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# Big deals from a University's point of view

A case study from the University of Bern

Research carried out by Dr. Michelle Schaffer, presented by Claire Powell and Gerhard Bissels (all Bern University Library)

### A big thank you!



- This paper is based on a research project by Dr Michelle Schaffer formerly of Bern University Library Switzerland. The presenters thank Dr Schaffer for allowing them to use her data from her presentation:
  - Increasing transparency for e-journal subscriptions and Big Deals: Comprehensive assessment of e-journals in Science, Technology and Medicine, given at the ISEW Library, Helsinki, 1st June 2016
- > and her article:
  - Increasing transparency for e-journal subscriptions and Big Deals: Comprehensive assessment of e-journals in Science, Technology and Medicine, Journal of EAHIL, Vol. 12 (2016), 6-9

#### What is a big deal? (1)



- First introduced by Academic Press in 1996
- Big deals are online subscriptions to large bundles of electronic journals bought by libraries from publishers e.g. Springer, John Wiley, Elsevier for a fixed price
- > Journal bundles can consist of
  - ,core titles' journals previously subscribed to by a library and
  - ,collection titles' accesss to previously unsubscribed titles (some of which might not be subject relevant)

#### What is a big deal? (2)



- > Big deal journal packages can be
- > attractive to libraries
  - but
  - can prove expensive with annual increases and
  - limit flexibility in title selection
- Annual increase of e-journal bundles can exceed library budgets leading to cuts to other library expenditure
- STM disciplines are most affected by increasing costs limiting the ability to purchase additional resources

#### Motivation

- Journal packages limit the flexibility in the selection of titles
- The annual increase of such arrangements exceeds the normal growth of the media budget and forces the library to find ways to stabilise its expenditure
- The STM disciplines are most affected by the increasing costs which limit their ability to purchase additional resources



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### Aims of Project (1)



- > 3 month research project by Dr Schaffer to verify relevance of STM e-journals in relation to their cost
- Provide STM subject librarians with overview of cost and composition of e-journal bundles increasing transparency and evaluate relevance of titles within the Library's e-journal collection
- Use research project findings as basis for renegotiation of subscription costs and conditions with publishers

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### Aims of Project (2)



- Use project evaluation as basis of dicussion with faculty on ejournals subscriptions and identify cost savings (if any)
- Redirect cost savings to buy additional resources e.g. e-books, databases, student textbooks

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#### **Project Methodology (1)**

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Electronic Resources Management (ERM) Journal name, mode of licensing, publisher, ISSN, URL



#### **Project Methodology (2)**

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- Project based on collected data for each individual e-journal (2014)
  - cost
  - uses
  - CPU (cost per use)
  - mode of licencing
  - Publisher
  - long-term preservation
  - assignment to individual disciplines
  - ISSN
  - URL
  - journal name



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## Comparison of different license models in the STM area



- > 3 Big deals have the greatest share in journal titles (90%), but account for only 29% of all use
- smaller bundles from non-profit publishers are frequently used and reflect the high quality of the journals



### Distribution of the e-journals to individual subjects

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# Distribution of e-journals to individual subjects

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- > largest number of journals in Medicine (28.7%).
- Iowest number of journals in Plant Science and Veterinary Medicine (1.5%, each)
- number of journal titles subscribed to corresponds to number of academics and students in a subject area

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# Ratio of e-journal usage to number of titles subscribed in a subject





# Ratio of e-journal usage to number of titles subscribed in a subject



- Roughly 50% total e-journal usage are generated by the general Science journals due to a few highly popular titles (Nature, Science, PNAS)
- Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Geosciences, IT have a very low usage ratio
- Veterinary Medicine shows the highest relative use (15%) within the individual subjects



### Evaluation of the three Big Deals for all disciplines

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the University has permanent access only to the 17% self-selected titles

# **Big Deals: Number of titles for the individual subjects: Elsevier**



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# **Big Deals: Number of titles for the individual subjects: Springer**



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# Big Deals: Number of titles for the individual subjects: Wiley Blackwell





Introduction Aim Methods Results Summary Conclusion Outlook



### **Big Deals: Number of titles for the individual subjects**

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- •40% of e-journals are from
  - Medicine (26%) and
  - the Life Sciences (14%)

subjects: Elsevier

Big Deals: Relative use for the individual

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#### Big Deals: Relative use for the individual subjects: Springer



Springer

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### Big Deals: Relative use for the individual subjects: Wiley-Blackwell



#### Wiley-Blackwell

M.F. Schaffer, I. Kirgus, G. Bissels. Journal of EAHIL. 2016 vol. 12 (1): 6-9



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### Big Deals: Relative use for the individual subjects

- > High e-journal usage for
  - Medicine
  - Economics
  - Psychology
  - Education
- Low usage and high costs in
  - Maths
  - Physics
  - Chemistry
  - Geosciences
  - IT

The low usage numbers are caused mainly by the "collection titles" with an average frequency of use of 30%

### **Big Deals: CPU (cost per use) for core titles**

CPU (EURO)	Elsevier	Springer	Wiley-Blackwell
Art & Applied Arts			32.76
Chemistry & Materials Science	15.85	27.42	0.20
computer Science & nformation Technology	3.00	59.40	6.17
Earth & Environmental Science	4.30	9.35	2.02
Economics & Business	5.88	3.31	4.10
Engineering & Technology	115.75	24.49	13.72
Humanities & Political Science	11.68	16.24	3.69
Law & Criminology	3.73	34.00	12.84
_ife Science	3.06	13.47	4.87
Mathematics&Statistics	38.62	51.12	10.29
Medicine	1.63	2.98	3.16
Physical Science & Astronomy	20.59	47.58	65.24
Psychology, Education & Social Science	3.75	1.82	3.93
Science - General			8.60
Veterinary Science	1.88	16.10	0.62
sum	3.63	7.73	3.39

CPU

- Elsevier: 3.6 €
- Springer: 7.7 €
- Wiley-Blackwell: 3.4 €

usage does not justify the costs

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CPU (EURO)	Elsevier	Springer	Wiley-Blackwell
Art & Applied Arts			32.8
Chemistry & Materials Science	15.9	27.4	0.2
Computer Science & Information Technology	3.0	59.4	6.2
Earth & Environmental Science	4.3	9.4	2.0
Economics & Business	5.9	3.3	4.1
Engineering & Technology	115.8	24.5	13.7
Humanities & Political Science	11.7	16.2	3.7
Law & Criminology	3.7	34.0	12.8
Life Science	3.1	13.5	4.9
Mathematics&Statistics	38.6	51.1	10.3
Medicine	1.6	3.0	3.2
Physical Science & Astronomy	20.6	47.6	65.2
Psychology, Education & Social Science	3.8	1.8	3.9
Science - General			8.6
Veterinary Medicine	1.9	16.1	0.6
Total	3.6	7.7	3.4

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usage does not justify the costs



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#### **Key findings**



- > 5% of the STM titles have more than 1000 full-text article requests per year
- Journals in Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Geosciences, Astronomy and IT have high CPU
- Small nonprofit publisher packages show a five times higher usage than the Big Deals and are twice as likely to be used than individual subscriptions
- Big deals have the highest percentage of STM e-journals but these bundles mainly contain little used ,collection titles'
- Springer has the highest CPU

#### Conclusions

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#### > Transparency

 STM Subject librarians were able to gain an overview of the ejournal bundles and their contents – costs, frequency of use and options for long-term preservation

#### > Collection Development

- Survey forms the basis for further decisions and encourages further discussion with relevant university faculties
- Survey results form important indicators for the relevance of the ejournals in the STM subject areas

#### Next steps

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- Challenges limited flexibility in renegotiation of strict and complex contracts with publishers
- Focus on one Big Deal: Springer
  - Why Springer?
    - Renegotiations start in September 2016
    - Smallest amount of titles (=smallest risk of loss)
    - Highest CPU
- More evaluation?
  - Consider several years (2011-2014)
  - Include more parameters: turnaways, bibliometrics
  - Decisions can never be based on statistics alone process needs to
  - be managed by a subject librarian in collaboration with academic departments





- Dr. Michelle Schaffer (now SAKK)
- Marion Prudlo, Dr. Isabelle Kirgus, Team E-Library (Carla Buser, Tamara Leuenberger, Igor Hammer, Jan Stutzmann, Oliver Evers)



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### SUPPLEMENTARY



### Number of titles for the individual disciplines

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CPU (cost per use) of the Big Deals for core titles

CPU (EURO) Elsevier Wiley-Blackwell Springer Art&Applied Arts 20.3694672 6.19769671 Chemistry&Materials Science 0.49712213 1.13993935 0.42288897 Computer Science&Information 0.87925758 1.59455803 3.13647016 Technology Earth&Environmental Science 0.3325965 0.57836272 0.65678221 0.41267395 0 56427653 0.91044933 Economics&Business Engineering&Technology 1 43092394 1 94154284 11 2503481 Humanities&Political Science 0 57717499 0 98958027 1 12947298 Law&Criminology 0.85723209 0.42469692 1.96140564 0.2771296 Life Science 0.2091305 0.41097214 Mathematics&Statistics 2 42392408 2 91065636 0 95860767 Medicine 0.4230832 0.18610371 0.32455237 Physical Science&Astronomy 0.99651622 3.40245692 3.22471418 Psychology, Education and Social 0.23934083 0.39267034 0.78306948 Science Science - General 30.5542008 6.90975145 9.08995518 Veterinary Science 0.18010451 0.1785905 0.06995761 0.39027049 0.4825811 0.47969325 sum



#### Why Springer ?

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- > Renegotiations with Springer starts in September 2016
- Smallest amount of titles (= smallest risk of loss)
- > Highest CPU