

2021_OSC: Poster Abstract

Poster title: "Small but sustainable? Scholar-led journals and open access"

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Abstract:

In Germany, stakeholders favour a few strategies to foster open access transformation: Library consortia negotiate (national) licensing models with major publishers; infrastructural service providers focus on flipping journals and therefore cater to the needs of renowned publishing projects. At the same time, for public research funding academic reputation (still) seems a key criterion. In doing so, major advantages of electronic publishing and bibliodiversity are given away, which include supporting innovative publication projects (inter-/transdisciplinary contexts, non-profit models, publications focusing on emerging topics, peripheral-local publication initiatives, small-subject-based initiatives) and developing new publication formats, tools and workflows (community-based and cooperative).

The project "Innovative Open Access in Small Sciences (InnOAccess)" (June 2019 - February 2021; funded by the DFG) responds to these challenges by analysing the market of scholar-led, non-APC journals in Germany, developing reusable technical workflows for smaller publishing projects and testing new, interlocking financing models.

One section of the poster features the results of a survey (sample size = 101) on the state of scholar-led, non-APC journals in Germany: How are they governed, staffed and funded? What are the budgetary options? Here it became clear, for example, that one-size-fits-all solutions do not work, mainly because publication cultures are as different as their publishing institutions. Particularly publishing projects beyond university infrastructures seem to have found creative financing opportunities and technical solutions from which the field of scholar-led-publishing as a whole can profit.

The poster furthermore outlines, based on the findings of the survey and a systematic evaluation of existing business models, how technical workflows and a modular approach to journal financing contributes to sustainable publishing. This includes a streamlined journal workflow based on open source applications, emphasising cooperative practices and using community-based know-how. Addressing the precarious funding situation of scholar-led, non-APC journals, the poster introduces a set of financing opportunities that have been tested and are deemed manageable with regard to the needs and administrative capacities of this journal segment.

In total, the poster sheds light on the precarious situation of scholar-led journals in Germany, emphasizes their importance for the open access ecosystem and offers insights on how to improve their situation in a practical fashion.