

The 2nd SPARC Japan Seminar 2009

“Sustainability of non-profit publishers – learning from OUP”

The Evolution of Academic Publishing at Oxford University Press

Oxford University Press first began publishing books more than 500 years ago. This presentation reviews the history of OUP, which has led to it becoming the largest University Press publisher in the world. Looking to the future, the second half of the talk presents the results of a recent survey examining what types of information sources are used by researchers and how they are using online information. The presentation concludes with some comments on how OUP is responding to the challenges facing all academic publishers in an online world.

Martin Richardson

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University presses form a natural partner with their parent institutions, advancing knowledge and disseminating it beyond the geographic borders of the university. As a world wide publisher, Oxford University Press (OUP) is a department of the University of Oxford, serving to advance the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship and education. OUP's main objectives are to publish the highest quality scholarly and educational materials, and to represent the Oxford name.

OUP has a history of more than 500 years, and started out by publishing the King James Bible in the 17th century. This formed the foundation for a profitable business for the following two centuries, and fuelled OUP's expansion. International expansion occurred more than 100 years ago with the establishment of an American office, and currently there are offices in more than 50 countries globally, publishing in more than 40 languages. Today, OUP is the industry leader of the university press world, holding more than half of the global market share. More than 80% of sales are made outside of the UK, making OUP a global publisher. In terms of output, 40% is in the academic and professional areas, 40% is in school and English language teaching books, with the remaining 20% in higher education textbooks. In the academic realm, OUP publishes more than 1,300 scholarly monographs annually, 235 journals and many thousands of other

types of books and online research. In comparison, a typical large American university press might publish only 100-200 monographs per year.

The impact of university presses worldwide is large; one out of every 10 books published in the US each year is published by a university press, and almost half of new history titles are published by university presses. There are four broad types of university presses, the “Giants,” being OUP and Cambridge University Press, large players such as Harvard and Yale, medium players such as Columbia and Stanford, and then all others.

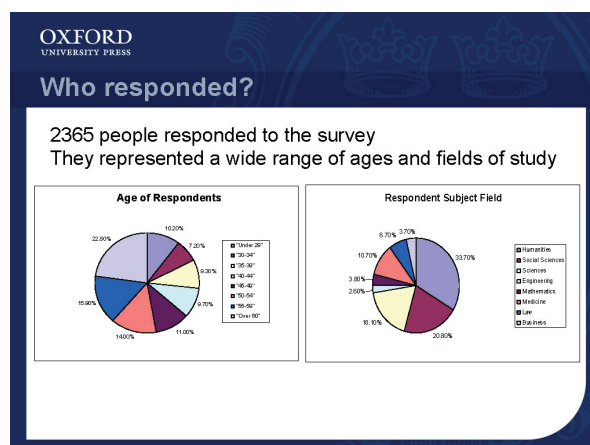
Funding is an important issue faced by university presses. While a few of the large university presses have their own endowments, the vast majority receive subsidies from their parent institution. In addition to this financial support, non-monetary institutional support is often provided in the form of free legal, accounting and audit services, payroll and human resources support, free office space, utilities, and frequently, working capital. In contrast to this, Oxford University has never subsidized its press, and there is a long history in which the Press has made financial transfers of its surplus to the University. Today, 30% of the OUP's surplus is transferred to the University where it is utilized for a wide array of mission-related purposes including funds

for library development, capital projects, as well as different funds supporting students and researchers.

Even prior to the current global financial crisis, market conditions for small university presses had become increasingly harsh, especially in the last decade. Almost three-quarters of a typical research library's budget is currently spent on scientific, technical, and medical journal "big deals" from the top three commercial publishers. As a result of this increased expenditure on journals, fewer funds are available to purchase monographs, which comprise the majority of a small university press' publishing output. As the budgets of parent institutions are tightened amidst the economic turmoil, parent institutions are in turn scrutinizing and stipulating that small university presses become more self-sufficient, and such pressures make it difficult to invest in the new technology necessary to support initiatives in digital publishing. Such initiatives are imperative in order for university presses to integrate successfully into the digital age, as technology such as the internet has caused a decline in the sales of printed books and journals as the demand for online information has increased,

Publishers who will survive this changing landscape are those that will adapt to change. OUP has been able to survive for more than five centuries because of its ability to change in response to the changing needs of readers and authors. Last year an online survey was conducted with US authors and readers to garner views about how research information is obtained.

researchers, with online databases and meetings and conferences generally in third and fourth positions. Surveys such as these allow OUP to study market trends and to adapt them to their business models when necessary.



Top five research resources by field

Humanities	Social Sciences	Sciences	Medicine
Print books	Online Journals	Online Journals	Online Journals
Online Journals	Print books	Print books	Print books
Print Journals	Print Journals	Print Journals	Print Journals
Online databases	Online databases	Meetings & conference	Meetings & conference
Meetings & conference	Meetings & conference	Online databases	Online databases

Online Survey

- A survey of 36,000 OUP authors and readers in the US to determine
 - Current research habits
 - Trusted resources, methods of identifying key new research in the field
 - "Information Seeking" or "User Studies"
 - Use of new and emerging online resources
 - eBooks, podcasts, blogs

The 2,365 respondents indicated that online journals and printed books were the top two resources for

OUP has responded to the changing needs of researchers in an increasingly online world. In 1994, OUP's first online journal was published and for the last decade all OUP journals have been published online simultaneously. In addition, an archive dating back to 1850 for all back issues of the 150 OUP journals has been added, as well as facilities to deposit supplementary data, an email table of contents, RSS feeds, and blogs and wikis. In addition, a variety of access models have been implemented.

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

How is OUP Responding?

Choice of Access Models

	Books	Journals
Subscriptions	√	√
Consortia deals	√	√
Document Delivery	-	√
Purchase	√	√
Developing countries	√	√
Open Access	-	√

The Open Access model, in operation since 2004, allows for articles to be made freely available online without charge to readers in return for the author covering the costs of publication. The majority of participants in this model are in the medicine and life sciences, and more than 1,000 optional open access articles will be published this year.

Survival for university presses rests on the parent institution having an explicit mandate regarding the role of their university press. Small University presses need to compete for the allocation of resources just like other university departments. Continual support from parent

institutions is necessary for numerous reasons. Firstly, university presses can provide a strong brand presence in their local communities or be flag-bearers for their parent institutions. The Oxford English Dictionary is one example of this. Secondly, university presses lie at the heart of the academic community with academics as authors and editors, and students a part of the readership. Additionally, formal publication is an integral part of research funding, tenure and promotion whereby formal publication constitutes core mechanisms for the evaluation and dissemination of research and scholarship.

The ways in which small university presses and academic society publishers can move forward include focusing on publishing the scholarship that academics are trained to write, developing expertise in specific areas, employing new business models both in print and online production for the exploitation of opportunities provided by new technology and by adding genuine value to publishing activities that could be undertaken by the university presses themselves. For those activities where value can not be truly added, outsourcing is recommended.

Profile



Martin Richardson

Martin Richardson has held a variety of positions at Oxford University Press over the past 20 years. He is currently Managing Director of the Academic Books and Journals Divisions, where he is responsible for over 3,000 print and online publications across a broad range of subjects. As a department of the University of Oxford, OUP is keen to experiment with new ways of increasing dissemination of research and educational material by employing new technologies and business models. Under Martin's leadership OUP began online journal publishing in the early 1990's and in 2000 launched the first of many online reference publications - the Oxford English Dictionary. In 2004 Oxford Scholarship Online was launched, providing a platform for the publication of OUP's extensive monograph programme. Martin has represented OUP on a number of publishing industry organizations, including ALPSP, PLoS and CrossRef. He is a regular speaker at conferences and has also published papers on various aspects of online publishing.