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# Publication Services at the University Library Graz: A New Venture, a New Role

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## ABSTRACT

Establishing Publication Services in the library at the University of Graz did more than broaden the service portfolio of the library. A convergence of expertise at the library, needs of researchers at the university, and ongoing changes in scholarly communication also contributed to the evolution of the library's role and profile. The new services offer first-level support for matters pertaining to scholarly publishing and communications. Furthermore, Publication Services has developed into a knowledge sharing platform, extending beyond the library to other administrative departments and creating a community of practice.

## KEYWORDS

Librarianship; publication services; knowledge sharing; services; roles

The real challenge these coming years will be to develop the right services in order to provide the support for work, research, teaching and studying in the digital age [...] without neglecting the written records and the preservation of cultural heritage (Seissl, 2015, p. 77).

## Introduction

Scholars today are faced with many publishing options and services to choose from, which may require new skills and expertise. Publishing Services at the University of Graz is an example of how seizing the moment and letting things happen naturally facilitated the creation of something new regarding both its organizational form as well as its service portfolio, originating in the convergence of expertise and needs on the part of the scholars as well as a readiness of other administrative departments to collaborate. Publication Services began with an organizational change, and those involved could have just focused on the exchange of expertise and coordination of services between library departments. Instead, an

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inter-departmental team emerged that not only provides members of the university with information and support regarding publishing and scholarly communications but has also established a knowledge sharing platform for administrative departments offering services regarding scholarly communications.

## Literature review

There is growing evidence that publication and research support services are the areas with the greatest potential for future development of academic libraries (Depping, 2014; Finlay, Tsou, & Sugimoto, 2015). The opinions regarding what these services should entail vary in regard to both the scope and content of such services. Both Corrall (2014) and Kennan, Corrall, and Afzal (2014) count Bibliometrics among the pertinent issues for library services. Providing publishing channels such as institutional repositories or university presses are among the services that are most often mentioned (Hahn, 2008; Walters, 2012; Mullins et al., 2012). Schmidt, Calarco, Kuchma, and Shearer (2016), Park and Shim (2011), and Keller (2015) observe that libraries can assist throughout the publishing process by assuming an advisory and mediating role as experts in scholarly communications. J. Cox (2016) regards the library as a service provider throughout the entire research process. That such an enterprise should be collaborative by nature has been stated repeatedly (Depping, 2014; Corrall, 2014; Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013). It is understood that the primary stakeholder in collaborations regarding scholarly publishing and communications is the academic staff (Eldridge, Fraser, Simmonds, & Smyth, 2016; Klain-Gabbay & Shoham, 2016; Wright, 2013). A. M. Cox and Pinfield (2014) see the information technology (IT) department as an important partner, especially regarding research data management. Other administrative departments that could be collaborators in providing publication and support services for scholarly communications include the research service department and the legal department (Carpenter, Graybill, Offord, & Piorun, 2011; Pritchard, 2016; Association of College and Research Libraries, 2011). The role of the library as either service provider or partner in such collaborations has been critically evaluated by some authors (Jeal, 2014; Delaney & Bates, 2015).

## Publication Services: A brief history of its genesis and development

Launching publication services in the University Library at the University of Graz was first conceived in the context of the strategic project *University Library (2013–2015)*, which was part of the university's development plan (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, 2012). This project envisioned both transformative changes, for example the library as a modern service-oriented organization, and practical goals, such as the development of an Open Access publishing platform. One of the aims of the project was to change the organizational structure of the library. Those involved in devising the project had a keen awareness of changes in scholarly communications that demanded that the role and function of the library evolve, and

the library as an organization had to adapt. The necessity of formalizing communication and cooperation among different departments in the University Library on key issues such as public relations, information literacy, and matters pertaining to scholarly publishing became evident over the course of discussions between the heads of departments regarding organizational and staff development at the library in 2015. Initial talks regarding establishing a cross-departmental unit focusing on scholarly publishing between the Head Librarian, the Head of the Department for Information Services, to which the University Press, the university repository and the university's Open Access Office are assigned, the Head of the Department for Journals and Databases, responsible for Open Access deals and bibliometrics, and members of these departments started in August 2015. Four staff members who had already been providing services such as the University Press, the institutional repository, support of Open Access publishing and assistance for editors of Open Access journals as well as bibliometrics and licensing of electronic media were chosen from these two departments and have been collaborating to establish Publication Services. A first priority was to develop a concept for the new services regarding scope and target audience. This included evaluating the library's current expertise and services that could be built upon. What is invaluable is the diverse academic and professional background of the members of the services, encompassing the sciences, humanities, and theology, as well as experience in nonprofit management, the publishing industries, and academia, which allows for a more nuanced understanding of scholarly publishing and enhances the services provided. Members of the team are continuously developing their expertise in scholarly publishing and communications through involvement in various nation-wide initiatives and co-operations such as the Open Access Network Austria, e-infrastructures Austria PLUS, and the Cooperation E-Media Austria, the Austrian consortium negotiating licensing agreements. They are thus actively involved in the negotiation of Open Access off-setting deals, the development of Open Access publishing, the planning of infrastructure for research data management, and discussions regarding the future of scholarly communications, such as the formulation of *The Vienna Principles: A Vision for Scholarly Communication* (Kraker et al., 2016). Publication Services are not merely a publishing initiative, but rather a conduit to facilitate and promote the dissemination of research findings.

The services were conceptualized to convey information and provide personal assistance in matters pertaining to academic publishing as well as scholarly communications. It was a common understanding from the beginning that the new services were not to be limited to publishing research findings but rather to encompass both publication and dissemination of research findings in general. This was to allow for greater flexibility and adaptability to the changing landscape of scholarly communications. Another strategic decision was to provide support for both print and digital publishing. The six faculties of the University of Graz (Catholic Theology; Law; Business, Economics and Social Sciences; Arts and Humanities; Natural Sciences; and Environmental, Regional and Educational Sciences) represent diverse publishing



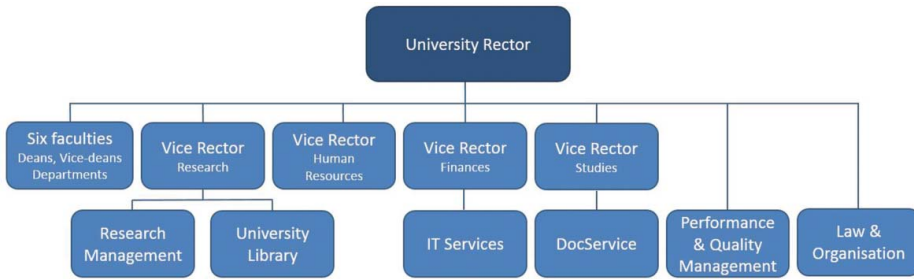
**Figure 1.** Initial partners of Publication Services.

cultures with a preference for both print and digital publishing. This signifies a departure from services other libraries offer that focus primarily on digital publishing. Consequently, Open Access, which is the nucleus that connects the Department of Information Services and the Department for Journals and Databases, is one of many topics the services address. Publication Services was thus defined as an information provider of key knowledge, best practice examples, especially at the University of Graz, and recent developments. The name Publication Services was chosen as it represents services that are already established and is more poignant in German than “scholarly communications.” The target audiences are the 3,000 scholars employed at the University of Graz, scholars joining the academic staff at the University of Graz and the students who are studying for a PhD or will be publishing for the first time.

Publication Services was originally created to coordinate among departments at the University Library. After only a few meetings it became evident that the collaboration had to be extended beyond the library to other administrative departments. A strong cooperation had already been developed with the Department of Performance and Quality Management in matters of bibliometrics by the Department for Journals and Databases. The Department of Information Services had previously collaborated with the Department for Research Management.

### **Structure and organization of Publication Services**

Within the first few months, both the Department of Performance and Quality Management and the Department for Research Management had joined Publication Services as partners (see [Figure 1](#)). The Department for Research Management contributes support through third party funding, especially with funding agencies such as the Austrian Science Fund and programs such as Horizon 2020 that greatly influence the publishing culture through their Open Access mandates. The department approved the transfer of the University’s publishing fund to Publication Services through which the funding of both print and Gold Open Access publications is subsidized. The Department of Performance and Quality Management’s expertise



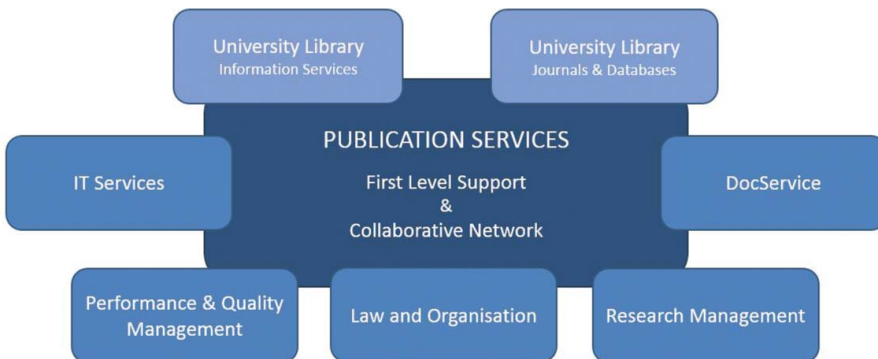
**Figure 2.** Allocation of the partners within the structure of the university.

in institutional bibliometrics and performance measurement at the university, which influences the publishing culture at the University of Graz, is invaluable for Publication Services.

Throughout 2016, cooperation with other administrative departments such as the IT Services, Law and Organization or the DocService, which serves young academics who are conducting their first research endeavors, was established to further solidify the portfolio of services offered in order to provide the best possible support. Publication Services is currently a collaboration of seven departments (see Figures 2 and 3). Other departments with which a partnership would be mutually beneficial, such as the Welcome Center for international staff and students and the Writing Center, have been identified and contacted.

Further consultations with all departments involved reinforced the understanding that it would be beneficial to have one central contact point for students and scholars in matters of publishing, something akin to first-level support. All partners agreed that the University Library was to take the lead in the collaboration of Publication Services, which has since been a service provided by the University of Graz under the administration of the University Library. The library therefore assumes the role of a service provider, partner and leader.

This new service has organizational consequences, particularly for the library. Establishment of inter-departmental units creates a secondary organization in



**Figure 3.** Current partners of Publication Services.

addition to the primary organization, which is a vertical, hierarchical, less flexible structure governed by a division of labor that reflects the traditional core tasks of a library such as acquisitions, cataloguing, customer services, and, more recently, information services. A secondary organization, which is in its nature less hierarchical, allows for greater adaptability in responding to current needs of the members of the university as well as developments in scholarly communications.

### **Development of the service portfolio**

A presentation to the Vice-Rector for Research, the deans of the six faculties and heads of various administrative departments officially instituted Publication Services in March 2016. This was followed by an information campaign on Open Access through which the Open Access deal between the Cooperation E-Media Austria and Springer was advertised followed by information on Open Access at the University of Graz. While creating a service portfolio, it became evident that it was vital for the future of Publication Services to determine its scope, role and function within the university. Moreover, the services to be developed had to be sensitive to the different publishing cultures in the various disciplines, for example, a preference for print or digital publishing, a preference for publishing in journals, conference proceedings or monographs or the significance of bibliometrics. Furthermore, it was essential to develop a demand-based portfolio of services. It was therefore a priority to establish relations with each of the six faculties, most importantly the respective vice-dean for research, and meetings were arranged. Prior to the meetings, a set of questions was drafted that focused on four key topics:

- The relevance of existing services related to publishing for the faculty and its academic disciplines;
- Publishing cultures of each faculty, including the relevance and role of Open Access;
- Services offered to each faculty to support publishing; and
- Topics to be dealt with by Publications Services and future collaboration.

Discussion regarding the services to be offered focused on these issues. In the course of these meetings, the perception that there could be a demand for publication services was confirmed. All vice-deans, moreover, emphasized the need for such services for their faculties. The following core issues were identified:

- Research data management
- Scholarly communications
- Scholarly publishing
- Publishing at the University of Graz in both print and electronic media
- Copyright law
- Open Access
- Bibliometrics

An understanding was reached with each vice-dean as to how much Publication Services could support scholars and what aspects of scholarly publishing would

best be addressed by academics from the respective disciplines. Fourteen topics were subsequently chosen for the Publication Services' service portfolio:

- Topics in scholarly publishing
- Publishing in academic journals
- Print and electronic publishing at the University of Graz
- uni≡pub, the institutional repository of the University of Graz
- Research data management and data management plans
- Complying with requirements of funding agencies
- Copyright law
- Creative Commons licenses
- Open Access
- Open Access Deals
- Publication contracts
- Bibliometrics
- Developments in scholarly communication
- Visibility of research output

The services for each topic consist of information available for download on the webpage and short presentations that can either be booked by departments, faculties or lecturers, e.g. to be held at faculty meetings or courses for doctoral students or offered as standalone workshops. Publication Services also organizes regular events and/or guest lectures on important topics of research and publishing for academic and administrative staff each term.

All vice-deans expressed that there is an urgent need for more information about copyright law. Therefore, Publication Services team organized a university-wide workshop on copyright and image rights in November 2016, although the official start of the course program was not set to begin until March 2017. Representatives from the collecting society Literar-Mechana, which represents authors, and the collecting society Bildrecht, which represents photographers and other professionals who hold proprietary rights to pictures, were invited to give brief presentations on the subjects; members of the staff were offered the opportunity to submit questions, and more than 30 questions were submitted beforehand. It proved to be the workshop with the highest participation ever organized by library staff; about 100 members of the academic and administrative staff attended. The Vice-Rector of Research opened the event by expressing support of the university's governance of Publication Services and the value of Publication Services for the university. Recently, the number of scholars contacting Publication Services has steadily increased, and most questions are about financial support, Open Access deals, publication contracts, and copyright.

The course program officially started in March of 2017 with workshops on Creative Commons Licenses by a member of Creative Commons Austria, the Open Access Policy of the Austrian Science Fund FWF by a representative of FWF, print and electronic publishing at the University of Graz by the Publication Services team, and publishing with templates by a graphic designer.



Two members of the team also gave a presentation titled “Gold Open Access and Open Access deals: synergy, peaceful coexistence or mutually exclusive approaches on the way to Open Access to academic research achievements” at the “Digital Library” conference at the University of Graz in March of 2017, to be published later in 2017.

The focus of presentations has shifted from the concept of the services to the process of establishing publication services and its applicability for other libraries. This is in response to many talks following previous presentations in which librarians from other universities said that they would like to include publication services but lacked the resources. One contributing factor to the rapid growth of Publication Services both in terms of scope as well as support among administrative units, especially the governance of the library, was that it responds to actual needs. That Publication Services contributes to the overall standing of the library is a most welcome consequence but was never the primary goal. Restraint was another essential ingredient. Publication Services is built on expertise already present at the University Library, which covers only some of the matters pertaining to scholarly communications. Partnerships among administrative units were sought for other aspects, thus avoiding possible friction and creating a community of sharing. The challenge ahead is to broaden and deepen the ties with the academic staff, departments, and faculties. This aspect of networking is vital and demands as much time and effort as developing the service portfolio. To involve all six faculties at the university from the beginning was an exigency of the structure of the University of Graz. Regarding the portfolio of services offered, the approach taken at the University Library has been resource intensive. The intention is to offer workshops and public events that cover a broad spectrum of topics and then to adapt the portfolio based on their reception. Smaller libraries might focus their portfolios on one or two topics in the beginning.

## Marketing

Publication Services was introduced to all members of the university through the news section on the university’s webpage and intranet page in April 2016. Simultaneously, the first version of the Publication Services website went live.

Over the next few weeks, the Publication Services team presented the new cross-departmental unit and its services to the colleagues of the library as well as the administrative and scientific staff at the university. In the summer of 2016, an Information Sciences Master student who specialized in library marketing developed a marketing concept for Publication Services as part of an internship at the University Library.

The Publication Services team actively sought to present its services to a wider audience. Publication services, being a rather novel service at university libraries in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, garnered interest at conferences in both Austria and Germany. The concept and development of the services were presented to

a mostly Austrian audience in September 2016 at the ODOK conference, organized by the Association of Austrian Librarians and the Austrian Society for Documentation and Information. Most recently, the team was selected for a presentation at the Deutscher Bibliothekartag (German Librarians' Day) 2017, the largest annual library conference in the German-speaking countries with several thousand attendees.

When the course program was officially launched in March 2017, a leaflet on Publication Services and its service portfolio was distributed to all scientific staff, and the website was expanded significantly and become a resource with key information regarding many aspects of scholarly communication. As an immediate response to the announcement of the course program, three workshops were booked by scientific staff for their upcoming lectures. Furthermore, Publication Services has been providing English-language workshops.

### **Implications for the role and identity of the library**

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, professors in German-speaking countries had curated literature collections in addition to their academic duties. The occupational profile of a librarian took shape in 1894 (Jochum, 1998). From its beginning, professional librarianship was regarded as part of the administration of a university and distinct from scholarly work. Teaching, research and publishing were seen as a prerogative of the academic staff (Jochum, 1998). Librarianship evolved with the introduction of electronic media in the 1980s. The role of the librarian as an information specialist gained increasing prominence, and today the librarian as an information specialist is a well-established role. Instituting the library as a service provider for disseminating and publishing research findings beyond the administration of the institutional repository and the publishing fund will pose greater challenges. Information literacy can be seen as a skill, whereas publishing is perceived by many as part of academic craft. It is and will be a process of continuous exchange with the academic staff, most importantly the vice-deans of research, and developing, offering, and adapting services. The PhD students and incoming academics are a pivotal audience in the integration of Publication Services, among other services, providing first-level support for academics. Advocacy for Open Access publishing by libraries since the Open Access initiatives of 2002 and 2003 opened the doors for libraries in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland to engage in the dissemination of research findings, which is “the foundation of every institution of higher education, regardless of its size, prestige, or endowment” (Wright, 2013, p. 2). Providing publication support encompasses provision of infrastructure, a university press and institutional repository and dissemination of information. The latter part entails providing foundational information on scholarly publishing, monitoring changes in scholarly communications and communicating relevant aspects of such changes. Most importantly, the library is actively involved in providing the best possible publishing channels when, for example, hosting academic

journals on the platform of the institutional repository or when negotiating Open Access deals with important publishing houses. Tan (2016), referencing Trifonova and Ronchetti, defines the core functions of a university as “knowledge creation, knowledge dissemination and teaching” (p. 526 as cited in Trifonova & Ronchetti, 2006, p. 459). Depping (2014), focusing on electronic media, observed that although libraries may offer services pertaining to publishing, they do not see them as connected. Subsequently, they are not advertised as an integral part of their services (Depping, 2014). Publication Services consolidates all scholarly communications services at the library, and the library can thus more visibly and actively engage in the process of knowledge dissemination.

Creating a new role for the library was a by-product of the change process, which ultimately has become one of its defining characteristics. From its beginning, the team members were given the freedom to shape these new services through their collaboration regarding which services to provide as well as their collaboration with other administrative departments at the university. Publication Services through its partnerships contributes to knowledge exchange at the university. It exceeds what Corral (2014) describes as “operational convergence,” the exchange and synchronization of services for the sake of effectiveness (p. 37). The library as a facilitator of knowledge sharing and a platform to build a community of interest regarding publishing and disseminating research findings is a new role that has strategic significance to the university, given that funding is, to a large degree, dependent on research impact. The future of research libraries has been broadly discussed these past years. Much thought has been given to present and future library services; today they are interdependent with services provided by other administrative units. Embedding the library in collaborative networks at the university is another facet of developing the role of a research library.

As mentioned before, establishing inter-departmental units such as Publication Services creates a secondary organization, which is less hierarchical and thus allows for greater adaptability. It fosters thinking of the organization in terms of an interdependent network that provides flexibility essential in fields that experience accelerated developments, whether it be in regard to publishing media, publishing channels, modes of communication, or the marketing of one’s academic brand. Inter-departmental teams often focus on coordinating activities and communication channels that display, according to Wenger (2010), network characteristics through its focus on connecting.

Publication Services can, according to Wenger (2010), best be described as a community of practice as all librarians involved demonstrate a “commitment to a learning partnership” (p. 191). For such a collaboration to be possible, support from all departments is essential. The team members themselves face the challenge to balance responsibilities in the primary organisation, that is, their departments, with this time-intensive collaborating. The future success of this enterprise, the community of practice, depends ultimately on what Wenger (2010) describes as “the right balance between enough formality to give them [self-organised groups]

legitimacy in the organization and enough informality to let them be peer-oriented, self-governed learning partnerships” (p. 193).

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