

Small but sustainable? Scholar-led journals and open access

Innovative Open Access in Small Sciences (InnOAccess) (DFG, June 2019 - February 2021)

The "InnOAccess" project takes the precarious situation of scholar-led journals and the need for a bibliodiverse OA ecosystem as a starting point and aims at practically improving their situation. The state of play of scholar-led, non-APC journals are examined in a national online survey and systematic evaluation of existing financing models for Open Access publishing. The team used the results to test technological improvements and financial models on use case Internet Policy Review¹. The project results are available for reuse by the community.

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PROJECT WEBSITE



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Early findings

Survey on scholar-led, non-APC journals in Germany

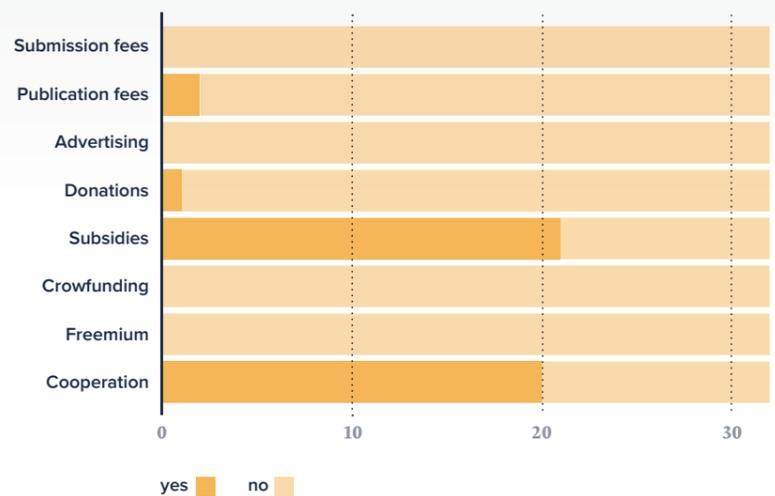
Method:

Sample (n=101) drawn from DOAJ.org, filtered for scholar-led, non-APC journals with a publishing institution located in Germany. The survey starts with content analysis of a journal's website and policy documents and is complemented by 24 Q questionnaire. It was conducted between November 2019 and February 2020.

Findings:

Financial and infrastructural support are both equally important for scholar-led journals in Germany (e.g., university libraries, university data centres, university publishers). The most widespread financing options are institutional subsidies (e.g., by universities, university libraries, research institutes). Other available financing modules are left unused (e.g., donations, crowdfunding, freemium, advertisement). All but a few key journals rely on unpaid labour and self-exploitation (e.g., by the editors, reviewers, designers). The journals do not point to a sustainable financing model.

Which financing models are currently being used?



Sustainable publication services: A matter of technology and networks

Core elements of sustainable journal publication services include ...

- ... streamlining workflows with professional publication software.
- ... displaying and contextualising altmetrics to showcase bibliometric diversity.
- ... increasing impact through repository-based archiving and indexing.
- ... providing accessible, single-source output formats.
- ... identifying authors and institutions with open databases.
- ... using community-based know-how, networks and non-profit cooperative practices to reduce costs.

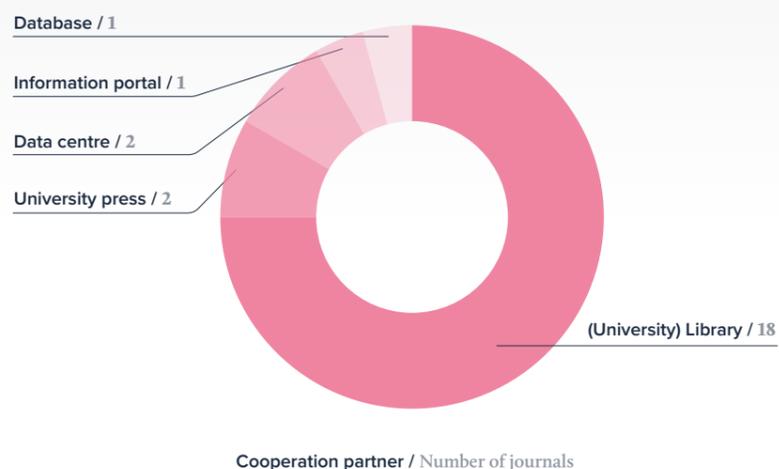
Sustainable financing: Modular, transparent, cooperative

Publishing costs, budgeting plans and administrative capacities vary greatly -- financing a scholar-led journal is meticulous work.

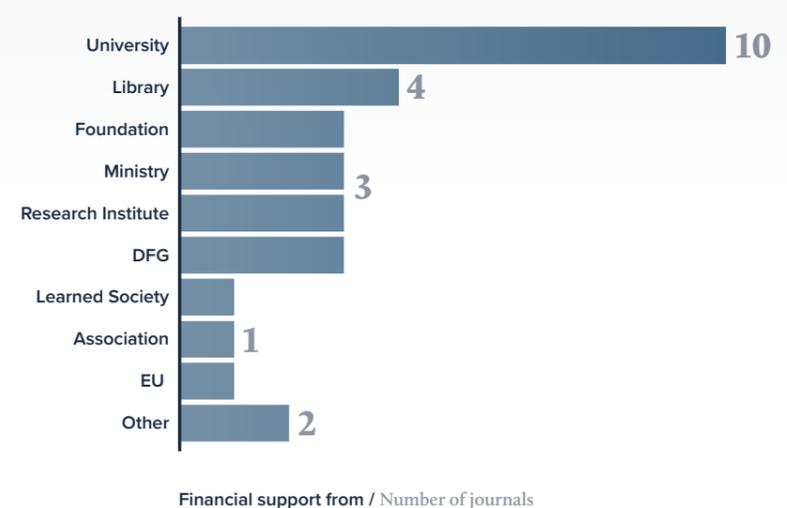
What is the way to go?

- Donations and sponsorships: partly, but keep an eye on the cost-performance ratio!
- Individual subsidies: yes, but depending on the institutional good will!
- Consortial approaches: great, but still under-developed in the scholar-led realm!

Which institutions is your journal cooperating with?



What actors provide financial support to your journal?



Next deliverables 2020 & final results 2021

Online workshops:

- "Technical Innovation & Networking Models" (29-30 September)
- "Sustainable Financing without APCs" (6-7 October)

White papers:

- "How can an independent, scholarly-led open access journal survive in the journal jungle?" (forthcoming 2021)
- "What publication services can make a journal better and more sustainable?" (forthcoming 2021)

1. <https://policyreview.info>