

## Going online with your journals – a beginners checklist

The checklist that follows is intended for smaller publishers who have not yet put their journals full text online. It is a brief overview of some of the key areas to address rather than an exhaustive “to do” list.

### Why go online?

- What do you want to achieve from making your journals available online?  
Greater visibility – more citations, happier authors, more international readers and authors?  
More revenue – greater market penetration and income from sectors or areas where you currently sell few subscriptions?  
As part of the society mission – broad dissemination of information?
- How much can you afford to invest – and how much of that investment will go to third party vendors or to additional in-house resources? Can existing staff’s jobs evolve and develop so that you acquire and build expertise in-house?
- Are there steep time pressures being applied to ‘going online’? Where is that coming from? Will you spend more or less on the venture by moving swiftly?

### Technology Issues

For most small to medium publishers, development of a proprietary system for online hosting and maintenance is not an option, nor is it advisable since any technology solution keeps evolving and even so-called innovations can be copied quite easily. Continual online innovation is costly to fund. The technical side of online publishing is not truly at the core of the publishers’ business so as with all non-core activities, consider delegating it to a specialist group who knows the business and can provide experience and advice you trust.

- What technology platform and partner will best suit your needs?

Working with a larger publisher?

Working with an aggregator?

Working with subscription agents who supply hosting services?

- Look in detail at your production workflow model and IT infrastructure to see how these may affect your choice.

How flexible can you make the workflow in order to achieve a cost-effective solution?

- Whatever your choice on technology platform and partner – make sure that the system adopted uses:-

Open standards throughout -such as DOI.

Meets the W3C [World Wide Web Consortium] Tier 1 accessibility standards.

Provides hardware redundancy and security

Protects you the publisher and users from local power failures

Provides 24 x 7-customer support for web-site customers.

Standards are essential for maximising the numbers of users. You need to be sure there is solid customer support for the online global client base.

### Features and Functions

If resources are scarce it is advisable to focus on the following areas:

- Quality content (!)
- Rapid upload of web pages

- Excellent navigation around and through the site
- Abstracts and references in HTML
- Full text in PDF - and HTML if you can afford it
- Reference linking through DOI/Cross Ref
- Table of contents e-mail alerts
- 2-year back archive
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As your online presence grows you may well wish to introduce:

- Personalisation features online – for society members -for example
- Web submission and online author services

So bear this in mind as you set budgets.

### Access Control

Who will have access to what and when?

How much can non-subscribers see?

- Table of contents
- Abstracts
- Free sample issue(s)
- News
- Jobs
- Free trial period
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### Pricing model

Who will pay for your online presence? This is the most important decision you will make about your online presence. Remember that in the online marketplace three primary revenue streams exist for publishers – campus/institutional licenses, individual/member subscriptions, and pay-per-view (PPV) article sale. The price of each will have an impact on the others. Seek as much input from end users as you can at this stage – at minimum ask a number of librarians in a variety of settings about what does and does not work for them – and consider the impact and options available. There is currently no consensus on pricing and at the time of writing numerous options are possible for personal/member and institutional subscriptions including: -

- Online journal distributed **bundled** with print:-  
Either online journal is free with print – usually as an initial offer  
OR online journal is an additional 10-35% of print
- Online journal is **unbundled** from print and priced at 0-35% less than print
- **Site licenses** with institutions based on a fee through:-  
Numbers of full time equivalents – students, staff, or both or by subject  
Size of institution – larger research institutions pay more  
Usage – historical or anticipated

Consider and decide also on: -

- Discounts to library consortia – how much?
- Pay-per-view – transaction based pricing. Set your price carefully – too high and there will be no customers, too low and your revenue streams may suffer.

In deciding on your pricing model it is wise to go through an analysis of the true costs of content creation for each journal versus all other publishing costs associated with EITHER print OR online OR both – to be sure you are setting a price which will sustain your publications through a transition to online only.

Decide on which model to apply to your pricing and announce it to libraries and suppliers well in advance of the online launch – at the latest August for the following January.

### **Linking policy**

To whom and under what terms will you link to other publications?

Linking policies have a dramatic impact on the overall visibility of your content.

### **Abstracting and indexing services – content integration**

Are your journals already well referenced on all the key professional service sites?

Check that the abstracting and indexing services know about your online presence well ahead of time and understand how to link to it.

How deeply embedded in the professional literature do you plan to make your journals?

In general the more integrated, thoroughly linked and retrievable the better for users.

### **Usage data**

Make sure that your technology partner can supply clear and coherent reports on online usage for each journal, which you and your institutional customers can understand and interpret.

Finally, remember that the costs of publishing your journals in print AND online will certainly start out higher than just print, but savings you can make from integrating production procedures and income from reaching new markets will help to compensate. Online distribution of research information clearly is the future – so insist on a rigorous approach to shaping your plans.

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