Why all these directories? An introduction to DOAJ and DOAB

You have probably heard about them: the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ)[1], *Directory of Open Access Repositories* (OpenDOAR)[2] and now, *Directory of Open Access Books* (DOAB)[3]. The abbreviations pop up on familiar list-discussions and blogs. The services are mentioned at conferences, referred to in articles about scholarly publishing, and their data is used in research about open access (OA). You might ask yourself what all this fuss is about? Are these directories contributing to scholarly communication? If so, how exactly?

This article argues for the value of the directories, mainly focusing on two of them: DOAJ and DOAB. It provides an introduction to the services, containing a brief history and status report, and addresses the differences between OA journal publishing and OA monograph publishing. It also highlights the value of these services and discusses whether the financial models behind them are sustainable.

Background to the services

In 2002, the number of existing free e-journals had reached a critical level. Librarians experienced problems cataloguing the free resources due to lack of time, and open access publishers had difficulty disseminating their published articles. The collections of free e-journals that were already available were difficult to overview and integrate into other library and information services.

At the First Nordic Conference on Scholarly Communication in Lund/Copenhagen (NSCS)[4], the idea of creating a comprehensive directory of open access journals came up. Earlier the same year, the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI)[5] defined open access. The conclusion was that it would be valuable for the entire global research and scholarly education community if a service focusing on true open access journals could be developed. Lund University Libraries, Head Office, was given the responsibility of creating this service. The Open Society Institute (OSI)[6] and Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)[7] financially supported initial project work.

In May 2003, the technical infrastructure was built and the service was launched with more than 300 listed titles. Since the start, there have been several improvements to the service and new functions have been introduced:

- OpenURL compliance

- subject classification on journal level (LCC) and subject browsing

- improved searchable journal index (Title, Publisher, Keywords, Language and ISSN)

- searchable article index (Title, Journal Title, ISSN, Author, Keywords and Abstract)

- OAI-PMH harvesting (journal level and article level)

- information regarding author page charges (APCs) added to journal records

- DOAJ article XML schema

- SPARC Europe Seal

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- RSS feeds

- journals by country table

- new public interface with translations in French, Turkish and Greek.

Since the start, the collection has grown at an average rate of 900 titles per year (see Figure 1) and it has become one of the largest and most well-reputed services within OA journal publishing.

While DOAJ has been operated by Lund University Libraries for almost a decade – and today contains more than 8,000 listed titles and 800,000 searchable articles – DOAB is a recent addition to the family of directories.

DOAB was launched in beta phase in April 2012, and currently lists more than 1,100 open access monographs from more than 30 publishers. The primary aim of DOAB is to increase discoverability of open access books. Academic publishers are invited to provide metadata for their OA books to DOAB. This metadata will be harvestable in order to maximize dissemination, visibility and impact. Aggregators can integrate the records in their commercial services and libraries can integrate the directory into their online catalogues, helping scholars and students to discover the books. The directory will be open to all publishers who publish academic, peer-reviewed OA books, provided that these publications meet academic standards.

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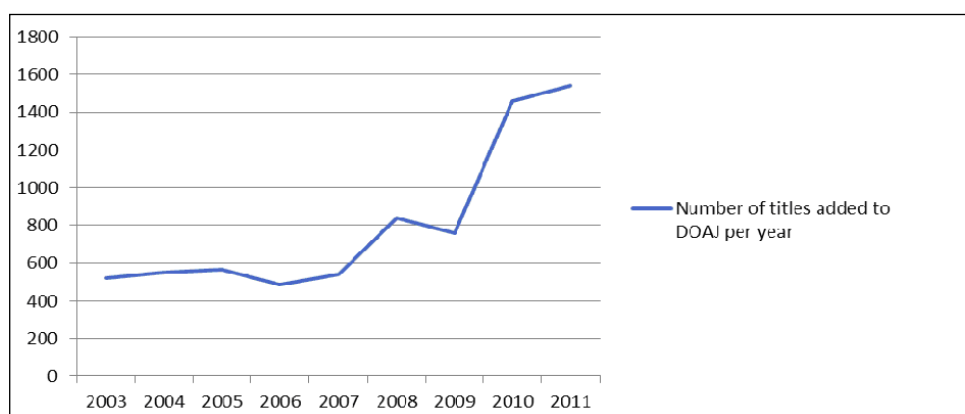

Figure 1. Number of titles added to DOAJ per year (2003-2011)

Differences between journal publishing and monograph publishing in an OA context

Even though DOAJ and DOAB can be considered complementary services (where one 'twin' is obviously much larger than the other), there are some major differences between journal publishing and monograph publishing in an OA context. Firstly, there are different traditions and preferences between scholarly disciplines. Publishing within STM is predominantly journal publishing, whereas because publishing within the humanities and social sciences has so far been more focused on publishing comprehensive works, monograph publishing has been the preferred route. Given the fact that open access has been driven primarily by researchers and publishers in STM and that the BOAI definition of open access is focused on the usage of articles, journal publishing has been considered the natural model for OA publishing. Lately, however, monograph publishing has increasingly come into the picture.

Consequently, DOAB is of great importance in order to strengthen open access publishing in monograph-centered disciplines such as humanities and social sciences. As Sandy Thatcher recently wrote in the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 'It makes no sense intellectually for journal literature to be digitally available via OA while monographic literature is not, as this will create an unfortunate 'digital divide' between naturally symbiotic forms of scholarly writing'.[8]

Another difference between journal publishing and monograph publishing is that digital monograph publishing (fee based or free), for a number of years now, has been a valuable way of promoting printed editions of monographs and other enhanced products. The life cycle of a monograph also tends to be longer than an article. This partly explains the interest in printed copies and why print-on-demand services seem to be an option for monographs. According to Thatcher, this is very important to the publisher, since it makes it possible to fund the publishing. In OA journal publishing printed editions play no significant role (if any). For journals that are not subsidized or funded by universities, societies or similar institutions, article processing charges (APCs) are a common financial model.

How are the services contributing to scholarly publishing?

There are many definitions and practices gathered under the umbrella term 'open access', and it should be remembered that there is a distinction between 'gratis' open access journals or books (e.g. free access) and 'libre' open access journals or books (e.g. free access with removed usage barriers). While some publishers believe that free access is enough for a title to be considered open access, other sectors of the scholarly community argue for the importance of re-use rights of open access material. Accordingly, there is more to the question of open access than 'what is freely available?'.

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The definition of open access used in DOAJ is inspired by the BOAI definition. By this definition, it is mandatory for a publisher to allow their readers to 'read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of […] articles' in order to be included in the directory. Since the licensing terms for OA journals and OA monographs differ, DOAB are using the statement about open access made by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)[9]: 'Book publishers who are members of OASPA shall strive to adhere as much as possible to the principles set out in the Berlin Declaration on Open Access[10]. OASPA recognizes that in some fields (e.g. Art History) the application of the most liberal licences may be difficult and in such cases other licensing practices are acceptable. OASPA recognizes and accepts that some members may impose restrictions on re-use, such as commercial re-use, but require that any restrictions must be clearly indicated'.[11]

Discussions about the most appropriate licensing terms for OA journals and OA monographs have been quite intense lately. At the moment, both DOAJ and DOAB are allowing their publishers to use any of the Creative Commons licences[12], even though it is argued that the Creative Commons Attribution licence is the licence that best meets the BOAI definition of open access (see, for example, the points highlighted by Klaus Graf in the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*).[13] However, in the current context, it would seem that the best option for OA journals would be to apply the Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC-BY)[14], which is the most liberal of the Creative Commons licences and offers the widest possible range of re-use rights, whereas OA monograph publishers would be very reluctant to apply CC-BY because that would harm the business of print, print on demand and enhanced publications. Disregarding the licensing terms applied for journals or monographs, visual and clickable representations of the licensing terms in records are a way reducing end users' confusion regarding the definition of open access. As a way of highlighting the re-use rights and supporting standardization, both DOAJ and DOAB records contain information about which Creative Commons licence a title is licensed with. (See Figure 2 for an example.)

Another important aspect of DOAJ and DOAB is that the inclusion process of new titles includes a review from a staff member. Being external to the publishing process, staff members are able to guide the publisher towards greater transparency and track and question any non-acceptable academic practices.
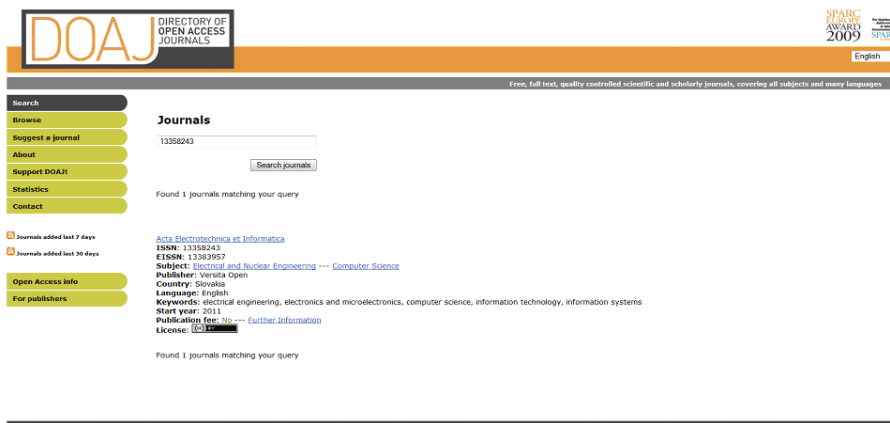
Figure 2. An example of a DOAJ record

Providing an infrastructure for open access publishers has in the past been important for the growth of OA journal publishing. It has helped to highlight OA publishers and to disseminate their published material, and it has helped libraries and other information service providers to increase the number of OA titles in their catalogues. It has also given end users a platform where they can access and search for free high-quality research papers. The launch of DOAB has the potential to support the growth of a new area and give OA monograph publishers, librarians and end users the same possibilities as DOAJ has done in the past.

From the perspective of standardization/licensing and discoverability and dissemination, there is still a great need for authoritative open access services.

Who is paying for the services and who should be paying for them?

As previously mentioned, DOAJ was initially funded by OSI and SPARC, while DOAB is (at the time of writing) funded by OAPEN[15], and will be for the first two years of the project. Other stakeholders have also contributed financially to sustain the DOAJ service after the first project period had ended. (At different times, the following organizations and publishers have contributed: SPARC Europe[16], EBSCO[17], INASP[18], Axiell[19], National Library of Sweden[20], Swedish Library Association[21], BioMed Central[22], Springer[23], Copernicus Publications[24] and Dove Press[25]).

However, a service like DOAJ is costly to maintain and develop. The number of existing OA journals is growing due to newly launched titles, digitization and transitions of toll access titles. The expansion is avalanche-like and it requires human resources to process and index new journal titles in DOAJ. Further technical development of the service is also essential. The DOAJ service needs to keep up with the developments in both OA publishing and commercial indexing services. There is a demand for, among other things, statistics and metrics for OA publications.

Since DOAJ left the project phase and became an established service, the funding situation has been more complicated. Fundraising generally seems to be easier for realizing time-limited projects, while maintenance work tends to be forgotten or of little interest to many stakeholders. In 2007, a membership program for DOAJ was established in order to maintain the service.[26] The membership was not introduced to create a short cut for publishers to increase their number of listed titles; rather it was a non-mandatory way of contributing to the survival of the directory.

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DOAJ members are paying a yearly membership fee based on a category classification:

- Individuals: 110 euros

- Libraries, Universities, Research Centers: 440 euros

- Library Consortia, Library Associations: 4,400 euros

- Aggregators and other Service Providers: 5,500 euros.

Members have an advantage over regular end users since they receive a newsletter, as a membership benefit, three to four times a year. This contains lists of recently added and removed titles. Members are also able to use their DOAJ membership for marketing purposes[27]. According to a review of DOAJ, published by Heather Morrisson in the *Charleston Advisor* in 2008, the lists are considered 'functional' and the ability to market the membership is described as a 'significant benefit to position the library for leadership in the internet age' and as 'important in the key emerging area of scholarly communications'.[28]

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The initial two-year period of support for DOAB will end in Spring 2014. The service will have to develop a funding model that might have similarities with the funding model for DOAJ. Community-based sponsorship seems to be a suitable financial model for running the directories since the core idea with services like DOAJ and DOAB is not to make profit, but to benefit the entire scholarly community. However, the scholarly community must be willing to contribute financially if this model is going to work in the long run. At the moment, the largest DOAJ membership category is university libraries and among the sponsors, large OA publishers. This might not come as a surprise. University libraries have been engaged in the open access movement since it started, working with institutional repositories, providing publishing support and raising funds to pay for APCs. OA publishers have also got a natural interest in DOAJ since it provides an infrastructure that increases the visibility and dissemination of their products.

Yet, there are other stakeholders who should benefit from the service but who could take greater responsibility for the OA infrastructure, which is not only a library-publisher concern. Policymakers, organizations that are working for developing countries (though INASP and eIFL are already contributing)[29] and research funders are examples of stakeholders who have not yet been that visible as contributors.

The numbers of large research funders that are requiring open access to the research publications they have contributed to financially are steadily increasing. Without an infrastructure, the retrieval and dissemination of the publications will be a problem. Since both DOAJ and DOAB provide the kind of infrastructure that disseminates material published with an OA licence, it should be taken into account that it is important to sustain indexing services that perform quality control of open access publishers. Both the DOAJ and DOAB teams are working hard to collect and highlight only high-quality research.

To assure sustainability of these services, the entire scholarly community will need to contribute. The question that now remains is: are they willing to?

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