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From Service Providers to Content Producers: New Opportunities For Libraries in Collaborative Open Access Book Publishing

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FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS TO CONTENT PRODUCERS: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIBRARIES IN COLLABORATIVE OPEN ACCESS BOOK PUBLISHING

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Several libraries have become active partners in Open Access publishing of books in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). Not only have libraries started up their own presses, they are also collaborating with existing presses or forming alliances with other institutions on campus such as scholarly communication offices, ICT departments, and academic research centers. By combining institutional strengths and enabling the sharing of resources across institutions, these collaborations offer synergies and efficiencies in the scholarly book publishing business. This paper examines this new function taken on by libraries. Using research conducted by the European project "Open Access Publishing in European Networks" (OAPEN) on OA publishing models and business models for books, we look at libraries' motives and challenges and explore how their new roles enable them to serve their customers in the most effective way. By combining digital repositories with scholarly publishing, libraries can facilitate and support HSS book publishing and can help sustain the scholarly monograph in the transition towards digital formats and an Open Access future.

Keywords library publishing, open access publishing, monographs, humanities, social sciences

Introduction

Over the last few years, the number of scientific publications available in Open Access (OA) has grown significantly. As of June 20, 2010, the directory of Open Access journals (DOAJ) consisted of 5,112 journals, with an estimated growth rate of over two titles per day (Morrison).[1] However, Open Access book publishing in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) is still an exotic endeavor.

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Open Access literature is defined as "digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions."[2] There are two main (and complementary) routes to OA: one is known as the "Green Road" and involves the author self-archiving works that have been submitted for peer review (preprints) or are final peer-reviewed versions (postprints) in institutional or disciplinary repositories; the other route is known as the "Gold Road" and involves publishing in Open Access journals, books or other types of literature (Harnad et al.).

By using their institutional repositories, libraries have already begun enhancing the accessibility of scholarly information, greatly benefiting the dissemination of scholarship as well as supporting new practices of scholarship and new forms of scholarly communication (Lynch). Libraries can also be (digital) publishers of OA journals and books or they can be funders of author fees in certain OA business models (Bailey). However, the focus of libraries as well as of publishers in the move towards Open Access has primarily been on journals and Green OA within the fields of Science, Technology and Medicine (STM).

Nevertheless, the last few years have seen an increase in experiments and collaborative efforts to enable and explore Open Access publishing of books in the Humanities and Social Sciences. In this paper, we will closely examine the role that libraries are playing in HSS book publishing. We rely on research conducted by the European project "Open Access Publishing in European Networks" (OAPEN) on OA publishing models and business models for books. This paper is based on a few case studies of libraries playing an exemplary role in this development. Based on these cases and on secondary literature, we discuss libraries' motives and challenges and the way libraries can facilitate and support HSS book publishing as a complementary strategy to help sustain the scholarly monograph in the transition towards digital formats and an Open Access future.

Hybrid Models and Open Access for Books

The initial slow uptake of OA book publishing can be attributed to a great extent to the persistent focus of both academic publishers and librarians on the potential for Open Access to be a solution to the so-called serials crisis, which has its roots in the sharp

increases in volume and prices of STM journals from the mid-1980s (Webster). Moreover, ebooks in HSS still occupy a minor share of library holdings, and not all scholarly publishers have developed ebook programs. We can, therefore, conclude that the uptake of ebooks has not reached its crucial tipping point in these fields (Tonkin). More recently, with the development of several digital reading devices such as the Kindle, the Sony reader, the iPhone and the iPad, the market for ebook sales appears to have begun flourishing (Allen).[3] Currently, the market for ebooks appears to be heavily focused on individual consumers. Libraries have only just started to develop acquisition policies with regards to ebooks, although they will probably move forward at a fast pace as they have done with journals in the past.

Although ebooks are on the rise, printed books are currently still the most important revenue stream for scholarly publishers. It is predicted that this format will stay with us for quite some time.[4] Especially in HSS, the importance of the printed monograph as a format deemed essential for thorough reading and study is not contested (Brown et al.; Rowlands and Fieldhouse; Heath and Robey; Adema and Rutten).

Current *hybrid models* for Open Access books focus on a combination of a basic free online edition accompanied by a for-sale printed edition. Digital printing is crucial to this strategy, as it enables small print runs or even on-demand copies and, thus, improves the planning of costs and turnover, reduces the costs of stock, keeps all books "in print" and serves the current reader's demand of a print copy at a reasonable price. Over the last decade, scholarly publishers have developed basic or more enhanced digital production workflows, with some taking advantage of open source software packages to lower the costs of development and infrastructure. These developments have proven to be particularly beneficial for independent OA journals, but they also offer the potential for experimenting with digital book publishing.[5] The benefits of Open Access—as already seen in various cases in STM—are thus beginning to be discovered for HSS, where a wide range of experiments with OA book publishing has been initiated by libraries, publishers, and scholars.

An important motive behind these initiatives is to move the book into an Open Access environment in order to open it up to *all* potential users; to reach beyond the predictably small print

runs that consign the book to a small distribution among specialized libraries. And this is, of course, also an effect of the serials crisis, which has led to a decline of libraries' budgets for the acquisition of monographs, which, in turn, has led to decreased print runs and book sales and thus to a decrease in dissemination and accessibility of specialized research in HSS (J. Wolfe Thompson; Steele "Scholarly Monograph"; Greco and Wharton; J.B. Thompson; Steele "Phoenix Rising"). Making a book available in Open Access enables remote, worldwide simultaneous use, contributing to the accessibility and efficiency of dissemination. It also provides a basis for other usage scenarios such as indexing and search mechanisms as well as an integration of these publications into virtual research environments, where researchers can apply tools and establish new connections between texts and other materials.

A main challenge for book publishing in general and Open Access models in particular is the search for (and the perceived lack of) sustainable business models (King; Oppenheim and Rowland). Moreover, there is still a need to explain to different stakeholders what Open Access specifically entails, that it can be a way to concede wider end-user rights while applying traditional or alternative mechanisms to guarantee the quality of the published content (King). Furthermore, there has been some anxiety that Open Access content could be stolen, reflecting concerns about ownership and copyrights (Waaijers and Wesseling). Clear and concise publishing policies as well as explorative research on new models are, therefore, necessary to battle these negative perceptions. Publication initiatives and experiments conducted by libraries and university cross-collaborations have an important role to play in advocating Open Access and allaying copyright concerns.

Changing Roles: Libraries as Publishers

Traditionally, the main tasks of libraries centre on readers, including "authors as readers," with a focus on the acquisition and/or licensing of materials adapted to the local or more specific disciplinary needs of their patrons. With regard to books in particular, one of the basic laws of library science rests on the following adage: "every book its reader, every reader its book" (Ranganathan). Given this focus on researchers, libraries have a clear

commitment to improving access to information and making sure that this information is kept accessible in the future. This is particularly important for digital materials, as formats and usage environments become obsolete much more rapidly than printed books, which have shown considerable endurance over time.

As consumers with specific needs, libraries compare the quality and prices of market goods based on the available resources (and their willingness to spend money). In particular, academic libraries aim to satisfy users' information needs within the constraints of their budgets. They are increasingly joining forces with other libraries to form library consortia in order to negotiate better prices and conditions of end users' access and modes of storage and preservation. As Raym Crow has stated, this is where the library's mission fundamentally differs from that of the publisher: the library primarily focuses on the needs of the host institution while the publisher aims to serve the academic community as a whole. What they have in common, though, is a need to confront the fundamental issues in today's scholarly publishing system in order to sustain the efficient communication of specialized research results in HSS. As Crow states, it is here that libraries and publishers understand their organizational interdependence and the need to collaborate in order to find a solution to these issues. Libraries increasingly see that taking an active role in publishing ventures might improve the current situation and give them more opportunities to influence the landscape of academic publishing.

Library publishing is, of course, not a particularly new phenomenon.[6] Libraries have been active in publishing and have been offering publishing services for quite some time already (Bailey; Harboe-Ree). Furthermore, libraries have also been very active in publishing (or assisting in the publication of) Open Access materials, from releasing OA books and journals to setting up elaborate OA systems and digitizing OA versions of out-of-copyright publications (Bailey). A 2008 report from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) even concludes that "publishing services are rapidly becoming a norm for research libraries" (Hahn). However, at the time of the ARL report, journal publishing was still dominant, with a focus on electronic-only publishing. Print versions—at the moment still essential for HSS communication—are only offered in a few cases in collaboration with a press (Hahn). Nonetheless, libraries are already familiar

with certain types of publishing services and see the benefits of offering these services to their clients.

Of course, the question is what these "publishing services" precisely entail. The ARL report makes use of Borgman's broad definition: "'Publication' occurs when a document is 'made public' with the intention that it be read by others." Through their digital repositories, libraries are increasingly offering basic publication services that go beyond the traditional publication forms (i.e., articles and monographs) (Hahn). In general, digital repositories collect a wide range of academic research to showcase the output of research institutions or disciplinary communities. In this context, the development of technical standards (metadata, the Open Archives Initiative interface, etc.) and end-user oriented services such as usage statistics play an important role. From a local perspective, the aim is to establish institutional repositories as a service enabling dissemination and re-use of research results. In Germany, the Electronic Publishing working group of the German Initiative of Networked Information (DINI) combined these issues in terms of quality standards and recommendations into a quality seal: the DINI Certificate for Document and Publication Services.[7] This certificate covers service aspects concentrating on end users as authors and readers, with technical requirements aimed at national and international interoperability. On an international scale, the aim is slightly more generic, as it focuses on the interoperability aspect of repositories and resulted for example in the development of guidelines for repository managers within the European Digital Repository Infrastructure for European Research (DRIVER) project.[8] Such guidelines also offer great potential to enhance the visibility of research outputs if extended to worldwide initiatives such as the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR).[9]

Libraries as Open Access Book Publishers

Recently, the OAPEN project released a report on OA models for HSS ebooks. This report, which is supplemented by a wiki,[10] provides an overview of initiatives that are currently experimenting with new business models and publishing models for books (Adema). This overview was based on web research and secondary literature relating to the initiatives. In three of the most common

publishing models identified by the report, libraries play an essential role. The first model is one in which a press has been set up by the library or in which a suspended press has been re-established within the library. The second model involves a library and an existing press teaming up, and the third model introduces a third partner into the collaboration between the library and the press: the scholarly communication or publishing office.

An example of the first model is *Newfound Press*. Set up in 2005 as a digital imprint from within the University of Tennessee Libraries, this press has formed collaborations with many departments and organizations in the library and university to take advantage of their resources and efficiencies. It actively uses its position as a library press to publish material that, due to the format or focus, has difficulty getting published by a traditional press. Newfound Press also focuses on publishing peer-reviewed works. As is written in its business plan:

> While university presses and other scholarly publishers select what they will publish, in part on the basis of the potential market, a library digital press can leverage campus expertise, server space, and open source software to provide global access to peer-reviewed content that might not otherwise be available to researchers. (Newfound Press Business Plan 2008–2011)

As it offers a full array of publishing services for both OA books and journals, the aim of Newfound Press is to integrate peer-reviewed OA digital publishing with other library services. And, by means of its repository infrastructure, the library provides usage statistics of the publications and ensures the long-term preservation of the content. It also offers options to acquire a printed version of its content through the University of Tennessee Press. This model can thus be seen as one in which there is a heavy dependence on the library infrastructure and on cooperation across institutions.

Göttingen University Press (GUP)[11], founded in 2003 by the Göttingen State and University Library Göttingen, can be seen as an example of a press with a "classical" quality control and production procedure combined with Open Access. The business model currently is a hybrid model. Authors contribute to the first copy costs of the book, and sales of high-quality print runs are based on digital printing. From the researcher's viewpoint, the online

OA edition is still primarily seen as an add-on, and a move to electronic only is currently an exemption only demanded for a few STM titles. Göttingen University Press utilizes the infrastructure of the library, in particular the digital repository, for the dissemination of the OA edition. Moreover, based on its experiences within the press and the library, GUP also provides some support to local authors and editors with regards to publishing in general, paving the way for wider dissemination of research results and a fair use of copyright (Bargheer and Schmidt).

The second model, the library-press collaboration, is more focused on the sharing of already available infrastructures, skills, expertise and services of both the library *and* the press. The California Digital Library (CDL), established in 1997 by the University of California (UC) in collaboration with the University of California Libraries, offers scholarly communication and publishing services focused on the University of California academic community. Its eScholarship OA publishing platform offers digital publishing possibilities for the various UC departments, including the publication of monographs and monographic series. In collaboration with the University of California Press (founded in 1893), in 2009 CDL set up the University of California Publishing Services (UCPubS),[12] which provides hybrid publication services for monographic publishing, offering both digital and print publication, distribution and marketing services. In the case of CDL, the libraries' eScholarship platform takes care of OA digital publishing, peer review and management tools as well as preservation, while the press covers the sales, distribution, printing, online marketing, and print-on-demand service. Finally, its Campus Publishing Partner assumes responsibility for the selection of content, peer review, editing, design, and composition. The University of California in this way uses the strengths of all its institutions (what it calls an organic approach) to embrace the new possibilities that digital and OA publishing have to offer, based on the brand of an established and renowned university press, and the skills and technical possibilities of the library (Cerruti and Mitchell)[13].

The third model—in which a scholarly publishing or communication office plays an important role in bringing together the skills and expertise of the library and other academic divisions or institutions—is already visible in the model described previously, where UCPubS serves a similar function. However, the Scholarly

Publishing Office (SPO) of the University of Michigan Library, established as far back as 2001, goes one step further. The aim was to set up a model for scholar-library collaboration that stretches beyond its own institutional or university basis. Through the SPO, the library partners with the University of Michigan Press (with which it publishes the OA monograph series *Digitalculturebooks*, for instance) but also with the Open Humanities Press (OHP), an academic-led endeavor, to experiment with library-based publishing. Its model can be described as follows:

> Between us, we're developing a model where international scholars coalesce around areas of interest through a book series and perform the editorial oversight, manuscript selection and development for that series, often with their own internal editorial boards and consulting editors. The Scholarly Publishing Office then takes the finished manuscript and runs it through their suite of publishing services to produce OHP's finished online, print on demand and, eventually also, epub books. (Jöttkandt, Kimball, and Willinsky)

In this model, the library aims to serve academia and academics directly in both the production as well as the dissemination of knowledge through the library publishing unit, where it "convert[s], host[s], provide[s] access to, and archive[s] these monographs." Through its partnership with OHP, it also intends to push forward OA book publishing in the Humanities. Although the head of SPO, Shana Kimball, feels that with this model SPO is operating at the outer edges of what is considered to be library activity, the effort is actually not that onerous, as it is a matter of organising already available library resources and infrastructure and reshuffling them to support publishing services (Jöttkandt, Kimball, and Willinsky).

   More recently, the library has also launched MPublishing, an overarching unit incorporating all the academic publishing activities of the library. Where the SPO focuses more on the Humanities and Social Sciences, MPublishing will expand into other areas such as biomedical and medical disciplines, developing services, and focusing more on the specific needs of the academic community of the University of Michigan.[14]

Mutual Benefits of Library-Press Collaborations

From these examples and from previous research done on the subject, we can derive what the potential benefits are for libraries that would like to engage in OA book publishing. First of all, it gives libraries—as university institutions—the opportunity to actively engage in, rather than simply react to, a market of dwindling access to monographs and thus to become more actively involved in publishing (this was already recommended by the Ithaka report). This gives them the chance to encourage publishing venues that offer the potential to improve knowledge dissemination and to create an environment where competition is balanced and not necessarily commercially focused. It also gives them the opportunity to devote more attention to alternative forms of publishing, new (digital) formats, multimedia publishing, enhanced publications, and the development of new services that are closely integrated into and related to the research process.

The specific strengths, skills, and services that libraries have to offer to HSS book publishing are also manifold: the library can offer support in the digitization of out-of-print books (for example Penn State UP) and in reformatting dated publications; they can give advice on standards and best practices for digital production—regarding formats, metadata, persistent identifiers, and so forth; they can offer direct support to authors while setting up learning resources centers, publication offices, and so forth; they can set up or develop specific publication and dissemination platforms and hosting services for ebooks; or they can use their digital repositories as dissemination channels.

Another main benefit of library collaborations with inter alia presses, academic, and/or ICT departments is the efficiency it creates as a result of the sharing of skills, expertise, and resources. The various functions in the publishing chain can also increasingly be separated from the players traditionally responsible for fulfilling them, allowing for the rise of "librishers" and a more modular and flexible system (Johnson).[15] In a library-press collaboration, presses can utilize their strengths to manage the editorial process, arrange the peer review (by setting up rules and standards, arranging experts and editorial boards), assume responsibility for IPR issues, and set up liaisons with authors. More importantly, in the case of books, they can use their expertise with

print production to arrange and/or conduct the design and print-
ing process either through small print runs or, what is more com-
mon today, through digital printing or print-on-demand (POD).
Presses can use their brands and marketing skills to ensure that
the scholarly works are efficiently disseminated. Likewise, collab-
orations with other institutional departments such as academics
or academic departments to select content and conduct editorial
and peer review services, or with the university, which can set up
editions or collections in cooperation with the press, can also be
beneficial (Crow; Brown et al.; Willinsky).

Motives and Challenges

Naturally, there are still many challenges concerning OA book
publishing for libraries. The quest for sustainable business models
and funding of OA publishing is ongoing. Most of the library OA
book publishing initiatives are still in an experimental stage, and
it is thus hard to predict whether they will be sustainable in the
long run.

One of the more important roles a library (or library con-
sortia) could play in OA book publishing is in funding OA book
publishing by setting up funds or subsidy schemes to stimulate this
type of publishing and to help create sustainable business models.
Libraries can co-resource publications and provide subsidies for
production costs, where a possible reshifting of library budgets
could serve to cover (first copy) costs in an OA model (Pinter).[16]
Librarians are well aware of the funding problems and, at least
based on the declining print runs of academic titles, one may con-
clude that the current pricing models are already unsustainable
(Harboe-Ree; Hawkins). To attain funding, library-based OA pub-
lishers should be founded on the argumentation that they pro-
mote greater access than provided in traditional publishing *and*
provide a possible solution to the currently unsustainable pricing
models.[17] This could even play out in a more localized setting, as
the ARL report also states:

> Subsidizing locally managed open access publishing is an alternative to
> subsidizing subscription models with inherent access restrictions. (Hahn)

However, expectations for library funding of institutional OA
models should not be raised too high. Attaining funding from

a variety of resources (including redistributed library budgets) seems to be a more realistic and well-balanced model. This holds in particular for the research funders themselves, which already provide funding schemes for publications. Indeed, several have established OA policies or mandates but rarely associate book publishing with Open Access.[18]

Another challenge with regards to OA book publishing is the management of copyright. This holds for back titles as well as for current titles, but for the new titles there is a clear opportunity to open up the content of books to usage that is impossible under a very restricted copyright regime. That is, libraries can take a clear stance in this debate, for instance by advocating pro-standardized licenses that allow for reuse and derivative works. Publication contracts can be gradually adapted to become more open for use and reuse.[19] And, this is an area where both the library and the press can clearly benefit from their collaboration: it moves authors away from their "copyright angst" by providing opportunities to explore Open Access while offering publication outlets adapted to their needs.

Moreover, specific challenges may result from cultural differences between the library and the press. A clear concept and distribution of roles and responsibilities is needed to avoid misunderstandings and inflated expectations. Also, concerning the digital infrastructures that libraries could provide, one should not forget that although many processes in the (digital) library are automated as much as possible, libraries are not a technology company, so this remains a challenge. As Laura Cerrutti from UCPress has stated, training is also a problem: people need handholding, although UCPress for instance provides much information on its website. Branding is also a challenge, according to Cerruti, as the imprint of the press is what people are looking for but the press also needs to protect its brand (Cerruti and Mitchell). Developing strong brands around OA book publishing seems to be both a challenge and a necessity.

Conclusions

Open Access is attractive to many libraries, as their fundamental mission is to connect people with information. As digital dissemination and publication gains importance for all scientific fields,

libraries engaging in repositories and digital presses can offer new services, in particular for fields with a slow(er) uptake of these technologies. An immediate practical approach for libraries that would like to become more actively involved in OA book publishing in support of the Humanities and Social Sciences would be to:

- Team up with presses, academics, and other interested parties to develop and explore purely digital or hybrid OA publication outlets for book publishing.
- Discuss and evaluate the opportunities and challenges of these OA experiments in joint working groups of academics, librarians, and publishers.
- Develop OA policies and implementation strategies, taking into account the need for author support, review of services and infrastructures as well as quality control and viability.
- Investigate these new services and use early adopters to evaluate and promote the services.
- Explore opportunities to share experiences and infrastructure with other institutions in order to improve services and dissemination strategies.

With these actions and strategies, libraries can take on new roles and help scholars to explore new routes of communicating and disseminating their research results. Libraries are not alone in this endeavor, as they have the chance to team up with different on- and off-campus parties that share the same goals or motives. Synergies and efficiencies can be obtained from these collaborations, as they offer a chance to explore new business models and funding opportunities for OA book publishing. Challenges abound, and further experiments reflecting and exploring new roles in electronic publishing are needed. What is clear, however, is that by taking on new roles, libraries can actively facilitate and support HSS book publishing and, thereby, better serve their patrons—the scholars—from both sides of the supply chain: as readers *and* as authors.

Notes

1. For more facts and figures monitoring the growth of Open Access publishing, see Heather Morrison's *Dramatic Growth of Open Access*, 31 March 2010

Edition: http://poeticeconomics.blogspot.com/2010/03/dramatic-growth-of-open-access-march-31.html

2. http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm
3. Amazon reported that its e-book sales overtook print sales for the first time on Christmas Day 2009.
4. Several sessions at the Tools of Change Conference 2010 addressed this theme: http://toc.oreilly.com/2010/02/toc-preview-ebooks-are-here-bu.html
5. One example is *Open Journal System,* a journal management and publishing system. Currently, Public Knowledge Project is developing a similar system, *Open Monograph Press*, for books.
6. One of the earliest collaborations between libraries and publishers involved electronic journals: Project MUSE was launched in 1993 by the Milton S. Eisenhower Library and the Johns Hopkins University Press. Its aim was to provide affordable and user-friendly online access to a comprehensive selection of prestigious Humanities and Social Sciences journals. http://muse.jhu.edu/about/muse/index.html
7. http://open-access.net/de_en/useful_information_for/repository_operators/dini_certification/
8. http://www.driver-support.eu/managers.html
9. http://www.coar-repositories.org
10. Soon to be made available at http://www.oapen.org
11. http://www.univerlag.uni-goettingen.de/
12. University of California Publishing Services: http://escholarship.org/ucpubs.pdf
13. ibid.
14. See MPublishing's mission statement: http://sansfoy.press.umich.edu/digital/mpublishing/
15. Richard K. Johnson, for instance, mentions partnerships in which a logical separation of content and service components may take place: all services other than content provision (such as those that cover registration, certification, dissemination, preservation, and rewarding) can be assumed by different parties, that is, they can be done by those with the necessary resources and prestige to do so.
16. Frances Pinter argued for an international library-funded Open Access model for books at the 2010 Tools of Change conference.
17. While the Green Road strategy does provide more accessibility, it does not fundamentally change the pricing and funding models that have led to the current unsustainable situation confronting book publishing. Green and Gold Open Access strategies should thus both be pursued by libraries and library consortia.
18. http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet/
19. Some presses started with the option of parallel depositing in the institutional repository, then moved to CC-BY-NC, and then decided to use CC-BY, as this allows the widest indexing and reuse of full texts, even by commercial service providers. Others—for example Göttingen University Press—went down a similar path but decided to keep exclusive rights for the printed

version to protect the publisher's investment. Moreover, some authors of books currently prefer to choose a slightly more restricted Creative Commons license, excluding derivative works (i.e., CC-BY-ND).

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