

CHALMERS CHOOSING THE GREEN PATH TO OPEN ACCESS

Maria Kinger

In January this year an Open Access Policy¹ was adopted at Chalmers University of Technology (Gothenburg, Sweden). During the last decade the Library at Chalmers has been an active part in preparing ground for and advocating the policy and the idea of Open Access publishing. It has been a sometimes slow process but now we have a rather radical policy (Presidents Decision C2007/1118), mandating Green Open Access as the general rule for disseminating free access to Chalmers research. The decision also includes providing access to the university's own publications. The core sentences are; *"All research published by Chalmers' researchers must be made available in an open archive, normally within six months of publication although no later than 12 months. This means that researchers at Chalmers must submit a full-text copy of all their publications in electronic form to Chalmers Publication Library (CPL)"*. The policy applies from 1st January 2010 but in practice it will have to be enforced retroactively, since not all resources required are in place from the start. However this is in full agreement with the decision, in which the Library Director is given a special mission to assess the resources needed and to make a plan for implementation, to be reported on 15th March. This paper describes the process preceding the policy decision.

Background

In the years of 2000 the library started to engage in disseminating information on university's publications in a new way. We set out to build a publication database, a project focusing on publication metadata with the aim to present a portal to Chalmers research publications on the web. Thoughts of Open Access did not grow into the picture of what we aspired for until a few years later. In February 2003 the Library hosted a seminar for researchers on the theme "Change of regime in scientific publishing" (*Systemskifte inom vetenskaplig publicering*) we invited both national and international speakers among others David Prosser from newly formed SPARC Europe (the Library soon joined as member) and David Wray from Institute of Physics. Quite a few faculty members turned up but at large the seminar attracted more interest from librarians than from researchers.

Chalmers Publication Library

The next step for us was to launch the publication database into an operational service, named Chalmers publication Library (CPL)², in 2004 researchers at the Physics Department were interested in becoming our test pilots. About the same time we were contacted by central administration at the university as they were looking for tools to measure research performance. They had thoughts on changing the way local research funds was allocated and sought ways of making the relations between input and output more visible. A better yearly publication statistics seemed possible to achieve using the database we just had put up to test, compared with the formerly used manually prepared publication lists. Except from the local need for publication statistics, all Swedish universities and colleges are required to report the amount of reviewed scientific publishing to the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, and one could foresee a continuous need for a tool like this. A few months after this first contact, a President Decision on compulsory registration of all scientific publications into CPL was taken (**President Decision ref. C2004/700**) in June 2004. CPL staff had a busy time during 2004-2005 advocating the use of publication registration. Researchers were not happy to have been laden with the extra burden of having to register their works, and the most common complaint then was; *all my articles are found in Web of Science anyway so why do you not download the data from there?* As we due to copyright restrictions could not do that, and even so, it would not have been sufficient to cover the all university publications anyway, we did our best to improve the user interface, building import routines for EndNote- and BibTex-formats etc. We also cooperated with the university webmasters when a new content management system (CMS) was about to be put up for the university at large. This cooperation led to the creation of a built-in xml-based feature, incorporating publication lists from our database to the CMS. The list function was well accepted and many researchers started to add their publication data way back beyond the mandated year 2004. We were also contacted by a couple of departments who earlier had managed local publication databases as they wanted to use CPL instead. This content was also incorporated and the CPL year span grew quickly and we soon had records dating back to the 1960s.

¹ Policy text
http://www.chalmers.se/en/sections/about_chalmers/policies-rules/open-access-policy

² CPL <http://publications.lib.chalmers.se/>

... what about the full texts?

From year 2006 and onwards Chalmers official publication statistics has been based on the data registered in CPL. By then we had a well established workflow for metadata registration, usually performed by the authors themselves, but the focus was still on just metadata, catalogue records. Providing access the full text content, was in this workflow, just possible by adding an URL in the registration form, and it could lead to a source anywhere; URLs to publishers' sites or local departmental servers. CPL did not have a full text archive of its own, though this was a feature much asked for by both students and researchers, especially in connection with a reorganisation of the university schools and departments in 2004/2005 which lead to the closing down and relocation of institutional servers and content.

We started to look for solutions to the juridical and technical questions implied in handling the full texts and understood that we had to work closely together with other functions at the university. The library alone did not have all the skills needed. These contacts proved fruitful for instance we found that the Printing office in fact already was using pdf-files as model for printing. Contact with lawyers also brought us a step further, according to Swedish law both researchers and students have full rights to his/her thesis and the university does not have the right to publish electronically without permission. We talked to Chalmers lawyers and gave them examples of publishing agreements used by other organisations both in Sweden and abroad and together we took forth a *Publishing agreement* to use. We set up a full text server, decided on a name conversion for files etc., and little by little we started e-publishing in a rather primitive way, people had to send in paper agreements and send us their pdf-files by mail. It was not until autumn 2008 we finally had an upload function for parallel publishing in place, much due to our participation in *Parallel publishing of scientific articles (PAVA)*³, a national project sponsored by the Royal Library development program *OpenAccess.se*⁴, but electronic publishing of Chalmers' own material still lingered at a Neolithic stage.

The SPA forum

The question of an Open Access policy was raised by library representatives within the local *Steering and reference group for electronic Publishing and Archiving (SPA)* in November 2007. Though, the idea of a policy had been advocated by the Library within our organisation during a couple of years already, SPA provided a better forum for pursuing the matter. The SPA group had originated out of a reference group earlier formed round the publication database, but was

renamed and extended since SPA was given the broader mission to include electronic publishing and archiving. It consisted of representatives from a range of functions dealing with the university's publishing in different ways, except from the Library, representatives from e.g. faculty, administrators, the central IT unit, the Board of graduate students, the Printing office and the Archive were members in this group. The chairman Per-Eric Thörnström came from the Office of Planning, a part of Chalmers central administration. There was also an external representative from Gothenburg University, an organisation with whom we have a close cooperation, since our universities have common departments. Both universities also use the same, jointly developed open source software (Scigloo⁵) for their publication databases⁶ CPL and GUP (Gothenburg University Publications). When, at SPA's first meeting, we lifted the subject of introducing an Open Access policy at Chalmers to the agenda, we could refer to a recommendation made by SUHF (The Association of Swedish Higher Education) in June 2005. It was a recommendation to SUHF members to introduce an Open Access policy in order to realize the Berlin Declaration, and as our university was a member it was easy arguing. In December 2007 the chairman of SPA was officially given the task to prepare a decision for an Open Access policy. From this point the Library, together with the other members in SPA, has served as a source of reference and support.

Before putting a policy text up for decision by Chalmers' president, SPA saw the need to anchor the proposed decision in order to get a policy that would have the Faculty members' approval. Therefore a series of anchorage meetings were held during the spring of 2008. To support this process SPA asked Tore Lund at the Library, Bibliometrics division to carry out a local survey⁷. Based on bibliometric data from 5 years (2003-2007) the journals most frequently published in by Chalmers researchers were selected and sorted by publisher. Then the percentage of possible Green Open Access was calculated using the information on publisher copyright policies in the RoMEO database. The survey showed that at least 85% of Chalmers journal articles could be parallel published either direct upon publication (78%) or after an embargo period of between 3-24 months (7%). This survey helped answering an important question during the process of anchoring the policy. The idea of a policy was discussed with among others the Heads of Departments, the Faculty Senate, and the Board of Graduate Studies (FUN).

⁵ Scigloo <http://www.scigloo.org>

⁶ In fact, we also use the same database.

⁷ *How many of our papers are published in journals allowing e-prints?(in Swedish)*
<http://roxen.lib.chalmers.se/bibliometri/oarapport.pdf>

³ The PAVA project

http://www.kb.se/OpenAccess_english/projects/#Parallel

⁴ Open Access.se http://www.kb.se/OpenAccess_english/

Down the Green Road

A first policy draft was presented to the President in September 2008 but was turned down and sent back to SPA to be reworked. The main reason for this was due to a new *Government bill on Research and Innovation*⁸ presented that autumn. The general content of the policy was accepted, but there were concerns rooted in the new focus on bibliometric measurements mentioned in the bill. The main concern was that the choice of publication channels would affect our future research funding from Central government, and a policy demanding Open Access journal as a first choice might then have a negative effect. The government bill played an important role when later deciding on favouring Green Open Access in the final version of the policy. The reworked policy includes a recommendation to researchers to seek publication in Open Access journals, when this is appropriate, but not demanding it as a first choice. SPA's chairman Per-Eric Thörnström has given me a resume of these discussions and the anchoring meetings. I asked him what arguments advocating an Open Access policy, he found, won easy approval from faculty members:

- *Free access to scientific results* was from an academic point of view considered the most interesting.
- Parallel publishing as a mean to *increase visibility* to one's research seemed attractive, especially combined with the *potential benefit of getting more citations*.
- Some researchers, though not that many, were also *annoyed with the way commercial interests profit on scientific communication*.

I also asked what the most common arguments against a policy were:

- The most common opposition to introducing an OA policy was that researchers would not like it. It was said that a mandate to self archive was to going to be perceived as a time

consuming administrative burden and it was believed that researchers would not comply. (Really good arguments against the policy were lacking according to Mr. Thörnström)

- A few faculty members did misunderstand the green policy and thought it wrong to force researchers to publish in OA journals.

Finally my last question to him was; - How big an influence did the Governmental bill in 2008 have on the choice of a Green OA policy at Chalmers?

- Yes, clearly it had a big influence, since the bill states that funding will be allocated according scientific quality, and indicators like citation figures will be important to us. It did not seem possible to mandate for Gold Open Access, too few journals have an impact ranking high enough. What could be done without taking such a risk and still achieve the goal - *free access*? The answer was quite obvious.

The fact that a rising number of funders are mandating Open Access publishing has made it easier to get acceptance for the need to provide facilities for this at Chalmers. Especially now since the Swedish Research Council has incorporated an OA policy into their grant conditions from 2010, as they cover about 17% of our external funding.

Work in progress

It was with great interest me and my colleagues sometime before Christmas '09 read Leif Hansen's paper⁹ in a previous issue of *ScieCom info*. We then knew that the CBS experiences soon might become highly relevant to us. There are many issues to address as we move into our new role as a key disseminator of our universities research results. We are happy for all advice from colleagues in the field and will closely follow and try to learn the do's and don'ts from others.



Maria Kinger Chalmers University of Technology Library

⁸ *A Boost to Research and Innovation - A summary of Government Bill 2008/09:50*:
<http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/13/07/65/d9e23a41.pdf>

⁹ *ScieCom Info*, Vol 5, No 4 (2009)
<http://www.sciecom.org/ojs/index.php/sciecominfo/article/view/1812>