

Formation and Development of the Cyprus Libraries Consortium (CLC), Impacts and Benefits.

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1. Introduction

This presentation will describe the creation and development of the Cyprus Libraries Consortium (CLC) and the process of formulating its own agreements with Publishers. Insufficient funds, lack of organization, danger of overlapping information resources, create a slow growth rate and obstacles in the provision of information material by Academic Libraries to their users. Realizing these problems and in order to avoid them the CLC was created comprising of seven members, with its main action limited only to subscriptions to Electronic Resources.

Although setting up a consortium can provide many benefits, the CLC has also acquired its Legal Entity to better process its administrative and cost actions. Furthermore, criteria will outline the reason for choosing services and electronic resources from Publishers. Benefits and negotiations with publishers will be discussed regarding the existing subscription packages and the possibility of transitioning to transformative agreements to support open access publishing.

Further development and future actions will be mentioned in order to emphasize that the CLC is not a static organization and will continue to evolve and enrich its activities.

2. A little history

The history of the universities in Cyprus is recent. The University of Cyprus (UCY), which is the first public higher education institution in Cyprus, was established in 1992. It officially became a member of HEAL-Link in February of 2000.

This initiative paved the way for the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) and the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) to follow and they also became official members of HEAL-Link in 2009. This was a big achievement considering that CUT and OUC only began to accept their first students in 2007 and 2006 respectively.

In parallel, the three public universities created the Cyprus Academic Libraries Consortium (CALC) with the purpose of subscribing to additional resources and services that could not be covered through the HEAL-Link membership. Also, as members of HEAL-Link, we did not have the opportunity to choose whether or not to participate in a deal. The Publisher deals were

for all the HEAL-Link members without exception. The three (3) Public Universities of Cyprus paid a pre-agreed percentage for each deal.

Due to the world economic crisis, Greece was faced with economic uncertainty and consequently this created many challenges for HEAL-Link and its members. This is why, in 2013, the Cypriot Universities withdrew from Heal-link based on a mutual understanding.

Since the three public universities of Cyprus (CUT, UCY & OUC) were no longer members of the HEAL-Link Consortium, something had to be done in order to maintain their electronic resources and to continue to be able to serve their respective academic communities.

Despite the economic difficulties Cyprus was facing due to the restrictions and implementation measures imposed by Troika, the CALC expanded in 2012 to include the private universities (who already had their own consortium and collaborations with publishers) and the process of formulating its own agreements with existing and new Publishers had begun.

When the direct cooperation with the Publishers started, the public universities' participation in HEAL-Link was used as a starting point for the negotiations. The financial crisis in 2013 also contributed as an argument in the negotiations with the publishers.

Initially the publishers were not willing to accept the collaboration between the public and private institutions. However, after extensive discussions, the publishers realized and accepted the fact that they had to consider Cyprus as a small country and with the number students as a whole, in order for any deals to take place and for everyone to benefit

The newly named Cyprus Libraries Consortium (CLC) consists of seven founding members, three of which belong to the public sector and four to the private sector:

- 1. University of Cyprus**
- 2. Cyprus University of Technology**
- 3. Open University of Cyprus**
- 4. University of Nicosia**
- 5. European University of Cyprus**
- 6. Frederick University**
- 7. Neapolis University Pafos**

According to the decision of the Council of Rectors in June 2018, the president of the CLC according to the statute, is a primary Professor from one of the seven founding member institutions.

The CUT Library was also appointed by the CLC Council to be the coordinator of the negotiating team for agreements with the publishers.

The seven founding members are represented in the CLC council with the right to vote.

Electronic resources have become the mainstream format for academic libraries and the CLC has moved to direct contacts, negotiations and final agreements with more than 20 recognized Publishers and Suppliers of scientific journals and electronic resources.

3. Legal Entity

Although setting up a consortium can provide many benefits, it demands a big commitment from all the members. In order to be better able to process its administrative and cost actions, the CLC has completed and acquired its Legal Entity in 2018. This action aims to help the CLC to operate as an official nonprofit company.

The Legal Entity outlines the main terms and objectives thus making official all the actions of the CLC in relation to the deals made between the members and the publishers/suppliers.

Without a legal entity, important managerial constraints are created such as: no autonomy, no dedicated budget, no management of budget and staff, etc.

4. Criteria for choosing services and electronic resources from Publishers

The main criteria for choosing these services were:

- the ability to provide on-line access to electronic content.
- providing abstracts and full-text files of scientific journals in subject areas related to the research and educational needs and directions of the CLC members.
- Obtaining depth of coverage and perpetual access.
- Obtaining appropriate equipment and software for the development of the ILL service.

Additional criteria for the selection of electronic resources (journal packages and databases) were:

- the common interest of the CLC member institutions in subject categories, as recorded in their research programs and related activities.
- the large number of published journals and subscriptions in these subject categories.
- the great cost of these journal subscriptions.
- the importance of early notification of the academic community on the latest developments in these sciences.

Each library sets priorities and determines collection needs in relation to its budget which is allocated by the university board. The Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) is officially the coordinator regarding the correspondence and negotiations with the publishers. The dissemination of cost per member institution for each deal is based on a formula created by the library directors and agreed by the senate of each member institution. The formula takes into consideration the FTEs (no. of Undergraduate Students, no. of Post Graduate Students and no. of Academic & research Staff) of the members who participate in a specific deal.

5. Benefits

In the framework of benefits, this paper presents some examples of cases where certain existing consortium members, participating in a deal, have benefited from additional members joining.

Chart 1 below presents, the total number of participants per year involved in all of the 16 deals between CLC and Publishers regarding electronic journal packages. The chart line shows a steady increase over the last eight (8) years.

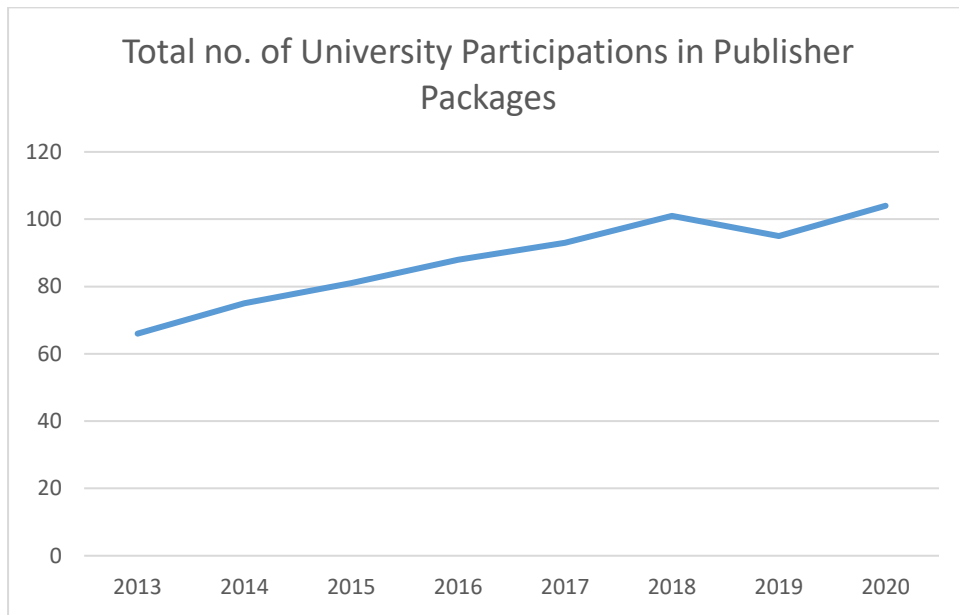


Chart 1: Total participations per year, 2013 -2020

The next Chart 2 presents an example of the benefits of participating in a consortium and a winning situation.

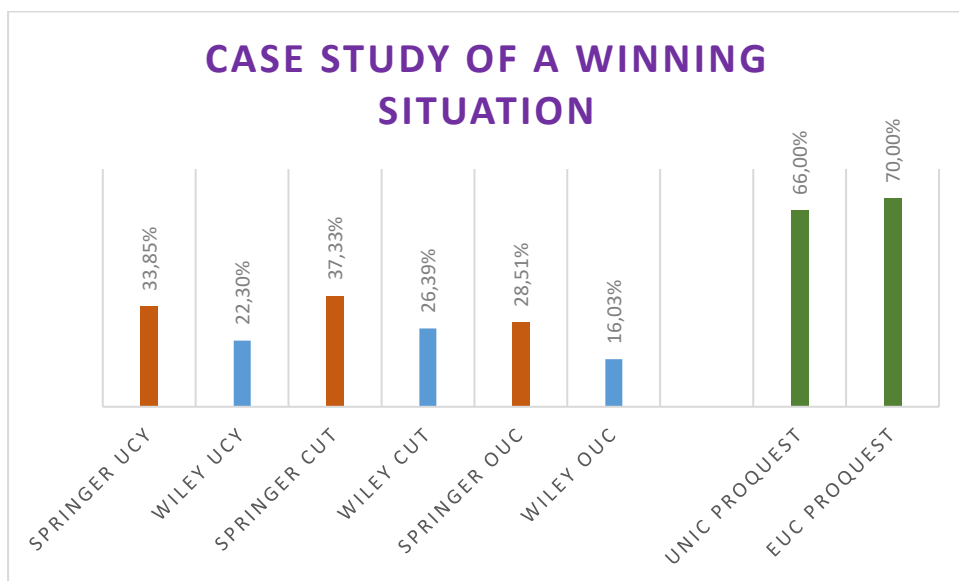


Chart 2: Case Study of a winning situation

For example, in the case of Springer and Wiley, in 2013 the only participants were the three public universities (UCY, CUT & OUC). While researching the interest of the rest of the CLC members to participate in the renewal year 2014, only one private university expressed interest in Springer, namely FU.

Regarding the interest for Wiley, only UNIC was interested, because it already subscribed to Wiley independently and was paying a higher amount in comparison to the public universities.

Regarding ProQuest Central only two private universities had a subscription (UNIC & EUC). The public universities were not so interested because they already subscribed to EBSCO Academic and Business Complete which covered their needs.

Taking into consideration the above, the publishers recognized that there was no interest on the part of the private universities to participate in the Springer and Wiley deals and so they decided to make an attractive offer to include all the CLC members.

As a result, Springer's offer included all the members with a 19% increase on the original price.

Wiley's offer included all the members with a 6.3% increase on the original price.

ProQuest's offer included all the members with an 11.4% increase on the original price.

The combination of these offers from the Publishers allowed the CLC to have full participation, increased content and cost savings.

According to the above Chart 2, it can be concluded that when adding a new member to an existing deal it automatically implies more savings. However, it is not obligatory to participate in any consortium deals and contribution is based on a library's ability to participate depending on budget availability and priorities.

During 2020 while negotiating with publishers the renewal agreements for 2021, CLC began the discussions regarding the "Transformative Agreements". So far, the CLC has already one Transformative Agreement in place with a publisher and another seven which are soon to be enforced. We have approached all the publishers with whom we collaborate in order to understand their approach regarding Transformative Agreements and all have shown us that they understand that this is the direction of licensing. We can say with certitude that each has a different approach. They understand that is the only way to meet EU funder's expectations and many of them they try to increase their revenue by offering transformative agreements.

6. Future Actions

Since its creation, the CLC has benefited very much from the negotiation process with the Publishers. Everything to do with correspondence, negotiations, license agreements, invoicing, payments, access etc. has helped us acquire experience and knowledge which has proven to be invaluable towards the development of communication and cooperation among the CLC members and our actions and future plans.

Such actions include:

- The creation and function of a union catalog of bibliographic records and the development of common cataloguing policies can contribute to the continuous education of library staff and the sharing of expertise.
- The joint implementation of technical infrastructure, e.g. creation of electronic repositories, thematic portals, digitization and archive management etc.
- The systematic monitoring and adoption of international practices and standards in matters relating to the operation of libraries e.g. such as quality issues, copyright issues, and the adoption and use of creative commons licenses or other similar licenses.
- Providing seminars for library users to maximize the use of information resources.
- Provision of consulting services on library related issues.

The CLC can go beyond the academic sector and can contribute to the public sector also, e.g. small government research institutions.

It is our belief that the aforementioned points relating to future actions can help in the evolution of libraries.

7. Conclusion:

Finally, it may be concluded that Consortia can help and contribute towards the development of libraries.

In the case of the CLC, the collaboration among its members has helped by establishing a common policy on electronic journal subscriptions, with the aim to promote rational growth of journal collections among partners, savings and access to a greater number of electronic sources in order to meet the educational and research needs of the users of the participating institutions.

Through the CLC's experience, maintaining good relations and strong collaborations with Publishers help to overcome problems and obstacles.

Also, the CLC believes and aims to go beyond the academic sector so it can contribute to the public sector also, e.g. small government research institutions.

However, a challenge that is of great concern to the CLC, is when universities have to withdraw their participation from subscriptions due to the lack of sufficient funds. Efforts to overcome this concern, is the evaluation of usage of the electronic resources which can help to prevent this from happening and minimize this risk.