requests for funding. And, with the requests, also the number of open access articles published at SU, funded by the library.

Since we monitor all APCs paid at the university (within the local accounting system) I keep a close watch on the ones for fully Open Access journals and can detect payments still made by the individual institutions/authors. In other words, which ones that didn’t know about the centralized funding via the library. I haven’t gotten the August report of APC invoices yet (still being August), but as soon as we have it I will check the payments and also be able to contact the corresponding author and/or the institution with our offer if needed. (We cannot refund payments already made, especially not credit card payments, but hopefully, they will send the invoice to us for future accepted articles in OA journals.)

Up until now, we have had about 40 requests, little over half of them for funding of OA articles in hybrid journals. Those we have declined, explaining why (because of hybrid journal) with a link to our news article: <<https://www.su.se/english/library/about-us/press-information/2.42247/stockholm-university-gives-researchers-more-support-to-get-published-in-full-open-access-journals>>.

When receiving our message and (hopefully) reading the text above, none of the authors have replied in a negative tone. Most of them say “thanks anyway” or “thanks for explaining”. When we have to decline articles we see it as an opportunity to educate our researchers about the open access publishing landscape and to make them aware of the university’s strategy regarding open science.

Researchers publishing in fully Open Access journals are obviously very happy to get funding and, not the least, to not have to bother with the handling of the invoice. So far we have only paid eight articles, but there are additional articles where we have confirmed funding with the author (and in some cases also the publisher), but for different reasons, we haven’t got the invoice just yet.

I might add here that we haven’t had a single complaint about not being able to access Elsevier content, not so far. The feedback that we’ve received is only supportive of the cancellation. A few patrons have turned to us saying they cannot access a specific journal, but in those cases they were unaware of the cancellation and the reasons behind it. When explaining, again with links to news about the Elsevier cancellation, none has replied being upset.

How are you providing perpetual access to content that was previously subscribed to from Elsevier?

IB: Our library’s agreement with Elsevier will run out with the end of 2018. For the case that there will be no DEAL agreement by then, our plan is to hold on to an absolute minimum of subscriptions from Elsevier (that means only a very few journals or perhaps a small e-book collection), and so will continue to have access to the Elsevier platform and therefore to our content that was previously subscribed with rights for perpetual access.

LL: As said, it is still early days and the reason behind not having any complaints so far might have to do with the fact that we can still access all previously subscribed content (Freedom Collection, Cell

Press titles and a few other titles, depending on local institutional additions to the cancelled agreement) on ScienceDirect published between 1995 - until last of June 2018, this for the majority of the titles. In other words, only content published from the first of July 2018 can no longer be accessed, thanks to the PTA clauses in the cancelled agreement. For details, please see the Bibsam Q&A: <<http://openaccess.blogg.kb.se/2018/06/20/qa-about-the-cancellation-of-the-agreement-with-elsevier-commencing-1-july/#more-4944>>. Adding to this is access to backfiles (pre-1995) purchased years back.

As for content published from the first of July, we offer the Get it Now-service <<https://www.su.se/english/library/about-us/press-information/2.42247/how-to-get-articles-from-elsevier-after-june-30th-1.392544>> and have noticed a slight increase in Elsevier-articles ordered.

We also inform our patrons about alternative ways to find content: <<http://openaccess.blogg.kb.se/2018/07/01/alternative-routes-to-scholarly-articles-and-research-outputs/>>.

It became clear to me, after my discussion with Irene Barbers and Lisa Lovén, that in North America we appear to be at a turning point in regards to the traditional big deal purchasing. Big deals have become condensed deals. Many academic librarians, trying to find ways to reduce their costs expended annually, reduce their title bases and have reconfigured their packages. We no longer can afford not to do so. At some point in the near future, we'll realize that the best deal is no deal at all. ■



FROM YOUR MANAGING EDITOR, *continued from page 3*

Seventeenth Annual Readers' Choice Awards

such as EBSCO (<<https://www.ebscohost.com/discovery/technology/openathens>>) and a variety other solutions, such as LEAN Library (now owned by SAGE <<https://www.leanlibrary.com/download/item244>>). CASA (Campus Activated Subscriber Access) by Google Scholar, in collaboration with hosting platforms such as Highwire Press (<<https://www.highwirepress.com/news/highwire-press-adds-casa-eliminate-barriers-campus-and-mobile-access-subscriptions>>), and others provide new ways to eliminate access barriers for researchers. <<https://ra21.org/>>

Best Effort

Taylor and Francis Kudos to T&F for pulling back on their plan to introduce a 20-year rolling (moving) wall on their periodical backfiles. This plan was strongly opposed by librarians around the world as it would have created extra work and expense for librarians and researchers to access older content which had already been licensed. <<https://taylorandfrancis.com/>>

Lemon/Vaporware Award

MLA International Bibliography The Modern Language Association (MLA) recently signed an exclusive contract to only offer the very popular MLA International Bibliography on the EBSCO platform. This has upset librarians worldwide, as access was previously provided on other distribution platforms such as ProQuest and Gale. Many libraries tend to prefer one platform over another, and popular discovery layers such as Primo or Summon (both from ProQuest) will no longer have access to the content from this database. <<https://www.mla.org/Publications/MLA-International-Bibliography>>

Tipasa This new cloud-based Interlibrary Loan (ILL) manager from OCLC has not been received well by many in the ILL community. Some feel it was brought to market too early by OCLC and many are not happy that the most favored product in the market, ILLiad, will be retired by OCLC. Not ready for prime time. <<https://www.oclc.org/en/tipasa.html>> ■