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# Towards Plan S compliance

An action plan for a library-based publishing service

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## Background

- 1 In September 2018, a group of European research funders launched Plan S – an initiative to speed up the transition of the scholarly publishing system to open access. Guidance on the implementation of Plan S<sup>1</sup> announces a set of requirements that researchers have to follow in the dissemination of scholarly articles resulting from projects funded by these funders, and proceeds to spell out the criteria that journals and repositories have to comply with in order to be able to serve as dissemination channels for such articles. The criteria should be finalized in the course of spring 2019. Plan S takes the development of scholarly publishing in the right direction: scholarly publishers must start making use of the technological advances, instead of being stuck in outdated, paper-oriented modes of publishing. However, for publishers with limited resources it may be difficult to achieve Plan S compliance within a year or two.
- 2 Publishing libraries are part of the current publishing ecosystem: they provide a service to researchers and carry out their universities' research-communication mission. The mode of publishing is often open access. The amount of financial and workforce resources allocated to these library-based publishing services varies, but it is not an uncommon situation that the resources are kept at a low level. Now these publishing services have to decide whether and how they are going to try to comply with cOAlition S criteria for journals spelled out in the.

## Septentrio Academic Publishing

- 3 Septentrio Academic Publishing<sup>2</sup> is a non-profit open access publishing service run by the university library at UiT The Arctic University of Norway. It publishes 8 peer-reviewed journals and 7 non-peer-reviewed series. The 8 peer-reviewed journals are accredited at level 1 in the Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers,<sup>3</sup> and 7 of

these journals<sup>4</sup> provide immediate open access to all of their content and are registered in the DOAJ with the DOAJ Seal<sup>5</sup> (the 8<sup>th</sup> journal had a delayed open access model until 2018). Septentrio does not own the peer-reviewed journals; all strategic decisions are made by the editorial boards.

- 4 The library manages the Open Journal Systems installation, provides OJS training and support to the editorial teams, helps with indexing and pays for some services, such as DOI-s from Crossref and the plagiarism-screening programme Crosscheck. The library also monitors the publishing landscape and helps the journals to stay abreast with the important developments. Septentrio services are free for the journals. There are five people at the library working with Septentrio tasks – all of them amounting to 1 FTE. Apart from the library staff, most of the journals lack staff specifically designated to technical tasks – the academic editorial teams are involved in journal management, including copy-editing and layout work. The journals work almost exclusively with Word-files (one journal requests manuscripts in LaTeX), the only format for the published articles is PDF.
- 5 Septentrio will recommend to all of the peer-reviewed journals it publishes to become Plan S compliant – the editorial boards will decide whether they would like to and can follow the recommendation. If a journal fails to comply with the criteria in Plan S, it will stop receiving manuscripts from cOAlition S-funded researchers – over time this may have consequences for the journal's perceived quality. The Norwegian Research Council will be implementing Plan S for project calls published after 1 January 2020 – which gives some time to the journals that are only orienting themselves towards Norwegian researchers. However, Septentrio journals have an international author base, with different funders involved, which means that the journals may face varying timelines.

## Septentrio towards Plan S compliance

- 6 Journals at Septentrio have a good starting point:
  - The DOAJ-indexed journals have the DOAJ Seal, which means that they satisfy the technical criteria in Plan S with regard to DOI-s and long term archiving.
  - Authors retain copyright in all journals and almost all journals have CC BY 4.0 as the default license.
  - None of the journals have APC-s, so that there will be no additional work with establishing waivers and making costs visible.
- 7 However, there are some compliance criteria that the journals currently do not satisfy, in practice or merely formally:
  - review according to the standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE);
  - cited references as part of article level metadata in standard interoperable format;
  - underlying data available in an external repository and linked to;
  - article fulltext in machine-readable format (e.g. XML).
- 8 The first three criteria can be implemented during 2019, but this will require changes in the editorial workflow and added workload for the editorial teams in the journals and the technical staff at Septentrio. A positive factor when it comes to open archiving of underlying data is that the university library is involved in the management and curation of the UiT-based open data repository (<https://dataverse.no/>), so journals and Septentrio will not have to go far for training and technical support for editors and reviewers.

- 9 The biggest challenge for Septentrio journals will be to start providing article fulltext in XML. It is possible that some of the journals will be able to allocate some of their budget to outsourcing XML-production, but the majority of the journals will not be able to afford it. Introducing APC-s will not be a desirable option, at least not for the humanities journals in the Septentrio portfolio. One type of solution could be to pool the resources of several (or all) Norwegian publishing libraries together – to either outsource XML production to an external contractor, or share personnel that would carry out this task. Septentrio can also go for an independent in-house solution: producing all of the XML-s, or, alternatively, only some and then training journal editors to do the rest. To this end one could use open source software such as XML Mind from MÉTOPES which is quite user-friendly and can be used for the production of multiple formats – but even this efficient tool will add to the editorial workload enormously. Should Septentrio decide to provide XML-production services to its journals, the publishing service will have to be professionalized and expanded.
- 10 With spring dedicated to review of possible solutions, this poster will present Septentrio's action plan for Plan S compliance.
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## NOTES

1. <https://www.coalition-s.org/feedback/>
  2. <https://septentrio.uit.no/>
  3. [https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside.action?request\\_locale=en](https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringskanaler/Forside.action?request_locale=en)
  4. [https://doaj.org/search?source=%7B%22query%22%3A%7B%22filtered%22%3A%7B%22filter%22%3A%7B%22bool%22%3A%7B%22must%22%3A%5B%7B%22term%22%3A%7B%22\\_type%22%3A%22journal%22%7D%7D%5D%7D%7D%2C%22query%22%3A%7B%22query\\_string%22%3A%7B%22query%22%3A%22septentrio%20academic%20publishing%22%2C%22default\\_operator%22%3A%22AND%22%7D%7D%7D%7D%2C%22from%22%3A0%2C%22size%22%3A10%7D](https://doaj.org/search?source=%7B%22query%22%3A%7B%22filtered%22%3A%7B%22filter%22%3A%7B%22bool%22%3A%7B%22must%22%3A%5B%7B%22term%22%3A%7B%22_type%22%3A%22journal%22%7D%7D%5D%7D%7D%2C%22query%22%3A%7B%22query_string%22%3A%7B%22query%22%3A%22septentrio%20academic%20publishing%22%2C%22default_operator%22%3A%22AND%22%7D%7D%7D%7D%2C%22from%22%3A0%2C%22size%22%3A10%7D)
  5. <https://doaj.org/faq#seal>
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## ABSTRACT

This poster presents an example of how a publisher with limited resources can work towards compliance with Plan S criteria for journals. The case in point is Septentrio Academic Publishing, a library-based open access publishing service at UiT The Arctic University of Norway.

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