

Looking for commitment : Finnish open access journals, infrastructure and funding

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Scholarly journals and OA on a national level

- Many of the arguments commonly used in OA discussions are based on experiences from the international context
 - Mostly dominated by big corporate publishers with high profit margins
- Most of the countries worldwide also have their own national journals
 - Often in languages other than English, but many of them reach international audiences as well
- These journals are also making a transition to OA, but the issues that they are facing are often somewhat different

Background: Finnish scholarly journals

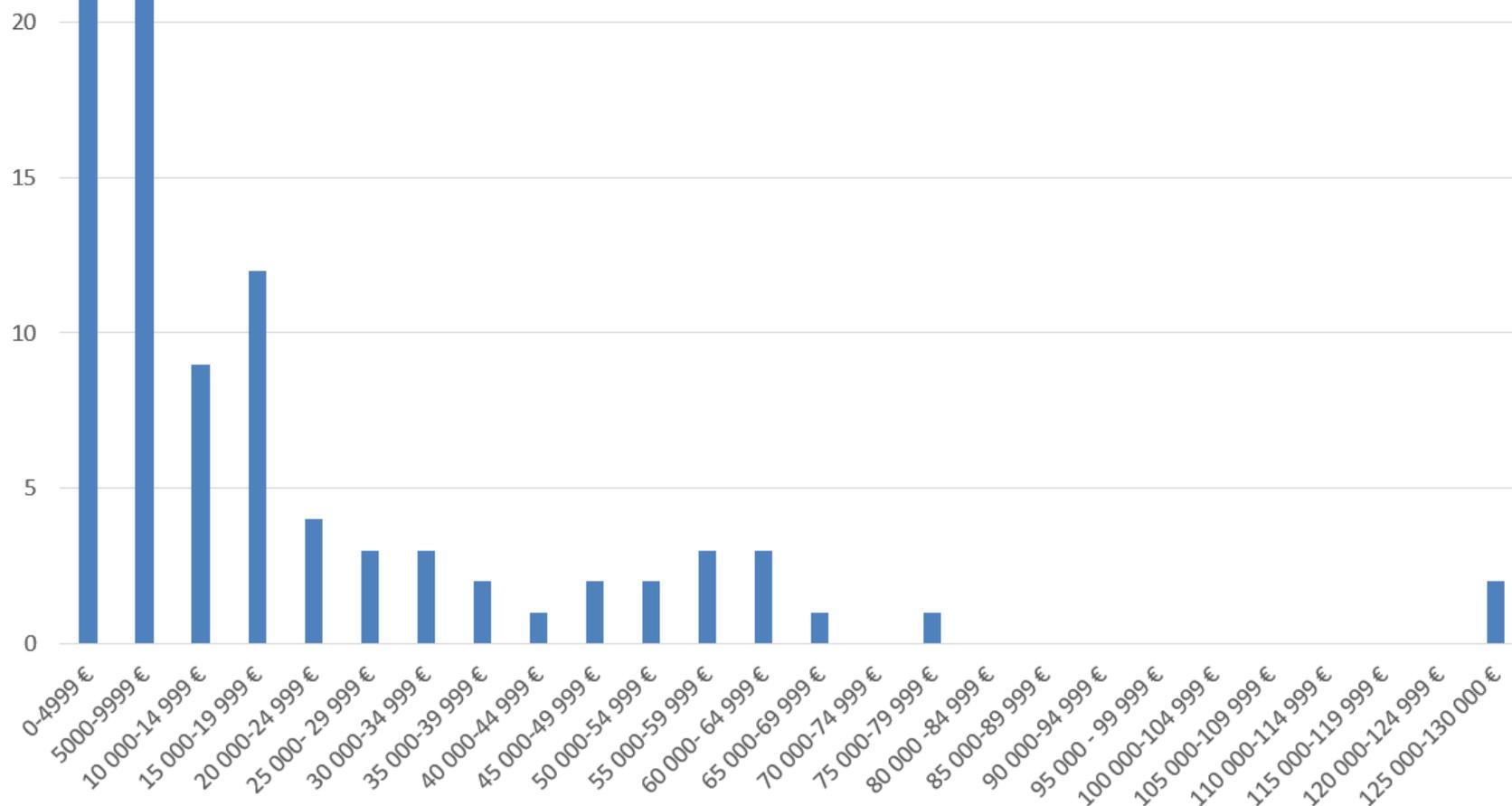
- About 30% of the Finnish scholarly journals are already open access journals - either immediately or after a delay
 - Many of the other journals are still only available in printed form or as part of a subscription-based service
- The Finnish domestic journals are mostly run by researchers, not by big commercial publishers
 - Most of the 100+ journals are published by small scholarly societies
 - Most of the journals operate with very little money; reliance on unpaid work and community effort
 - Lack of technical expertise and infrastructure

Current sources of income

- The main sources of income have been subscriptions, membership fees and state subsidies
 - Individual subscriptions and society membership fees very important for many journals
 - A few of the journals have received support from research organizations, but this has been decreasing
- State subsidies are distributed by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies
 - About 600.000 euros a year allocated to the journals
 - The journals need to have other income as well – the funding covers only a percentage of total income
- The total budget of the ca. 90 journals receiving state subsidies is currently in the range of two million euros a year

Differences in income

The revenues of 90 Finnish scholarly journals in 2014.
Source: Federation of Finnish Learned Societies



Flipping to OA?

- In theory, the transition to OA should be a relatively easy process, as there aren't any big commercial interests in the way
- In practise, however, it is not possible to simply flip the current the acquisition costs to cover the OA costs - there is not enough money
 - The subscription and licensing costs paid by the research libraries for these journals have been minimal
 - The total acquisition budget of the Finnish university libraries is ca. 30 million euros a year
 - It has been estimated that they spend ca. 150.000 euros a year on domestic journals (about 0,5 % of the total acquisition budget)

Value of the journals

- Although the acquisition costs are small, the journals are actually quite valuable to the research communities and organizations
- About 8 % of all peer-reviewed journal articles published by Finnish researchers come out in domestic journals
 - The share of domestic publications is far higher in many fields within the humanities and social sciences
- The universities also benefit directly from publications
 - 13 % of the total state funding for the universities is distributed based on the number and quality of research publications
 - The articles published in the 90 journals receiving state subsidies account for nearly 5 million euros of state funding paid to the universities

Making open access viable for Finnish journals

- The Kotilava project (www.kotilava.fi), 2015-2017, was a part of the Open Science and Research initiative funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture
- Based on the recommendations of a report on the potential funding models for the Finnish scholarly journals ([Ilva & Lilja 2014](#))
- The project has had two main goals:
 - To provide an improved Open Journal Systems -based technical platform for the Finnish journals (Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, Antti-Jussi Nygård, 9/2015-5/2017)
 - To create a sustainable funding model for the journals to support their transition to open access (National Library of Finland, Riitta Koikkalainen, 3/2016-9/2017)

Journals vs. platforms?

- Some OA activists insist that journals are an outdated legacy system that is no longer needed in scholarly communication
 - It might be more cost-efficient to build a mega-journal-like generic national platform that could be used for the evaluation and dissemination of pre-prints/articles
- However, the current journal-based infrastructure seems to be supported by the researchers, at least on a national level
 - "Our own journal" often important for building researcher communities and defining researcher identities
 - The case of [Kasvatus ja aika](#) ("Education and time"): a new OA journal founded in 2007 re-vitalized the study of educational history in Finland

Conservative aims?

- The Kotilava project aims to preserve the current infrastructure consisting of journals mostly run by scholarly societies
 - Many of the Finnish-language journals still have a substantial audience as journals both within and beyond the academia
 - In many cases also incubators for new content, not just anonymous publication channels for unsolicited articles
- It seems to make sense to work with the current community-owned journals instead of trying to come up with something that would replace them
 - The current system can be enhanced by adopting new technologies and increasing the visibility and usability of the content

Journal.fi

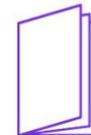
- The newly branded Journal.fi platform was launched by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies in January 2017
- Upgraded to OJS 3, with major technical upgrades
- Currently contains 40 journals (most of them OA), about 20 other journals waiting for their turn to join



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Journal.fi

Journal.fi is a new journal management and publishing service provided by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies. The site features 40 Finnish scholarly journals, with more to come.

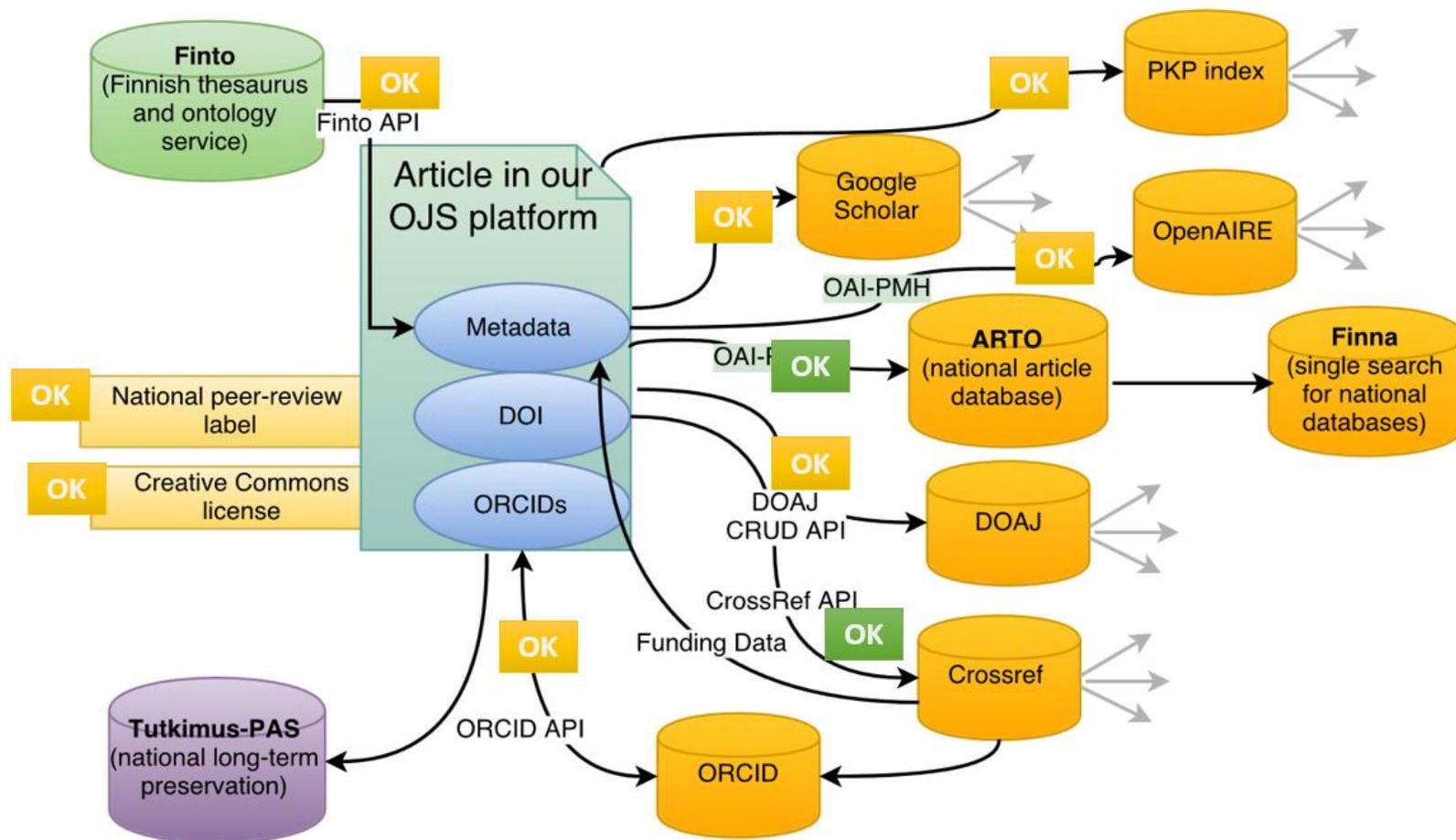
Journal.fi is designed to meet the needs of authors, readers, publishers and funders in the age of Open Access journals. The service is using the Open Journal Systems 3.0 software.

Part of the scholarly infrastructure

- The journals at Journal.fi will be integrated with national and international infrastructures
 - The article level metadata can be harvested to other systems via APIs
 - Adoption of permanent identifiers in Finnish journals: DOIs for the articles, ORCIDs for the authors
- The use of XML format in journals
 - Additional funding received from the European OpenAIRE project for piloting the use of a XML-based publication format
- Long-term preservation will be ensured in co-operation with other national projects



Journal.fi infrastructure plan, 5/2017



Graph: Antti-Jussi Nygård, Federation of Finnish Learned Societies

A national consortium to fund the journals?

- The other aim of the Kotilava project has been to create a national consortium which would provide funding for the journals
 - The journals generally agreed that a consortium-based funding model would be the preferred solution for them
 - For several reasons, the adoption of article processing charges (APCs) as such was not seen as desirable
 - The organizations that benefit from the work the journals are doing seen as potential funders: e.g. universities, universities of applied sciences, research institutes, research funders
- The continuation of state subsidies was also seen as essential
 - The income received from the consortium and the state subsidy would compliment each other

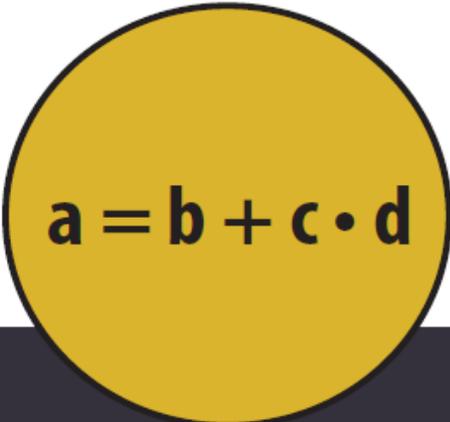
From subscriptions to consortium funding

- Based on voluntary participation from the funders and publishers
 - Commitment to support the domestic journals required
 - Research universities with a lot of publications in domestic journals would pay a greater share of the costs
- The journals would retain their independence and would be run by the scholarly societies in each field as before
 - Funding from the consortium would replace the loss of subscription income

An article-based funding model

- The consortium funding would be collected from the research organizations and distributed to the journals
- The sums paid in the model would be based on the number of peer-reviewed articles published by the researchers affiliated with each organization
- Preliminary article price used in the calculations: 800 euros
- Based on three-year averages

The formula to calculate the share of the member organisation


$$a = b + c \cdot d$$

a = sum paid by a member organisation of the consortium

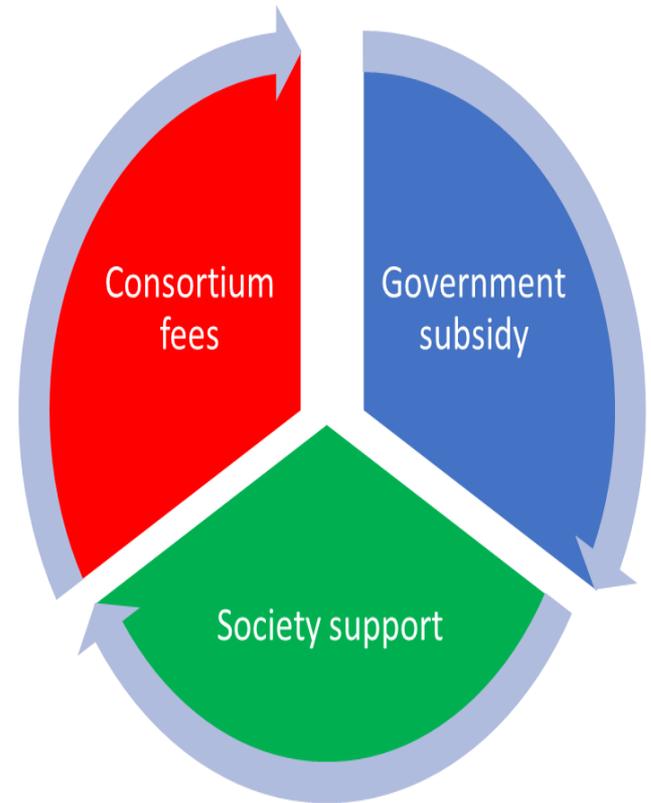
b = fixed charge for the consortium administration

c = mean value of the number of peer-reviewed articles published in the Kotilava journals by the researchers of the organisation, an interval of three years

d = price of an article

The sources of revenue in the new model

- The income from the new model should cover significant part of the costs, but not all of them, at least not for all journals
 - The societies could continue subsidising the costs from e.g. membership fees
 - The rest would come from the state subsidies
 - The journals might be able to cut some of their present costs



The aims of the new funding model?

- The funding model will be a compromise between different interests
 - In the long run there may be winners and losers among the journals
 - This should be OK, as long as the model is fair and transparent
- The research organizations may end up paying more than they do now, but they should be able feel that they get compensated for that
 - The researchers would have competitive high-quality publication channels, which provide visibility and metrics for their work
 - In return for the funding the journals would pledge to follow certain standards in e.g. openness, licensing, peer review, infrastructure

Differences in OA requirements

■ Journal.fi

- Immediate or delayed OA (max 12 months embargo) required
- Metadata CC0 required
- DOIs and ORCIDs recommended
- CC licenses recommended
- Registration to DOAJ recommended
- SHERPA/RoMEO policy recommended

■ Funding model

- Immediate OA required
- Metadata CC0 required
- DOIs and ORCIDs required
- CC licenses or other OA licenses required
- Registration to DOAJ required
- SHERPA/RoMEO policy required

Some further issues under discussion

- Non-peer-reviewed content: should it be taken into account in some way in the funding model?
- International journals published in Finland: will some of them need additional funding (possibly APCs for non-consortium authors)?
- Funding and editorial independence: an affiliation should have no effect on publishing decisions
- Sustainability: the publishers should be able to trust that both the consortium and the platform will be around for the long term

What has been achieved by now?

- The Ministry of Education and Culture has been supporting the transition
- There have been big steps forward with the Journal.fi platform, with plans for further enhancements
- We have developed a funding model that may still require some adjustments but would probably work just fine
- The journals themselves are enthusiastic about moving to open access

- What could go wrong...?

Looking for commitment...

- The proposed model got initially a positive response from the Finnish university rectors in May 2017
 - "Important initiative"
 - "The costs seem reasonable"
- The plan has been to launch the funding model in 2018 with about 30 journals, with more journals joining during the two following years
 - A letter was sent to the rectors of the universities and universities of applied sciences in November, 2017
- Many of the universities of applied sciences have decided to join the model, but only one of the research universities (so far)
 - Several of the research universities have informed us that they will not join the consortium at this point

What happened?

- The university libraries have concerns about the model
 - "Openness would be nice, but we are wary of the costs"
 - "It would raise our acquisition budget"
 - "The model should provide more transparency on the actual costs on the publishers' side"
 - "Introduction of APCs might be preferable, since they would be paid from research funds and not from library budgets"

Lessons to learn

- It seems that we haven't been completely successful in communicating the big picture to the libraries
 - The goal has been to come up with a permanent solution that would be beneficial to the universities, libraries and journals
- There are short term issues which seem to make the transition more difficult than it should be
 - The library acquisition money is tied up in Big Deals (off-setting elements added to the current deals don't necessarily help the journals/publishers that are not included)
 - The management of OA publication costs has not been centralized in Finland (APCs mostly paid from research funds, which are not administered by the libraries)

What next?

- The development of the Journal.fi platform will continue
- There will need to be further discussion on the consortium model with all of the stakeholders
- We still believe that a shared vision - and national co-operation based on it - would benefit everyone

www.kotilava.fi



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FEDERATION OF FINNISH LEARNED SOCIETIES



THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND