

## Open Access and Bibliodiversity in Irish Scholarly Publishing

A Report on the [Online Workshop](#) held by the National Open Research Forum (NORF) on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 (11am – 1pm)

### **Daniel Bangert, Digital Repository of Ireland, Royal Irish Academy**

Daniel Bangert, National Open Research Coordinator based at the Digital Repository of Ireland, welcomed participants to the workshop and gave an overview of the work of the [National Open Research Forum](#) (NORF). This was followed by an outline of the day.

### **Jonathan Dykes, Royal Irish Academy**

Jonathan Dykes echoed Daniel's comments, encouraged participants to join in the Q&A session, and introduced the two speakers from the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies – Sami Syrjämäki (Head of Publishing) and Janne Pölönen (Head of Planning).

### **Sami Syrjämäki, Federation of Finnish Learned Societies**

Sami gave an overview of the work of the long-established [Federation of Finnish Learned Societies](#) (TSV). Following this Sami focussed on the Finnish scholarly publishing landscape. Most academic publishing in Finland is via learned societies. He outlined [Journal.fi](#), an open access portal for learned journals in Finland. This system is flexible to individual journal branding, an important motivator for reviewers and editors. TSV supports training, maintenance, and development. The current costs of this system are two salaries. The centralised service creates considerable savings compared to individual solutions in agreements with bodies such as CrossRef. The system is very well used by students and researchers.

### **Janne Pölönen, Federation of Finnish Learned Societies**

Janne discussed the Finnish label for peer-reviewed publications introduced in 2014 by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies. This was introduced as a quality mark to promote transparency in academic quality assurance. This symbol requires transparency around peer review and minimal standards (e.g. a minimum of two PhD holding experts in the field providing peer reviews). This label has proven popular among journal and book publishers in Finland, with over 200 publishers now using it.

Janne then addressed the increase of Finnish language journals in the [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) (DOAJ). TSV was keen to increase the number of Finnish language journals in the DOAJ. In just two years they increased the number from 25 to 50 journals.

Janne then discussed the [Helsinki Initiative on multilingualism](#). There are three main elements to this: support dissemination of results for the full benefit of society; protect national infrastructures for publishing locally relevant research; promote language diversity in funding, research, and evaluation. Participants were invited to sign and join the Helsinki Initiative.

Sami and Janne invited questions.

### **Questions:**

- The issue of multilingualism and the Irish language was discussed. For public understanding, the importance of local languages was emphasised.
- The impact of Journal.fi on publishing was explored.

- The functioning of the Finnish quality label was explored in depth.

### **Panel Discussion**

Jonathan Dykes introduced the function of the Panel and introduced participants.

#### **John Doyle, Dublin City University (DCU)**

John discussed the [DCU Press](#) and the move to Open Access (OA). John discussed the importance of monographs in the Arts and the difficulties researchers in this field encountered. The link with UCL (University College London) Press was discussed. The scale and global reach of UCL publications was discussed. All UCL publications are now OA. John noted significant internal and external support for free OA to the digital version of publications. DCU supports the costs of such publications. John acknowledged the concerns of academics about publishing OA. Some academics are concerned about how it will be viewed externally.

#### **Ruth Hegarty, Royal Irish Academy (RIA)**

Ruth discussed the experience of the RIA in having moved to OA, where possible. Ruth acknowledged the challenges involved in OA. It is easier with new publications, but much harder with the complex legacy of past publications. Ruth outlined how one-off publications can be made OA through various funding sources. Ruth outlined the difficulty in multi-annual publications, for example, the Academy's six journals. An internal evaluation estimated costs per article at between €1500–€2000. Even this figure ignores the cost of academic peer review. Ruth outlined the transformative shift via the IReL consortium recently. The initiatives of Jisc in the UK were discussed, as was the need for longer-term publishing agreements.

#### **Fiona Morley, Maynooth University Library, [Library Association of Ireland](#) Library Publishing Group**

Fiona outlined the priorities of the Library Association of Ireland's Library Publishing Group (LPG). The LAI LPG support Open Access and outlined a host of reasons for this position. Fiona outlined longstanding examples of OA publishing in Irish Universities and Technological Universities. Fiona mentioned the challenge of the lack of knowledge of library publishing platforms in Ireland. The Library Association of Ireland supports a national platform for such OA publishing.

#### **Hannah Wilson, F1000Research, HRB Open Research**

Hannah outlined the work of [F1000Research](#), including its links to Ireland's [Health Research Board](#) (HRB). Hannah outlined their post-publication open peer review process that facilitates articles to be a 'living entity', rather than a moment in time product. Hannah noted that change is hard. It was acknowledged that researchers were worried about how such publications would impact their CVs and were concerned as to how OA publications would be seen by peers. Hannah felt that researchers trust their colleagues and funders and if these groups were supportive that was very important. She also mentioned that indexing and visibility of articles were vitally important. Hannah acknowledged that gaining a critical mass to be included in PubMed was important for F1000Research. She also mentioned that researchers still value curated content and that there is still a high demand for the publication of Study Protocols – COVID has changed the publishing landscape.

### **Discussion**

Jonathan opened the Q&A session and discussed the important issue of sustainability in the digital age. He also discussed the increasing focus on DOAJ and Diamond OA Publishing. Jonathan asked participants about the potential applicability of the centralised Finnish model here in Ireland where things are more fragmented.

**The following issues were discussed:**

- The lack of consensus among researchers about OA was acknowledged, particularly for well-funded science funded projects.
- The importance of marketing and dissemination efforts for OA publishing content was emphasised.
- The development of a set of national principles for OA publishing in Ireland.
- The level of support for diversity and supporting publishing in Irish/vs international access.
- The role of OA Publishing Champions in promoting OA approaches.
- The issue of long-term preservation for Irish publications.

**Sami and Janne were invited to comment on the discussion so far:**

Sami outlined the political history of the move to support Finnish academic freedom under Russian rule. Sami outlined the need for a lead organisation to progress a national publishing initiative. He also outlined the strong tradition of Societies and NGOs in Finland.

Janne outlined that finding technical solutions is now relatively easy. What is harder is navigating the publishing landscape and building a sustainable funding model.

**Discussion**

The discussion turned to the following issues:

- The issue of individual branding of journals and publications was then discussed.
- The importance to researchers of the prestige of their publications was discussed.
- The existence of further country-specific publishing platforms was noted.

**Wrap-up**

Jonathan thanked the participants and gave a brief overview of the important questions and issues remaining.

**Prepared by:**

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