How the Elsevier Big Deal sparked a rampage at Cambridge

Dr Corina Logan
Leverhulme Early Career Researcher
@LoganCorina #Rampage2017

Big Deal = buy many journals bundled together for one price
PRE-signing rampage: do NOT sign Elsevier contract

- Elsevier contract distributed to Zoology
- Deadline for feedback to JCS
- JCS decides whether to sign
- 24 Nov 2016
- 2 Dec 2017
- 5 Dec 2017
The players

160 UK universities

~£40 million/yr to Elsevier

1) No cost increase
2) Offset APCs
3) No confidentiality
4) 3yr contract, not 5
5) Pricing not based on ‘historic spend’

The players

160 UK universities

\(~£40\) million/yr to Elsevier

1) No cost increase
2) Offset APCs
3) No confidentiality
4) 3yr contract, not 5
5) Pricing not based on ‘historic spend’

PRE-signing rampage: do NOT sign Elsevier contract
PRE-signing rampage: do NOT sign Elsevier contract

2016

Nov

24

Elsevier contract to Zoology

25

Rampage group started

30

2017

Dec

2

5

Photos © University of Cambridge
PRE-signing rampage: do NOT sign Elsevier contract

- Maths
- Biochemistry
- Economics
- + History & Philosophy of Science, CRASSH

Elsevier contract to Zoology
Rampage group started
Sent survey to Zoology

2016 2017
Nov Dec
PRE-signing rampage: do NOT sign Elsevier contract

- Maths
- Biochemistry
- Economics

+ History & Philosophy of Science, CRASSH

- Elsevier contract to Zoology
- Rampage group started
- Sent survey to Zoology
- 39/40 researchers in Zoology said NO

2016

Nov

24

25

30

2

5

2017
PRE-signing rampage: do NOT sign Elsevier contract

Maths
Biochemistry
Economics

+ History & Philosophy of Science, CRASSH

Elsevier contract to Zoology
Rampage group started
Sent survey to Zoology
39/40 researchers in Zoology said NO
JCS decided to sign

24
25
30
2
5
Why the JCS says they signed...

1) **No Plan B**
   *(the JCS had 12 months to make one)*
Why the JCS says they signed...

1) No Plan B
   *(the JCS had 12 months to make one)*

2) No one happy with the deal, but feel there was no other choice
   *(because they didn’t make Plan B)*
Why the JCS says they signed...

1) **No Plan B**
   *(the JCS had 12 months to make one)*

2) **No one happy with the deal, but feel there was no other choice**
   *(because they didn’t make Plan B)*

3) **Most researchers won’t go without access**
   *(the only systematic data collected [by independent researchers - not JCS] showed opposite)*
Why the JCS says they signed...

1) No Plan B
   *(the JCS had 12 months to make one)*

2) No one happy with the deal, but feel there was no other choice
   *(because they didn’t make Plan B)*

3) Most researchers won’t go without access
   *(the only systematic data collected [by independent researchers - not JCS] showed opposite)*

"Despite disruption, many German scientists welcome the DEAL consortium’s firm stance in negotiations with Elsevier"
POST-signing rampage: prevent future exploitation

- JCS decided to sign
- Rampage & OCC discussions
- Letter to Board of Scrutiny: hold JCS accountable
- JCS make working group
- RSC Town Hall
- On JCS SBS Consult Comm

Taylor & Francis contract expires in Mar, Wiley in Dec
Still no Plan B or consultation by JCS (Cam) or Jisc (UK)
Jisc still the negotiator (for all ~30 contracts this year)
What is in our future at Cambridge?

Massive cuts to journal subscriptions because we invested so much money in the Elsevier Big Deal.
What is in our future at Cambridge?

**Massive cuts** to journal subscriptions because we invested so much money in the Elsevier Big Deal

**Which publishers** are cut? Small ones that don’t bundle journals into Big Deals
What is in our future at Cambridge?

**Massive cuts** to journal subscriptions because we invested so much money in the Elsevier Big Deal

**Which publishers** are cut? Small ones that don’t bundle journals into Big Deals

**Status quo will be maintained** by JCS & Jisc
What is in our future at Cambridge?

**Massive cuts** to journal subscriptions because we invested so much money in the Elsevier Big Deal

**Which publishers** are cut? Small ones that don’t bundle journals into Big Deals

**Status quo will be maintained** by JCS & Jisc

We can change our behavior...
Life cycle of a paper

Academia
goal=share science

£0

Paper published

SPARC http://sparceurope.org/oaca/
Tennant et al. 2016 F1000Research, McKiernan et al. 2016 eLife
Life cycle of a paper

**Academia**
goal=share science

- Paper published
- Profits go to
- Shareholders
goal=maximize profits

- £0
- £3777
- £1397 (37%)

Life cycle of a paper

- **Academia**
  - goal: share science

- **Editor/reviewer**
  - time

- **Profits**
  - go to
  - **Shareholders**
    - goal: maximize profits
    - £1397 (37%)

- **Paper published**
  - £3777

- **SPARC**
  - http://sparceurope.org/oaca/
  - Taylor 2012,
  - Tennant et al. 2016 F1000Research,
  - McKiernan et al. 2016 eLife

- **Elsevier**
Life cycle of a paper

Academia
goal=share science

Available to read by

Editor/reviewer time

Profits go to

Shareholders
goal=maximize profits

£0

£3777

£1397 (37%)
Life cycle of a paper

Academia

- OA APC £0-2042
- goal=share science

Editor/reviewer

- time

Available to read by

Profits go to

- Shareholders
  - goal=maximize profits
  - £1397 (37%)

Paper published

- £3777

- indirect discrimination

Available to read by

Life cycle of a paper

Academia

goal=share science

OA APC £0-2042

Paper published

Editor/reviewer time

Available to read by

Profits go to

Shareholders

goal=maximize profits

£0

£3777

£1397 (37%)

-indirect discrimination

Life cycle of a paper

Available to read by

- indirect discrimination

OA APC £0-2042

Academia
goal = share science

Available to read by

Editor/reviewer time

Profits go to

Shareholders
goal = maximize profits

Paper published

£0

£3777

£1397 (37%)

Life cycle of a paper

Available to read by

OA APC £0-2042

Academia
goal=share science

Profits go to
Shareholders
goal=maximize profits

Editor/reviewer time

Paper published

-indirect discrimination

£3777

£1397 (37%)

£££

-£0

Life cycle of a paper

Academia

- indirect discrimination

Available to read by

Profit go to

OA APC £0-2042

£3777

£0

£1397 (37%)

Shareholders

goal=maximize profits

Editor/reviewer

time

Paper published

+ readers + media + citations + jobs + funding

Available to read by

(100% OA journals) + (at ethical publishers) align with science values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>APC</th>
<th>Open Review</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PeerJ</td>
<td>(£151)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>For-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eLIFE</td>
<td>$2500</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOS</td>
<td>£1135-2202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Behavior &amp; Cognition</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Cognition &amp; Behavior Reviews</td>
<td>($1000)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROYAL SOCIETY OPEN SCIENCE</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology Open</td>
<td>£1134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellcome Open Research</td>
<td>$135-900</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ScienceOpen.com</td>
<td>$400 or 800</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>For-profit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Article level **impact** = what counts for citations  
More **replicable** = papers can be longer  
**Fair**,
**improves quality**  
**Good business** = money invested in academia
I have argued that:

1) Publishing can exploit researchers + academia and discriminate against who can read research

2) JCS & Jisc will not put researcher interests first

What can we (researchers) do?

Connect the costs of publishing with our choices

Change our behavior to stop exploiting ourselves and discriminating against others

...because all of the options we need exist now
For more information...

CorinaLogan.com/ethics.html

OpenConConCam.org

Gowers 2016 Details on the Elsevier Big Deal
https://gowers.wordpress.com/2016/11/29/time-for-elseexit/

McKiernan et al 2016 How open science helps researchers succeed
http://dx.doi.org/10.7554/eLife.16800

Thanks to Alecia Carter for making me question!