Developing research (support) in university libraries
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Demmy Verbeke
KU Leuven Libraries

15 units
25 physical libraries and learning centers, spread over 10 Flemish cities

physical collection: c. 3,500,000 items
c. 5,000 seats
more than 11,000,000 € acquisition budget

204 members of staff (175.3 FTE)
KU Leuven Libraries Artes

unit focused on the Arts and Humanities

3 locations in Leuven, 1 location in Antwerp

27 staff members (20.5 FTE)
“And the library? It can look like the most archaic institution of all. Yet its past bodes well for its future, because libraries were never warehouses of books. They have always been and always will be centers of learning.”

“A librarian, how nice. Tell me, what is it like to be a librarian?”
“Essentially, it is all about money and power.”

recommendation 1: find institutional support
white paper about Digital Humanities and/in KU Leuven Libraries (2013)

⇒ DH part of the mission of new library organization Artes (2015)
⇒ library develops DH module for doctoral students of Faculty of Arts (2017)
⇒ library front and center on DH website of Faculty of Arts (2020)


⇒ library front and center when KU Leuven develops Open Science roadmap (2019)
⇒ representatives from library in OS task force of KU Leuven (2019)
⇒ library coordinator of working group devoted to the future of scholarly publishing (2019)
⇒ library main organizer KU Leuven OS Day and OSD4PhD (since 2021)

Open Educational Resources as priority in strategic plan KU Leuven Libraries (2022)

⇒ library invited to develop OER training for MOOC bootcamps (2023)
recommendation 2: find economies of scale
Faculty of Arts Library and Central Library were two libraries of KU Leuven, separated by less than 150m, serving largely the same public, but:

- separate libraries, with separate budgets and separate management structures
- separate libraries, with (in the best case) related collections spread over two places and (in the worst case) overlapping collections

creation (2015) of Artes, keeping several locations, but with one budget, one management structure, one library team (with colleagues working on both locations)
goals set in the Artes memo
(i.e. the document guiding the reorganization in 2015)

1. optimization of the use of library/shelf space - a.o. by bringing related collections together
2. optimization of the library services connected to the collections
3. optimization of how budget is managed and spent
4. increase of collection budget
5. creation, within the existing means, of new positions within the library adapted to present and future needs for research and teaching
What we do

- Collaborate with interested students, teachers, researchers, and staff;
- Teach, train, and support digital scholarship research at the Faculty of Arts in particular and the humanities in general;
- Organize events such as workshops, discussion groups, and conferences;
- Develop resources which contribute to the mission and vision of KU Leuven Libraries Artes and KU Leuven Libraries as a whole.

Our expertise

- Digital forms of scholarly communication in the humanities, focusing on Open Access;
- Innovative publication methods in the humanities, including data sharing;
- Research data management in the humanities;
- Tools and methods for digital forms of research in the humanities;

recommendation 3: find focus
recommendation 4: become indispensable
obligatory digital scholarship module for PhD students of the Faculty of Arts

1. introduction to scholarly communication and research data management
2. introduction to the landscape of Digital Humanities
3. incorporating digital tools and methodologies into PhD research
4. publication and data repositories
5. digital scholarship plan workshops
recommendation 5: 
lead by example
Library funding for open access at KU Leuven

As main buyers of scholarly literature, research libraries have always provided essential economic support for sustaining the market of academic publishing. With the switch to open access (OA), libraries are now faced with transitioning this support from the demand (subscriptions) to the supply (publications) side. The way in which this is currently done, in general, risks strengthening the preponderance of the for-profit approach to scholarly communication. We therefore believe that it is essential to apply library budgets to foster a greater diversity. That is exactly the purpose of the Fund for Fair Open Access, set up by KU Leuven Libraries in 2018, which is exclusively devoted to stimulating the development of non-profit and community-led initiatives. This is achieved by Library memberships to sustain open scholarship infrastructure, by supporting diamond OA programmes and by subsidizing OA books published by Leuven University Press. In this article, we will demonstrate the accomplished successes of the fund and share some insights we have gathered along the way, such as our decision to cease financing article processing charges, even in a FA OA business model.

Keywords:
librarry funding; non-profit; community-led; OA business models; Fair OA
Artes digital scholarship community

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This presentation introduces the why and how of research data management (RDM) specifically for humanities researchers at KU Leuven. It contains relatable examples of RDM practices, tool recommendations for various kinds of humanities data, a deep dive into data publishing, and much more. Different.

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Work materials for Digital Scholarship Module at KU Leuven Faculty of Arts

The materials below, a Digital Scholarship plan and accompanying data table, are used during the Digital Scholarship Module, a training on scholarly publishing, digital humanities, and research data management for new PhD researchers at the Faculty of Arts of KU Leuven. They are published under a CC.

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Publishing data: why and how

This presentation, the second of two parts, introduces the basics of data publishing for PhD researchers in the humanities. The focus is on the kinds of data involved in data publication and ways to communicate them.
The KU Leuven Open Science Day is an annual event where KU Leuven researchers from all career stages share knowledge and exchange examples of how they implement Open Science principles in their research. It offers a platform where researchers can inspire, learn from each other, and discover how their research can benefit from these principles. The proceedings offer a record of the presentations, panel sessions, and posters, which demonstrate how KU Leuven researchers embed Open Science practices during the different stages of their research.

The KU Leuven Open Science Day is organized by KU Leuven Libraries in collaboration with the Research Coordination Office and the Information & Communication Technology & Systems Office (ICTS) and under the auspices of the KU Leuven Open Science task force.
recommendation 6: don’t be afraid to make mistakes
KU Leuven Fund for Fair Open Access

established in 2018 to streamline support for non-profit and community-driven Open Scholarship infrastructure*

put the spotlight on partners who are willing to try out something new and who serve scholarship rather than shareholders

distinct budget line separate from the acquisition budget for academic publications behind a paywall

www.kuleuven.be/open-science/fairoafund

examples: journals and publishers

for a full overview, see https://www.kuleuven.be/open-science/what-is-open-science/scholarly-publishing-and-open-access/open-access-kuleuven/OS-services
examples: Open Scholarship infrastructure

for a full overview, see
https://www.kuleuven.be/open-science/what-is-open-science/scholarly-publishing-and-open-access/open-access-kuleuven/OS-services
support for APCs (2018-2020)

exclusive focus on fair APCs: support for scholar-led, non-profit OA journals depending on an APC-based business model, no support for profit-driven journals

why we launched an APC fund

- standard thing to do if you want to support open publishing
- increase awareness about OA publishing costs
- increase awareness about for-profit vs. non-profit
why we discontinued the APC fund

- misconception of central APC fund
- grey zone between for-profit and non-profit
- APC business model is not equitable
- APC business model is associated with profit-driven approach
- not a huge number of non-profit APC journals, but a growing number of Diamond OA journals and book programs
- large administrative burden and cost