



A day in the life of a publishing account executive Simon Neilson

Simon is proud to be a part of the movement which over the past decade has seen open access (OA) transform the publishing landscape, but his career at BioMed Central is not one for which he had originally thought he was destined.

At a time when there is still a post-Finch buzz in the air, we follow Simon through a busy day based in the London office of this OA publisher.

My day starts relatively early compared to most people I know. By 6:30 am I am drinking my first coffee of the morning at home while checking e-mails and listening to the BBC World Service. I am a morning person, but I have to admit that in the early months of the year it does take willpower to keep the momentum up. I am out of the house by 7:30 am and head straight to the gym before getting to work for a 9:00 am or 10:00 am start, completely depending on how much exertion I have given to my morning workout/swim.

I have worked in academic publishing for six years now and really could not have predicted this career path. In my early 20s, I worked as a runner for sound studios across London and with a degree in music, scientific publishing was not a route I initially envisaged myself choosing. However, in 2006, a friend who worked at BioMed Central (BMC) suggested I interview for a role in the Customer Services department and, as they say, the rest is history.

Every day is different, but BMC continues to be a very exciting company to work for. Although I am working from the office today, the role I do is not a typical desk job. From November to the spring we tend to be planning our conference travel and then from March onwards my weeks become much more unpredictable. I build relationships with each of my clients, and their open access needs can differ considerably. This role involves trust and the ability to offer impartial advice. I work closely with universities, government organizations, funding bodies, charities and museums so there is a great variety! By working closely with my clients, I am able to assist in the growth of submissions and publications and advise on

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215 the OA needs of individual institutions. My sales territory is Northern Europe and Israel and although this may not be as glamorous as travelling to Brazil and Australia like some of my colleagues, I do get the chance to travel and a highlight of last year was the opportunity to travel to Tel Aviv for a conference, where I gave a presentation.

This particular morning sees me juggling a number of things: a 24-page tender for a consortium of repositories, a few phone calls to UK institutions regarding the Research Councils UK (RCUK) funding, and also some planning for a trip to Stockholm next week. I will be attending my first conference of the year there, and looking to create new business within the Swedish regional hospital sector where there has been a growing interest in OA over the past couple of years. When planning trips, I try and fit in a couple of visits to maximize my time. This time I will be meeting with the consortium administrator to discuss their current OA activities and goals.

Just before lunch I have a catch-up meeting with our marketing team so that I can liaise with them on the mailings we want to send out. We do this regularly to inform institutions about our products and offers and to let people know where they can find me at the various conferences throughout the year.

After lunch I spend an hour or so, as I do most days, planning forthcoming presentations and tailoring these to the events. The most recent one was the UKSG Roadshow in Sheffield, where I presented on open access publishing for researchers wanting to find out more about a publisher role, and another recent presentation was in Manchester for the NHS, where we looked at the publisher response to the Finch Report and RCUK funding.

My role in 2012/13 has focused on the growth and awareness of open access at institutional and funder level. This requires my looking at OA funding streams and ways to increase the amount of research published into OA journals, as well as enabling cost savings for institutions in the short and long term, so this is also an ongoing part of my daily role.

The recent RCUK funding announcement and UK government's commitment to free and open access to publicly funded research has kept me busy as it is important that our UK members know how they can use these funds alongside their BioMed Central membership. I also speak to non-members on how a BioMed Central membership can provide further cost savings, and encourage OA author submissions. So I spend the rest of my afternoon preparing proposals for institutions so that they are aware of the membership models we offer, the benefits for green OA publishing that tie in with our membership programmes, and how we can work together in tailoring these to their specific needs. I also send them their article submissions history in both the BioMed Central and SpringerOpen journals, aimed at highlighting the growth of OA submissions across the institution. For those interested in the green route, I discuss 'Open Repository', our hosted DSpace digital solution. I work with organizations in setting up customized, reliable and cost-effective repositories. Clients include Oxfam, The Natural History Museum and Manchester Metropolitan University.

Another part of my role is working with potential clients in the developing world, and I find it extremely fulfilling to help researchers and institutions from these countries publish their research and become a part of the wider research community. In the last few years, BMC has hosted an Open Access Africa conference, which in 2012 was held at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. It has been a wonderful achievement to bring together so many interesting people and although not working on this today, we have come away with a lot of actions to take forward for 2013 so I will be kept busy on these another day!

The best thing about my day is when I am interacting with people and meeting new and old faces, which is something that I feel very fortunate to be able to do. In 2013, I will be

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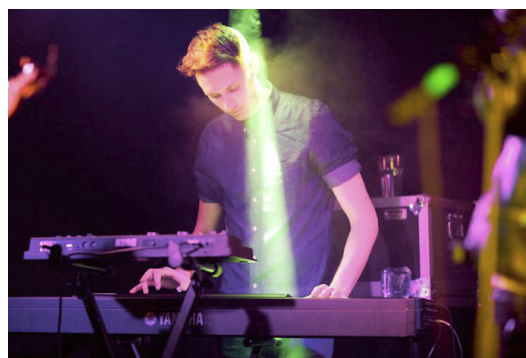
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Simon and a colleague at the recent UKSG Conference and Exhibition in Bournemouth

attending my staple conferences such as UKSG and EAHIL, but hopefully attending some new events in cities I have never visited. I also hope to work closely with territories that I have been less involved with in the past, which should add even more diversity and challenges to my daily role. Changes within the scientific publishing arena occur on a regular basis so every day is guaranteed to be different. I would highly recommend this role to anyone who enjoys being faced with new challenges throughout the year.

At the end of the day, I would normally head home to relax or edit some music work for my band, Autoheart, as we are about to release our debut album in June, but tonight I will be rehearsing for a gig that is coming up soon so it will be quite a long day for me – home at midnight and then up again in the morning ready for the next working day!



Juggling work and play sees Simon performing with his band after a long day