A Library-Publisher Partnership for Open Access

Building an innovative relationship between scholarly publishers and academic libraries
Overview

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1. Introduction

As the importance of open access continues to grow, there remains no clear consensus on the ideal model to sustain scholarly publishing while making content openly accessible.

Can a solution be found that meets the needs of both the scholarly publishers and university libraries?

The Érudit Consortium and the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) are exploring one solution to this challenge through a strategic partnership that supports the move towards open access for Canadian francophone scholarly journals.
2. About Érudit

Érudit is the leading provider of Francophone and Canadian peer reviewed journals in North America.

- Consortium founded by three leading French-language universities in Canada
- Non-profit society
- Established in 1998
- Disseminates 150 Canadian scholarly and cultural journals
- 95% of content is open access
The Érudit model

Publishing Model
- XML markup paid for by journals
- All other digital costs are covered by Érudit: preservation, promotion, dissemination, etc.

Dissemination Model
- Choice to be available through a two-year moving wall or full open-access
- Moving wall journals receive revenue from subscriptions
- No revenue is returned to full open-access journals, as there are no subscription fees
Situation of Canadian journals

Around 350 scholarly journals in Canada

- 300 journals in SSH // 40 journals in science
- 130 scholarly journals on Érudit

CANADIAN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHERS PROVENANCE

- Canadian University: 61%
- Scholarly Society or Association: 24%
- University Press: 8%
- Scholarly Publisher: 4%
- Research Center: 3%
About the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN)

- **75** Canadian university members providing access for 1.2 million researchers and students
- **52 licenses** with key national and international academic publishers (e.g., Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Springer, etc)
- **2,616** supported by individualized institutional agreements
- **$88 MILLION** annually in content/license agreements saving members $130 million/year
Context: Challenges in the current scholarly communications environment

• **Budget**
  - Majority of university libraries in Canada are seeing flat, or reduced budgets
  - Declining value of the Canadian dollar impacting the cost of large commercial journal packages priced primarily in USD, GBP or EUR

• **Market**
  - Consolidation of control of journals in the commercial publishing community leading to steadily increasing journal costs
  - Faculty unwilling to give up access to journals and unaware of dynamics of the “big deal”

• **Canadian scholarly publishing**
  - Increasingly challenged to be sustainable in this environment without being absorbed by the large commercial publishers
Context: Other open access models

Other explorations of new models for scholarly publishing

- Open Library of Humanities
- SCOAP³
- Knowledge Unlatched
- Open Edition - Freemium
3. Previous agreement

• 2008-2013: CRKN and Érudit had a license agreement

• Consortia subscription to content on Érudit platform

• Beneficial to both parties
  ▪ Libraries – access to a suite of content they might not otherwise subscribe to individually
  ▪ Journals – readership and revenue from many institutions that might not subscribe otherwise

• Limits of this agreement
  ▪ Comparison of Érudit against commercial publishers and platforms
  ▪ Libraries financing a system of closed-access to knowledge
4. The Partnership
Key aspects of the partnership

- Access to content
- Support for Canadian publishing
- Change in relationship
- Governance and participation
- Unique ability to bring large groups together
Access to content

• Access to all scholarly journals on the Érudit platform

• Reduction in the embargo
  - Érudit has always had a 2 year embargo period, after which content becomes open access
  - Partnership will see the embargo reduced to 1 year, with a long term plan of complete open access with no embargo

• Access to data and meta data for research and data mining
Support for Canadian publishing

- Libraries are looking for new models to support scholarly publishing in Canada.

- In the international sphere, this is specialized content (Canadian, French language, SS&H) with a limited market for commercialization.

- Without a change in perspective, many libraries may not subscribe, and the content may no longer be financially viable to publish, resulting in a loss of important Canadian content.

“International journals…are much less likely to publish articles with local or, one might cynically say, non-American themes.”

Vincent Larivière, Canada Research Chair on the Transformations of Scholarly Communication (http://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/in-my-opinion/importance-national-journals/)
Change in relationship

- From a customer/vendor relationship, to a partnership relationship
- Finding common goals and figuring out how you can achieve them better together
- Emphasis on working together, with both parties being flexible and open to changes
- Collaboration on the terms of the partnership
- Ongoing collaboration as well
Governance and participation

• A CRKN representative has been appointed to sit on the Érudit Board of Directors as an observer

• CRKN members will be invited to participate in a User Committee
Unique ability to bring two groups together
5. Challenges
Shared Challenges

• Changing the relationship from customer/vendor to partner
  Both libraries and publishers needed to look at the agreement from a bigger, more long term strategic perspective

• Language
  Although Canada is a bilingual country, many of our member universities are predominantly English-speaking

• Accepting an imperfect model with some “unknowns”
  Both libraries and publishers needed to trust one another for this model to work
Challenges from the CRKN/library perspective

• **Budget**
  - Majority of university libraries in Canada are seeing flat, or reduced budgets, in some cases the budget cuts are very severe
  - Unfavourable exchange rate between the Canadian dollar and the USD

• **Multiple models and projects**
  - Limited funds and many commendable initiatives
  - Which one is the “best”? 

• **Opt-in/opt out model**
  - CRKN agreements are all optional, which means a critical mass of participation was needed in order for the agreement to be financially viable
Challenges from the Érudit/publisher perspective

- Moving journals to the model proposed by the partnership, weakening the scholarly publishing environment
- Allocation of the funds collected
- Pro-active support
- Changing the relationship between Érudit and the journals
6. Next steps
Next steps

• Sharing our work with others

• **Ensuring channels of communication are open** between CRKN and Érudit, and between CRKN libraries and Érudit publishers

• **Exploring other ways to fund journals** in a sustainable manner, such as grants

• **Working together on what the relationship/model will look like post-2017**, as our current partnership agreement ends at the end of 2017

• Potentially opening up the platform to more content

• **Transform current agreements with other consortia** and develop new opportunities for partnerships