December 2011

Publisher Profile: UC Press

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

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

Recommended Citation

(2011) "Publisher Profile: UC Press," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 23: Iss. 6, Article 26.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6046>

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.

arly communication cycle, university presses have a key role in creating a sustainable system, especially in a world where higher education continues to be undervalued and underfunded. The recent success of journals such as PLOS may pave the way in STEM disciplines (although it is not really clear whether the author-pays model is reducing the cost or simply shifting it), but for those of us committed to also supporting the humanities and social sciences the path is less clear. For university presses, greater demands for OA and the desire to link articles and books to other objects — data sets, audio, visual, etc. — provide opportunities for us to partner with our libraries. Many of us have done so with increasing success. **UC Press** has an extensive partnership with the **California Digital Library** for the delivery of hundreds of backlist titles in OA format, and we're now starting to explore ways in which we can collaborate to support the new forms of publication I mentioned above.

ATG: *Some people are talking about the idea of an enhanced eBook where the text is complimented by a variety of multimedia offerings. Is there a place for enhanced eBooks in a university press's catalog?*

AM: Absolutely. Although the market for enhanced eBooks is currently a relatively small part of this rapidly growing market, we're experimenting with a few different models at **UC Press** so that we are ready as and when these start to take off. One great example is our enhanced digital version of the 2nd edition of *The Jepson Manual* — the most authoritative and comprehensive identification guide devoted to California plants. This 1,600 page behemoth is "the plant bible of California" — for both for expert and amateur alike. Extensive linking and eBook-friendly illustrations will make it easier for users to learn about plant characteristics and identify all the plants of California, all in a much more field-portable package than the printed book. Using readily available eBook readers, field researchers, students, and amateurs will be able to click on links allowing rapid navigation through keys to families, genera, species, and subspecies or varieties.

ATG: *In another interview you mentioned that the University of California Press would be developing two pilot "born-digital" products. What do you mean by born digital? What will these products be like?*

AM: I'm talking about products that are not simply online versions of previous print products — those that could not have existed in a print world. In many cases, these will draw on the deep and rich content archive we have at **UC Press**, but will augment this material with new content and tools. One example about which we've been thinking is the *California Natural History Guides*. We own an incredible wealth of content in this area that is currently "locked up" in set-format print books. There are many ways in which

against the grain
publisher profile

University of California Press

2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94704-1012 USA
Phone: (510) 643-7127
Websites: www.ucpress.edu
www.ucpressjournals.com

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

AFFILIATED COMPANIES: n/a University of California Press Foundation

OFFICERS: **Alison Mudditt** (Director); **Rebecca Simon** (Director, Journals & Digital Publishing and Associate Director); **Anna Weidman** (CFO and Assistant Director); **Erich van Rijn** (Director, Publishing Operations and Assistant Director)

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS: Association of American University Presses, Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division/AAP, Society of Scholarly Publishers.

KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: Scholarly books, course books, trade books, reference materials, scholarly journals and magazines, digital products across the arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Faculty, students, professionals, academic and public libraries, interested general readers.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 105

NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 180

NUMBER OF JOURNALS PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 37

TOTAL NUMBER OF BOOKS ON YOUR BACKLIST (IN PRINT): 4,800

TOTAL NUMBER OF JOURNALS CURRENTLY PUBLISHED: 37

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY/PUBLISHING PROGRAM: Founded in 1893, **University of California Press** is one of the most distinguished scholarly publishers and the major nonprofit press on the West Coast. Publishing a world-class list of books, journals, and digital publications across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, **UC Press** advances its core mission by giving voice and impact to important ideas and informing meaningful debate.

Publishing fields include art, music, cinema and media studies, classics, anthropology, sociology, history, religious studies, biological and environmental sciences, food and agriculture, wine and viticulture, public health, and California and the West.

With a forward-looking and risk-taking perspective, **UC Press's** publishing program has brought attention to critical social issues and fostered emerging interdisciplinary fields including women's studies, food studies, and California studies. 🌱

this content could be updated, repackaged, and augmented to create a much more flexible and interactive user experience in digital form.

ATG: *With the market for scholarly books continuing to shrink, what can be done to spur growth or at least stop the shrinkage? Are there any innovative outlets that university presses can take advantage of for their eBooks that will help create new revenue streams? Does print play any role in the future of a university press?*

AM: The shrinking market for scholarly monographs was initially driven by skyrocketing serials pricing, which has then been exacerbated by the dramatic technological and cultural shifts as information has moved to an online, decentralized, and abundant environment. In this world, the largely static, often print-only, scholarly monograph seems both isolated and out-of-date. While print is undeniably in decline, I think it will always

have a role at **UC Press**. Like many others, I envisage a future in which the electronic version becomes the standard, and print becomes a less frequently produced luxury item. There will always be those of us who want and are prepared to pay a premium for a beautifully crafted print book — such as **Rebecca Solnit's** *Infinite City*, in my view one of the most original and beautiful books **UC Press** has published — but the transition to a digital-first world is inevitable.

There is much to be optimistic about in this brave new world. The new eBook collaborations among university presses — such as **Books@JSTOR**, **University Press Scholarship Online** through **OUP** and **Project MUSE** — provide a great opportunity for presses and their readers, as well as for our library customers. **UC Press** is partnering with **OUP** to launch **California Scholarship Online**

continued on page 56