

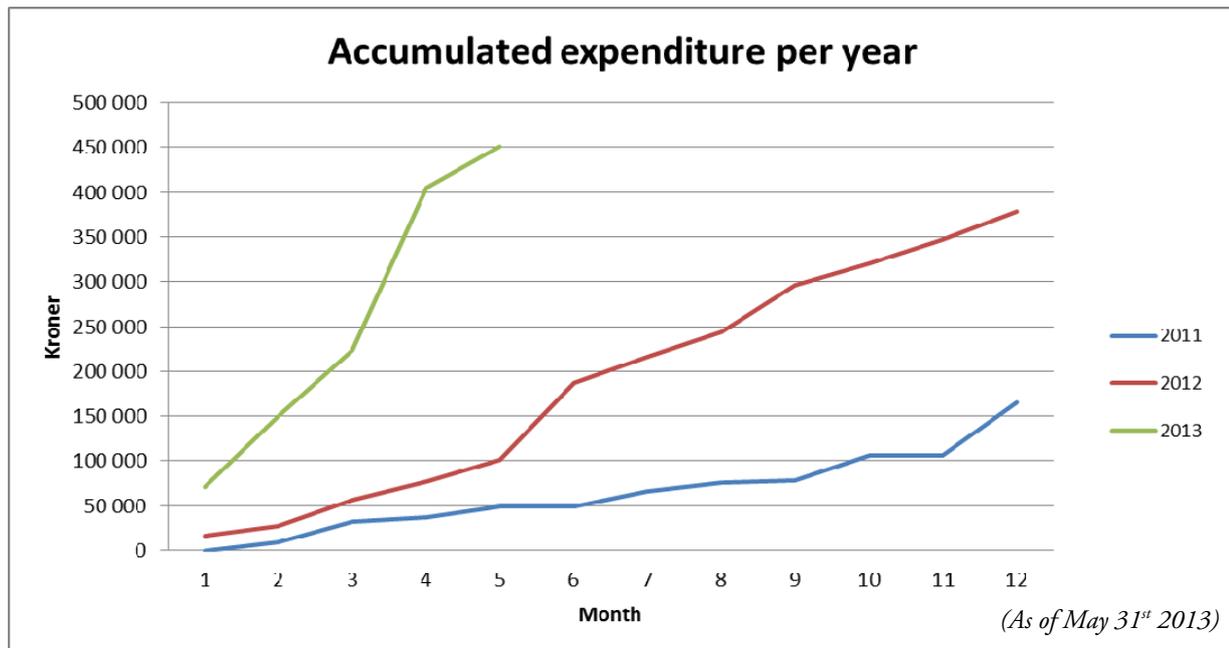
## THE TROMSØ PUBLICATION FUND - EXTREME GROWTH!

Jan Erik Frantsvåg

In 2011 we informed the world about the establishing of our publication fund at the University of Tromsø (Frantsvåg 2011). We started out with some hazy ideas about how much money we needed and how this would develop. Very little of what we foresaw, became as we thought it would be.

We started operations early in 2011, with a budget of NOK 300 000, but ended up having used only NOK 165 000 on 24 articles.

But the fund really took off early in 2013. At the end of April we had already spent NOK 405 000 of the available NOK 500 000 on 39 articles, and were looking at the bleak prospect of having to suspend the fund until the next budget year. The university rectorate came to our rescue, and on May 30<sup>th</sup> we were given another NOK 500 000 to tide us over and let us operate the fund uninterrupted. By the end of May the fund has spent 451 000 on 43 articles.



We understood that there was much to do in the way of marketing the fund, and assumed that we would increase the use of the fund in 2012, but were satisfied with a budget of NOK 309 000 for 2012 – we couldn't possibly be more than doubling our expenses! And when we, in the spring of 2012 were asked for a number for the 2013 budget we were expecting continuing growth and also possibilities for financing OA monographs, so we boldly asked for the huge amount of NOK 500 000.

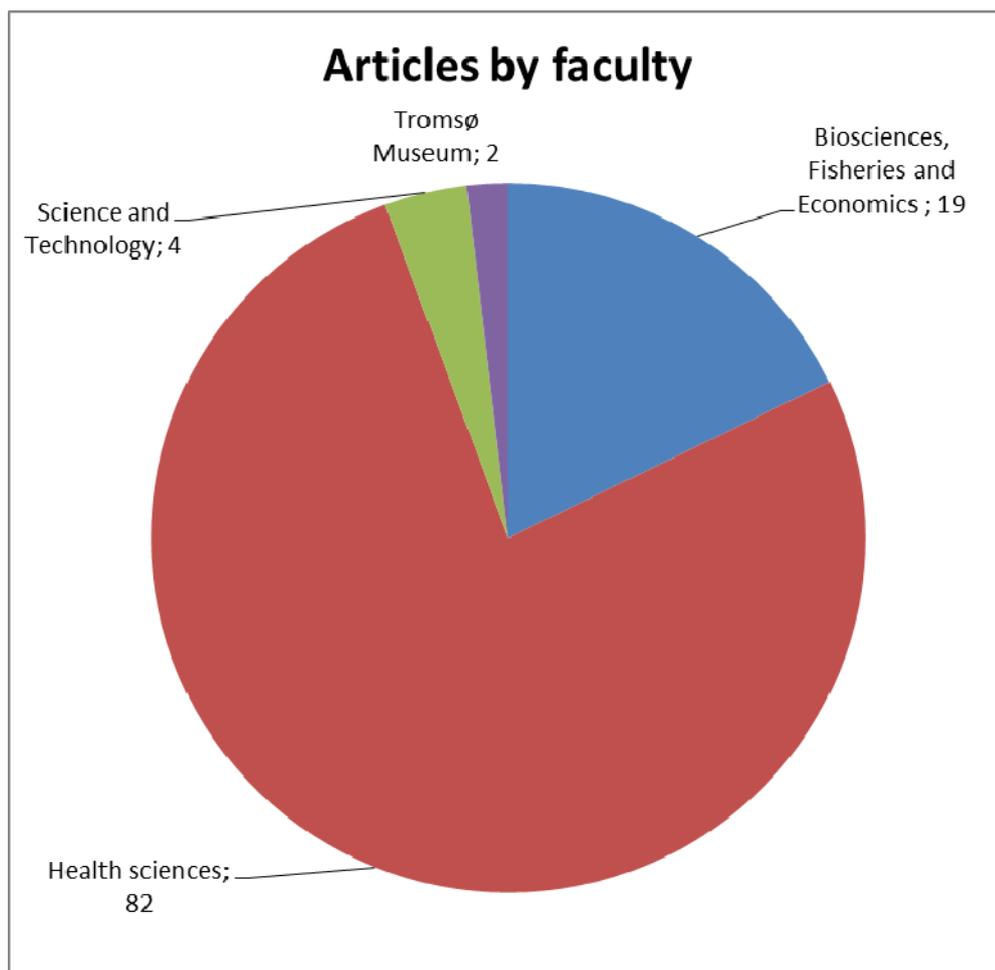
At the end of 2012 we had spent 378 000 on 42 articles, and were saved by the unspent money from 2011.

After having experienced that our optimism in assessing future need of funding wasn't optimistic enough, we asked for NOK 2 000 000 when given a chance to give input to the 2014 budget.

Why this strong growth? There are some reasons that are of a technical nature, e.g. we had some 50 per cent rebates at BMC for much of 2011. We also see that we now get the applications at an earlier stage of the process than before; this will have an effect that looks like growth but really is a displacement in time. Increased awareness of the fund is a strong factor, we see every time we inform about OA and the fund we

immediately after receive applications from people in the audience.

But the major reason for this growth must be the strong underlying growth in the use of Open Access at the university. OA has increased its share of articles from 11 per cent to 16.8 per cent, an increase of more than 50 per cent. (For more on the growth of OA in Tromsø see another article in this issue of ScieCom Info.) The increase in OA from 2011 to 2012 is much larger than the number of articles financed by the fund.



Another symptom of this underlying growth of OA is the use of hybrid OA, with an uptake of 9 per cent in 2012. The fund doesn't fund hybrid OA, we discovered recently that this has induced at least one institute at the Faculty of Health Sciences to create a fund, specifically to cover hybrid option costs! This means OA is important to the researchers, even if they have to pay for it. With about 60 articles in 2012, given at standard APC of USD 3000, authors have used more than double the sums they received from the OA fund, to pay for hybrid articles.

### Who uses the fund?

If we look at faculties, we see that the Faculty of Health Sciences is the major receiver of funds, with 77 per cent so far. The Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics is number 2 with 18 per cent.

This structure is partly due to the relative size of the volume of articles, but it also has other structural explanations. One is that the humanities and social sciences have an OA share near that of the health faculty, but they publish only in free-to-publish OA journals while the health disciplines mainly publish in APC-funded journals. The Faculty of Law in reality

has no relevant OA journal to publish in, APC-funded or not, while the health sciences has a wide selection of general and specialist journals with good standing. So we should not see the overwhelming share that goes to the health sciences as greed, but as a sign of a more developed market for OA publishing in these fields.

### The hierarchy

In what type of positions do we find the authors? – are they the young, born digital generation, or do

the mighty professors take more than their share? The numbers so far seem egalitarian, while we haven't compared them to the number of people in various position types they seem fairly consistent with how the campus is populated.

### Where is the money spent?

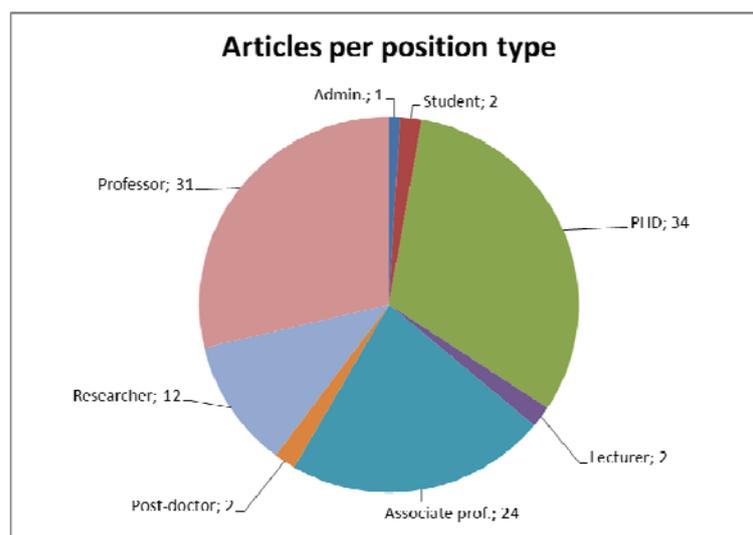
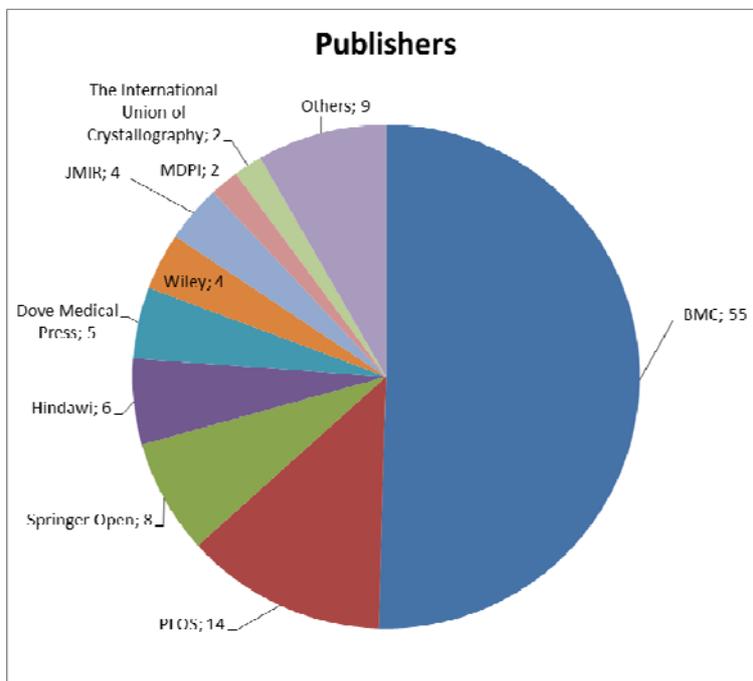
We also keep track of with which publishers the money is spent. An obvious finding is that BMC holds a market share of about 50 per cent; Springer Open represents an additional 7 per cent. Number two is PLoS with 13 per cent, then comes Hindawi, Dove, Wiley and JMIR (Journal of Medical Internet

Research). The dominance of BMC/Springer Open is even more marked so far in 2013, with a total of 75 per cent. We fear that this unexpected dominance of BMC may be due to the fact that we have a pre-pay membership with BMC. This functions so, that any time a UiT researcher submits an article, he/she is asked whether they have the code to draw on the publication fund's account with BMC.

In other words, they are made aware of the fund to a much higher degree than authors that publish with other publishers. We haven't yet investigated if BMC has had a corresponding increase in the total volume we publish with them, or if this means that BMC authors are funded by the OA fund to a higher degree than other authors. If the fund's membership influences the choice of journal, this is not necessarily

a good influence. If the membership makes the fund finance more of BMC articles than other publisher's articles, we must see if the advantage of the discount we receive is offset by an increased tendency to use OA fund money instead of money from other sources. It is also clear that with the current strong growth in OA we must prepare to disband the fund in some years' time. An application process takes time and resources,

and when OA has become mainstream there is no reason to use resources to stimulate it further. A fund also isolates the author from the cost, in the longer run this cannot be continued if we want to create a more competitive market for OA publishing. An OA article component in the annual internal distribution of funding must take its place. But not yet!



**References:**

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