

A NEW START FOR OPENACCESS.SE

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Background

The National Library of Sweden started the OpenAccess.se programme in 2006 to create a platform for practical cooperation between research libraries and the major stakeholders in the research sector. The programme integrated earlier initiatives to support development of digital repositories and awareness raising on Open Access. The programme was initially planned for a four-year period and in 2009 it was evaluated by two international experts.¹

International evaluation

The evaluators, Leo Waaijers from the Netherlands and Hanne Marie Kvaerndrup from Denmark, stated that “The OA programme has been a catalyst for co-operation, networking and activities on a national scale. It has also managed to get OA on the agenda of several important organisations such as the Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF), the Swedish Research Council and the Swedish Knowledge Foundation.”

“The review show a strong consensus among stakeholders on recommendations for a future OA programme based on a strategic framework with clearer goals, bigger projects and broader commitment.” The reviewers stressed the need for action on the national level that concentrates on infrastructure, sustainable end-user services, a critical coverage of good content and awareness raising. They also wanted the national library to take the role as coordinator and catalyst for this national OA agenda in collaboration with the SUHF, the Swedish Knowledge Foundation, the Swedish Research Council and other partners. The evaluation includes a separate, very useful overview of international trends by Leo Waaijers.²

Starting from a new level

There has been significant progress in Open Access developments in Sweden during the time span covered by the first phase of the programme, 2006 to 2009. There is now a mature infrastructure for Open Access

in operation. Almost every higher education institution has a repository, usually integrating metadata for the total research output of the institution (a publication database) with a growing proportion of Open Access documents. Their content has been growing quickly and getting more varied, now notably including a much larger share of self-archived scientific articles. There is a national search service - SwePub - in operation, where the total content of HE institutions repositories can be accessed effectively.³ SwePub at the moment - September 2010 - has close to 320 000 bibliographic items of which about 36 000 links to freely available fulltext documents. Any figures should be handled with care because the coverage is still uneven. However, it is quite clear how the share of OA fulltext rises steadily from 2000 and onwards. The number of Swedish Open Access scholarly or scientific journals has also been steadily rising. New OA journals have started and old journals have migrated to an OA model. At the moment there are 29 Swedish OA journals registered in DOAJ.

There is a significant move from support for Open Access principles to policy decisions that have a more direct impact. A very significant step was the decision of the Swedish Research Council in autumn 2009 to include an Open Access mandate for all its research grants from 2010.⁴ This was followed by Open Access mandates from the research council Formas (sustainable development)⁵ in 2009 and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Social Science and Humanities) in 2010.⁶ Chalmers University of Technology in 2010 was the first Swedish university to take a strong Open Access mandate.⁷ This was presented and discussed in ScieCom Info by Maria Kinger.⁸ They had been preceeded already in 2007 by an OA mandate by the Blekinge Institute of Technology, a university college, discussed in ScieCom Info by Peter Linde.⁹

³ <http://www.swepub.se>

⁴ <http://www.vr.se/omvetenskapsradet/strategierochriktlinjer/fritillgangelighetopenaccess.4.1d4cbbbb11a00d342b0800021800.html>

⁵ http://www.formas.se/formas_templates/Page_____5620.aspx

⁶ http://www.rj.se/svenska/forskningsstod/soka_anslag/open_access

⁷ http://www.chalmers.se/sections/om_chalmers/verksamhetsdokument/open-access-policy

⁸ <http://www.sciecom.org/ojs/index.php/sciecominfo/article/view/3552/3126>

⁹ <http://www.sciecom.org/ojs/index.php/sciecominfo/article/view/3623/3172>

¹ <http://www.kb.se/OpenAccess/nyheter/2009/Utvardering-av-OpenAccessse-klar/>

² http://www.kb.se/Docs/about/projects/openaccess/International_trends_OA_LeoWaaijers.pdf

The NL Sweden has realized that Open Access principles concern several areas of its operations and in June 2010 adopted an Open Access policy with a broader orientation than the ones taken by funders and universities, reflecting the wide remit of the national library. The policy takes its starting point in the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, which uses a broad definition of Open Access: "We define open access as a comprehensive source of human knowledge and cultural heritage that has been approved by the scientific community". The NL Sweden signed the Berlin Declaration in 2006.

The policy covers:

- Support for Open Access repositories and journals (via OpenAccess.se today),
- Open Access perspectives in national licenses for electronic resources,
- Open Access to the non copyright protected material digitized from the collection of the library,
- Open Access to publications from the national library and from its staff and finally
- Open Access to metadata

The policy is supposed to coordinate activities within the library and communicate a clear common position.

Permanent programme with new focus

The OpenAccess.se has now been transformed into a permanent programme and this second phase of the programme starts from a new level. The national library has invited the former partners and some new bodies to participate in the steering organization of the programme. A steering committee has been appointed with participants from the SUHF, the Swedish Research Council, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the Swedish Knowledge Foundation and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. The steering committee is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor of Halmstad University. There are also two working groups, for information and counseling to researchers and for infrastructure and user services. At the time of writing the steering committee and the working groups have still not convened for their first meetings. Thus, what is said in the following so far only reflects the view of the national library.

Whereas the OpenAccess.se in its first phase basically was a development programme, it would now have a

broader perspective, with three main areas of action: Open Access policy, information to researchers about OA and development of infrastructure and user services.

The programme will lay more stress on information about Open Access to Swedish researchers, who now will have to respond to recent OA mandates from research funders and universities. As a consequence the official website www.openaccess.se is now being radically refocused towards having researchers and the general public as its core audience. This will also be coordinated with the NL Sweden being the national Open Access desk of the EU project OpenAIRE, which supports researchers in complying with the OA mandates of the EU. The "inside" information for the Swedish Open Access Community will be available on a more informal website, based on blog software. This site will be open for direct participation from the community, but still run by the NL Sweden and linked to the official website.

Open Access policy issues is another major theme. The Ministry of Education and Research announced at the Meetingplace Open Access meeting in November 2009 that it was going to formulate a national OA policy. The programme will hopefully be able to contribute to this as it has representatives of the major stakeholders within its steering organization. The evaluators of the OpenAccess.se stress the need for an authoritative and highly visible policy, that includes a vision statement and defines a national Open Agenda.

Finally, the programme will continue to support development of infrastructure and user services, building on earlier work. Repositories have to be user friendly and keep a high quality, new kinds of content have to be accommodated for, the support for Open Access journals in Sweden should be strengthened and coordinated. There is also an interest from research funders in promoting Open Access to monographs, especially in Social Science and Humanities. The development of services will now more than ever have to unfold within the framework of an international Open Access infrastructure.

During this time of transition the basic activities of the programme have not been halted. There are a number of on-going projects that continuously report on their outcomes, the website is updated with news and planning has been going on for the main public event, Meetingplace Open Access, which this year will take place in Lund on November 24-25.



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