

April 1999

Robert C. Richards, Jr., Technical Services
Librarian, University of Colorado Law Library

Editor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Editor (1999) "Robert C. Richards, Jr., Technical Services Librarian, University of Colorado Law Library," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 11: Iss. 2, Article 14.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3832>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.

Profiles Encouraged

Robert C. Richards, Jr.,
M.A., M.S.L.I.S.

Technical Services Librarian,
University of Colorado Law Library
Federal Depository Library 0074-C
Fleming Law Building, Kittredge
Loop South, Campus Box 402
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0402
Telephone: (303) 492-2706,
Fax: (303) 492-2707
E-mail: rrichard@stripe.Colorado.EDU
URL: <http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~rrichard>

Born when and where: 1966, in Bridgeport, Connecticut. My parents lived one door apart from each other on the same street. They met while my mother was walking the dog after supper one night.

Current residence: Boulder, Colorado: a very beautiful place, but I must confess that I prefer Denver. Once a city mouse ...

Education: B.A. English, Yale University; M.A. Communications Studies/Film Studies, University of Iowa; M.S. Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Summary of job experience: When I graduated from library school in 1996, I found a job as a library technician at the **University of Colorado Government Publications Library** in Boulder, cataloging U.S. documents, and doing Web work. Since February of 1997, I've been **Technical Services Librarian at the University of Colorado Law Library**, where I'm in charge of acquisitions, government documents, the Web interface to our online catalog, and the technical services department's Website.

Most Recent Accomplishment: After several years of hard work, my colleague **Kathleen Kluegel** and I just had a work we co-edited published by the **Reference Division (RUSA) of ALA: Towards a New Vision of Reference: Kaleidoscopic Collections and Real Librarians, RUSA Occasional Papers, no. 23.** And I was recently appointed Chair of the **American Association of Law Libraries' Publications Committee.**

Last Book Read: **John Updike, Toward the End of Time.** Much very beautiful prose, but thoroughly revolting characters. I'm so relieved he's not one of our patrons!

Single Most Important Piece of Advice: My advisor in library school, **Beth Woodard**, assured us that we would find two skills absolutely essential in library work: time management, and the ability to type accurately while enduring sleep deprivation. How right she was (and still is)!

Mergers & Acquisitions from page 31

benefits - as I mentioned - of the superstores and the Internet outlets for selling our books. The effect, I think, has been to increase the trade aspect of our books including those that might otherwise be labeled as purely scholarly.

ATG: *Given the persistent negative reaction to increased prices of scholarly journals, could you imagine a scenario under which university presses would play a dominant role in their publication?*

JC: No. The momentum is from libraries and from university administrators. Most university presses do not know how, or can't afford, to publish cutting edge science journals. It will come in a new form - probably on the Web - and be vetted by administrators and librarians.

DS: We don't publish any journals at Ohio University Press, but it seems utterly reasonable that the universities and by extension their institutional presses should be actively involved in the publishing programs of their academic programs and attendant scholars, as in fact they are.

JF: I believe it would take decisions at the top administrative level of universities about:

1. supporting editorial offices of, or giving start-up subsidies to, journals that arise on their campuses that contract with a non-profit publisher;
2. finding a way to support scholars who submit to, and publish in, the publications of university presses;
3. devoting seed money to university presses that do not publish journals so they could build a program;
4. allowing existing journals programs at university presses to invest more heavily in acquiring existing journals or in starting new journals. This would mean money. It could also mean allowing the press to add staff and space.

ATG: *Is there a point at which the effects of consolidation might cease or reverse? Do you see a limit — a functional rather than a legally imposed limit — to the merger activity? What are the best- and worst-case scenarios for this process?*

JC: Starting a publishing company is easy. There will always be new ideas and lists. I feel that mergers are about at their limit - only a few independents left - but new imprints will pop up and be distributed by bigger houses. Big changes will be from the Web and its impact.

Who knows what is next? But books will stay. How you get them will change.

JF: The only things I can see that would affect it is change in the mindset of scholars. Most of them do not particularly care if a

journal is published by a commercial or non-profit publisher. What matters most is getting their article in the most prestigious journal in the field. Even when new journals are started, researchers tend to be standoffish in the first few years until the abstracting and indexing services begin coverage, and librarians do too.

This makes it extremely difficult for a publisher to start a new journal, and since nonprofit publishers (unless they are large societies) tend to have less of a deep pocket because of traditionally low pricing (and other reasons), they are even less able to start new publications. More and more of the new emerging areas, then, get ceded to commercial publishers which feeds the cycle.

DS: I would be surprised if there were not a natural saturation point for the availability of every published work. On the other hand, it seems to represent a new way - or the beginning of a new way - of understanding access.

KW: I also think that the area of electronic publishing offers some interesting possibilities for the university presses to create innovative publications and partnerships that are not being pursued aggressively by the large commercial publishers. In particular, university presses might put new efforts into creating collaborative projects with the libraries and faculty on their campuses, and work with their librarians as partners in developing projects that can fill a smaller, yet important, market need. It's not that the commercial publishers don't work with these groups as well, but it is sometimes easier to work quickly and creatively with the partners on one's own campus, as relationships have developed already, making collaboration easier.

I agree with Janet that universities could play an important role by supporting their presses in all of the ways she mentions. However, I also think that university presses must take a very aggressive and creative stance in these fields, and begin to think about how they can fill niches in the professional, scholarly, and reference markets that have, for various reasons, been ignored by the commercial publishers. By working closely with faculty in the fields in which they publish, it may be possible to determine where a field is going at an early stage, and to move into that area quickly.

In general, it is a time for the non-commercial publishing world to rethink what it is that we do best, and how we can take advantage of these strengths in a challenging environment. We can never duplicate the size and financial resources available to the newly-merged commercial entities, but we can sometimes use our smaller size and closer proximity to both our authors (faculty) and market (libraries) to our advantage if we think about our operations in new ways. 