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## University Press eBook Platforms: A Brief Overview

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in reference resources like the **Routledge Performance Archive**. The same is true for **SAGE**, who includes 72 videos as part of their multimedia reference collection. However, none of the surveyed publishers appear to have any interactive, enhanced monographs available at this time.

While **SAGE** does not have interactive monographs available, the company is actively producing interactive textbooks. These enhanced textbooks include “integrated links to engaging video and audio, as well as access to complete academic and professional articles, all from the same pages found in the printed text.” Users also have access to study tools such as highlighting, bookmarking, note-taking, and more. According a November 2012 post on the **SAGE Connection** blog, the eBook version can be used in conjunction with the traditional textbook (students get access to the eBook for no additional cost with purchase of a new print book), or the interactive eBook can be purchased on its own at a discounted price. Students have access to the eBook for six months after registration. Textbooks that have been converted to this interactive format include titles such as *Leadership*, *Social Problems*, and *The Communication Age*. (A demo of interactive features in *The Communication Age* can be seen at <http://www.sagepub.com/edwards/demo/>. In addition to the text and images from the textbook, the demo chapter includes links to audio and video files, as well as journal articles.)

The incorporation of interactive content into monographic eBooks will present a unique set of challenges, both for libraries and publishers. For example, who is responsible for the creation and incorporation of the interactive content: the author of the book, the publisher, a third party? In the case of **JoVE**, **JoVE’s** in-house production team produces almost all of the videos on the **JoVE** site. The production process includes script writing, filming, editing, animation, and voice over work. The entire process takes approximately seven months, a significant investment of time and manpower.

In terms of interactive content in eBooks, challenges and questions include issues of file format, compatibility, accessibility, and cost. In what file format should the content be? Could libraries select a preferred format? Will additional software be required to make interactive content viewable to and usable by users? How do we ensure compatibility of the interactive content across the wide variety of eBook devices on the market? How should eBooks with interactive content be priced compared to print books or even unenhanced eBooks? What kind of DRM might be required by the publisher as a result of the addition of the interactive content?

It remains to be seen how and at what pace commercial publishers like **SAGE** might move forward with the creating of enhanced monographs. While the issues outlined above are not insurmountable, they may certainly inhibit a commercial publisher’s ability to move forward with the production of eBooks with interactive content, especially at the rate at which libraries and patrons might demand them.

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# University Press eBook Platforms: A Brief Overview

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## Introduction

As consumer demand for eBooks has grown, so too has the demand for scholarly books (monographs) in electronic format. Libraries are looking to purchase eBooks to save shelf space and to better serve patrons who prefer to read books on their computers or eBook readers. While most university press book revenue still comes from print books, publishers at major university presses are planning for the future by actively moving into the eBook space. This is a brave new world of scholarly books online, and current eBooks platforms vary significantly. In this article, I will be examining several of the leading university press eBook platforms, including “the big three” — **Johns Hopkins’ Project MUSE**, **Oxford’s University Press Scholarship Online (UPSO)**, and **JSTOR** — as well as **BiblioVault**, **Cambridge Books Online**, **ebrary**, and the **eDuke Books Scholarly Collection**.

Online eBook platforms are facing challenges very similar to those faced by their journal colleagues five to ten years ago. Most of the journal publishers with whom I work at **Stanford University’s HighWire Press** have successfully transitioned their business from a 1990s print model to a predominantly electronic model. Think of the modern journal Website as something akin to the modern car: because all automobile manufacturers now use wind-tunnel testing, most cars on the road today have the same aerodynamic profile. Online journal users know what they want (for example, PDFs of articles, hyperlinked

references, and article-level usage statistics), and thus journal sites are looking very similar these days. Books, on the other hand, have just begun their online evolution, and their features and functionality have not yet been standardized to allow for a consistent user experience from book to book, site to site, and platform to platform. It will be exciting to watch how these eBook platforms evolve over the next several years.

## Project MUSE — <http://muse.jhu.edu>

**Johns Hopkins University Press** founded **Project MUSE** in 1995 as a sales and hosting consortium for university press journals, particularly focusing on the social sciences and humanities. **MUSE** launched books from the **University Press Content Consortia (UPCC)** in 2012. **Project MUSE** now hosts over 20,000 books on behalf of over 90 publishers participating in the **UPCC**.

Books first entered the picture when **MUSE** partnered with the **University Press eBook Consortium (UPEc)** in 2009 to explore the feasibility of a university press-based eBook initiative. **UPEc** received funding from the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** to survey the needs of the library community and, based on the results of that survey, to develop and test a business model. **Project MUSE** was selected in 2011 to implement **UPEc’s** plan for a transformative and sustainable product offering digital versions of book-length works from many distinguished scholarly presses. As a result, **UPCC Book Collections on Project MUSE** launched in January 2012.<sup>1</sup>



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**Project MUSE** as an aggregator is particularly attractive to university presses publishing books in the humanities and social sciences because of the already-established critical mass in those disciplines, and as a result it has a very compelling collection package for selling to libraries. A benefit of the **MUSE** platform to both university press publisher partners and library buyers (and their end users) is a fully integrated search across both books and journals. The established and easily discoverable journal content helps drive usage of the book content, and vice versa.

**Project MUSE** is currently hosted in-house by **Johns Hopkins University Press**. The platform has a clean design that is appealing to end users. Book content is available as full-text PDF downloads without digital rights management and is available to subscribing institutions via Shibboleth and IP recognition. In April 2013, **Johns Hopkins University Press** announced plans to move the hosting of **Project MUSE** to **HighWire Press** in late 2014.<sup>2</sup>

### University Press Scholarship Online

<http://www.universitypressscholarship.com/>

**Oxford University Press (OUP)** is the owner and primary sales driver behind **UPSO**, **Oxford's** academic monograph platform. **UPSO** hosts nearly 14,000 eBooks within 28 different subject areas on behalf of **OUP** and 13 other major university presses. While **Project MUSE** is the largest aggregator of university press eBook content, **Oxford** was the first to put academic books online, via **Oxford Scholarship Online**, in 2003.<sup>3</sup> **OUP** looked closely at its successful journals program and determined that an XML workflow would be used. While other book programs focus on PDFs, **UPSO** has concentrated on a full-text XML workflow, which allows richer linking via references (from in-line references as well as end notes) and full-text search.

**UPSO** is powered by **PubFactory**. Search is across **UPSO** or specific to a publisher, but is limited to eBook content at the book and chapter level, without integrated journal content. Many familiar journal features, such as download to citation management tools, are available. The design is clean and looks attractive on large monitors, laptops, and tablets alike.

**UPSO's** key value proposition for university press publishers is the ability to tap into **OUP's** massive global sales network. This partnership gives **OUP** more content to sell and offers partner university presses the ability to extend the reach of their content via **OUP's** well-developed international channels. The appeal for libraries is the high quality of the content and the delivery of content with robust features that are appealing to patrons with experience navigating online literature.

**JSTOR** — <http://books.jstor.org/>

**JSTOR** is a digital library consisting of over 1500 journals that was originally founded in 1995 with a grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. **JSTOR** merged with **ITHAKA** in 2009, creating a larger not-for-profit organization for journal hosting (**JSTOR**), journal archiving (**Portico**), and research and consulting (**ITHAKA S+R**). **JSTOR Books** was announced in 2011 and now includes more than 15,000 eBooks on behalf of 30 university presses.<sup>4</sup>

**JSTOR Books** is built on Atypion technology and features integrated searching between book and journal content. The search results default to content the reader is authorized to access, but search can be modified to include all content hosted by **JSTOR**. **JSTOR Books** is a natural option for university press publishers using **JSTOR** for journal hosting and sales. The **JSTOR** sales network is well established. Pricing is set by the publishers and tiered according to **JSTOR's** classifications.

**JSTOR Books** offer librarians flexibility in the manner in which content is purchased. Institutions can purchase by collection or by individual title, and volume discounts are available. Books may be purchased under either a single-user or multi-user model. The single-user model does not allow concurrent use and limits download quantities, while the multi-user model allows concurrent use and unlimited downloads. **JSTOR** indicates that a demand-driven acquisition model is also available.<sup>5</sup>

### University Publishing Online

<http://universitypublishingonline.org/>

Now that I've covered "the big three" platforms, let's take a look at what some other major university presses are doing about eBooks. **Cambridge University Press**, like **OUP**, is one of the oldest and most prestigious university press publishers. Also like **OUP**, **Cambridge University Press** has joined forces with other university presses (nine, including the **University of Edinburgh Press** and **Liverpool University Press**) to launch a consortium called **University Publishing Online**.

Of course, the lynchpin of the **University Publishing Online** portfolio is **Cambridge University Press. Cambridge Books Online** (<http://ebooks.cambridge.org/>) alone hosts 20,000 eBooks. Both **Cambridge Books Online** and **Cambridge Journals Online** are hosted by **Cambridge University Press** in-house. Search is integrated, in that a search can return both book and journal results, at the chapter and article levels, respectively. However, if the user chooses to follow a journals result, he or she is asked to navigate through to **Cambridge Journals Online**.

**BiblioVault** — <http://www.bibliovault.org/>

The largest university press in the United States is the **University of Chicago Press**.<sup>6</sup> In 2001, the **University of Chicago Press** launched **BiblioVault** as a repository for book files and metadata for scholarly publishers. The service has since grown to support more than 90 university presses and not-for-profit publishers by storing files and metadata on over 30,000 books. Unlike the other platforms discussed above, **BiblioVault** is not intended to be an eBook platform for end-readers. It is intended to provide a number of services to the publishers of eBooks, including the fulfillment of digital files from purchases made from a publisher's Website shopping cart.<sup>7</sup>

Searching on **BiblioVault** returns information about the book and conveniently provides links to sites where a user may access or purchase the book. As an example, a listing might return a link to purchase the book from the publisher's Website as well as links to purchase eBook versions for Amazon Kindle, Apple iBook, Barnes & Noble Nook, and Kobo. There are no links for licensing institutional access.

### eDuke Books Scholarly Collection

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/Libraries/edukebooks>

**Duke University Press** has a backlist of over 1,500 books and publishes 100 new books per year, all of which are included in the **eDuke Books Scholarly Collection**. **Duke** is currently in the process of moving its eBooks from the **ebrary** platform to **HighWire**. One goal of the transition is to provide **Duke's** institutional customers and end-users with seamless integration between books and journals (**Duke** journals are already hosted by **HighWire** at <http://dukejournals.org/>). A video preview of the new site can be found on YouTube, here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOnA5LwhpKQ&feature=share&list=UUsIzn-VkvENwJmpWrhAfGyEw>.

### Exclusivity, or Lack Thereof

University presses are notorious for having divisions for books and journals that are challenged to work together effectively. This political office environment is reflected in the digital realm, often with books and journals on different platforms and sold under very different business models. Usually, journals will have one "official" site hosting the version of record. This is not at all the case for books.

For university presses (and all book publishers), the eBook hosting platform is often viewed as a sales channel. As a result, a book—unlike a journal—can be hosted on a number of different platforms. A good example is a book called *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction*, by **Arved Ashby** (University of California Press, 2012). An eBook version can be purchased directly from the **University of California Press** Website (<http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520264809>), and it can also be found at **California Scholarship Online**, part of the **UPSO** offering (<http://california.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1525/california/9780520264793.001.0001/upso-9780520264793>); it is also available via **JSTOR Books** (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pn8wv>).

While it is understandable that university press publishers would try to extend their market reach by putting books on a number of different

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platforms, this practice does make library purchasing decisions more complicated. Librarians have to work harder to make sure they are not ‘doubling up’ on the purchase of a title by licensing it from two or more different sources.

### Conclusions

While eBook sales are growing, the institutional library licensing income for most university press publishers remains far less than their print book sales. The university press publishers I spoke with told me that **Amazon** is by far their largest customer, for better or worse. While the technology behind an eBook hosting platform is important for delivering a good end-user experience, at this point the single most important factor is revenue. Where can a university press put their books to maximize revenue while minimizing risk of diminishing print sales? The Big Three university press eBook platforms, from **Oxford (UPSO)**, **Johns Hopkins (Project MUSE)**, and **Ithaka (JSTOR Books)**, all have an appealing value proposition for university press content partners and strong sales channels and “bang for the buck” offerings that appeal to library buyers.

As more attention is placed on technology, an important trend will be the ability to effectively integrate book and journal content. Platforms that do this well now, like **Project MUSE**, are well positioned for the future. 🌱

### Endnotes

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## From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

The second edition of *Culture Wars in America: an Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints, and Voices* (2013, 978-0-7656-8302-1, \$349) was just published by **M.E. Sharpe**. Edited by **Roger Chapman** and **James Ciment**, these three volumes comprise approximately 640 entries plus more than 120 primary documents.

Like its predecessor, the focus is on hot button issues and individuals that reflect the culture divide that is part of the American landscape. Coverage ranges from articles on ideologies and movements to those on activists and advocates and from those on specific events and incidents to others that discuss organizations and institutions. There are also articles that discuss the conflict that surrounds numerous social, economic, political, legal, governmental, religious, and scientific issues. The new edition also adds to the mix the divisiveness of the Obama years with the rise of new issues and new movements ranging from the Tea Party to the Occupy Movement to the economic issues/conflicts



engendered by the Great Recession of 2009. In addition, the new edition features numerous articles that have been updated from the first edition to include information up through 2012.

The articles are written with a broad audience in mind that ranges from upper-level high school students to undergraduates and to the interested lay reader. As such, the style is accessible, straightforward, and factual. There is an alphabetical list of all articles as well as a topic finder grouping entries by broad category in the first volume, while Volumes 2 and 3 each have their own tables of contents. The third volume also has a collected bibliography and a thorough index for the complete set. Each entry has “see also” references and brief lists of further readings. B&W photos illustrate all three volumes.

However, the most substantive value-added feature in this set is the collection of 120 primary documents that are found in the third volume. These documents are helpfully arranged by topic and represent the multi-sided aspects of the subject under consideration. The documents focus on topics ranging from abortion to campaign finance reform; creationism to gays in the military; gun control to the Iraq War; illegal immigration to public pensions; pornography to social security; and same-sex marriage to women in the military.

*Culture Wars in America: an Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints, and Voices* should find a wide audience. Students in particular will benefit from the accessible background information offered in this reference, not to

mention the primary sources provided for specific issues. Given the diversity of the coverage, this set could also serve as a first stop for those in the initial phase of searching for research topics. It is a set that would be of value in the reference collections of high school, academic, and larger public libraries.

(This set is also available via **Sharpe Reference Online** as an individual title or a part of the *U.S. History & Culture Collection*. Information about the options available via **Sharpe Reference Online** can be found at <http://www.sharpe-online.com/SOLR/aboutus>.)

**Salem Press** recently released the third edition of *The 50 States* (2013, 978-1-61925-208-0, \$225), expanding a previous one-volume reference into a two-volume set. Edited by **Rodney Carlisle** and **David Garoogian**, all the relevant data has been updated though 2012, and there are “several new features including current survey results, new color photos, and new statistical tables.”

Each state has its own chapter which provides an overall profile, a basic history and a timeline as well as Notes for Further Study, statewide county and city maps along with population and area figures, and a section entitled “Survey says...” This last section contains the current rankings of the individual state drawn from a variety of sources including *Forbes*, *Reuters*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *CNN Money*, *Gallup*, and the *Huffington Post*.

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