

2013

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Recommended Citation

Riley, John D. (2013) "Library Marketplace-An Interview with the "Library Publishing Toolkit" Authors, Investigators, Sponsors and Editors," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 25: Iss. 5, Article 28.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6624>

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Library Marketplace — An Interview with the “Library Publishing Toolkit” Authors, Investigators, Sponsors and Editors



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Congratulations to all of you at the **IDS Project**, the **Rochester Regional Library Council**, **Milne Library** at **SUNY Geneseo**, and the **Monroe County Library System** on the publication of your new book *Library Publishing Toolkit*, edited by **Allison Brown**.

I found **Walt Crawford's** foreword to be a great justification for libraries to embark on the publishing process. “Libraries have always been places for creation, at least indirectly — the research required for nonfiction, the inspiration required for fiction, and not infrequently, the atmosphere that helps the creative juices flow.”

What inspired you to start publishing at your libraries?

Patty: The **Rochester Public Library** has been publishing digital content on our system Website for more than a decade as part of a larger digitizing project. Unique content owned by the **RPL** and partner agencies was made available through an image database (Rochester Images), a scholarly journal (*Rochester History Journal*, a publication from the City of Rochester Office of the City Historian), and through a loosely developed collection of PDF documents. While the project began with a definite focus (images) and funding source (an IMLS grant), it began to lose focus as staffing and equipment changes occurred. In 2013, we are reevaluating the entire digitizing program, developing a strategic plan, and expanding our internal digital publishing beyond local historical material. All of these activities were inspired by the desire to better share the unique historical materials owned by the **RPL**.

Cyril, Allison, Kate: For **SUNY Geneseo Milne Library**, it is a combination of factors. The Scholarly Communications Team sees

author services as a valuable service to faculty and helpful to the transformation of scholarly communications. **Kate Pitcher**, Head of Technical Services and Chair of the Scholarly Communications Team has been a strong leader in advancing library publishing and has been involving many of the cataloging and acquisitions staff in that service. The transition in Technical Services began with the Digital Thoreau project, which is a Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) digital scholarship project (<http://www.digitalthoreau.org/>). **Kate** and many in Technical Services learned TEI and encoded various works; this allows unique views of the seven editions of **Walden**. Technical Services also began to support journal hosting with Open Journal Systems and the reprint publications.

Cyril Oberlander has been involved in reprint publishing for several years and has worked with author services ranging from reviewing transfer agreements to seeking permissions, digitization, and serving as reader. His interest is in exploring the workflow and service models in scholarly, educational, and creative production. The unique value that libraries offer is connecting author and reader. This is an opportunity to expand librarian roles and library value. During a time when library downsizing appears the norm, expanding roles and services may seem risky, but the publishing value to the academy and library cannot be understated. Library publishing offers an alternative distribution model that is academic, author, and reader friendly, and in so doing, it demonstrates lasting value of libraries, and can result in collaboration across library units; library instruction, technical services, digital library production, etc., and with authors. The Open **SUNY** Textbook project, which is publishing 15 open textbooks in the fall of 2013, demonstrates the value of library publishing services and the role of editor. Working with authors to develop high-quality learning resources that reduces the cost of colleges and universities provides a library solution to a major challenge for students and higher education.

Your book is a perfect example of what you are advocating: a cooperative, open access research tool published by your libraries. Could you tell us how you came to write and create this book?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: This project was a logical next step for libraries; various reports and articles pointed to the need to collect library publishing stories, and we thought it critical to gather those stories. However, the background of the story owes a debt of gratitude to **Kathy Miller**, the Executive Director at **Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC)**. **Kathy** has heard us talking about library publishing services and after hearing a presentation about publishing by **Mike Furlough**, Associate Dean for Research & Scholarly Communications at **Penn State University Libraries**, held at **SUNY**

Geneseo on August 2012, **Kathy** approached **SUNY Geneseo** and **Monroe County Library Services** about an incubator project. **Kathy** asked what could we do with some innovation seed money? From there, the ideas advanced forward rather quickly and collaboratively. Libraries needed to gather use cases, strategies, and best practices — a best practice toolkit, that was what was needed. From previous experience with the **IDS Project** (<http://idsproject.org/>), a NY library resource sharing cooperative administered by **SUNY Geneseo**, we knew that toolkits serve as a great way to share transformational documentation.

First, a team of **SUNY Geneseo** and **MCLS** folks developed a formal project proposal to send to **RRLC** which was later approved. Next, in January 2013, we hired a Researcher and Editor for the project, and thankfully, that was **Allison Brown**. From there, we moved to the call for authors that was tailored to two cultures; public and academic libraries. We sent a call for authors or survey late January 2013, and we also invited participation from public and academic libraries known for their work in this area. By July 31, 2013, the *Library Publishing Toolkit* was published, and we are very pleased with the results. Exhausted from a high-speed, eight-month publishing project, the **SUNY Geneseo** and **MCLS** team cited in the acknowledgements collaborated very effectively on the publishing tasks from design, drafting, review, to proofing the Toolkit.

Your book contains over thirty separate articles that cover everything from public library writing programs to academic journal publishing to multimedia self publishing in libraries. How did you find your contributors?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: We sent out a “call for authors or survey” to about 20 listservs and posted to various blogs, reaching out to communities in collection development, college libraries, scholarly communications, public libraries, digital libraries, programmers, regional and international groups. We also sent emails directly to institutions or people known for their work in the area of library publishing.

What kind of cooperation is in place amongst libraries that are publishing?

The last section of the *Library Publishing Toolkit* has three articles that describe cooperation, specifically among Digital Library of the Caribbean, Public Knowledge Project, and Library Publishing Coalition. We see easier adoption and more scale to library publishing if it is designed as a networked or distributed and shared service; however, many of the ideas in the Toolkit can be adopted by individual libraries or librarians. The cooperation today seems focused on defining what is library publishing, what niche market and service to develop, and what

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The *Library Publishing Toolkit* is published by **IDS Project Press** and edited by **Allison P. Brown**. The Principal Investigators are **Cyril Oberlander**, Library Director, Milne Library, **SUNY Geneseo**; and **Patricia Uttaro**, Monroe County Library System Director. The Project Supervisor is **Katherine Pitcher**, Head of Technical Services, Milne Library, **SUNY Geneseo**, and the Project Sponsor is **Kathleen Miller**, Executive Director, Rochester Regional Library Council.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9897226-0-5 (Print)
ISBN-13: 978-0-9897226-1-2 (eBook)
ISBN-13: 978-0-9897226-2-9 (EPUB)

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platform to use. The much needed cooperation is developing a strong community of practice. Currently library publishing is emerging from a variety of locations and communities: digital library, scholarly communications, special collections, and other groups.

Most libraries have built Institutional Repositories. Is it much of a step to then move onto publishing?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: Hosting digital objects is one type of publishing service that has some of the necessary skills: metadata, etc.; however, moving toward editing and creating new works is a step into the design of the work itself. Editorial workflows and services require specific tasks and assigned roles, a variety of skills including project manager, graphic design, text layout, copy editing skills or services needed for publishing. How a library manages to resource those varies widely. For example, some ask volunteer writer/readers to proof, and others hire copy editors.

How are most library publishing initiatives funded?

Patty: For the Rochester Public Library, most of our funding comes from our foundation, the Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library, and from grants.

Cyril: Libraries seem to fund library publishing by re-allocating operational funds and staff lines or hybrid duties. Libraries are likely to dedicate permanent lines to library publishing as they demonstrate success and value to their organizations.

At SUNY Geneseo, in addition to hiring an Electronic Resources and Digital Scholarship Librarian, a Publishing and Web Services Developer, and an Editor Production Manager, many librarians serve on the Scholarly Communications and Publishing Teams. As for funding new works, the Open SUNY Textbooks, for example, is funded by SUNY's Innovative Instruction Technology Grant and participating libraries.

What preservation efforts are you looking at for your electronic publishing?

Patty: All our digitization work has a workflow that involves the creation of hi-res, raw data images, plus "working" copies that staff use to create the final images and OCR files. Currently, the raw data, TIFF images are stored on DVDs which are refreshed every five years. As part of our strategic planning process, storage of this data will be examined and recommendations made for future processes.

Cyril: Our preservation strategy is evolving and depends on the series. For instance, with reprint publications, the works already have print holdings in libraries, albeit, not many — one of our criteria for digitization is rare and never been digitized. If anyone is curious how we automatically detect those rare titles, just see John Riley's previous article http://buscainc.blogspot.com/2012_10_01_archive.html on GIST GDM. Digital preservation is simple. PDF are backed up on the Amazon server and local storage, and we are also exploring Google Books in addition; however, the long-term preservation strategy remains print. Similarly, when possible, new works that start as digital are also made

into print, using print-on-demand services, and ideally picked up by libraries. So far the Toolkit has 12 holding libraries and growing. Where it gets complicated is borne digital that aren't able to be archived in print. What can we do? Drop by next year and find out how we addressed this challenge. It is likely to be related to how we manage data preservation.

How do you track usage statistics?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: Currently, we use Google Analytics and WordPress to record view and download behaviors. We make these available on the Toolkit Website; the latest press release provides extensive data and analysis of the first month since publication. Demonstrating broad interest by the library community, the Toolkit had some 1,881 unique views during its first month of publication, some 430 from outside the U.S. During the same month, 12 libraries attached their holdings to the print record in OCLC WorldCat, and we sold 52 print copies. As you can see, statistics are gathered from various sources. We are interested in working with the Public Knowledge Project to incorporate COUNTER statistics and additional statistic functionality into Open Monograph Press, the open source publishing platform we are using.

Are you making an effort to purchase more self-published and library-published works?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: SUNY Geneseo has focused collection development on patron-driven acquisitions for some time, so I wouldn't say we have a strategy or policy that limits self-published. Looking at our OCLC holdings and publisher CreateSpace, for instance, shows that we have seven titles; *Tagging along: Memories of my Grandfather James Wolcott Wadsworth, Jr.* is a title we published ourselves.

What are your relationships with DPLA, JSTOR, and Project Muse?

Cyril: None, save that we currently subscribe to JSTOR, and are very interested in how the DPLA forms content hubs, etc.

Discoverability is a key issue with self-published material. How does your expertise as librarians help this process?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: Before publication, we started with reaching out to others, as librarians often do. We sought and received some collective wisdom. We knew that securing an ISBN would be one of the important standard practices. However, the bulk of the work was getting the word out about the publication and sending copies out to readers. As librarians, we also knew the value of getting the record in OCLC with enhanced details was also key. In terms of discoverability, we also knew that usage statistics would be very important. Tracking in both WordPress and Google Analytics has been very useful because we can monitor the referrers, location, and visitors flow within the site. Using those tools, we are learning how influential blogs, twitter, and Website referrals can be to discoverability. In the months ahead, we will have to see the impact of readers and reviewers. Because we have a free online and a print-on-demand, we are probably seeing interested viewers leading to sales of the print, and at about \$8 for a 381 page book, it's a bargain.

It's useful to have both a print and a digital copy. How did you manage to produce the print version for under \$8.00?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: Print-on-demand publication is very reasonable depending on the objectives. Our goal was to make this work very affordable in print. To meet that goal, we didn't want royalties and we wanted to control production cost. Allison Brown made the print version black and white to significantly decrease the cost. In addition, we leverage all the market and distribution channels of Amazon by using CreateSpace, so we did not purchase a short-run of titles, or manage the purchase and delivery services. We are free to start on the next project. Lastly, we also set royalties at the lowest amount possible, because the *Library Publishing Toolkit* is a project funded partially by Regional Bibliographic Databases and Inter-library Resources Sharing Program funds which are administered and supported by the Rochester Regional Library Council.

For the IDS Toolkit you used Amazon's Create Space. What is the turnaround on a short print run and is it cost effective to print one copy at a time?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: Amazon's delivery is very fast. If the buyer has Amazon Prime, like Milne Library does, they can expect the book printed and at their address in about three days. While the cost of titles in medium to large orders of short runs can lower the cost of this book, it would be difficult to compete with the print-on-demand model. In fact, many university presses are adding their backlist titles to this type of distribution model, so they start a title with a short-run production, followed by print-on-demand production.

Do any of you employ the Espresso Book Machine in your publishing process? What other alternatives have you found for producing print copies?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: We do not.

We will be exploring alternatives that produce hardcovers, and for producing short children's books.

With so many options available to libraries to participate in the publishing enterprise the future looks bright for more libraries to join in creating, editing, and producing books, journals, and multimedia. Do you think that this effort will ever replace commercial publishing?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: Library publishing services is developing its niche market. We do not want to replicate university presses or commercial publishing; instead, we want to encourage a publishing model that is author, reader, academic, and public library friendly.

There was a startling prediction by Provincetown Public Press that "With major bookstores struggling to keep their doors open or turn profits, libraries will be the last brick-and-mortar outlet of literature left standing, so it's essential that they weigh in on an industry that they will play a large role in as time moves on." This will place a lot of added responsibility on libraries. Are you ready for such a role?

Cyril, Allison, Kate: Independent bookstores will likely grow in numbers. There is a pride and respect for independence in readers that continues. It is likely, however, that the shape of independent bookstores, as with libraries, continues to evolve. We are committed to connecting authors and readers, providing a dynamic learning environment, and so much more. 🐼