

Experiences with a Tender for Bibliographic and Bibliometric Databases and Post-Termination Access

*Aude Alexandre, François Renaville & Paul Thirion
BICfB consortium (Belgium)*

Agenda

- Introduction: a few words on the BICfB
- BICfB's experience with a tender for Bibliographic and Bibliometric Databases
 - Looking back: the context
 - Comparative study WoS / Scopus
 - Why a European tender?
 - Difficulties before the tender
 - Tender timetable
 - Special specification
 - Tender analysis
 - Difficulties after the tender
 - What we have learned
 - Is all this really necessary?
- BICfB's experience with post-termination access to the data
 - (contractual) theory vs reality
 - What can we do?

A few words on the BICfB

- Non-profit organization created in 2000 by the **board of chancellors of the French-speaking universities** in Belgium (9 universities in 2000, 6 in 2012 after mergings)
- Aimed at promoting, coordinating and developing a **common policy** between the university libraries regarding academic and scientific documentation
- Financed by the public authorities (65%) and the universities (35%)
- Negotiates the consortial purchase of eProducts (partially funded) with the objective (partially met) that all the member universities have the same products
 - 44 products in 2012 = 193 subscriptions
 - Works with consensual decisions (\neq central purchasing agency)
- Achieves 1 yearly project / study
(ex: institutional repositories, Open Access, preservation and curation...)
- Daily activities managed by a technical staff (1,5 ETP) ;
Decisions taken by the board (6 universities' chief librarians)

Universities	Students (FTE)
FUNDP	4.992
FUSL	2.370
UCL	21.047
ULB	18.501
ULg	15.352
UMONS	4.100

Tender for Bibliographic and Bibliometric Databases

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Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire de la Communauté française de Belgique

Looking back: the context

- **Since 2002 : Consortial subscription** of BICfB universities + Belgian French-speaking Research Foundation (FRS-FNRS) to the **Web of Science** (Thomson Reuters) (+ CCC + ESI + JCR)
 - 3 contracts: 2002-2004; 2005-2007; 2008-2011
 - by decision of the Chancelors board
 - including the « backfiles »
 - Arrival of a **potential concurrent** on the market: Scopus (Elsevier)
- ⇒ decision to compare the 2 databases to prepare the 2012 renewal decision (regardless of the financial aspects)

Comparative Study (method)

- Aim: comparing Web of Science and Scopus
 - On the content (quality and extend of the data)
 - As a bibliographic database (search functionalities)
 - As a bibliometric tool (citations & indicators)
- Taskforce of 17 people
 - members of different universities + Research Foundation
 - with different backgrounds and angles (libraries and research administration, researchers, administrative staff)
 - worked in seminars, sub-meetings and e-mail exchanges
 - conclusions based on the use of the databases
- From November 2010 to May 2011
- 119 pages report, presented to the universities' chancellors
- Confidential results because of the context of pre-negotiations

Comparative Study (results)

- Similar scope and functionalities but **different strenghts and weaknesses**
 - 95% of Web of Science titles in Scopus, but differences
 - Content selection policy (geographic and linguistic coverage, articles in press or not, Open Access titles...)
 - Retrospective collection (coverage and consistency)
 - Citation counts and bibliometric indicators provided by the two databases, but
 - IF had been the only reference so far
 - citations in Scopus only back to 1996
 - Advanced search functionalities in the 2 databases, but
 - Scopus interface more appreciated
 - Scopus interrogation quicker
 - Some characteristics due to the different « age » of the products and their situation on the market
 - 2 very big publishers but different orientations (Data and Press vs academic journals) (monopoly risk!)
- **No clearly better product ⇒ complementary**

Why a European tender ?

- **Mandatory :**
 - High costs (> 200,000€ yearly for the consortium) for any of the two products
 - Concurrent products because of similar scope and functionalities (bibliographical and bibliometrical)
- **But risky:**
 - Hope for better prices <> fear for higher prices
 - First experience for us and for the publishers too in Europe
 - **Prisoner's dilemma:** delay problem if one or no response...

Difficulties before (internal)

- **Very tight calendar :**
 - Decision in June 2011, conclusion before January 2012
 - Official time / process constraints :
 - EU minimal official periods (consultation, stand still) and publication process
 - Universities internal calendars and approval procedures (public vs private institutions)

⇒ 1 month to write the specifications , < 1 week for draft submission analysis
- **First time** such a tender for eProducts as a collaboration b. universities
 - lots of questions
 - necessity of a convention between the universities
- **Merging** of universities ongoing during the tender period
- Consortium is **not structured to do public tenders:**
 - No human resource in the consortium specialized in public tender

⇒ exceptional administrative and legal support in the consortium chair's university

Difficulties before (external)

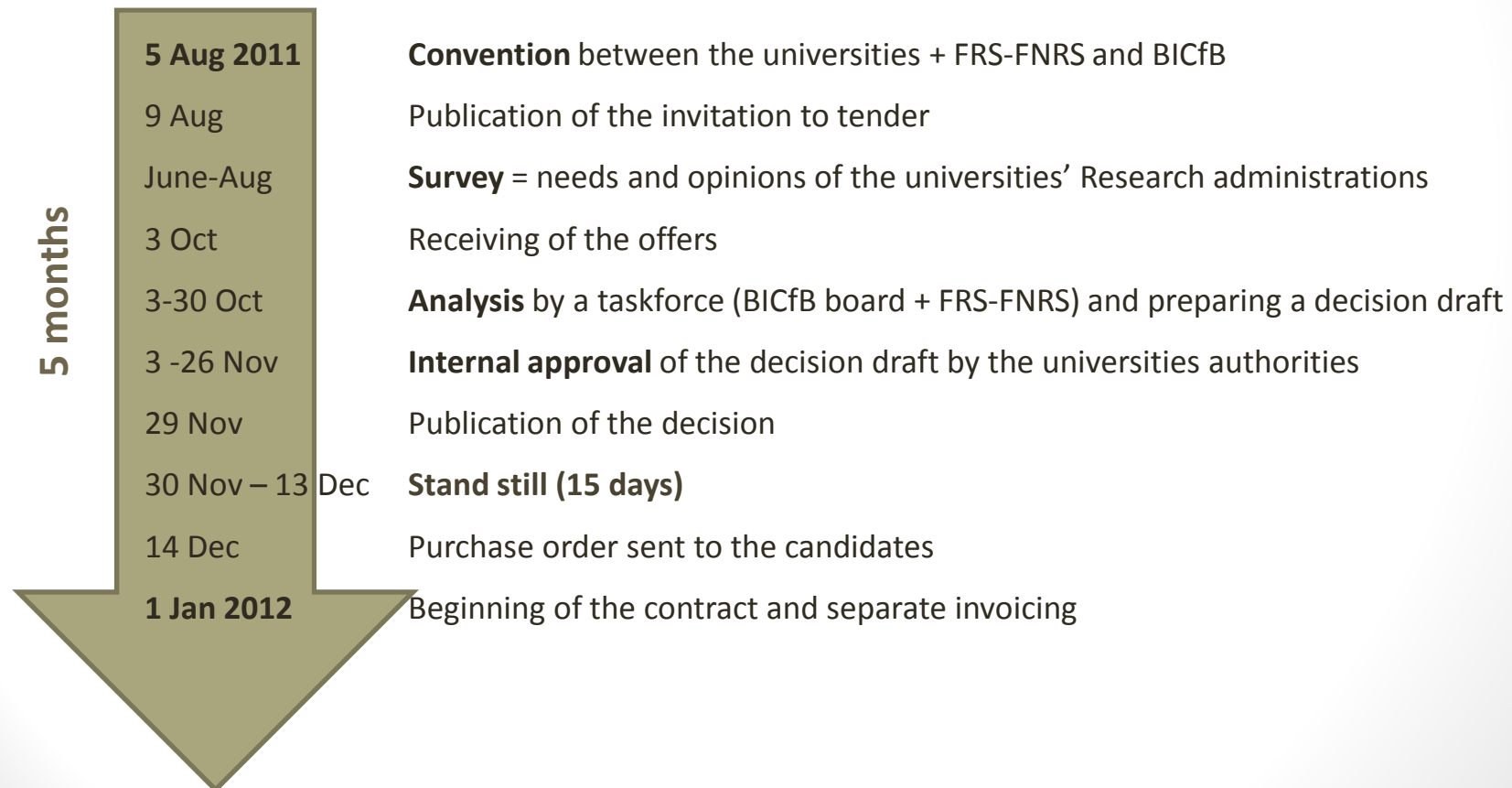
- Very **negative reaction** from the publishers:
 - threatens not to respond to the call for tenders
 - Interruption of the ongoing trial period
 - problem of the publication of prices
 - never done before (first experience for them)
 - much administrative work
- Feeling of trust breaking...



Tender's timetable

Final and financial responsibility stays by the universities

Consortium = representative for the tender's organization



Special specifications

- Based on the comparative study
- Supply (not services) contract
- Divided into different batches :
 - To **give the publishers** the possibility to meet the needs of the consortium and to advantageously present their products
 - To **give some institutions** the possibility not to subscribe to some products
- Difficulties in the writing:
 - A priori writing = "a minima" clauses ⇒ loosing the negotiation's benefit
 - Finding the balance to avoid :
 - unadequate submissions
 - Oriented tender (ex: description the coverage, indicators)



Tender analysis

- **BATCH 1: WoS / Scopus**

- **Price** (criterium 35%)

- respondents maintained their previous price policy
 - Product A 3,5 x more expensive than product B
 - Price cap Product A 3% vs Product B 0%

- **Content & coverage, functionalities, indicators...** (criterium 55%)

- No surprise after comparative study results (coverage, consistency, policy)
 - Difficulty to compare some aspects > lack of information

Criteria	WoS	Scopus
Nb e-journals	11 401	18 041
Nb Records (2002-2011)	10 569 000	18 303 000
Nb Open Access titles	1 021	1 846

- **Quality of service** (criterium 10 %)

- Author feed-back by Scopus

- **BATCH 3: JCR**

- No concurrent product
 - 1,5 x more expensive than 2011 price (same product, same universities, but no package...)!

Difficulties after the tender (external)

- No appeal from any respondent, but very practical action by the « loser » for the bibliographic part (batch 1 & 2) :
 - 1st January 2012: Immediate access cut to all the products subscribed at the same publisher (including a **product « winner »** of the tender... and a **free** product!!!)
- Difficulties for licensing the purchased products :
 - Publishers **do not** (want to) understand that :
 - special specifications are mandatory (must be respected)
 - special specifications act as a license
 - ⇒ maintain clauses which are not legal or contradictory to the specifications)
 - ⇒ VERY LONG negotiations (May 2012) ⇒ **access cut** or **delay in giving access to updated data** (JCR 2011)

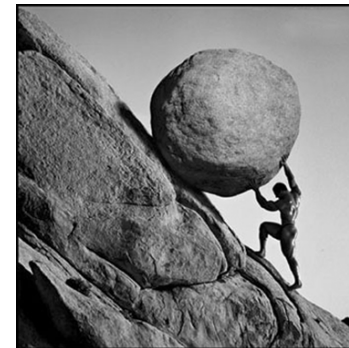
What we have learned

1st experience for us, but also for the publishers....

- **Practical recommendations** to smooth the process :
 - Be very accurate in the invitation to tender, best with a systematic form to complete for each product (risk of inadequacies / « holes » between requirements and submissions)
 - Annex the license with/in the invitation to tender (to avoid losing time in negotiating afterwards)
 - Have a good legal structure regarding the competences of the consortium (this could avoid making new conventions between the members)
 - Find good administrative and legal support to prepare the tender
- Importance of a **good dialogue** (before) between publishers and libraries ... publishers have to collaborate (they have the data, they choose to participate to the tender or not...)

Is all this really necessary?

- Until now, we have always negotiated directly with publishers, without special specifications or public tenders....
- But as the legislation is evolving, our universities' control authorities are more and more encouraging (obligating ?) us to engage in public tenders ...
 - For multiplatform databases > possible concurrence
 - For publisher's e-journals packages : special specifications only
- No clear conditions and processes at present, but it seems necessary for consortia to gain very specific knowledge in public tenders (as informational products are very specific)
 - Questioning the role and relevance of consortia (benefit vs cost analysis)
 - Very difficult for small consortia ...
- Is it also feasible for the publishers?



Post-termination access for Bibliographic and Bibliometric Data

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(Contractual) theory vs practice

- In theory: WoS archives were **purchased** in 2001-2004 :
 - « In the event Licensee chooses to cancel the Agreement, Licensor agrees to provide Licensee with the licensed Databases and the then current software by tape or CD-ROM. »
- In practice:
 - « platform solution »
 - Publisher's offer = annual access fee to access the archives on the publisher's platform ⇒ too high costs
 - « tape solution »
 - Promise to send the archives on tapes but, after many recalls and discussions, tapes effectively arrived in... August 2012 (more than 7 months after the end of the contract)
 - Software problem : difficulty to receive the publisher's software and information and to anticipate the material needs (very high !) ⇒ human cost to analyze the data and software once received

With the passing of time, the data have become more and more obsolete....

What can we do?

- **BEFORE**

- Include **very specific clauses** about PCA solutions AND prices in the contract (prices are at the present very often omitted)
- Best ask for multiple solutions, complying with the conservation policy of the institution
- Ask for « use cases » and examples: has the publisher already provided the data to an institution?

Probably done much more now than in 2000... Maybe useful to check out the « old » contracts?

- **AFTER**

- Negotiate! Abandonate the purchased data (and gain present time and money) could have been an alternative... but
 - Request from some universities (mostly for evaluation of researchers with minor h-index in the chosen solution)
 - data were paid with public funds (to be justified)
- Requesting a financial compensation?
 - Seems not very realistic: difficulty and costs of justice for a small consortium vs a big publisher...

Could grouping with other consortia or institutions be a solution?

Thanks for your attention



Do you have a feedback on the same problems?

bicfb@ulg.ac.be

<http://www.bicfb.be>