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Learning to Say Maybe: Building NYU's Press/ Library Collaboration

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- Scholarly marketing and discovery: listing in **UC Press** catalog, title flyers, indexing with major distribution partners, search engine optimization
- Sales and distribution of print books (order fulfillment, customer service, and accounting services)
- Peer review management
- Persistent access and preservation
- Sales and use statistics

We believe we can more fully address the needs of our constituents by bringing together all the pieces of a digital and print publishing solution, i.e., combining our respective activities into a single, coordinated publishing suite.

Although these services will appear fully integrated to our publishing partners, the **CDL** and **UC Press** will maintain separate operational structures in providing them. Our decision to preserve our distinct organizational identities behind **UCPubS** —rather than forming a joint venture — acknowledges the very real and dissimilar budgetary structures within the press and the library. **UC Press** supports itself chiefly through sales of books and journals, while the **CDL's** work is funded primarily by the **University of California's** Office of the President. As a result, **UC Press** must cover its costs for its print distribution services, whereas **eScholarship** is able to provide its digital publishing services to the **UC** scholarly community free of charge. For both organizations, the new effort leverages current systems and processes and thus requires no additional staffing in the short term. **CDL** and **UC Press** staff meet weekly to coordinate the program, and jointly present publishing solutions to **UC** academic units. We work independently, however, to provide the services requested by these new partners.

While the first iteration of the **UC Publishing Services** program will not deviate far from our current offerings, we anticipate it becoming a seedbed for innovations around new forms of peer review, conferences, social networking, digital distribution, indexing/aggregation, data sets and multimedia, and user-generated content. We believe **UCPubS** represents a real opportunity to help shape a sustainable scholarly publishing system in the service of the **University of California's** research and teaching enterprise. Together, we are better positioned to respond to the publishing needs of the university: the **CDL** is known for providing innovative publishing, discovery, and preservation services within **UC**, while **UC Press** is an established scholarly publisher with a marketing and business infrastructure that reaches well beyond the university. With **UCPubS**, we share these identities and thus extend our capacity to support new scholarship and to raise the visibility of scholarly publishing activities across the **University of California**. 🌱

Learning to Say Maybe: Building NYU's Press/Library Collaboration

by **Monica McCormick** (Program Officer for Digital Scholarly Publishing, New York University Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing) <mjm33@nyu.edu>

New York University is in the early stages of a joint program between the **NYU Press** and the **NYU Libraries**. As of this writing, the **NYU Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing** has existed for just over ten months. With no existing collaborations, but cordial relations and strong motivation, we are starting from scratch. As the first employee of this office, I report to both the library and the press, in a role designed to share the skills and perspectives of each organization with the other. Part of my work is to identify projects on which we can collaborate. This article describes those potential collaborations, which grow out of **NYU's** particular needs and capabilities. Though collaborative efforts will probably work best when they respond to each university's local conditions, I hope to illuminate here some broad issues that may be relevant elsewhere.

Developing the Vision

Over the last few years, the leadership of our libraries and press began a series of conversations about scholarly communications, together with faculty in the humanities and social sciences, and key staff in Information Technology Services. The participants realized that these organizations had overlapping but not identical missions, distinct skills, and very different business models. They shared a set of concerns about providing new services in response to technology-driven changes in scholarly practices and the university's developing global mission, but had no existing means to address them together. The nascent vision at **NYU** was articulated in "University Publishing in a Digital Age" (Ithaca, 2007): "... a renewed commitment to publishing in its broadest sense can enable universities to more fully realize the potential global impact of their academic programs."

Although the **Press** reports to the Dean of Libraries, there had been no joint projects beyond a few books published from particular library collections. Both partners realized that they could benefit from the other's expertise, but neither could spare existing staff to coordinate and lead new efforts. Nor was there a person to take active responsibility for developing and managing such a new program. The Provost's Office at **NYU** provided funding for a single position, reporting jointly to the library and to the press — Program Officer for Digital Scholarly Publishing. The position was created to serve these purposes:

- To bring publishing knowledge and experience into the library, responding to faculty publishing needs in partnership

with the staff engaged in digital services and projects, and in consultation with collections and reference librarians.

- To bring the library's experience with digital content (licensing, usability, repository services, etc.) to the press, to support the transition from print books to more hybrid products.
- Most broadly, to contribute to the development of a digital publishing program that will enable the sustainable online dissemination of **NYU**-supported scholarship.

I arrived in the job with experience in publishing and libraries (a dozen years as acquiring editor at a university press, an **MSLS**, and a relatively brief stint in another library digital publishing venture). My role is to bridge the two organizations, with their different cultures, business models, and modes of operation. The digital publishing program will rely on both partner organizations, along with Information Technology Systems, but there is so far no clearly defined structure for joint activities. The first tasks, therefore, have been to (1) assess our skills, needs, and opportunities; (2) look for projects that will create operational relationships across the collaborating departments; (3) establish a basic set of processes for the services we hope to provide; and (4) gather information from campus departments, centers, and institutes to develop a sharper vision of the program needs.

The Partners

NYU Press is a mid-sized university press, over ninety years old, which publishes about one hundred books per year. The list covers relatively few fields: American history, sociology, law, politics, criminology, cultural studies and media studies, religion, psychology, and anthropology. As most effective publishers do, we focus on our areas of strength, so are simply unable to consider for formal book publication the extraordinarily diverse scholarship produced by the university's faculty that falls outside of these fields.

Notably, **NYU Press** is near the top of the **Association of American University Presses** in the category of titles published per FTE. That is, our staff is extraordinarily efficient and fully engaged in keeping the organization running. This leaves little room to experiment with the workflow, product mix, or title output. We publish no journals, so there is little in-house experience in the transition from print to digital products. Nevertheless, the press is forward-looking and eager to develop our digital capabilities. We have started with the basics: our books are available in **Google Book Search** and **Amazon's** search-inside program, we license our titles through eBook vendors

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(eLibrary, NetLibrary, ACLS Humanities E-Book, Kindle, etc.), and have improved our Website and digital asset management. We are beginning to explore the costs and opportunities of primarily digital products.

NYU Libraries serves the largest private university in the United States (50,000 students, 16,000 faculty and staff) with a fast-growing collection of four million volumes, five million microforms, 500,000 government documents, 80,000 sound and video recordings, and a wide range of electronic resources.

NYU has been active in digital library developments, with an emphasis on video and Web preservation. We have been a partner in two **National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP)** grants, one to preserve born-digital public television and the other on tools for archiving Websites. We are co-developers of the **Archivists' Toolkit**, an open-source data-management system for archives, and are working with the **Institute for the Future of the Book** on tools to support networked scholarly communities. Other projects include digital collections of music, images, and rare books. Our **Digital Studio** provides advice and support to faculty and students for creating, converting, and using digital media in research and teaching. NYU opened the **Faculty Digital Archive**, a **DSpace** repository, in 2007. We have done relatively little work on digital texts, so the digital publishing program will help to develop those skills.

An important third partner in these efforts is the university's **Information Technology Services (ITS)**, particularly the **Faculty Technology Services (FTS)** team, who are integral to the **Digital Library**, **Digital Studio** and repository services. These are complex relationships, with teams staffed from the library and ITS, and leaders who report both to the university CITO and to the Dean of Libraries. The overlapping and intersecting teams are challenging to display on an organization chart, but bring together the range of knowledge and skills needed to effectively provide new services. The complexity demonstrates a level of comfort with ambiguous roles across organizational boundaries, a useful model for the digital publishing program.

Challenges of Collaboration

An underlying goal of the digital publishing effort is to bring the press into a closer relationship with the university at large, by finding ways to share our publishing expertise more widely. This may be through new product areas or partnerships for the press, as a general consulting and planning service, or both. With the constraints on staff time and the lack of substantial investment capital, we will have to plan carefully to ensure these efforts' sustainability. Similarly, digital publishing services will create new opportunities for the libraries and our technology partners to support the university's mission. NYU has launched a plan for a new campus in Abu Dhabi, which the

university describes as "an effort to develop a new paradigm for the university as a dynamic global network." Leaders of this effort specify the need for "a robust network for shared access to electronic resources and for joint classroom and research activity" (<http://nyuad.nyu.edu/about/message.vice.chancellor.html>). The dissemination of NYU-supported research and teaching on the Web will require strong infrastructure, of which the digital publishing program should be a key component.

As we seek potential collaborations, we are beginning with small projects that can not only establish working relationships but also build capabilities, test assumptions, and shape priorities to guide our transition to services. Among my first requirements has been to get acquainted with relevant staff of the collaborating services, to develop an understanding of each group's priorities, technical capabilities, and workflows. This has illuminated issues that will influence the collaboration. Bringing together the cost-recovery approach of the press with the project- and service-oriented culture of the libraries and ITS reveals distinct approaches to selecting projects.

On the one hand, book publishers have a well-oiled process for deciding what to publish. The perpetual consideration of new manuscripts requires the criteria for acceptance to be clearly understood and articulated as a balance among a work's topic, scholarly value, market expectations, appropriateness for list, and its literal size and scope. Once accepted, projects follow a similarly well-marked path to publication, with reasonably predictable costs. These processes go smoothly in part because they are not often changed. As a result, scholarly publishers may appear intransigent or rigid. Their efficiencies — which are essential to their business success — come at the cost of flexibility.

On the other hand, the selection and development of library technology projects can be far more fluid, in part because libraries have no cost recovery imperative. The criteria for acceptance may include the opportunity to develop particular skills, create new tools, or provide new access to important collections, and the availability of a grant. By contrast, a publisher's most powerful drivers for choosing books — projected market, the subject's fit with the publisher's list, author credentials and standing — are generally not criteria for a digital library project. Digital libraries are able to experiment with new technology; their role is to innovate, often enabled by injections of new funding or grants. As a result, digital library production processes can vary widely, with unpredictable costs and investment of staff time. Their flexibility may come at the cost of efficiency.

One of the first projects we considered brought these differences to the surface. To the library staff, it was a well-funded project that would allow us to develop skills and tools for managing online texts. For the press staff, it addressed a topic that had little fit with the list and a rather small potential audience. As we discussed the diverging responses, I ventured that we were witnessing what seems to me, with a foot in both camps, a significant

library/press distinction. Libraries are service organizations whose funding comes in part from their success in anticipating needs — they tend to say yes. Publishers, working to break even in a highly competitive business, evaluating many potential projects, and with quantifiable limits on their productivity, tend to say no. Both parties are responding logically to their institutional and business realities. **Steve Maikowski**, the press director, considered this and said, "I guess we'll both have to learn to say maybe."

Selecting First Projects

In that spirit, we are embarking on our first efforts. The approach is to explore institutional needs, and seek out projects requiring services that are likely to be applicable elsewhere. We also want to start with fairly simple tasks that can build a shared success, identifying modular processes from which we may develop more complex services. I hope to unite the library and IT capacity for innovation with the press's ability to develop repeatable processes with predictable costs, so that we can build from small projects to sustainable services.

For example, both press and library have small book-digitization projects underway. The press is scanning a few hundred backlist books that lack digital files, for use with our online discovery partners (**Google**, **Amazon**) and eBook vendors. We are willing to make some of these available via open access, to evaluate the impact on sales and access. The library has a grant-funded effort to digitize selected books from two of our libraries (fine arts and math). These efforts are small-scale (fewer than 1000 volumes total) but have spurred us to refine our criteria for the preservation repository, learn more about text formats, and investigate the alternatives for an eBook delivery platform which could support a whole range of content in the future. We will also use the press project as a starting point for ingesting copies of every digital book file in the preservation repository, a long-deferred goal. These are basic efforts, but as we develop them thoughtfully we stand to learn a great deal.

In another case, the research institute of the Abu Dhabi campus has approached us to help them develop a hybrid print and digital imprint for the scholarship that they sponsor. This may include conference proceedings, lectures, translations, and potentially books and journals. We are working (with staff from the press) to help them elaborate their vision of the publication program. Will it include peer-reviewed scholarship as well as more ephemeral work? What will be the relationship between print and digital products? What role might the press play? At the same time, we are building (with staff in the library and ITS) the infrastructure they will need for digital publications. This is being done in combination with other institutes and centers that want to publish e-journals and disseminate conference proceedings. We are evaluating tools for these purposes that may be deployed at our New York campus as well as for content expected from Abu Dhabi. Our strategy focuses on opportunities that address the university's emerg-

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ing priorities, which may bring new funding, while bearing in mind the existing needs of the university for which solutions are still needed. So, for example, the long-expressed wish to efficiently disseminate conference proceedings may be met with services developed for the new global network university.

Conclusion

The process at NYU may not mirror that at other institutions, but the first months of our press/library collaboration support analyses of the challenges described in *SPARC's University-based Publishing Partnerships: A Guide to Critical Issues*. We had an existing and complex working relationship between the digital library and IT. With the creation of the **Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing**, the press has been brought into that relationship. We have agreed to align, as appropriate, the partners' distinct skills with our shared mission to support the university with new networked research and publishing services.

At the outset, we have found that governance and administration (in the basic sense of selecting and staffing projects) can be challenging, even with a shared vision of the ultimate service. At this early stage, we are working within existing management structures, with key leaders from the library, press, and IT division setting priorities and assigning personnel, based on information that I gather with collaborating staffs, and from our engagement with faculty and university administrators. As we complete and assess our early projects, we will learn what works and what does not, what tools and processes our existing staff can support, and develop a shared understanding of each partner organization's capabilities. The process will help us to identify our strengths, and, as we continually assess the need for new services, offer us the opportunity to create new institutional alliances, and develop a digital scholarly publishing program aligned with NYU's particular strengths and global vision. 🌱

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one of the **Charleston Conference mentors** — **Susan Campbell** (Director, **York College Library**, York, Pennsylvania). Her paper is called "**The New 3 Rs: Revolution, Reorganization and Renovation**." In it **Susan** explains how **Schmidt Library** managed a reorganization that eliminated 13 clerical positions and created 11 new full-time and 2 new part-time positions as well as performing renovations in three and a half months with \$3.5 million. There is much more useful material in this book. Check it out.

<http://www.lu.com>

<http://www.against-the-grain.com/rumors>

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The Coefficient Partnership: Project Euclid, Cornell University Library and Duke University Press

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How can — or should — libraries and publishers, including university presses, work productively together? This is not an idle question now that academic libraries have sought to offer publishing services to their institutional communities. We propose to answer this question by citing one example of a successful library-press collaboration: **Project Euclid**. While **Euclid** does not represent the only viable partnership model available to libraries and presses, it does address some critical issues, such as the proper identification of each partner's capabilities and responsibilities and the need to develop an appropriate business model and maintain good financial hygiene.

In the domain of mathematics where **Euclid** operates, the numbers still astound: eight hundred and forty mathematics journals in circulation worldwide, nearly half now available from commercial publishers. The rest comprise an exceedingly fragile long tail of not-so-profitable but still independent journals. Meanwhile nearly two hundred new or renovated math journals have come onto the market during the last ten years. Most are small but all hope for a long and inglorious life, giving off a weak signal in the increasingly noisy ambit of cyberspace.

Ten years ago the **Cornell University Library**, with the encouragement of the university's department of mathematics and statistics, undertook an initiative designed to provide these small, independent journals with a preferential publishing option. The majority of noncommercial journals in mathematics had yet to establish a footprint on the Internet by 2000. By early in the decade, however, academic libraries were beginning to favor electronic form and Internet delivery over paper editions for most STM serials. Could the library be an active agent in this transition by offering small publishers of scholarly journals a model, a platform, and a cost structure that would encourage them to shift their attention and investment from print to electronic?

The **Cornell Library** has a well-established track record in the conversion of scholarly material to digital form, codification of metadata standards, development of digital library technologies, and preservation of paper and digital assets. These strengths, along with its mandate to expedite access to scholarly resources at the point and place of need, made the library the primary catalyst for a project that would transform it from a consumer to a producer.

Nine years ago the library was awarded a generous grant from the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** for the development of an online publishing service designed to support the transition of small, non-commercial mathematics journals from paper to digital distribution. The goal of **Project Euclid** was to ensure that the long tail of mathematics scholarship would endure. An academic library, long the steward of scholarly discourse, would, in effect, provide a safe harbor to publishers it was often not able to support through subscriptions.

Duke University Press's relationship with **Project Euclid** reaches back to the initiative's blueprint phase. **Duke** shared **Cornell's** concern about the long-term viability of non-commercial journals in mathematics. **Rick Johnson**, then executive director of **SPARC**, brokered the connection. Over a two-year period beginning in mid-2000 **Duke** supported contract negotiations, T_EX consulting, and marketing. Beginning in early 2003 the library assumed responsibility for all strategic and operational functions; in May of that year **Euclid** launched with nineteen journals.

Over the next three years **Project Euclid** spent down its initial funding and by late 2005 had achieved a measure of financial stability: the number of partner journals had more than doubled, to forty-four; it had captured one hundred five institutional subscriptions; and it closed the fiscal year cash positive. But by 2006, it had become clear that its status as a redoubt was under stress. Gross revenues from subscriptions were increasing at significant rates but so were operating expenses and revenue sharing allocations to the participating publishers. Net income at the close of the fiscal year provided **Euclid** with a modest surplus but not nearly enough to capitalize growth and remain competitive.

On its own **Cornell** found that it needed to replicate the operating structure of a small publishing house. **Project Euclid's** success was dependent on the library developing traditional but cost-efficient publishing functions — acquisition, production, design, marketing and order fulfillment. It was, in effect, deploying and operationalizing a revenue-capture model within a cost-focused culture. **Euclid** needed to borrow from the library, leveraging its brand and its network, but it also needed to leave behind its organizational design and modus operandi.

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