February 1997

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Scandinavian University Press

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Recommended Citation

Joa, Harald (1997) "A Case Study in E-Journal Development: The Scandinavian Position," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 16.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1989>

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A Case Study in E-Journal Developments: The Scandinavian Position

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Please note that British spelling has been used in this article. — KS

Introduction

In this paper I will try to give a short overview of the situation in Scandinavia with regard to peer-reviewed scientific and scholarly electronic journals. The emphasis is from a publisher's point of view, trying to take into account the needs of the market. We will look into the challenges and dilemmas facing publishers when electronic publishing is part of their strategy and publishing programme.

Scandinavian University Press

Scandinavian University Press is one of the largest publishers of non-fiction in Scandinavia; we publish academic books and textbooks as well as academic and professional journals. Our head office is in Oslo, Norway, with editorial branch offices in Stockholm and Copenhagen; in addition we have offices in Oxford and Boston. However, we treat Scandinavia as our home market. With regard to the quantity of our publishing, in 1996, Scandinavian University Press published 500 new and revised book titles. The journal's program counts 110 different journals, of which 65 are in English. We publish journals in several areas, mainly within medicine, social sciences and humanities. We also publish a few specialised magazines, for example within sports and music and — naturally — the oil industry. The Press publishes several CD-ROMs, mainly for the Norwegian and Scandinavian markets. So far, we are online with one electronic journal: *The Nordic Journal of Philosophical Logic*. We have been on the Internet since early 1995. You can learn more about the Press by visiting our homepage on the World Wide Web <<http://www.scup.no>>. Currently, these pages have between 40,000 and 50,000 visitors monthly.

Scandinavia

A few introductory words about Scandinavia: In Scandinavia, or the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden — there are altogether approximately 24 million people. These five countries have their specific characteristics, but there are certainly more similarities than differences. Most Scandinavians can communicate with each other in their native tongue, and apart from the Finnish language, linguistic barriers are minimal, especially on the academic

level. The Scandinavian countries are well known for their high-quality education and have well-developed welfare and social security programs. English is a second language for most people, and in the ongoing internationalisation of research and science, many scientists publish their work in English. In fact, approximately 80% of Norwegian scientists work within fields where some 80% of the findings are published in English, and a further 80% of these are published in non-Norwegian scientific publications. The level of computerisation is relatively high. In Norway, for instance, the 4 million inhabitants have access to some 1.4 million PCs. This year the computer industry expects to push another 400,000 units onto the market. The situation in the other Scandinavian countries is more or less the same.

The Journals Market

In Scandinavia there are two key players within journal publishing: Munksgaard International Publishers, based in Copenhagen, and Scandinavian University Press. We are both competitors and friends, and in preparing this paper of a Scandinavian perspective on electronic publishing, it was natural to talk to a colleague in Copenhagen, Mr Anders Geertsen. I will return to Munksgaard's activities and experiences later on.

E-Journals in Scandinavia

If you wanted to get an overview of electronic journals in Scandinavia, you could start by visiting the Internet pages of The Norwegian National Library. At present there are 356 different Norwegian titles available. The VTT Information Service at the Technical University of Finland presents a collection of 69 academic online titles in Scandinavian languages on their homepage. When you look more closely at these listings, you see that most of the titles are actually on the borderline of what I would define as an electronic journal. The Norwegian listing is a collection of almost everything that is published online: you find newspapers, magazines, newsletters, profile magazines for universities, and so forth. Only three of the journals are updated on a continuous basis. The VTT listing of academic titles shows a similar pattern: very few peer-reviewed

academic publications are electronically available. Another characteristic is that most of them are free of charge. So far we may conclude that there is a great deal of activity on the "net" in Scandinavia, but very little in the area of academic production and publishing. The listings I have mentioned are really in need of revision and editing by a professional information specialist — a librarian, or an information resource specialist.

In addition to an online search, it would be natural to talk to Scandinavian librarians about which electronic journals they have discovered are being used. It seems that, so far there is great interest, much discussion, and a lot of concern and uncertainty as to how you may enter electronic journals on a more permanent basis. But some libraries have made initiatives into this new way of information dissemination: At Karolinska Institutet in Sweden they have set up The Medical Information Centre, and they call it "a national centre for computerised biomedical information services" <<http://www.mic.ki.se>>. This is a collection of online information services, special resources, links to external resources and sites of biomedical interest.

On the homepage of The Royal Library in Copenhagen <<http://www.kb.dk/index-en.htm>> there is a list of different online material, including a listing of CD-ROMs and online databases, electronic books and periodicals, and links to useful sites on the World Wide Web.

The homepage of Norwegian School of Management's Library and Information Resources <<http://www.bi.no/library.htm>> has links to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *FirstSearch*, news from the National News Bureau, the national bibliographic database Bibsys, UnCover, and

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a listing of different CD-ROMs, just to mention some of the online information available.

A very comprehensive service has been built up at the Technical Library of Denmark <<http://www.dtv.dk>>. On this server, users may access 200 electronic journals; in addition they may also access the table of contents of more than 3,000 journals. There are advanced search tools, and the information resources are well organised. This site is worth a visit for those of you who "surf the Web".

Perhaps the most dramatic changes have taken place at The U.S. Information Service in Copenhagen <<http://www.usis.dk/usis/>>. As a consequence of electronic availability of journals and newspapers, the librarian has canceled 100 paper titles and has gained access to 800 electronic titles. The philosophy is "just in time" instead of "just in case". The librarian, **Karen Kirk Sørensen**, claims that there are both pros and cons, but the growth in the collection is significant!

What We Have Done as an Academic Publisher in this Area

At Scandinavian University Press, electronic journals and discussions about electronic publishing are on the agenda every single day and are becoming more and more important. For the last few years we have taken particular care to keep up with the electronic trends and developments in the journals market: we discuss this with our colleagues in publishing and with the other important players in the market: the academics and the librarians. We are negotiating and collaborating with several companies and organisations. We believe that 1997 will be the year when we will "be going live" with several electronic journals. During 1995 and 1996 we have mainly carried out tests and experiments. As mentioned earlier, however, we also launched our first electronic journal in May of last year.

The Scandinavian Family Therapy Journal

One of our test projects involved converting two issues of the *Scandinavian family therapy journal* to HyperText Markup Language (HTML) and Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF). The journal, which is published in the Scandinavian languages, was made available free of charge on the World Wide Web <<http://www.scup.no/journals/fokus/fokus.html>>. The pilot project was carried out in cooperation with VTT Information Service in Finland. The idea of having the pilot journal in two electronic formats was to test whether the users regard page fidelity as an important factor: should the elec-

tronic version preserve the look and feel of the original publication? Another aim was to detect the readers' opinions of how an electronic journal should be developed. An important aspect of this pilot project was to gain hands-on experience with electronic publishing and to see how the different areas of the Journals Department could handle a project like this. We have learned a great deal, and we are now in a much better position to see what training our staff need and the organizational changes we must make as a consequence of making journals electronically available in the market.

As **Sandra M. Whisler** at The University of California Press states: "The publishers' task is to prepare their staff and their organisations to live in constant change during these transitional years"¹. The opinions of the online readers of the *Scandinavian family therapy journal* were surveyed by a questionnaire placed on the same Web page as the journal issue. Unfortunately, the response was low: It may seem that the core readers of the journal are not yet very active Internet users. This is of course, also a reflection of the general difficulty of getting information and feedback. A few interesting findings may be worth consideration. Readers seem to be willing to pay another 20% in addition to the regular subscription price to gain access to the online version. They also seem to prefer the HTML version; that may be because the Acrobat PDF is rather time-consuming in the downloading process. These findings must be taken with a pinch of salt, as the number of respondents was rather low. One of the end results of the project is that practical recommendations about how to write HTML documents were composed. For those of you who are interested, this is available on the World Wide Web: <<http://www.vtt.fi/inf/nordep/projects/webpilot/cookbook/>>

The Nordic Journal of Philosophical Logic

In 1995 we were approached by three young academics from the University of Oslo, who were in the process of launching a new electronic journal called *Nordic Journal of Philosophical Logic* <<http://www.hf.uio.no/filosofi/njpl/>>. They wanted us to be the publisher of the paper version, while they would take care of the electronic version themselves. In this situation we were confronted by the new generation of academics: they are used to and they exploit the full potential of the new electronic media.

In several meetings we presented to the students the full range of services, support and value-adding work the publisher may offer. A successful collaboration emerged, and in May 1996 we launched the first issue of the journal both

in paper and electronically on the World Wide Web.

The University of Oslo and the National Research Council entered into the project with active support. Thus, this is also an example of how the scientific community may take interest in these new ways of communicating scientific results. As a publisher we developed electronic format guidelines for authors, indicating requirements for articles to be published in the journal. The journal is typeset using LaTeX, as this provides a convenient way of producing the many special characters within the closely-related fields of mathematics, computer science and logic. It is also easy to produce both print and hypertext documents for the World Wide Web, based on LaTeX's ability to produce Postscriptfiles.

The Internet is used not only for publishing but, naturally, also for submission of articles, and the peer-review process. The journal will be freely available on the World Wide Web for two years, but users have to register to access the articles. The intention is also to make the journal a living site with discussion groups, links to related sites, and so forth. We look forward to the continuous evaluation of this project, as we believe it will give important user behaviour information in the new market for scholarly communication. So far approximately 3,000 people have visited this very specialised journal. When the period of free access comes to a close, we will evaluate the level of pricing we may introduce.

The Norwegian Health Network

Medicine and health constitute one of the fastest growing fields on the Internet. We see an enormous increase in the services, mainly in the form of different Web sites. We are partners in a project named **The Norwegian Health Network**. The idea is to produce a twofold concept: one for the general public and one for health care professionals. This service will present a collection of information providers, service organisations, pharmaceutical companies, and many other parties that have an interest in meeting and serving the health care community. This is a very good example of regional initiatives, because differences in medical legislation make it difficult to have an international perspective. As publishers, we see this as another opportunity for dissemination of journal articles and book promotion.

Multi-Media Questionnaire

In addition to testing and evaluating online journals, we have also carried out a multi-media study in collaboration with **Oxford University Press**. We have sent out a questionnaire to the individual subscribers of two of our journals. These are

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journals published for learned societies. The focus of the study is to determine how the researcher identifies information today, and how he/she evaluates the different new ways and media for information identification. The study was initiated in May, 1995, and we are currently collating the answers that we received from the subscribers.

International Electronic Publishing

As you may have understood by now, the activity in Scandinavia with regard to academic electronic journals in the Scandinavian languages is relatively low or preliminary, both on the publishing and the library side. When it comes to our international English-language journals, however, there is much more activity. Like most other international publishers we are participating, negotiating and talking with old and new players in the field: **ADONIS, ISI, OCLC, RedSage, BioMedNet, CatchWord, BIDS/STeAMline, Ideal and Superjournal**, just to mention some of the many different projects and services that exist.

ISI Electronic Library Project

We are participating in Institute for Scientific Information's Electronic Library Project which I am sure many of you are quite familiar with. ISI is trying to persuade 350 publishers of 1350 journals in **Current Contents/Life Sciences** to participate. So far, I believe 500-600 journals are participating. Ten sites — universities and companies in the US and UK — have been chosen to make the journals available to the users on their sites, in Local Area Networks (LANs). It is up to the different sites to choose the core journals to be digitised. The rest will be available on a document delivery basis. After long discussions, we worked out a price and access model for unlimited viewing which essentially means subscribers pay the same whether or not they take the print version. Thus, if they already subscribe to the print version, there is a supplementary charge of 20%; if not, they pay a fee which is 120% of the print subscription price. There is no extra charge for printing up to ten printouts per issue. Above that figure, there is a charge, but the cost per copy decreases as the number of copies increases. We do not allow unlimited printing of articles. For document delivery, there is a discount of 25% for the electronic subscriber. IBM developed the software. The project is now up and running, but as we speak there are no definite user data to report, but there is a lot of activity, especially at **Purdue University** in Indiana. The aim of the project is to test user behaviour, such as: how do they use the

electronic access? How many printouts are produced? Does the price model work? Is the technical solution appropriate?

One-Stop Shops

As publishers we realise that one of the keys to success for electronic journals is that the users can easily access a comprehensive collection of quality journals from many different publishers within his/her field of interest. We believe that in the end the users are in favour of the one-stop shop concept. If every single publisher creates its own database, these have to be linked together for example, within medicine in **MedLine**, **Current Contents** and so forth. We believe there will be several shops that present journals' collections to large user groups. Thus, one possible scenario for us might be

Journals for the libraries: ISI, OCLC, CatchWord, ADONIS and so forth;

Journals direct for academics: BioMedNet, ChemWeb and other dedicated services, in addition to —

Our own database — the Publisher's Database.

On our way towards this scenario, we have read innumerable pages of proposals, studied endless suggestions for formal agreements, and evaluated very many different concepts, and we have discussed them internally as well as with competitors, STM (Scientific/Technical/Medical) colleagues and several secondary publishers. There is a lot of activity around, involving three main interest groups:

- librarians working within the digital library;
- secondary publishers and agents trying to build electronic collections;
- publishers figuring out the best ways to publish electronically.

I believe we all share the same vision, and I am convinced that one of the solutions will be a number of one-stop shops that satisfy the needs and requirements for specific user groups.

Evolution / Not Revolution

We are all familiar with the current situation in the journals' business, such as the decrease in institutional journal subscriptions, the discussions about price increases, library budgets, copyright, fair use, interlibrary lending and document delivery. At the same time, there is a strong focus on digital communication and the use of networks, both locally and the Internet. We believe that many scientists, editors, authors — the whole range of academia — would prefer to print out articles at their own desks. We are also familiar with the fact that they use different databases to trace information and, in addition, enter different fulltext databases.

As the General Council of the International Publishers Copyright Council. **Mr. Charles Clark** put it: "The possibilities

inherent in the merger of the most advanced technologies from three different industries: cable, computer and telephone are revolutionary....If you add the impact of multi-media CD's and the Internet and its successor networks, the sheer scale of deliverability is revolutionary".²

Our aim must be to enter scientific journals into this evolving system in a way that ensures the future of scholarly communication. We believe that academics will continue to send their best works to quality journals based on peer review and that the readers of these journals know that the articles have been through a great deal of value adding, corrections and modifications before they reach their desk. As a publisher we will continue to develop our products and services to this very quality-conscious community.

I think **Pieter S. H. Bolman**, President of **Academic Press**, is most correct when stating: "In science publishing, however, we are continuing to build on foundations constructed in the past and are dependent on them. A clean break, without taking care of building bridges from the old to the new, could lead to discontinuities and mismatches in the fabric of scientific literature that could be very difficult to remedy, if allowed to fester"³.

Copyright — Site Licensing

Copyright is also a key issue in the new electronic environment. Publishers want authors to be empowered appropriately by copyright laws for digital work — that he/she can license the publisher appropriately. We want the sole right to digital work to rest with the copyright holder. We are all taking part in the discussions around the European Community's Green Paper and the American White Paper that will regulate this. The budget situation for libraries is serious. Perhaps site licensing can be a new way to solve some of our common problems in the future.

Let me cite **Charles Clark** once more: "Site licences permitting use of works within an agreed site, e.g., a college, a university or a consortium of universities where the user wishes to make many different uses of a work — e.g., photocopying, inclusions in coursepacks, loading onto a local area network — in return for a fee which seeks to reflect the volume and the value of these uses.The wicked circle of increased prices and the decline in library subscriptions has to be broken. Publishers feel that interlibrary loan both in paper and electronically and so called resource sharing among libraries undermine the financial basis for publishing on a long term basis."⁴

René Olivieri, Managing Director of **Blackwell Publishers**, gave a very interesting paper on site licences at the **19th**

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UK Serials Group Annual Conference in April this year. He talked about a UK pilot site license initiative sponsored by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). He calls "site licence a clever way of buying in bulk and getting around the worst limitations of copyright. Site licences operate by pushing down the average unit price of information to the consumer and increasing usage. Maybe this is the way out of the current deadlock, a way of getting the average cost of use down and giving the customer much better value for money."⁵

We look forward to the results of the HEFCE license scheme. Our aim must be to enter our scientific journals into this evolving system in a way that ensures the future of scholarly communication. Site licensing could also be considered a strategic partnership, an aspect that **Sandra M. Whisler** makes herself a spokesperson in favour of: "The strategic partnerships that publishers are undertaking with libraries, scholarly societies and with one another will, I believe, greatly enrich the whole art of publishing, beyond the success or failure of specific projects. Collaborating closely with individuals representing key markets can only enhance publishers' overall understanding of and responsiveness to those markets."⁶

Munksgaard

As promised, I will give a short description of the electronic activities of the other major Scandinavian publisher, **Munksgaard** of Copenhagen. In a rather dramatic headline of an article in the news magazine *Børsen* one can read: "The Internet threatens Danish publishing house."⁷ In the introduction the journalist **Kim Schauman** states that Munksgaard is forced to publish gratis on the Internet. The users are happy. But copyright and profit are threatened. As often is the case in newspapers, the title does not give the correct impression of the content. Having

read the article and spoken with **Anders Geertsen**, who is responsible for the electronic publishing activities at Munksgaard, it is safe to say that they are doing more or less the same as we are. Munksgaard have presented one online journal, *First Monday* <<http://www.firstmonday.dk/>>. This is a journal about the different aspects of the Internet. This is only available online, and they have launched it to gain experience in electronic publishing, including the economic issues, technical issues, production processes and user behaviour. For the printed journals they work with more or less the same partners as mentioned earlier: **Ovid**, **ISI**, **OCLC**, **BioMedNet**. They are trying, as we are, to identify the pros and cons within the different projects. They are positioning themselves and also indicating that 1997 will be the year when they "go live" with a number of electronic journals.

Summary

Well, it is time to end, so I will try to summarise the Scandinavian University Press' experiences within the field of electronic publishing:

- Still more questions than answers remain; we are at the very beginning of a new era in publishing, we believe in an evolution — not a revolution.

- We are testing and entering into non-exclusive agreements and arrangements with a number of players.

- We realise that there will be many changes, players will leave and new ones will arrive, but it is in the marketplace, with the end users, that the decisions of the electronic future will be made.

We are convinced that close collaboration among the author, the academic community, the library community, the subscription agents, the secondary publishers and publishers is the key to a new and successful electronic future. Public authorities may also increasingly enter into this collaboration. It is difficult, or even impossible, to talk about the Scandinavian market as a separate unit. As an STM publisher of international academic seri-

als, we have to have an international perspective on electronic publishing. In the words of Mr. Bolman of **Academic Press**: "Science is a truly international endeavour and the scientific community forms one of the few true international markets currently in existence."⁸

This article is based on a paper presented at the Third European Serials Conference, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, 25-27 September 1996.

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ENDNOTES

¹Sandra M. Whisler. "Electronic publishing and the indispensability of publishers." *LOGOS*, v. 7, Issue 1, (quarterly, 1996), pp.120-126.

²Charles Clark. "The Copyright Environment for the Publisher in the Digital World." *IPCC*, 6th updated version, March 1996.

³Pieter S. H. Bolman. "Journals face the electronic future." *LOGOS*, v. 7, Issue 1, (quarterly, 1996), pp. 86-92.

⁴Charles Clark. "The Copyright Environment for the Publisher in the Digital World." *IPCC*, 6th updated version, March 1996.

⁵René Olivieri. "Site Licences: a new economic paradigm." *Serials*, v. 9, no. 2, July 1996.

⁶Sandra M. Whisler. "Electronic publishing and the indispensability of publishers." *LOGOS*, v. 7, Issue 1, pp.120-126.

⁷Kim Schaumann. "Internett indhenter dansk forlag." *Børsens Nyhedsmagasinet*, Nr. 14, September 6, 1996

⁸Pieter S. H. Bolman. "Journals face the electronic future." *LOGOS*, v. 7, Issue 1, pp.86-92.