

Making OA monographs happen: Library-Press collaboration at the University of Ottawa, Canada

At the University of Ottawa, Canada, the UO Press and the UO Library have developed a strategic partnership to publish and disseminate selected new monographs as gold open access (OA). Starting in 2013, the Library agreed to fund three books at C\$10,000 per book (a total of C\$30,000 per year) in order to remove barriers to accessing scholarship and to align with scholarly communication goals of the University. In 2015 this agreement was renewed for another three years and the funding was increased to cover four books (a total of C\$40,000 per year). Ten titles have so far been published under this model. The data reveals that there have been 12,629 downloads as well as 16,584 page views of these titles, as of September 2015. There have been over 4,700 copies (print and EPUB) sold in spite of the free availability of the PDF version. This program has been very successful in terms of increasing the visibility and impact of the Press's publications; in providing unrestricted access to new scholarly research; and also in providing a significant source of revenue for the Press. The goals, process and outcomes are described in the context of the UO Press and the UO Library.

Introduction

In recent years various OA initiatives involving university presses and libraries have been implemented. This is a period of much experimentation around business models and delivery options, while financial pressures remain significant. At the same time, presses are concerned about focusing on their mission and demonstrating value to their institutions. At the University of Ottawa, Canada, the Library and the Press have developed a strategic collaboration on a number of scholarly communication initiatives. This has led to a funding agreement whereby the Library provides monies to enable the Press to publish a select number of new monographs as OA publications. The rationale, the logistics, and the (somewhat surprising) outcomes will be explored in this article.

It is worth mentioning at the outset that Canada now has a public policy mandate from the three federal granting agencies requiring open access within 12 months of publication for funded research.¹ This policy applies to all grants awarded from 1 May 2015. However, this applies to all journal publications as well as research data (health-related) and is not mandatory for monographs and other scholarly outputs. The Tri-Agency Policy was the result of a lengthy period of consultation and debate, and the implementation will be closely assessed by many stakeholders in the public research sphere. The University of Ottawa's mixed approach to OA – green and gold elements – is a strategy that we developed to meet our own policy objectives. The gold OA monograph project is highlighted in this paper.



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The University of Ottawa

Founded in 1848, the University of Ottawa is located in the heart of Canada's national capital and at the juncture of French and English Canada, and is known for its commitment to bilingualism. (It is the world's largest English-French bilingual university.) In terms of language, about 70% of students are anglophones and 30% are francophones. As one of Canada's top ten research universities, it plays a significant role

58 in national and international research networks. In fall 2015 there were 41,754 students, made up of 35,311 undergraduates and 6,443 graduates (Master's and PhD), enrolled on more than 450 programs across a very broad range of disciplines and research areas. The University's current strategic planning initiative, Destination 2020, focuses on four key strategic areas: the quality of student experience; research excellence; promoting Francophonie and bilingualism; and developing leaders through internationalization.² The University is a strong proponent of OA, having announced an OA program in December 2009 to '... adopt a comprehensive access program that supports free and unrestricted access to scholarly research.'³ This has included the hiring of a Scholarly Communications Librarian; establishing an institutional repository managed by the library; supporting OA journals on campus; and establishing the Open Access Author Fund (now replaced by a strategy of institutional deposit accounts with several OA publishers).

University of Ottawa Library

The Library's mission is to advance discovery and the communication of knowledge by connecting our community with global resources that support research, teaching and learning. Our activities contribute significantly toward the goals of student experience and research excellence, while the goal of supporting Francophonie and bilingualism permeates our work. There are three libraries (Arts & Sciences, Health Sciences, and Law) as well as numerous specialized centers, such as Media Resources, Education, Maps, and Archives and Special Collections. There are approximately 155 full-time staff and the collections budget was C\$15.3 million in FY2015–16.

The Library offers a diverse and rich collection of approximately 2.3 million print books, 1.2 million e-books, over 111,000 e-journals and about 850 research databases, as well as strong holdings of maps, government publications, microforms, slides and music materials. The delivery of our collections has been transformed. Low-use print collections have been moved off-site, allowing significant spaces to be repurposed for the use of our students. Spending has shifted from being more than 70% print to more than 70% digital. Liaison librarians work closely with faculty to address teaching and research needs in their disciplines. The Library has leveraged consortial relationships in Canada and beyond to license key digital resources, such as journal collections, research databases and e-book collections. Virtual reference, iPad loans service, and 24/7 opening hours during exams are some of the service enhancements that have been introduced in recent years. Most Library spaces have been renovated and we look forward to the completion, in 2017, of the University's new Learning Centre that will include technology-rich, collaborative library spaces.

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University of Ottawa Press

Founded in 1936, the University of Ottawa Press is the only bilingual university press in Canada and the oldest French press in North America. It reports to the Office of Research, and has a staff of six. Its mission is aligned with the University's strategic goals – to enrich intellectual and cultural life through the publication and dissemination of scholarly works, and to extend the reach and influence of the University of Ottawa and to associate its name with excellence in research and knowledge creation. Reflecting the linguistic duality of the University is essential to the mandate of the Press. In 2014–15, for example, there were nine books published in English, seven in French and bilingual work, as well as four journals. A typical year sees 20–25 new publications. All books are rigorously peer reviewed. Most works are in the arts and social science disciplines, although there is crossover with other areas since research has become highly interdisciplinary in recent years. The publishing program is based on three strategic areas, namely Francophone and Canadian Studies; Politics, Public Policy and Globalization; and Contemporary Society, with

'A typical year sees 20–25 new publications'

59 specific collections in each area. The Press publishes works by University of Ottawa authors as well as by others. In 2014–15, for example, there were a total of 35 authors (for 17 books), 17 (48.5%) from the University of Ottawa, 15 (43%) from other Canadian institutions and three (8.5%) from other countries.

The Press publishes in many formats, namely print (including print on demand), PDF, EPUB and Kindle. Simultaneous print and digital publication is the default business strategy. Annual sales are approximately C\$300,000. The Press employs a number of distribution channels in Canada, the US and overseas. In terms of the e-book market, the Press participates in the University Press Content Consortium (UPCC) initiative on Project MUSE; the Books at JSTOR collection; the Association of Canadian University Presses e-book license agreement with the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN); and the Canadian Electronic Library. The Press also sells e-books via MyiLibrary, ProQuest, EBSCO, Overdrive, Barnes & Noble and Kobo.

The governance model reflects the integration of the Press with the University community and the close collaboration with the Library. The Management Board includes the Press Director, the University Librarian, a former Provost and an independent publisher, while the Editorial Board includes the Press Director, the Associate University Librarian for Collections (the author) a former Provost and several professors representing diverse disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The Scholarly Communications Librarian also has close ties to the Press for a number of matters, including deposit in the institutional repository and the planning of OA Week activities. Thus there existed a close relationship between the Press and the Library on numerous levels. This provided a solid foundation on which to build our partnership aimed at broadening access to scholarship published by the Press.

OA partnership

In 2013 an initial three-year agreement to support the open dissemination of selected monographs (gold OA – non-exclusive distribution license) was struck. The Library agreed to subsidize the publication of three new titles per fiscal year by an amount of C\$10,000 per title. This meant a total commitment of C\$30,000 per year. This has been succeeded by a second agreement, whereby the Library's commitment is now four titles per year, a total cost of C\$40,000. This represents significantly less than 1% of the Library's collection budget. All titles published in the Press's OA collection are available in PDF, EPUB, mobi and in print. The PDF is archived in the institutional repository, with direct links provided on the book pages of the Press website. The Press sells the print and EPUB versions. A total of 58 backlist books have been released by the Press as gold OA. These are available on our provincial consortial platform called Scholars Portal Books⁴ and on our institutional repository called uO Research.⁵ Each fall, the Press releases five more backlist titles as gold OA.

'All titles published in the Press's OA collection are available in PDF, EPUB, mobi and in print'

'Each fall, the Press releases five more backlist titles as gold OA'

The Press provides the Library with an itemized production budget that includes other sources of financing. Other sources of funding, e.g. the federal Awards to Scholarly Publishing Program,⁶ must be utilized for this library funding to be applicable. The library subvention is meant to cover the direct costs of production and support OA dissemination of new monographs. The Press and the Library discuss new publications that are seen as good candidates for the program. The program directly supports the publications in the 'Law, Technology and Media' collection since this addresses timely topics that would be of broad public interest, such as copyright, intellectual property and internet surveillance. However, we determined early on that we needed to identify a much broader range of books for OA, in order to open up a broader range of scholarship published by the Press. We also wanted to test the new model, i.e. to see the levels of usage across books in very divergent fields. The titles selected to date have reflected a variety of social, cultural and economic issues in contemporary society, as will be seen below (Table 1).

Title	Year of Publication	Print sales (units)	EPUB sales (units)	Total net sales	Page views	Downloads
<i>Sexual Assault in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women's Activism</i>	2012	505	1,445	C\$17,924	2072	4431
<i>The Copyright Pentology: How the Supreme Court of Canada Shook the Foundations of Copyright Law</i>	2013	361	565	C\$13,364	8378	1114
<i>Sport Policy in Canada</i>	2013	348	831	C\$10,637	905	997
<i>Homelessness & Health in Canada</i>	2014	266	24	C\$6,248	1,807	2,196
<i>Transfert : Exploration d'un champ conceptuel</i>	2014	0	0	0	93	255
<i>Rethinking Canadian Aid</i>	2015	204	3	C\$4,563	1,363	1,114
<i>Des outils pour le changement: une approche critique en études de développement</i>	2015	0	0	0	29	154
<i>Law, Privacy and Surveillance in Canada in the Post-Snowden Era</i>	2015	131	0	C\$3,557	1277	10
<i>Laïcité et humanisme</i>	2015	0	0	0	78	58
<i>eGirls, eCitizens</i>	2015	64	1	C\$1,766	582	2,300
TOTALS		1,879	2,869	C\$58,059	16,584	12,629

Table 1. Key data points for OA titles (as of September 2015).

Results

These numbers are very instructive. Print sales for several of the books are quite robust – five titles have sold more than 200 print copies, and three of the books have sold more than 800 EPUB copies. At the outset of the project we were not sure what level of sales to expect of books that are available as free PDFs. Intuitively, we expected low numbers. However, it became evident that there was a persistent desire for print copies for long-form reading of scholarly works. Readers are willing to pay for print even when the PDF is freely available. This could reflect the familiarity and ease of reading experience of print books. It could also reflect the fact that e-reading is seen as invaluable for searching, browsing and skimming, while print is better for immersive and sustained, linear reading. The overall sales data reveals that there is an important audience for books that address current socio-political and economic issues. The fact that over 4,700 copies of OA books in alternative formats have been sold is a clear indication that readers are diverse in their habits and want multiple options. While it is possible or likely that some readers bought copies because they did not notice the link to the free PDF file, this is only one reason among others for print sales, e.g. library approval plans for new books. It will be interesting to follow the sales trajectory of these books in the coming years, as this will probably not follow the typical pattern of print books, i.e. 50% in the first year and 90% within the first five years. The digital reading space has completely disrupted the predictability of such patterns, especially for OA books. We are only beginning to understand the variable appeal of different formats and of free versus non-free models. The fact that OA is outside the standard distribution channels is another challenge to be addressed. The discoverability question and the sheer scale of the digital environment are key factors – there are many virtual pathways to discovering new works, and there can be many obstacles as well, depending on book visibility, metadata, sales channels and search behavior. How well does the author and topic resonate with the wider public, and how does this relate to format preferences and willingness to pay? Many questions for us to ponder! There is both opportunity and uncertainty in today's world of university press publishing.

'Readers are willing to pay for print even when the PDF is freely available'

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The number of downloads and page views far outweighed the number of sales, as was expected. The fact that several of these titles have garnered several thousand

downloads each is a definite indication that there is wide interest in these topics and perspectives – and not just in Canada but in many other countries. For example, *Sexual Assault in Canada* has been downloaded 379 times in the US, 156 times in Germany, 44 times in China, 27 times in Australia, 25 times in the UK and 22 times in India. *Homelessness & Health in Canada* has been downloaded 219 times in the US, 204 times in Denmark, 52 times in China, 14 times in the UK, 12 times in Russia, eight times in Australia and six times in the Czech Republic. Publishing OA titles has allowed the press to reach a global audience and greatly extend its visibility and its impact. The distribution model of the web has allowed the Press to complement its traditional marketing and distribution activities, and to connect with an audience that would have been impossible to reach in the analog era.

Discussion

At this point it would be useful to take a step back and apply a wider lens to new publishing models for university presses. Back in 2007, the Ithaka Report, *University Publishing in a Digital Age*, pointed to the need for universities to re-engage with scholarly publishing in a holistic, mission-driven manner: 'As information transforms the landscape of scholarly publishing, it is critical that universities deploy the full range of their resources – faculty research and teaching activity, library collections, information technology capacity, and publishing expertise – in ways that best serve both local interests and the broader public interest. We will argue that a renewed commitment to publishing in its broadest sense can enable universities to more fully realize the potential global impact of their academic programs, enhance the reputations of their specific institutions, maintain a strong voice in determining what constitutes important scholarship and which scholars deserve recognition, and in some cases reduce costs.'⁷

There was a prescient recognition almost a decade ago that university presses needed to grapple with the transformative implications of information technologies in the digital age – in terms of impact, visibility and collaboration. This links up with the goal of enhancing institutional recognition and profile, and with developing a stronger presence of local scholars in global conversations. And of course the many pressures and challenges of publishing are much more intense today than a decade ago.

In a similar vein, Robert Holley and Clayton Hayes argue that university presses need to imagine a broad and diversified audience in this age of information abundance: 'The presses serve institutions of higher education, independent scholars and libraries of many different sizes; it is important for the future of UPs that they keep the needs of these stakeholders in mind ... For the presses to be successful, it will be necessary for them to examine how they can better serve groups beyond their traditional clientele while still meeting the needs of their core customers.'⁸ Implicit in this statement is an understanding that the presses need to understand their market in much broader terms than in the analog era. Achieving a fine balance between traditional and new clienteles will be essential for success in relation to mission and sustainability of the presses.

'Achieving a fine balance between traditional and new clienteles will be essential'

Common purpose between libraries and presses is at the heart of collaboration and partnership. Eaton, MacEwan and Potter, reflecting the University of Pennsylvania experience in 2004, state that 'First and foremost, we agreed that libraries and university presses have a shared stake in the future of scholarly communication. Without this belief, there would be little basis for partnership.'⁹ This speaks to common values and purposes in developing new business models and new forms of scholarship in the post-analog landscape. Libraries are noted for their expertise in metadata, preservation, access management, digitization, and knowledge of user behavior. Bringing funding to the table for joint initiatives is another key area of collaboration where the Library can play an important collaborative role.

'Bringing funding to the table for joint initiatives is another key area of collaboration'

We live in an era where experimentation and innovation need to align with issues of fiscal sustainability and the impact and value of scholarly publishing. These are closely related questions. The mission-centric focus of the presses remains central, but openness to the opportunities of rapidly changing technology seems essential to remaining viable and valued in the academy and beyond. In the words of Peter Berkery, Executive Director of the American Association of University Presses, 'Instead of focusing just on how technology is changing publishing from print to electronic, because we're actually getting okay with that, we really need to begin thinking about how technology is changing scholarship and what those changes mean for the workflow of our authors (our customers, the scholars), and therefore for us.'¹⁰

OA in its various incarnations is not only a disruptive business model, but a new vehicle for understanding the role of scholarship in our hyper-networked digital culture. It also means that new forms of impact and visibility can enhance traditional measures of value, within the context of a new scholarly communications ecology – one that will shape the future of libraries and presses. The hybridity of the present environment means that print and digital will continue to co-exist, and that free and traditional models of dissemination of scholarship can lead to a new positioning of presses within their institutions. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, as each press has its own unique circumstances and drivers. Needless to say, innovation and openness in dissemination of scholarship will remain key issues.

Conclusion

This partnership between the Library and the Press is a win-win arrangement. It has demonstrated our common alignment with scholarly communication goals by integrating OA strategies with core business activities. It has contributed to the University's goal of providing free and unrestricted access to scholarly research, in particular new monographs. The extent of usage (downloads and views) is an indicator of success, while the extent of sales reveals that there is downstream revenue to be made. The Library has prioritized scholarly communication issues, and this funding has allowed the Press to make selected new scholarly monographs openly available, in a financially sustainable manner. The funding represents a very small proportion of the Library's collection budget, while having a large impact on the mission of the Press to enrich intellectual and cultural life and to extend the reach and influence of the University of Ottawa. It has helped forge new relationships between the Library and the Press as we work towards common goals. We continue to monitor the program, and we recognize that the business model of the Press is rapidly evolving in relation to new opportunities, technologies and expectations – and that gold OA is an important element of a multi-faceted publishing strategy in a rapidly changing environment.

'This partnership between the Library and the Press is a win-win arrangement'

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

A list of the abbreviations and acronyms used in this and other *Insights* articles can be accessed here – click on the URL below and then select the 'Abbreviations and Acronyms' link at the top of the page it directs you to: <http://www.uksg.org/publications#aa>

Competing interests

The author has declared no competing interests.

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