Checklist: Publishing an OA Journal on a Budget

If you're looking to launch an open access (OA) journal or currently working with one, you've likely got financing on the mind. Plan on needing around $500 a year to sustain an online-only journal, give or take based on your disciplinary needs and publication volume. This checklist will help you publish affordably. Remember, for online-only journals a little goes a long way!

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Keep a rolling list of grants and organizations that may have future funding offerings, and ask your library and department to pass new opportunities to you. The Open Access Directory (oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/OA_publication_funds) has a great list of funding options.

Consider different OA funding models (nominal submission fees, advertising, sponsorship, etc.) and what is acceptable within your journal's discipline.

Apply to join OASPA as a "Scholar Publisher" member ($75) and get a free membership ($275 value) to CrossRef - official Digital Object Identifier (DOI) registry and 50 free DOIs are included.

Consider using free plagiarism checking software (e.g. SearchEngineReports.net).

Solicit graduate students from relevant departments at your editors' institutions to serve as editorial assistants or even managing editors - students can handle administrative journal tasks.

Have authors pre-format their submissions as much as possible, and create formatting templates for articles in Word or Google Docs (but NOT in InDesign or other professional layout software that most people can't use).

Add a donation button to your journal website, and consider sending a bi-annual donation reminder to your email list.

Consolidate journal management tools to cut costs - could you manage peer review and publishing on one platform? Remember your time is money too - aim for efficiency!

Use free online promotion outlets like social media, a journal blog, and your email list.

Use a website template you can customize yourself rather than paying a web developer. Make sure it addresses discovery needs like metadata parsing and Google Scholar indexing (psst…Scholastica has affordable journal website templates that offer this!)

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