

# New university presses in the UK: Accessing a mission

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## Abstract

In the space of just a year, five new university presses were launched in the UK. Although very different in size and stages of development, all but one were launched first and foremost as open access presses, based in or supported by their university's library. Why should there have been such a significant flurry of activity in such a short space of time, and what can the stated objectives and activities of these presses tell us about the current UK scholarly publishing environment? To answer some of those questions, this article looks back to the original mission of the founding university presses, examines the policy and funding environments in which the new presses are operating, looks at overseas developments in recent years for comparison, and concludes with a review of the challenges these young presses face as well as the benefits all university presses, but particularly open access ones, can confer to their institutions.

## INTRODUCTION

The story of university presses is a chequered one – while there are longstanding entities such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Manchester University Press, Liverpool University Press and Edinburgh University Press, a stable wider group of smaller university presses persisting over many decades has not been evident. The survival (or otherwise) for university presses in this wider circle has apparently been more contingent on shorter term factors ranging from politics, policy and marketing conditions to the specifics of management and finance. After a flurry of closures in the 1980s the UK university press scene seemed to consolidate for a period until the rise of open access from the early 2000s. With the increasingly difficult trading conditions for traditional presses that have seen prices for scholarly monographs rise and sales fall, a new cluster of university presses suddenly emerged during 2015. These new presses challenge the prevailing scholarly publishing model in a number of ways, both in their emphasis on open access and, for some, in their questioning of academic evaluation criteria. This article reviews this new wave of publishers in the context of policy developments, a longer history of perceptions concerning the purpose of university press publishing and the current open access university press scene.

## THE ORIGINAL MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

It is one of the noblest duties of a university to advance knowledge and to diffuse it not merely among those who can attend the daily lectures but far and wide. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016)

Daniel Coit Gilman's famous words on founding the Johns Hopkins University Press in 1878 are quoted almost as far and wide today as he hoped his university's research would be distributed. His quote represents the original mission of the university press, which was to ensure that a university's own teaching and research was made widely available. Similarly, John Fell, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, expressed his hope in 1669 that a press at Oxford 'by God's blessing may not only prove usefull to us poor scholars but reflect some reputation and advantage on the Publick' (McKitterick, 2002). Manchester University Press was founded in 1904, 'primarily as an outlet to publish academic research being carried out at the Victoria University of Manchester' (Manchester University Press, 2016). And the mission behind the founding of Princeton University Press was similar: it was

### Key points

- Five new UK university presses started in 2015–2016.
- What are the motivations behind new university press publishing?
- How university libraries are often the base of open access publishing: the opportunities.
- Scholarly communications, open access, and the university's mission.
- The new university press in global context: challenges, operations, and progress.

initially set up in 1905 as a printing operation with a donation from Charles Scribner, publisher and trustee of the university who had already been considering the need for a press that would issue scholarly books 'not feasible for commercial firms' (Princeton University Press, 2016), and among its first publications were books by Princeton academics.

## DIVERSIFICATION

Due to financial pressures that started to emerge especially from the late 1970s in the UK and the USA (Givler, 2002), many university presses took a decision to diversify their activities away from the core academic business of publishing scholarly monographs by members of their own institution into other genres of publishing including variously trade books, English Language Teaching (ELT), educational publishing, and classics. While some were successful in employing this strategy, notably Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, and several of the larger US university presses such as Chicago and Princeton (and in many years it proved a challenge even for these), others were not able to adapt and were forced to close down. Other UK university presses focusing on more exclusively academic outputs in the UK often failed to take deep root – as Hardy and Oppenheim (2004) showed – with buy-outs of new ventures (e.g. Leicester, Open University Press) and closures (e.g. Hull, Nottingham) occurring regularly from the 1990s onwards. University presses were caught in a difficult position: expected by their parent institution to publish works of scholarship that did not necessarily have a commercial market, while at the same time achieving financial viability, many presses found themselves between 'an academic publishing rock and a financial hard place' (Steele, 2008; see also Givler, 2002).

And that is the position many university presses still find themselves in today.

## FIVE (OR SIX) GO OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

In 12 months from June 2015, five university presses in the UK were launched in some form or other. University College London

(UCL) Press was very well advanced with three books (and another five books and three journals on the way in the same year) by the time it launched from its beginning as the UK's 'first fully open access (OA) university press' on 4 June 2015. Its clear strategic intent and well-advanced publishing programme made it at once the biggest and most immediately ambitious of the newcomers. UCL Press had been preceded only by the University of Huddersfield Press in 2007 – OA in part from 2010, fully OA from 2014. Led by library publishing pioneer Graham Stone, Huddersfield shared with UCL and three of the other newcomers' ambitions to promote OA scholarly communication and a base within university library departments. Bookending this group – that included in order of appearance Cardiff University Press (9 July 2015), University of Westminster Press (16 September 2015), and White Rose University Press (open for submissions 4 January 2016) – was Goldsmiths Press (12 May 2016), which published its first title, Les Back's *Academic Diary: Or Why Higher Education Still Matters*, on 12 May 2016.

Beyond this particular group of presses, there is evidence of an increase in library-based university publishing with more growth envisaged (Keene, Milloy, Weigert, & Stone, 2016). The work draws upon the US-based Library Publishing Coalition definition of library-led presses to categorize new university presses (NUPs) as a '...set of activities led by college and university libraries to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and/or educational works'. The basis of Keene *et al.*'s work is a Jisc-led survey in May 2016, which estimates a total of 17 such ventures with further 12 universities considering establishing a publishing operation of some sort. A fuller account of the findings of this research will follow. The definition of a university press used by the current authors is narrower, seeing a university press as an entity similar to the definition of Hardy and Oppenheim (2004), 'as a publishing house associated with a higher education institution, bearing its imprint, and primarily devoted to publishing scholarly, low-profit works'. A feature of the more recently established university presses (and of much library-based publishing activity as described by the Library Publishing Coalition) is that their publishing activities can range from hosting OA journals on behalf of academics, for example, through to full publishing services for monographs and journals, including active commissioning, editorial, marketing, and print sales. The five presses that are the focus of this article reflect this variety. Definitions aside, the boundaries are not always so clear, with nomenclature all that sometimes stands between library-based university publishing and a university press in the fullest sense. Growth by either measure has occurred recently and more research by Jisc is to be undertaken on this sector and on independent academic-led publishing in UK higher education. Within this context, it is perhaps worth stating that in terms of subject emphasis the newcomers do not substantially deviate from a traditional and widespread university press emphasis on the social sciences and humanities rather than the sciences.

To varying extents, these new presses have expressed a vision of supporting OA within their home institute and beyond,

of making research outputs available, more visible and impactful, and raising the profile of such research globally, not an idle claim in this digital world. The early publications of the group and stated aims suggest that they will in the main follow established university presses in producing high-quality, peer reviewed scholarly monographs, and journals focusing on social sciences and humanities monograph publishing, although UCL Press's science monograph and textbook publishing is growing, perhaps not surprisingly given the research-intensive nature of its science faculties. These new presses also express ambitions to make a positive contribution towards the increasingly unappealing (to commercial publishers) mission of publishing scholarly monographs successfully. An important aspect of this laudable mission is the recognition that some very good books are reaching some very small audiences via the tried and tested commercial market model which Rupert Gatti (2015) of Open Book Publishers notes, 'remains successful as a business model. *But as a dissemination model, it is an unmitigated disaster.* [Original author's italics]'. All five of the NUPs have recognized the benefits of OA in terms of enlarging readerships as a core part of their rationale, even if Goldsmiths Press has placed more emphasis than the others on potential drawbacks of OA (see Kember, 2016) and is proceeding from a standpoint that seeks in particular to encourage innovative forms of scholarly communication and promote academic freedoms.

## WHAT DO THE NUPS DO?

New UK university presses were noticeable in their absence in the OAPEN report (Open Access Publishing in European Networks, the main OA publishing platform in Europe) (Adema, 2010), which usefully surveys a range of institutions and their experiments with OA business models. In the UK at least it was academic-led OA presses that took the initiative to become fully OA publishers: Open Book Publishers launched in 2008 and the Open Humanities Press, a not-for-profit community interest company also launched in 2008. With hindsight, it could be said that OA-oriented university presses were more notable first in other English-speaking countries: Australia, Canada, South Africa, and of course the USA, and in Europe as Adema (2010) shows. Yet there was some interest in the UK university press sector. Manchester University Press was one of six founding university presses, and the only UK university press, involved in the original OAPEN project of 2008, in the early days of the development of open access monographs [Manchester University Press (MUP), 2008; OAPEN Consortium, 2011].

A variety of paths to establishment of the five NUPs that are the subject of this article is apparent. Some were initiated by senior level, strategic, long term and principled commitment to fostering OA means of publication, making research outputs available, and challenging the prevailing scholarly publishing model. Other NUPs have been established thanks to the efforts of dedicated individuals: librarians, academics, and administrators

wanting to make a difference and save library budget costs in the long term. There has been an element of additional push from academics trying to revive more creative agendas and create alternative spaces away from the vexations of the academic publishing machine with publishing house prestige being used as a proxy measure (or time-saving shorthand) for assessing quality in the academic job market (Eve, 2014, pp. 48–49).

It is very early days for this group of publishers. Formats and publications are diverse and are looking beyond standard formats to embrace digital's flexibility as basic typesetting and webhosting costs come down and interfaces improve. UCL Press has published some very 21st century outputs including the 'Why We Post' monograph series on global social media as well as more traditional museum books such as *The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology: Characters and Collections*. As well as a print version, this book has been produced in an enhanced digital version. At the same time as it develops innovative digital models, UCL Press is focusing on publishing scholarly monographs, textbooks, and journals, where it has seen most significant demand from academics, as well as supporting six student journals. Its plans are quite far advanced, with 20 books and four more journals planned for 2016, and over 30 books already commissioned for publication in 2017. Goldsmiths Press, based on the success of its parent institution's creative writing programmes, intends to publish fiction and poetry as well as conventional scholarly monographs and is also considering options for a 'DIY modular post-textbook textbook' (Page, 2016), apps and audio-visual formats. Cardiff University Press has started by publishing journals only, but also publishes the European Sources Online database ([www.europeansources.info](http://www.europeansources.info)), and is considering monograph publishing. As of July 2016, there are 10 journals in the portfolio, with more in the pipeline. All have international editorial boards and are fully peer reviewed. The University of Westminster Press is placing a focus on short books in the monograph tradition, notably in its *Critical Digital and Social Media Studies* edited by Professor Christian Fuchs and plans to publish 9–10 books in the academic year 2016/2017 alongside its two published journals: these book titles will include several expert authors in the field based outside its university. White Rose University Press will be publishing its first content towards the end of 2016/beginning of 2017, with the launch of two to three journals, and a handful of academic monographs. While traditional monographs and journals are envisaged by the University of Westminster, UCL Press, and White Rose as being central to their programme, they are all also considering, or actively developing, other innovations. For example UCL Press's BOOC (Books as Open Online Content) launches in September 2016, an early example among these five NUPs of the ways in which digital avenues are being explored to develop platforms that can readily adapt to new project requirements in the digital age. Such diversity in activity and approach means that on a daily basis these operations are required to think afresh in the digital age: what is a university press for and what contributions can it make to scholarly communication? It is not a new question even if it takes on a fresh form in 2016.

## THE LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY PRESS, AND THE WIDER WORLD

In other parts of the world, OA university presses, often dedicated to publishing the outputs of their institutions, are continuing to emerge, and indeed several have been well established for a number of years.

A significant and early example is the Australian National University (ANU) Press. This was established as an OA press in 2003 out of a 'recognition of the need to create an effective mechanism for disseminating high quality ANU scholarship that lacks a ready commercial market' (Australian National University, 2016). In its 2016 catalogue, ANU Press listed 38 book titles and 12 issues of its journals as published in 2015. Its most successful titles achieve downloads of well in excess of 10,000 per year. This is significant in the Australian context, since regional research is seen as particularly uncommercial, and is therefore 'consigned to the rejection basket' by overseas-based publishers (MacIntyre, 2012). 'It is tragic', she goes on, 'that brilliant research and beautifully written ethnography can be dismissed on commercial grounds'. ANU Press is a good example of a well-supported university press that is offering a much-needed publishing option to its academics, ensuring that their research is widely disseminated. ANU Press sells print copies of its books alongside OA versions, and it is subsidized via grants from the institution. ANU Press is just one example of a long-established Australian tradition of OA library publishing: one in four university libraries in Australia is publishing original scholarly works, most of which are OA, and they report a combined total of 3.4 million downloads in a single year (Missingham, 2015, November 30).

In recent years, there have been more OA developments in the US and Canada. A long-established and successful publisher, California University Press, launched its OA initiative, Luminos, in 2015. It makes a charge for publishing OA using a model of funding in which the baseline cost of \$15,000 is shared between institution, library, and author. The author is expected to contribute around \$7,500 of the total cost, and UC Press points the author in the direction of numerous sources of funding beyond the institution, including departmental or Dean's funds, the library's OA funds, and campus grants. It has published 14 books so far.

Open SUNY (State University of New York) Textbooks, launched in 2012 as an initiative to develop high-quality open educational resources (OERs) to replace textbooks, in a move designed to expand the use of free course materials to save students money. It has published 17 textbooks so far and now has plans for expansion. Its new initiative 'will offer professional development for faculty members, instructional designers and librarians, a publishing platform, and a support network for participants at different campuses to connect with one another' (Straumsheim, 2016, June 22). Its strategy is to provide the network, platform, and services to enable faculty to produce their own textbooks.

In January 2016, the announcement was made of the establishment of a new OA publishing initiative in the US. Lever Press, founded by the Oberlin Group (a consortium of 80 libraries in

America's top liberal arts colleges) with Amherst College Press and Michigan Publishing, that plans to provide a digitally native, 'platinum open access' scholarly publishing enterprise (Oberlin Group, 2016). There are many other examples of innovative scholarly publishing in the US, often OA and often supported by Mellon funding which Cond (2016) neatly summarizes.

Even during the time of writing, three new OA publishing ventures were announced: the Johns Hopkins University announced on 12 July 2016 that it had been awarded a 2-year \$938,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop MUSE Open in Project MUSE, to host OA monographs; the Wellcome Trust announced the launch of Wellcome Open Research, a new OA research platform to enable Wellcome grantees to publish a wide variety of outputs from standard research articles and data sets, through to null and negative results. The platform will use a model of immediate publication followed by transparent invited peer review; and a new OA university press was announced in Canada, Concordia University Press, which will launch in October 2016.

## ADVANTAGE ENGLISH OR LATE DEVELOPERS?

University presses have traditionally been anchored predominantly in the humanities and social sciences and with a centre of gravity in books rather than journals in many cases. With the UK having the luck to speak the global language of English, which has led to a vigorous commercial publishing sector, this advantage probably postponed the day when OA university presses came to seem like a good idea. Other countries without this advantage have been wrestling with the issue of low print runs and sales in the university press market for even longer, including for example Gottingen University Press (since 2003). In her presentation to the University Press Redux Conference GUP (Bargheer, 2016) reported in Germany a 'high density of scholarly presses' dating back to enlightenment times, with 15 dedicated university presses currently run or supported by university libraries, with OA lobbying from the 'early days'. In spite of ongoing difficulties with sales and low print runs, there is a vibrant publishing scene in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, with its language barriers perhaps contributing to a more firmly established tradition of institutional support.

Heidelberg University Publishing is one very modern example of this commitment right down to its abbreviated name, mixing capitals, and lower case letters (heiUP). An OA press, its first title was published in April 2016 and it was founded in July 2015. As in the UK, academics in Germany well versed in digital media cultures have also taken the initiative at an early stage with Meson Press, operated by members of the Hybrid Publishing Lab at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg, publishing its first monograph in 2014. There is a trend here, witnessed in the UK too, of university presses working with a services provider to offer a platform, for example Utrecht University Library Open

Access Journals, which works with Ubiquity Press. Ubiquity offers their platform and publishing services to several university presses in the UK and Europe, and indeed the US, where they provide the platform to University of California Press's Luminos OA initiative. Septentrio Academic Publishing likewise offers support for Open Journal Systems (OJS) journals publishing from the University Library of Tromsø for its university academics. And on 15 November 2015, Lund University (2015) announced a NUP that will work with Manchester University Press who will provide the infrastructure for Lund University to publish, 'Lund research world-wide, publishing its books simultaneously online (Open Access) and in print'.

Several factors may explain the current, limited state of OA monograph publishing in the UK: the Research Excellence Framework, which had the effect of generating a safety first based attitude to publishing; the strength of its English language publishing that has sustained finances for publishers in many areas longer than many thought possible (thanks in the main to the US library market) and the relative absence of strong local or regional imperatives. The absence in the UK of a deeper and broader culture of university press publishing (perhaps only truly evident in the USA) might be seen as enabling in the UK context as a result of the lack of US-style restrictive conservatism in what is an established small-university-press sector. Alternatively this lack of depth could also be envisaged as a drawback – a community in search of an established pool of norms and expertise and still much more in the making.

## WHY NOW?

So why did five NUPs get started in 2015 in the UK? Though serendipity cannot be discounted, a factor may have been the timing of the conclusion of the Research Excellence Framework 2014, with universities in the UK looking ahead to clear signals that the subsequent REF would continue the OA push. Indeed, HEFCE has mandated that journal articles and conference proceedings are deposited in an OA repository from April 2016, in order to be eligible for entry into REF 2020. Spurred on by the Finch Report of 2012, HEFCE has gradually turned up the dial on encouraging OA publishing of monographs, though it has so far stopped short of mandating them for the REF. Anthony Cond of Liverpool University Press identified longer standing trends in *The Bookseller* (Cond, 2015) highlighting the, 'ongoing consolidation of commercial publishers' in the humanities and social sciences with its worrying consequences for library budgets – see Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon (2015) on journal ownership consolidation – as one underlying reason for the new entrants to the field, together with the imperatives of government and funders for research with impact and the opportunities presented in the area of textbooks. Cond (2015) gives an example for a pioneer scheme funded by Jisc to explore the role of the institution as e-textbook publisher, under which Liverpool University will produce a business studies textbook in collaboration with Liverpool University Press. With

the possibility of making a saving of £56 (per head) to the student or to the library and university course budget, sizeable savings can be made using this model for courses with enrolments in the high hundreds and even four figures. This initiative (Jisc, 2016) is funding four Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop institutional textbook publishing (Liverpool, University of the Highlands and Islands in collaboration with Napier University, Nottingham University and UCL Press).

Another key driver for setting up new OA university presses is of course the oft-cited profiteering of the large journal publishers that are squeezing library budgets and driving down sales and therefore viability of scholarly monographs. Fuchs and Sandoval (2013) report profits of big corporate publishers as ranging from 12.4% (Wiley-Blackwell) to 24.9% (Taylor & Francis) in 2012, while Kingsley (2015, July 8) in a blog piece on the recent Dutch 'boycott' of Elsevier, noted the published group profits of the same company in 2014 had risen to a staggering 37%. And in February of this year Informa (2016), owners of Taylor and Francis, revealed continued strong performance with operating profit up to 30.1% (£365.6 m from £1,212.2 m). By any standards inside or outside publishing these are high margins. Overall a shift of library expenditure from books to journals – the so-called 'monograph crisis' touched upon by Milloy *et al.* (2011) and discussed more fully by Willinsky (2009), Crossick (2015), and Adema (2015, January 29) – has raised awareness of a very real threat to the humanities and social sciences monograph publishing that has traditionally been perceived to be at the core the university press's mission.

Reflecting Eve's (2014) concerns, Professor Daniel Miller has also expressed (Miller, 2012) anxieties over corporate publishing's role in stifling the spread of knowledge via high prices and market restrictions: 'we have ceded control of dissemination to inappropriate commercial concerns that have come to stand for what should have been academic criteria'. Against this backdrop of rising prices and oligopolistic concentration, Cond's conclusion that 'there is probably more institutional goodwill for such entities across the sector than at any time for a generation' rings true even if, as he reminds, the precarious nature of university press imprints in the UK and elsewhere has not morphed into any kind of cherished certainty overnight.

## PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE OVER PAYWALLS

The continuing fall in scholarly monograph sales is another driver for universities to establish their own press. With reported sales of scholarly monographs typically in the region of 200–400 copies globally in their lifetime, largely to institutional libraries, institutions and their academics are concerned that their research is not reaching its full potential audience and that the current model is therefore not serving its interests. And of course, there is inevitably a huge amount of research that would not even be published by a commercial press. A particular example can help to demonstrate this: a title published in a dual English/Portuguese

edition by UCL Press in November 2015, *Participatory Planning for Climate Compatible Development in Maputo, Mozambique* (Castan Broto *et al.* 2015), has been downloaded ca. 1,500 times in over 120 countries round the world. In print, it has sold around 20 copies. The work has a demonstrable global audience, one that in all likelihood would never have had the opportunity to purchase the book or read it in an institutional library, but it would never be able to cover its costs in a commercial environment. Such research deserves to be published, as shown by the number of readers accessing it, and that is precisely the role identified for many new OA presses – to make available important research, regardless of its commercial potential. A related example of the power of OA publishing to reach new audiences is Ruth Finnegen's book *Oral Literature in Africa*, published by Open Book Publishers. It has been viewed 103,222 times (Open Book Publishers, 2016a) since publication in 2012 and more in Africa than in any other continent.

## WHY LIBRARIES?

It is significant and beneficial that many of new presses discussed in this article are embedded in their institutional library and draw on that support. Within the group of new UK university presses all retain strong links to or indeed are departments of their university library. This support takes the form of either direct staff involvement, funding or in-kind support, institutional reporting structures, inspirational leadership and often technical support for dissemination via repositories. It is a wider trend. In the USA, Charles Watkinson (2016), Director of Michigan Publishing, reported at the University Press Redux Conference in March 2016, a rising trend in university presses reporting to libraries up from 14% in 2008/2009 to 30% in 2016. In the Association of European University Press's membership survey [AEUP (Association of European University Presses), 2015] released in October 2015, 34.2% of members are linked to a library or libraries.

Libraries are significantly affected by the rise in serial costs, and therefore they can identify significant potential in supporting their own press, both in practice, as a cost saving, and in principle, as a reaction against profiteering. As a department of the library, a significant cost centre already, university presses can be supported in many ways: office space, use of the institutional repository which is usually managed by the library, OA funding often managed by the library, dissemination expertise, and technical infrastructure. Libraries of course also play a crucial role in supporting staff and students at the institution, and as such are embedded in the institution's strategies and make a significant contribution to them – there are mutual benefits to be derived from this relationship, that can help the university press deliver the mission of its institution.

However, small-scale institutional or library publishers do face significant challenges. Okerson and Holzman (2015) examined a number of library publishers in their report for the Council on Library and Information Resources, *The Once and Future Publishing Library*. They identified a number of factors that can affect

the success or otherwise of new library publishers, factors that pertain equally to our new UK university presses. These include the publisher aligning themselves to the institutional mission, having a problem to resolve in the first place, and the necessity of strong marketing activities to promote the books.

## INSTITUTIONAL BENEFITS AND REACH

What seems clear is that to succeed presses are going to need to be a more important partner in helping their host institutions to fulfill their research and teaching mission. (Brown, Griffiths, & Rascoff, 2007)

In the traditional publishing model, numerous benefits have been well articulated by members of the American Association of University Presses (AAUP). These include publishing specialist works that do not attract commercial publishers, making faculty research available to the broader public, and generating favourable publicity for the institution in the form of book reviews and awards (American Association of University Presses, 2016). For Oxford University Press, revenue for the institution is a significant benefit, and they report (OUP, 2016) reporting 'profit for the year' within trading operations of £74.8 million in the financial year ending 31 March 2016. But this is the exception among university presses, and reflects OUP's diversity of activity in profitable publishing areas.

New OA university presses can offer many of the benefits already described, and more. Their focus on the original mission of university presses, that is to diffuse the work of their own scholars to a much wider audience, combined with full OA, means that the institution's research does indeed reach the broad audience eagerly sought by Daniel Coit Gilman. For example, monographs published by UCL Press in its first year are reaching an average audience of around 3,000 readers (minimum 1,000, maximum 14,000), and its books have been downloaded in nearly 170 countries. This is particularly significant for arts and humanities, where most monograph publishing takes place, which is often perceived as contributing niche research outputs that, based on typical monograph sales figures in the low hundreds, are often incorrectly perceived as being of little interest, let alone having an impact on society. Open Book Publishers revealed via their blog (Gatti, 2015) that interest in their OA monographs is sustained for titles published over 5 years ago. There is no drop-off. Their projection for 10 years based on existing figures suggests an average of 100 times more visits and reads via OA compared to typical monograph sales in print. Their experience is an interesting one for the NUPs as it is based on several years of activity.

Further, the campus-based, institutionally focused university press can accomplish many other things. UCL Press advises faculty on publishing and copyright matters; it offers careers advice to students, as well as the possibility of internships; its activities help alumni and global relations departments; it offers innovative

digital platforms for non-traditional research; it offers student publishing activities, in the form of student journals, and many of these activities support UCL's 2034 institutional strategies. This kind of activity, which goes beyond core publishing, exemplifies Brown *et al.*'s proposal (2007) that university presses need to be contributing to their institution's core missions. Of course, this is essential for any university press, but where the institution is investing in the press, the imperative is even stronger in order to demonstrate value for money. Graham Stone of the University of Huddersfield Press, at a presentation at the ELPUB2016 conference (Stone, 2016), attempted to quantify reputational benefits of Huddersfield's publishing, and concluded that Press outputs were at least partly responsible for £82.5 K of the University's Music School's Quality Related funding in 1 year. If it could be successfully argued that such publications would not have happened without the involvement and collaboration of the institution's own university press then this is a tangible benefit. In the longer run further research may establish more clearly the benefits from having active publishing at a university (or not) in many more diverse ways.

## MISSION AND MESSAGE

Many have advocated for greater institutional involvement in publishing university research outputs, and for the institution to play a role in research from its inception to its dissemination, a role that seems to have been largely lost in the decades since university presses were first established. In 2007, David Shulenburg (former Vice President for the National Association of Public and Land-grant Colleges) surveyed 215 National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) provosts in the USA to ask them what research publishing strategy they had in place. He found that the overwhelming majority of provosts did not have a publishing strategy. Keene *et al.* (2016) in the UK revealed that demand 'from/for early career researchers' was a leading motivation for NUPs in the UK alongside the wider aim of developing OA publishing and others of supporting university objectives and enhancing an institution's reputation. In all probability the rationale for a press has multiple aspects, and the initiative to start a press seems to come equally from senior level strategic missions, library staff and academics.

Such a study as Shulenburg's has not been undertaken in the UK to the present authors' knowledge, but he is not alone in advocating for greater institutional support and involvement in research dissemination. Stuart Shieber in 2014, June 12 declared that, 'dissemination is an intrinsic part of the research process. Those that fund the research should be responsible for funding its dissemination'. He makes the point that in many cases the university is the research funder, and that the university 'can and should place conditions on funding that dissemination'. Brown *et al.* (2007) identified that at some presses in the US just 10% of a university press's output is written by members of their own faculty – the benefit to the institution in such a scenario might surely seem arm's length rather than deeply felt. Their report

goes on to further explore the theme of institutional publishing policy and support for university presses:

We will argue, however, that universities give up too much by withdrawing from publishing. They give up the opportunity to enhance institutional reputation and prestige. They reduce their ability to influence what gets published – and, therefore, not only what gets read but also who gets hired or promoted. They give up an opportunity to enhance the quality of what is published through the rich dialogue that is enabled by bringing editors into the fabric of relationships among scholars.

## OPERATIONS: RESILIENT OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

Discussions between the authors with colleagues in the sector – the university presses discussed in this article – reveal considerable variety in terms of operations day-to-day and the business aspects of their activity. Many library publishers worldwide focus on the ability to draw on in-kind assistance and services from colleagues while minimizing direct costs and overheads. At the same time less emphasis is placed on investing in personnel and structures aimed at acquiring sales through conventional print distribution or print on demand. Clearly, someone has to pay for the costs of producing and publishing a monograph, which include staff, overheads, infrastructure, editing, typesetting, marketing, and sales. When the reader does not pay, the model used for much OA publishing is for the author, their institution, or their funder to pay a BPC, or Book Processing Charge, to the publisher, in addition to other forms of financing such as institutional subsidy and/or support for overheads, revenue from print sales and library membership fees.

It is clear that costs for publishing monographs can vary considerably, depending on the costs included in the calculation. One study (Maron, Mulhern, Rossman, & Schmelzinger, 2016) noted about the costs of publishing a monograph in the USA, 'the smallest presses have the lowest average costs per title, and the largest have the highest costs'. The average 'basic' cost of a monograph title they found (not including press-level overhead or in-kind support) ranged from \$22,559 at the smallest presses to \$34,686 at the largest (Maron *et al.*, 2016, p. 20). Some of the very high costs per monograph listed there suggests work to be done. Another report (Kennison & Norberg, 2014, p. 38) suggests that, 'considerable efficiencies within the US system could be found to lower costs'. The report by OAPEN into OA monograph publishing identifies publishing costs that appear to be considerably lower than those identified in the Ithaka report (Ferwerda, Snijder, & Adema, 2011). It could be argued that the transparency of Ubiquity's APC fees (Ubiquity Press, 2016) of £300/€375/\$500 and similar BPC fees [starting from £2,860 for a typeset but not copyedited or indexed work of 30,000 words, and up to nearly £6,000 for a work of 100,000 words including typesetting, copy-editing and indexing, Ubiquity Press (2016)] offers encouragement to other operations who need to charge authors a BPC

but who are endeavouring to operate with lower fees than some of those quoted in the Ithaka report cited above, or those charged by some commercial publishers for OA. Collins, Milloy and Stone (2015, p. 18) also list indicative fees for a range of university press and commercial publishers showing much variety that is likely to continue between presses and over time.

One avenue that is being explored is the sharing of services and platforms both in the UK and the USA with Ubiquity Press and the University of Michigan providing benchmarks in the field. The avoidance of high operational costs in several of the NUPs is also facilitated by the use of open source software platforms (Open Journal Systems or that of Ubiquity Press), low staffing levels and sometimes in-kind support from university colleagues.

Article Processing Charges and Book Processing Charges are avoided on principle by Cardiff University Press (APCs only) and Goldsmiths (APCs and BPCs) as a means of funding publication, whereas they are a component of overall publishing options for Westminster, Huddersfield, and White Rose Presses, with the sources for the funding also sometimes being departments within their respective institutions and the destination of spending being primarily but not exclusively internal authors. UCL Press is funded by UCL, and makes no charges to its own academics, but it does at present charge a BPC to non-UCL authors. The starting premise for these presses was at least in part to offer a viable alternative to researchers at their own university. In terms of building a publishing programme, however, it is likely to be via external authors attracted to particular series, for example *Westminster's Critical Digital and Social Media Studies series* (University of Westminster Press, 2016) that publishing strands or category identities may be best developed, for those presses that consider this important.

Of the NUPs some include traditional distribution plans for print publications (UCL and Goldsmiths), though overall the weighting given to sales income is very much down to the individual press's publishing plan. For others including UCL Press and UWP, gold OA potentially creates a positive virtuous cycle of interest leading to print sales, still a preferred format for many dedicated readers of particular monographs. Author-side fees, institutional subsidy, and print sales currently form the bulk of income in this early stage for NUPs, but the consortial funding schemes of the Open Library of Humanities and Open Book Publishers, where libraries are asked to help support parts or the whole of a publishing programme, or other schemes such as Knowledge Unlatched may point to a future where consortial funding develops an important new strand of funding for OA university presses in the UK and worldwide. Open Book Publishers have secured the support of 91 libraries to their Library Membership Scheme (OBP, 2016a, 2016b), each paying £300/\$500/€400 per year. The Open Library of Humanities, which publishes journals only, has over 190 members of its international library consortium (Open Library of Humanities, 2016) whose members support the platform and infrastructure of OLH. Library partnership membership in the UK costs £800. For the longer term see Eve (2016) on how consortial funding may be able to exert pressure in a scholarly communications market large conglomerates seek to control.

In terms of personnel, staff at the NUPs are a mix of library professionals, experienced publishers and engaged academics, and head counts range from less than one full time post to five. Therefore, in the great scheme of things, small university presses cost their institutions very little, while the potential benefits can be great. The NUP is looking to digital technology, OA and the internet to do much of the heavy lifting when it comes to achieving reach and demonstrating dissemination benefits to its institution.

## CONCLUSION

The development of new OA University Presses in the UK in 2015 does mark a departure. Such developments have been reflected in the rest of the world and the EU's support for a proposal that would see all scientific papers published via Open Access by 2020 (as reported by Enserink (2016) in *Science*) is likely to continue to create the conditions for further development either within existing operations or potential new entrants. The rationale for the new UK presses at one level is not substantially different than any other country but the powerful mandates of funding bodies and the significance of the Research Excellence Framework are factors that are felt particularly strongly in the UK and are likely to ensure the future development of university presses may not be identical in form to other countries.

The current situation offers a wonderful opportunity for institutions to take a greater role in the dissemination of their institution's research and to support their academics, if they can be convinced of the benefits that accrue to an institution by making its research widely available via OA publishing. University presses need the support of their institution to achieve this, not only in terms of funding but also at the strategic, policy, advisory and advocacy levels. University presses play a key role in the shaping and dissemination of scholarly research, and whether new or old should be celebrated for their contribution. And indeed, this question is one that seems to be coming to the forefront of traditional publishers' minds again. At the University Press Redux Conference opening keynote speaker Mandy Hill, MD of the Academic Publishing Division of CUP, noted that increased collaboration with authors from their own institution was something CUP was actively seeking to increase in the coming years. As (Brown *et al.*, 2007) notes 'What seems clear is that to succeed presses are going to need to be a more important partner in helping their host institutions to fulfill their research and teaching mission' with university libraries and their parent institutions looking in some form or other to become that important partner.

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