



# Big Deals from a publisher's point of view

## The Value of Elsevier's "Big Deal" for the University of Berne

Presented by  
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**What is a “Big Deal”?**

**What are the benefits of a  
“Big Deal”?**

**What are the key findings of  
the article?**

**„Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?**

**Increasing transparency for e-journal subscriptions  
and Big Deals. A comprehensive assessment of  
e-journals in Science, Technology and Medicine (STM)**

Michelle F. Schaffer, Isabelle Kirgus and Gerhard Bissels  
Bern University Library, Bern, Switzerland

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**What is a “Big Deal”?**



What are the benefits of a Big Deal?

What are the key findings of the article?

„Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?

- University subscribes to journals
- For the promise of not cancelling titles, the university can get access to additional journals.
- The university gets access for a fraction of the normal list price, depending on it's size.
- # of journals: 2,000
  - > in many cases 10 times more journals than subscribed journals
- We call this “Freedom Collection”.

What is a “Big Deal”?

**What are the benefits of a  
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Benefits for the user:

- access to large # journals
- Increased productivity: access to content means output rate is pushed
- If research focus changes: journals are already available for access: Trend towards being interdisciplinary is supported.
- no costs for document delivery
- no opportunity costs for searching and ordering of articles or journals
- quick access on the spot to content needed
- quality

Benefits for the librarian:

- no need to monitor and change subscriptions each year
- prices are known in advance
- no need to deal with single journal orders or doc delivery orders

What is a “Big Deal”?

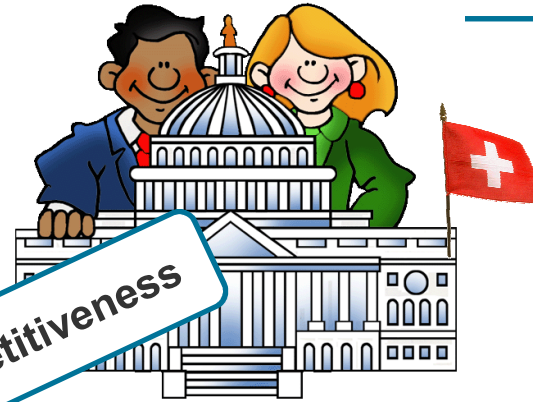
What are the benefits of a Big Deal?

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Competitiveness



- Journal articles are your “raw material” because:  
input (content) -> output (journal articles published) -> part of **ranking** criteria.
- **Researchers** require access to journal content. It is an important part of their “equipment”. If your competitor grants broad journal access and you don’t:  
Where will the researcher go to?

## Increasing transparency for e-journal subscriptions and Big Deals. A comprehensive assessment of e-journals in Science, Technology and Medicine (STM)

Michelle F. Schaffer, Isabelle Kirgus and Gerhard Bissels  
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What is a “Big Deal”?

What are the benefits of a “Big Deal”?

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„Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?



- “Big Deals” are cost-effective \*
- Many expensive journals for specific research topics \*
- Bundles contain poorly used collection titles \*
- Limit (financial) flexibility \*
- Higher frequency of use is an important indicator of relevance \*
- Big Deal contain mainly STM journals

What is a “Big Deal”?

What are the benefits?

What are the key findings of the article?

**„Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?**



Article Finding: “Big Deals are”  
cost-effective

## „Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?

### Article Finding: *“Big Deals are cost-effective”*

True.

Because:

- Lots of Additional Journals (via Freedom Collection) are offered for a fraction of list price.
- These titles increase the usage base (# of available titles) significantly. They are used. The usage is excellent.

-> usage going up

-> cost per use: going down



## „Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?

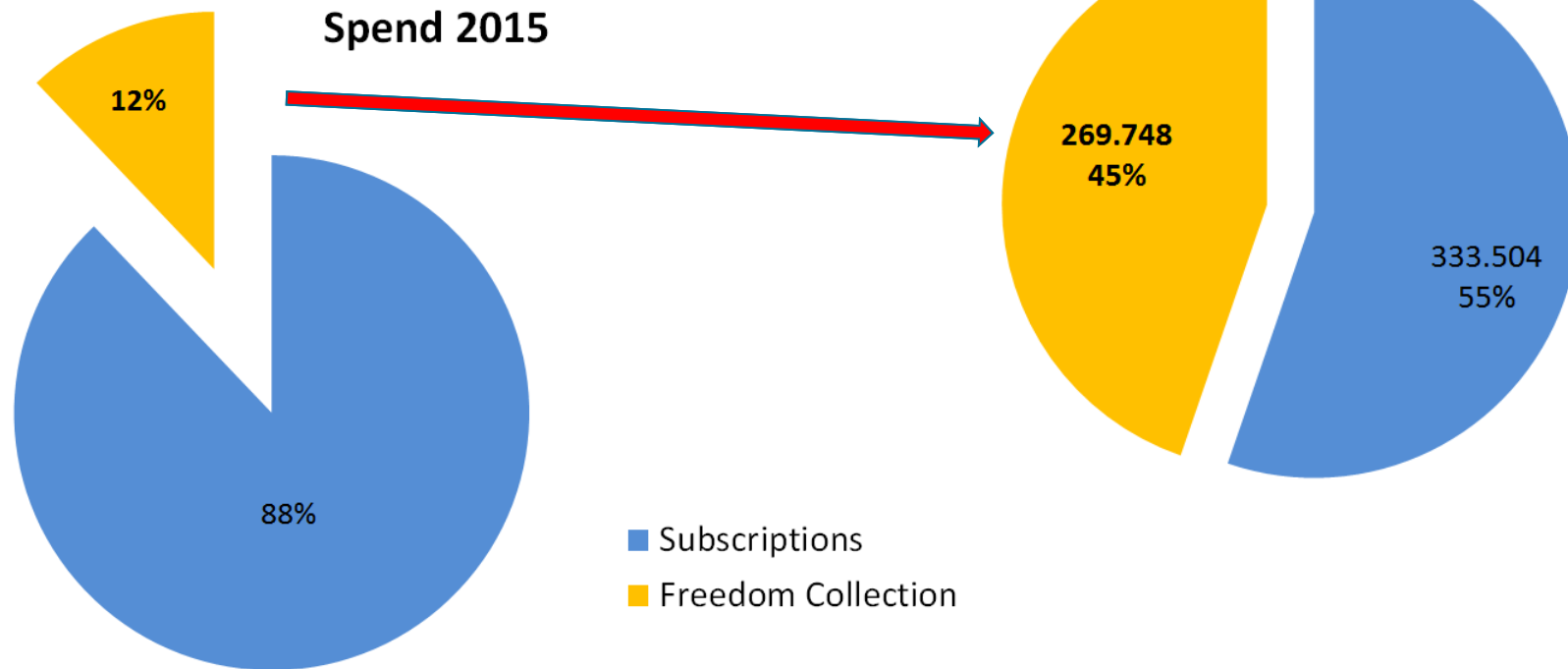
### Article Finding:

- *“Many expensive journals for specific research topics”*
- *“Bundles contain poorly used collection titles“*

**True. And also true is:**

„Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?

# University of Berne



## „Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?

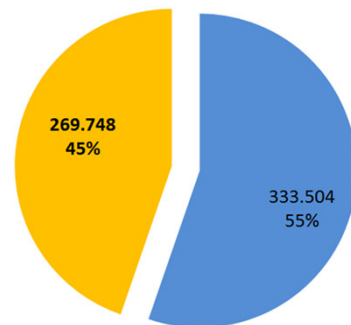
### Article Finding:

*“Limit (financial) flexibility“*

Yes. And also no.

How would the library serve user needs without a Freedom Collection? More flexibility without?

Usage 2015

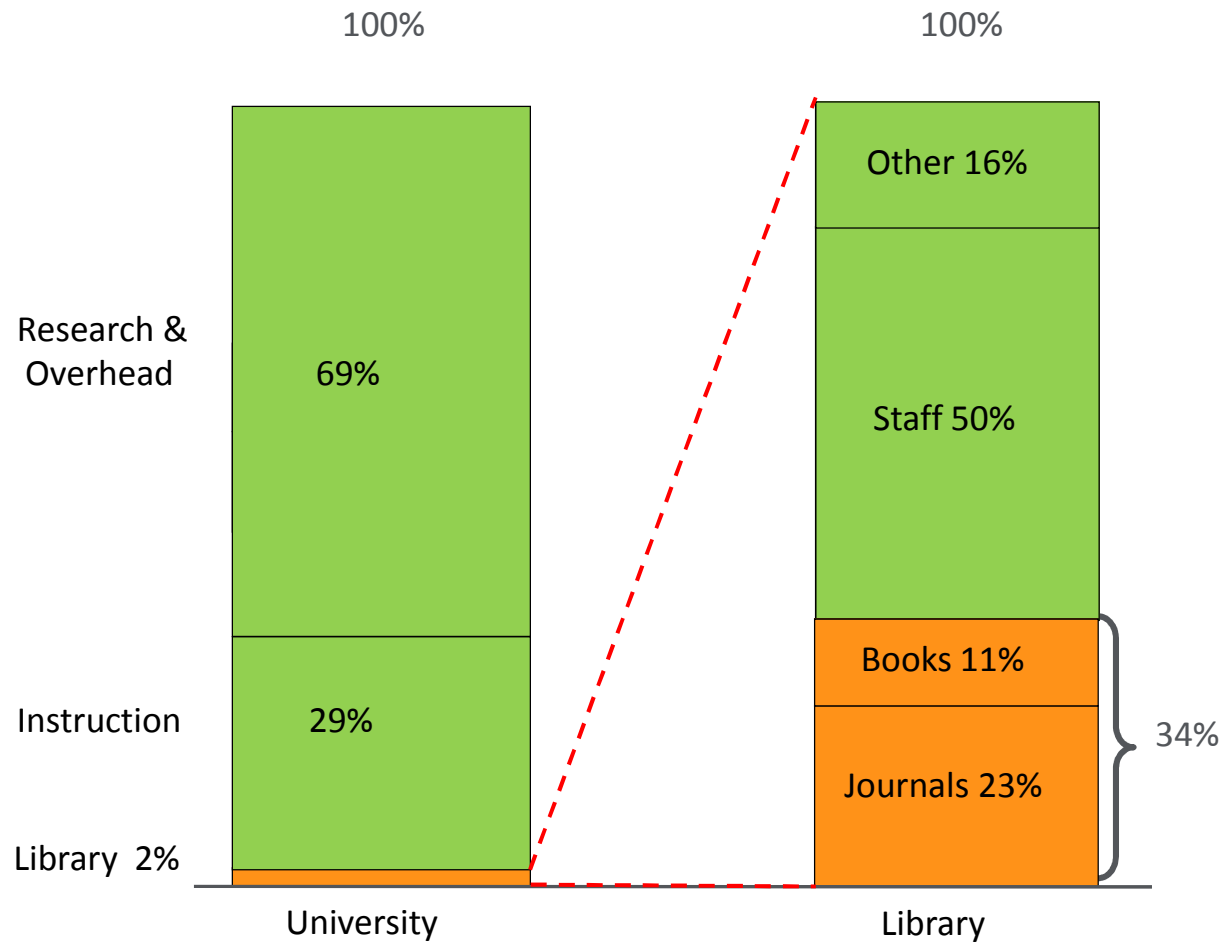


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„Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?

“Limit (financial) flexibility“

## Average University & Library spend



## „Big Deal“ or not „Big Deal“?

*“Higher frequency of use is an important indicator of relevance”*

- 1. Consider looking at usage over a longer period (3 years?)**
- 2. Consider looking at non-usage based aspects:**
  - Usage/Cost per use is not always a true indicator, it does not tell us about the outcomes.
    - > One brilliant idea can be the result of just one use.
  - Having access to a Freedom Collection is a value in itself.
    - > Even if not all journals are used (now!), you are prepared for the future.
    - > Journals might be used (significantly) in the future.

## Conclusion

**Yes, a “Big Deal” is big.**

**As long as you get Elsevier value, this is a worthwhile investment.**

**Thank You.**