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

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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. 🦃

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

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

by **Terry Ehling** (Director, Center for Innovative Publishing, Cornell University Library) <ehling@cornell.edu>

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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$_E$X 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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HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: More risk taking. Innovative and exciting partnerships; sure, some won't work out over the long term, but we can't let that keep us from trying. 🐾

The number of functions **Project Euclid** had to manage in order to develop into a sustainable enterprise surprised the project's management. **Euclid's** entrepreneurial status fostered interdependence with disparate units within the library and with an ever more complex supply chain of service providers outside the university. **Project Euclid** was able to weather the transition from the incubator to the marketplace by outsourcing its marketing program and repurposing library personnel hired and trained for more conventional job functions, e.g., a department accountant also assumed responsibility for subscription order fulfillment. It was clear that a long-term strategy for **Project Euclid** needed to include a hospitable business partner who would share the library's principle goals for this venture, and be able to meet a growing desire on the part of the publishers for a deeper and more diverse portfolio of services. **Duke University Press**, publisher of the *Duke Mathematical Journal*, one of **Project Euclid's** highest profile journals, had also become one of the library's most consilient content partners. **Duke** had inaugurated a STM publishing initiative in 2004 and began to focus its acquisitions energy on building a strong collection of math journal titles. As **Euclid** and the relationship with **Duke Press** matured apace, both parties agreed to explore the benefits and consequences of entering into a formal partnership for joint management of **Project Euclid**. **Cornell** and **Duke** were shepherded through the year-long negotiation process by **SPARC**. A formal joint venture agreement was signed in March, 2008.

Duke's primary investment is in human capital; it hired a dedicated project manager and quickly incorporated **Euclid** into its marketing, financial, and order fulfillment workflows — areas where **Cornell** was incurring the greatest resource deficits. The partners agreed to divide their management responsibilities along naturally occurring lines of influence and specialization: the library would continue to support the technology infrastructure (architecture, code base, hardware, and network support) and provide archiving and preservation services. The press would manage on-ramp and off-ramp functions: finances, journal recruitment, marketing, customer relations and order fulfillment. Identifying precisely where and how to divide the responsibilities was probably the single most critical task.

While the **Cornell-Duke** partnership is barely six-months old, some ground-truth data are worth noting:

- This represents an asynchronous collaboration: While both parties were involved during the planning phase (1999-2000), **Cornell** assumed responsibility for **Euclid** prior to, through, and well after launch. When it became clear that **Cornell** needed to roll **Euclid** up, a university press, with whom we had a strong and constructive working relationship, became the obvious partner.

Most library–publisher projects have involved both entities jointly incubating, implementing and then managing the initiative. But a "relay" model, where one party provides early-stage development and then the other assumes operational responsibility for a more mature product or service, might also be politically and economically desirable.

- While this library-press partnership was specific to one enterprise-scale project, collateral benefits extending beyond **Project Eucli**d began to accrue early in the relationship. Through the library the press was able to establish a beachhead at **Cornell**, providing it with an ever-open window onto the local publishing environment and resulting in several new journal acquisitions in non-STM areas, notably *New German Critique* and the *Philosophical Review*.

- **Cornell** and **Duke** also believe that the partnership they choreographed for **Euclid** will help define the scope and characteristics of future collaborations. If the alliance is perceived as an investment, by both parties, then it should also be scalable. While collaboration between a library and a press at the same institution seems logistically obvious and desirable, joint efforts involving libraries and presses that do not share the same genetic material can produce products and services that play to the unique strengths of each institution.

It is worth underscoring the unique nature of the relationship between **Cornell Library** and **Duke Press** that ultimately transpired around **Project Euclid**. **Euclid**, unlike other more indigenous library-press collaborations, was designed from the ground up to be an online publishing service for a heterogeneous collection of publishers with no specific or even symbolic relationship to either **Cornell** or **Duke**. **Project Euclid** is a domain-specific online publishing service that competes directly with a variety of commercial-grade

and NFP service providers. It also competes indirectly with commercial publishers — were an independent journal, already participating in **Project Euclid**, to be acquired by, say, **Springer Science+Business Media**, it would terminate its agreement with **Euclid**. **Euclid** was, and still is, a distinctly market-facing operation, and that market is two-sided: we must recruit journals from a broad playing field and then sell those aggregated journals to academic and corporate libraries.

While **Cornell** and **Duke** hope to be able to extrapolate a richer and more complex relationship from their shared responsibility for **Project Euclid**, we don't expect the model for future collaborations to look or feel the same as this first-generation effort.

This particular joint venture also raises issues relevant to the objectives of these reformative collaborations for organizations beyond **Cornell** and **Duke**. The publicized library-press partnerships, some extending back fifteen years, at a dozen research institutions, have been heroic and artisanal but certainly not insurgent or transformational. The byproducts of these collaborations, to paraphrase **David Carr** of the *New York Times*, do not have an audience problem, they have a consumer problem, and the survival of these projects and programs depend on the latter not the former. Have these discrete and, by all accounts, non-disruptive projects had an impact on the status quo bias in scholarly publishing? Are libraries simply providing IT services to presses and authors, services that could more cost-effectively be supplied by third-parties? Are these, in effect, supply-side initiatives in search of a demand that isn't there?

The current docket of library-press collaborations have yet to mature into competitive publishing programs. And they must compete in the marketplace to survive. The future of library-press partnerships will not, perhaps should not, look like what we see today. Academic libraries and university presses are homesteading on a frontier now crowded with

Publishing the Long Civil Rights Movement at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

by **Sylvia Miller** (Director, the Long Civil Rights Movement Project, University of North Carolina Press) <skm@email.unc.edu>

Why Collaborate

Much has been written about the epic clash between commercial publishers and libraries over the price of serials and the resulting decreased access to journal content. The open access movement that was academia's response has certainly had significant and far-reaching consequences, and many publishers regard it negatively, placing it somewhere on a scale between a minor annoyance and a serious threat. Yet it is important to recognize that many scholarly publishers have whole departments of people — editorial, production, marketing, sales — whose careers have been built upon the relationship of the publishing house with libraries. These professionals have a detailed appreciation and understanding of the workings and the needs of libraries and often regard libraries as partners in the publication process. Formal collaboration between scholarly publishers and libraries might be seen as an extension of a relationship that already exists but needs to be explored and revised.

Librarians' and publishers' roles are changing, and the possibilities offered by the online medium have caused us all an identity crisis. We used to know how our roles fit together, and now that relationship is up for reinterpretation.

Publishers have been accustomed to creating an archivable product (usually a book or journal), which included universally understood navigational tools (a table of contents, for example, page numbers, cross-references, index) and turning it over to libraries, which made the product accessible and archived it. Now these roles overlap: many libraries expect publishers to host the digital book and provide perpetual access to it. Publishers create aggregations of content because library cataloging has not yet made federated searching possible at a level granular enough to make all the different types of published content easily and seamlessly discoverable. Publishers invest millions of dollars in digital conversion, software, retooling production workflows, staff retraining, search engines, Website design, information architects, developers, hosting, online security and access management, online subscription systems, and standardized user statistics, often without a concrete prediction of potential returns (the business equivalent of a high dive without knowing if water awaits below), only to have library customers complain that online publications are too expensive.

Meanwhile many librarians wonder whether the library will be needed in the future to provide access to scholarship. What about its role as archive, since bits and bytes are inherently so ephemeral? What about the librarian's role as guide, educator, detective, gatekeeper; will those services be automated and replaced by online portals? Are publishers' aggregated services taking away librarians' independence in choosing which publications to acquire? Will accuracy, authority, indeed truth win the battle for eyes and minds? Libraries find negotiating price and license agreements onerous and identifying duplication challenging or impossible. They conduct usability studies on their Websites to figure out why patrons are not aware of the existence or value of the e-resources that librarians have so painstakingly chosen and negotiated to license or purchase. Librarians daringly move into new territory, creating online collections, providing publishing services, and challenging the prevailing subscriber-pays model with Open Access publishing.

We all wonder where scholarly publishing is going and who will pay for it in the long term: customers, authors, scholarly societies, libraries, end-users, taxpayers, foundations, advertisers? In our collective desire for sustainability, we try hybrids of all of the foregoing in a vast, fragmented experiment. Many of us wonder whether, ultimately, libraries and scholarly publishers will survive at all and, if so, what they will look like at the turn of the next century. The institutions, publication models, and business relationships that we know will surely have morphed into something we would not recognize today.

One thing we can see clearly right now is that roles are increasingly fluid and overlapping: publishers are providing more and more library-like services while librarians are turning into publishers. Who knows where we will end up; perhaps our roles will disappear, or perhaps they will merge. We are on a journey in the same boat; we may not have a map, but we might as well gather on deck and look at the stars together, take turns at the tiller, and share ideas and skills in facing the adventure that comes to us. No one project can become a new compass, but perhaps a number of collaborations will collectively help us make some useful discoveries.

Project Beginnings

It is important to note that the foregoing description is based on my own twenty-plus years of experience in scholarly publishing and does not represent the official view of the **University of North Carolina**. However, this collaborative project grew out of a collective recognition that roles need to be reexamined and perhaps reinvented.

Initiated by **Kate Douglas Torrey**, Director of **UNC Press**, the **Publishing the Long Civil Rights Movement Project** was based on some of the principles and challenges outlined by the widely read *Ithaka Report* "University Publishing in a Digital Age" (July 26, 2007). Bringing the partners together to agree upon the narrative in the grant proposal took many months and many meetings, but everyone could see the potential synergies among the groups, ideas, and topics of common interest and lasting importance, and the potential to bring them to audiences in new ways. The support of the **UNC-Chapel Hill** Provost, **Bernadette Gray Little**, and **UNC** Vice President for Academic Affairs, **Harold Martin**, was key; ultimately, the project budget included a significant contribution from the press, the **Chapel Hill** campus, and the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**. The project plan takes seriously the strong advice of the *Ithaka Report* that principal investigators are necessary for an innovative project but not sufficient: a staff, in particular a dedicated director, was funded, by the Foundation.

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smart, noisy, large-cap technology players, notably **Google**, **Apple**, and **Amazon**, who are positioned to change the state of publishing irrevocably. How, rather then if, university libraries and publishers collaborate with these and other non-academic agents will have an impact on their collaborative publishing agendas. A press and a library dependent on local expertise and funding may not be able to sustain a viable publishing program. Inter-institutional cooperation through a network of alliances could, however, promote the development of a scalable process model and the formation of a new value chain. **Project**

Euclid represents an initial step in this direction. We need not — must not — think small. Beyond library-press collaboration lies *university publishing* — a network of institutions and other culture-first organizations that can advance scholarship by drawing collectively on their domain expertise and content stores. The current environment calls for a bolder vision and more, not less, dependency. "The way forward is paradoxically to look not ahead, but to look around."[1] 🐦

Endnotes
1. **John Seely Brown** and **Paul Duguid**, *The Social Life of Information* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Press, 2002), p. 8.