A Library Publisher Partnership for Open Access
Building an innovative relationship between publishers and academic libraries

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November 6, 2015
Introduction

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- Challenges
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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.
About Érudit

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

- multi-institutional publishing consortium founded by Université de Montréal, Université Laval, Université du Québec à Montréal
- Not-for-profit society established in 1998
- Disseminates 150 Canadian scholarly and cultural journals
- 95% of content in open access
- Revenue traditionally comes from three sources
  - Commercial activities (subscriptions and digital publishing revenues)
  - Government and research grants
  - Direct investment by the three founding universities
The Érudit Model

Publishing
• Érudit invoices journals for the costs related to XML markup
• All other costs (hosting, maintenance, development, preservation and any other indirect costs) are covered by Érudit

Dissemination
• Journals had the choice to be available through a two-year moving wall or full open-access
• Moving wall journals receive revenue from subscriptions
  ▪ approximately 70% subscription revenue returned to journals, 30% invested in Érudit's account management, customer service, marketing, maintenance of technical services etc.
About the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN)

- 75 Canadian university members providing access for 1.2 million researchers and students
- 54 licenses with key national and international academic publishers (e.g., Elsevier, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, Springer, etc)
- 2,510 supported by individualized institutional agreements
- $100 million annually in content/license agreements saving members $150 million/year
Context and Previous Agreement
Context: 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 PUBLISHER’S PROVENANCE

- Canadian University: 61%
- Scholarly Society or Association: 24%
- University Press: 8%
- Scholarly Publisher: 4%
- Research Center: 3%
Context: Challenges in the current Scholarly Communications Environment

- **Budget**
  - Majority of university libraries in Canada are seeing flat, or reduced budgets, in some cases the budget cuts are very severe
  - Declining value of the Canadian dollar impacting the cost of large commercial journal packages supplied 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 to reduce expenditures 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
Previous agreement

• 2008-2013: CRKN and Érudit had a license agreement
  § Consortia subscription to content on Érudit platform
• Benefits 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
The Partnership
Key aspects of the partnership

• Change in relationship
• Support for Canadian publishing
• Extending Access to content
• Governance and participation
• Fostering large scale collaboration
Change in relationship

• From commercial – customer/vendor relationship to a partnership relationship

• Transition from a subscription model to contribution model

• Work together to elucidate common goals and develop the process for achieving them
Change in Relationship: The Process

• Érudit provided detailed information on the costs of sustainability and set a target annual figure

• CRKN set a minimum contribution for members
  ▪ Lower contribution for institutions with 1000 FTE or less

• The majority of institutions who had previously been subscribing needed to participate and some institutions need to pay more than the minimum in order for the deal to be viable

• Transition Phase: September 2014 to December 2016
Support for Canadian Publishing

• Libraries exploring new models to support CDN scholarly publishing
• Specialized content (Canadian, French language, SS&H) with a limited market for international commercialization
• Without subscriptions, the content may no longer be financially viable to publish, resulting in a loss of important Canadian content

• 53 libraries, 112 journals
• Royalties for OA journals

“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/)
Extending Access to Content

• Access to all scholarly journals on the Érudit platform

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

• Access to data and metadata for research and data mining
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
Fostering large scale collaboration
Challenges from the CRKN and library perspective

• Budget
  ▪ Securing commitments during a time of severe budget challenge

• 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 and publisher perspective

• No previously proven model to emulate
  ▪ risk weakening the scholarly publishing environment as impact is unpredictable

• How to allocate the funds collected in a fair and equitable manner

• Pro-active support for the journal publishers during the transition demands staffing resource

• Changing the relationship between Érudit and the journals
Shared Challenges

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

• Language
  ▪ Although Canada is a bilingual country, most CRKN member universities are predominantly Anglophone

• Accepting an imperfect model with some “unknowns”
  ▪ Both libraries and publishers needed to trust one another for this model to work
Next steps

- Share our work and engage stakeholders in further collaboration
- Ensure communication channels remain open
  - Between CRKN libraries and Érudit publishers
- Exploring other ways to fund journals in a sustainable manner, such as grants
- Evolve the relationship/model, following the current partnership agreement post-2016
- Potentially open up the platform to more content
- Transform current agreements with other consortia and develop new opportunities for partnerships
- Conduct a Socio-Economic Study on Canadian Scholarly Journals: https://apropos.erudit.org/en/journals-study/
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