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The Surge in New University Presses and Academic-Led Publishing: An Overview of a Changing Publishing Ecology in the UK

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Abstract

This article outlines the rise and development of New University Presses and Academic-Led Presses in the UK or publishing for the UK market. Based on the Jisc research project, *Changing publishing ecologies: a landscape study of new university presses and academic-led publishing*, commonalities between these two types of presses are identified to better assess their future needs and requirements. Based on this analysis, the article argues for the development of a publishing toolkit, for further research into the creation of a typology of presses and publishing initiatives, and for support with community building to help these initiatives grow and develop further, whilst promoting a more diverse publishing ecology.

Key Words: University Presses; Academic-Led Presses; Scholarly Publishing; Open Access

1. Introduction

Recent years have seen commercial publishers merging and consolidating their assets. As such, the academic publishing landscape is increasingly controlled by only a handful of major players. However, alongside this centralising top-down movement, a grassroots revival is taking place from the bottom up, initiated by universities, libraries and academics.

The publishing industry is having to adapt to the widespread change brought about by the digital revolution. In addition, open access publishing is becoming a viable publishing model in many formats and disciplines. In response to this, a new wave of university presses offering open access, digital first, library-based publishing is emerging, such as ANU Press in Australia, Amherst College Press and University of Michigan Press in the US and UCL and Huddersfield presses in the UK. However, in the UK a complete picture was not readily available. Furthermore, a small but notable number of academics have set up their own publishing initiatives, often demonstrating an innovative or unique approach either in workflow, peer review, technology, or business model. In what way will the advance of these new publishing initiatives disrupt the traditional scholarly communication environment?

This article will discuss a recent Jisc research project, *Changing publishing ecologies: a landscape study of new university presses and academic-led publishing* (Adema & Stone, 2017), which takes a snapshot of the changing landscape of New University Presses (NUPs) and Academic-Led Presses (ALPs) emerging within the UK and/or publishing for the UK market. The article takes a different approach to the report by identifying common themes from the responses to both strands of research. It also recommends further work to support and foster new developments in this space.

1.1. Background

Jisc's National Monograph Strategy (Showers, 2014) set out a high-level roadmap to support the future of the monograph, calling for experimentation around platforms and business models. The OAPEN-UK project, a five-year study into open access monograph publishing in the humanities and social sciences, stated in one of its recommendations that, "[e]xperimentation and change will be a feature of the open access monographs environment for some time. It

is important that stakeholders understand how their innovations play out in practice, to inform future development” (Collins & Milloy, 2016).

In October 2014, the Northern Collaboration,¹ a group of 25 higher education libraries in the north of England, held an exploratory meeting of its members to discuss possible collaboration and shared services relating to University Presses and potential library publishing ventures. A paper was subsequently prepared, which proposed three potential activities: benchmarking, best practice and a UK Library Publishing Coalition. At this point there was anecdotal evidence of an interest in these new publishing ventures, but little hard evidence of the extent to which they were evolving and what issues and challenges they were facing.

1.2. Jisc Landscape Study

In 2016, Jisc commissioned a research project focusing on institutional publishing initiatives. The aim of the study was to gain a greater understanding by Jisc, UK HEIs, funders, and publishers as to the progress and success of New University Presses and Academic-Led Presses in the UK or publishing for the UK market, including existing and future plans and directions.

The objective of the research was first to provide an evidence base that would include views from key stakeholders on existing presses and the opportunities and issues they currently face and/or have faced in the past. This evidence base would then be utilised to inform the direction of Jisc’s support for open access publishing. Furthermore, the research would also take forward recommendations from previous research, including the National Monograph Strategy roadmap (Showers, 2014) and OAPEN-UK final report (Collins & Milloy, 2016). It would provide a baseline against which further benchmarking and monitoring could be undertaken, serving as a useful tool for new initiatives entering the marketplace. Finally, the research would facilitate libraries and their institutions working together at a European level by establishing common goals and encouraging best practice and shared services for library publishing. For example, via the development of a European Library Publishing Coalition in the longer term.

The study was divided into two strands, which were co-ordinated and run in parallel. The first strand surveyed existing and planned NUPs in UK higher

education institutions (HEIs), the second strand consisted of a series of interviews devised to acquire a better understanding of ALPs currently operating in the UK or publishing for the UK market.

2. Setting the Scene

2.1. New University Presses

The idea of a university press is not a new one. Cambridge and Oxford University Presses were established in 1534 and 1586 respectively (Gadd, 2013; McKitterick, 1992). In the US, the oldest university presses emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Thompson, 2005). By 1967 there were 60 university presses in North America (Thompson, 2005, p.108). However, the situation changed dramatically in the UK and the US between the 1970s and 1990s with many presses either closed down or sold off as they were deemed commercially unviable (Thompson, 2005). In 2004 there were just 17 university presses operating in the UK (Hardy & Oppenheim, 2004). Seven could be considered large enough to compete with commercial presses [Cambridge, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, Oxford, Policy Press (Bristol) and University of Wales]. Of the others, many were established in the 1990s. Some of these are now dormant or have closed while others, such as Exeter, Nottingham, Northumbria, Middlesex, the Open University and Dundee have passed into the hands of commercial publishers (Cond, 2014; Hardy & Oppenheim, 2004; The Open University press, 2002; Thompson, 2005).

However, Hardy and Oppenheim saw a crucial role for university presses in the future, recommending collaboration with funding bodies and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC),² an international alliance of academic and research libraries working to create a more open system of scholarly communication, as key to their success. Furthermore, the transition to digital output and the rise of the open access movement is allowing NUPs to establish along different business models. Bankier and Perciali (2008) argued that it was time for universities to embrace gold open access by becoming publishers in their own right, and many NUPs and library publishers have done just that by publishing journals, conference proceedings and monographs (Bankier & Perciali, 2008; Daly & Organ, 2009; Royster, 2008). Armstrong (2011) considers that libraries and especially

institutional repositories are well placed to support universities in their strategies to disseminate research.

In parallel, questions have arisen about the long-term sustainability of print publication for scholarly monographs. Library book purchasing budgets have decreased significantly in the past 10 years, both in real terms and as a percentage of overall library budgets (Adema & Hall, 2013; Pinter, 2012; Research Information Network, 2010; Thatcher, 2007, 2011) and print sales of monographs are in decline (Thatcher, 2007; Willinsky, 2009). Open access is beginning to gain traction as a financially viable model that could potentially increase monograph readership. In the Netherlands, the OAPEN-NL project (Ferwerda, Snijder, & Adema, 2013) found a positive impact on the usage and discovery of open access books. Open Book Publishers, an exclusively open access monograph publisher has tracked downloads of their titles and found significant usage from countries that generally do not have good access to the scholarly literature (Gatti, 2013).

Hahn (2008) found little evidence of academic writing on libraries as publishers before 2008. However, in recent years, one outcome of the rise of the open access movement is the establishment of small scale university presses, particularly in the US, where in a 2013 AAUP survey, 65% of the 83 respondents regarded library publishing as increasingly important and 62% of all respondents felt that this should be a core aim of the library's mission (AAUP, 2013). Some, such as Amherst College, have launched new ventures. College Librarian Bryn Geffert stated that, *"[i]t's time for libraries to begin producing for themselves what they can no longer afford to purchase and what they can no longer count on university presses to produce"* (Schwartz, 2012).

The Library Publishing Coalition (LPC),³ established in 2012, defines these new library-led presses as a "set of activities led by college and university libraries to support the creation, dissemination, and curation of scholarly, creative, and/or educational works" (Skinner, Lippincott, Speer & Walters, 2014). The Library Publishing Coalition itself was a clear indication that library scholarly publishing had become a phenomenon in its own right. It was an attempt to coordinate library publishing in North America by providing centralized leadership to the growing library publishing community with a preference for electronic and open access publishing (Chadwell & Sutton, 2014). By February 2013 there were 54 libraries involved in the initial two-year project (Howard, 2013), there are now 67 members.

There are many different ways in which libraries act as publishers. For example, many publish journals, monographs and conference proceedings, but few carry out all of these tasks (Mullins et al., 2012; Perry et al., 2011; Stone, 2011). It may not be an exclusively library led initiative either, many libraries work in conjunction with the University Press (Mullins et al., 2012; University of Pittsburgh, 2015; Watkinson, 2014, 2016). Many libraries first become involved in publishing after an approach from faculty for assistance with the production of digital work (Skinner et al., 2014).

NUPs have also been established in Australia (Harboe-Ree, 2007; Missingham & Kanellopoulos, 2014), Germany (Bargheer & Pabst, 2016) and the UK. In 2013, Lawson (2013) found it difficult to establish how many university presses existed in the UK, while Cond (2014) estimated that there were 10 other NUPs in addition to the seven larger university presses. This was not a definitive list, indeed there were probably a further four presses active at the time. However, five university presses were launched in the 12 months since June 2015 (Lockett & Speicher, 2016) indicating what appears to be a growing trend in the UK.

2.2. Academic-Led Presses

Albeit less familiar than university presses, commercial publishers, and library publishing, independent, Academic-Led Publishing is not a new phenomenon. Scholarly or learned societies have been publishing (as well as financially supporting) journals, books, book series and other publishing projects in their respective fields for over 300 years (Kieft, Fitzpatrick, Nordin & Wheatley, 2013). Publishing has often been one of the central missions of these academic communities, where, as Fitzpatrick (2012) states: *“from the beginning, scholarly societies were designed to play a crucial role in facilitating communication between scholars working on common subjects”*. Scholars have also been at the forefront of open access publishing, where some of the earliest open access journals in the humanities (i.e. *Postmodern Culture* and *Surfaces*), were published independently by academics.

Academic experiments with independent book publishing have been less forthcoming. For example, learned societies tend to publish their monographs through external publishing houses (Crossick, 2015, p. 56–57). This lack of uptake of book publishing by academics is mainly due to technological

challenges and financial reasons, where monograph publishing is perceived to be expensive and unsustainable. In addition, where journal articles are relatively easy to read online, academics continue to profess a preference for reading academic monographs in print (Wolff-Eisenberg, Rod, & Schonfeld, 2016). The existence of a print component is thus more essential for monographs than it is for journals, also for academic prestige and career development. The rise of online self-publishing (e.g. lulu.com) and the development of Print on Demand (PoD) technology has therefore been a crucial element in the rise of academic-led book publishing, enabling many of these initiatives to experiment with a hybrid (print+digital) model.

However, before PoD became widely available, academics were also publishing books, mainly in small print runs and often in collaboration with libraries, scholarly publishing offices and other institutions on campus interested in promoting their scholars' research. One of the first (contemporary) independent scholar-led publishers was Melbourne-based *re.press*, who started publishing books in 2006. *Open Humanities Press* and *Open Book Publishers*, two of the main players in the current ALP landscape, launched shortly afterwards in 2008. The development of these and other academic-led initiatives was stimulated by frustration and a critical attitude towards the ongoing commercialisation of publishing, alongside growing awareness among scholars of open access publishing options. These initiatives were set up in an international context and have often been pioneers where it concerns experiments with the form of the book. Very little has been written about these initiatives, however, and no systematic research has been conducted on their development, their publishing processes, and their ongoing challenges and needs.⁴ The literature that does exist has mostly been authored by the academics involved in these kinds of scholar-led initiatives. Their writings are often highly self-reflexive and transparent, open towards sharing experiences, best practices, guidelines, and challenges encountered (i.e. Gatti, 2015; Hall, 2015). This sharing of information and advice has been part of an ongoing ethos of collaboration and gifting, often in stark contrast to the closed-off and proprietary business and publishing models of commercial publishers. A lot of this sharing of information has also been taking place in offline, informal, face-to-face and ad hoc settings.⁵

The interviews conducted for our study provided a clear overview of the background against which many ALP initiatives established. Quite striking is how almost all came about due to the perseverance of strong leading figures.

Still, these initiatives tend to be foremost community-based, established out of or connected to already existing communities and networks, based around research groups, conferences, blogs, journals, and universities (e.g. *MayFly Books* extended from the journal *Ephemera*, and *MediaCommons Press* from the digital scholarly network *MediaCommons*). Most initiatives tend to share a dissatisfaction with the ongoing commercialisation of scholarship and express a general frustration with the existing legacy publishing route, specifically with the profits made by commercial publishers. Most, if not all, were also reacting to a situation and context in which access to scholarly materials in the humanities remains restricted. Additionally, they felt that there were not enough places for scholars to produce research and publications in forms that were not textual or print-based, but multimodal or non-linear.

The choice to set up an independent press can often be traced back to a lack of institutional support, where attempts to set up a university press or an imprint connected to an institution had been unsuccessful. Institutional support is also harder to secure when many of the presses were set up by networks of scholars active at different universities internationally. Still, it was clearly felt that independence offered certain benefits too. For example, *Open Humanities Press* mentioned that their independence means they are better able to respond to what scholars want, “rather than what their institutions, libraries and funders want” (Adema, 2017). Independence means the initiatives do not have to confront the necessary risk averseness that many institutions struggle with. A further important reason for setting up a press relates to the kind of content that can (or increasingly cannot) be published. Several academics established presses specifically to promote (book) scholarship within a particular field. Yet many presses also publish what can be described as emerging or avant-garde academic content, sometimes even functioning as ‘niche market publishers’. For example, *Mattering Press* is keen to support work from early career and emergent scholars in Science and Technology Studies, and *Roving Eye Press* was set up to promote the works of one avant-garde writer and publisher, Bob Brown, in particular. Academics also professed a need to promote more experimental work, which they felt traditional presses have not been sufficiently supporting. Finally, independent presses were also established to show that it was possible to publish cheaper (and faster) than traditional publishing outlets. For example *Open Book Publishers* brought cost down by at least a third compared to legacy publishers by using alternative distribution channels.

With respect to publishing values, the interviewees mentioned that they see publishing as a logical extension of their own critical scholarly work. Several explicitly acknowledged that their enterprise is based on an 'ethics of care'.⁶ Related to this, there was a clear emphasis on community-centred enterprise: *Language Science Press* relies heavily on community building and *Open Humanities Press* operates as a radically heterogeneous and autonomous collective, where the collective support each other and share knowledge and skills. Where collaboration is seen as an important value, the presses have also supported each other in various ways, from providing advice and support, to publishing or collaborating together. Most presses (*Ubiquity Press* being the main exemption) also adhere to a not-for-profit principle. However, this stance also calls up issues around fair pay, and the gifting of labour and volunteer work, which these initiatives heavily rely upon. As such there is a clear consciousness of the issues surrounding free labour.

3. Methodology

The NUP survey aimed to capture information on current NUPs, their plans for the near future and for the long term. The survey was divided into four sections. The opening section aimed to establish whether respondents were currently operating a NUP, considering setting up a press or they had no formal plans at all. The second section asked a series of questions regarding motivation and vision, governance and financial support, quality measures, publishing formats, licensing, software platforms, metadata and preservation policies. This section also asked about future publishing plans, such as plans to expand into other publishing formats. A similar set of questions were used to establish a picture of those HEIs that were planning a NUP. Finally, in the fourth section, all those planning or operating a NUP were asked a number of questions regarding possible future support. A total of 43 responses were received, the results of which are analysed below.

For the ALP study, 14 presses were interviewed, together covering a wide-range of international initiatives from the more established to relatively recent start-ups. The interviews were transcribed (if audio recorded) and edited with input from the interviewees (Adema, 2017). The interview protocol consisted of three sections: the first focused on the background, motivations and goals of the various initiatives; the second gave an overview of the various presses (business and publishing models, licenses and policies,

preservation and dissemination); and finally, the third looked at where the initiatives (still) need support.

An overview of the general comments from each strand are noted below, before specific themes are drawn out for further discussion.

4. New University Press Survey

Thirteen HEIs responded with information about their existing library-based publishing initiatives. Table 1 uses existing information obtained from the survey and other sources (e.g. Cond, 2014) to compile a list of known NUPs in the UK. To this list of 16, three more who also replied to the survey but do not have an existing web presence can be added. This implies that there are now 19 NUPs in existence in the UK. It should be noted that Edinburgh is a separate press to the established Edinburgh University Press.

Only two of the presses that answered the survey were more than 10 years old. However, it appears NUPs define launch in different ways such as the date they were formed or re-launched, or the date of their first publication.

Of the 12 universities considering a press, eight may launch in the next five years. Therefore by 2021 there may be as many as 27 NUPs operating in addition to the 'big seven'. This represents 20% of UK HEIs, a large increase based on previous years (Hardy & Oppenheim, 2004).

Sixteen universities had no plans to launch a press at present. However, of these, four universities expressed interest in the survey and in how other universities were approaching the issue, so may be considering a press at some point in the future. Four other universities commented that it was not a strategic priority in the institution.

The report groups the answers regarding motivation for current and planned NUPs into a number of themes. The two key themes that emerged were to develop open access publishing at a university level (8 responses) and to satisfy demand of, or encourage early career researchers and academics (8 responses). Also important were the related themes of supporting the university's strategic objectives (4 responses) and enhancing the reputation of the university (4 responses). Undergraduate research, innovation and

Table 1: Known New University Presses in the UK.

University	Press name	URL	Publication types
Cardiff University Goldsmiths, University of London	Cardiff University Press Goldsmiths Press	http://cardiffuniversitypress.org/ http://www.gold.ac.uk/goldsmiths-press/	Journals Monographs; non- standard modes and forms of communication
Kingston University SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)	Kingston University Press Rural Policy Centre (RPC)	http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/kup/ http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120161/our_publications	Monographs Research reports; policy briefings
University College London University of Buckingham	UCL Press University of Buckingham Press	http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucd-press https://ubpl.buckingham.ac.uk/	Journals; monographs Journals; monographs
University of Central Lancashire University of Chester University of Edinburgh	UCLan Open Journals University of Chester Press Edinburgh University Library Open Journals	http://pops.uclan.ac.uk/ https://www.chester.ac.uk/university-press http://journals.ed.ac.uk/	Journals Monographs Journals
University of Hertfordshire	University of Hertfordshire Press	https://www.herts.ac.uk/uhpress	Monographs
University of Huddersfield	University of Huddersfield Press	http://unipress.hud.ac.uk/	Journals; monographs; sound recordings
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York	White Rose Press	http://universitypress.whiterose.ac.uk/	Journals; monographs
University of Surrey	Surrey Undergraduate Research Journal (SURJ)	http://www.surrey.ac.uk/library/learning/undergraduatejournal/ https://journals.warwick.ac.uk/	Journals
University of Warwick	Warwick journals hosting service		Journals
University of Westminster	University of Westminster Press	http://www.uwestminsterpress.co.uk/	Journals; monographs
University of York	University of York Music Press (UYMP)	http://www.uymp.co.uk/	Music scores

new forms of publishing, and moving existing internal publishing activity (including library related research) all attracted 3 responses each.

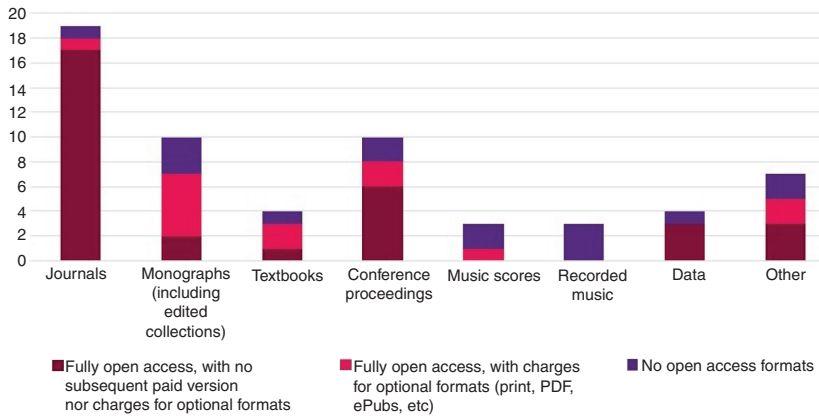
In most cases the presses were financially supported by the institution while making use of existing staffing and estates resources in the library. Only one press described itself as self-sustaining.

The issue of staffing and the resultant effect of increased success versus a limited staff base has been the focus of discussion for many successful presses. Perry states that it is difficult to fully support library publishing without more staff (Perry et al., 2011). In 2011, the number of staff allocated to publishing activities ranged between 0.9 and 2.4 FTE, with staff dedicated to library publishing programmes described as relatively rare (Mullins et al., 2012). In 2017 the survey found the average number of staff per NUP to be 1–1.5 FTE. There is also an overlap with the ALP interviews, which found that ALPs are very much driven by single individuals. Regarding staffing from other parts of the institution, most answered zero or did not know. However, one commented that “*[e]ach journal has its own model—some have 1-2 FTE associated with the journal but more often this is in kind support alongside other duties*”. It could be inferred that this might be the model for other NUPs.

Regarding publishing formats and access, all but two existing NUPs publish journals and most are fully open access with no paid versions. Seven of the 13 NUPs publish monographs, but only four are open access (with paid optional formats). Of the universities considering a press, the majority of universities plan to publish fully OA journals with no subsequent paid version. Only three plan to publish monographs. Figure 1 shows the combined responses from existing and planned NUPs. This indicates a possible picture for the next five years.

Fully OA with charges for optional formats refers to fully open access at publication with options to purchase print copies. No subsequent paid option is most common for e-only OA journals where there is no other format available. ‘Other’ replies could consist of experimental, augmented or enhanced publications, short format books, edited works, interviews, podcasts, blog posts or blogging platforms, reports and grey literature, and conference videos. Although no one particular format was specified. It should be noted that a number of existing presses may move to OA formats, therefore the number of non OA formats is set to reduce.

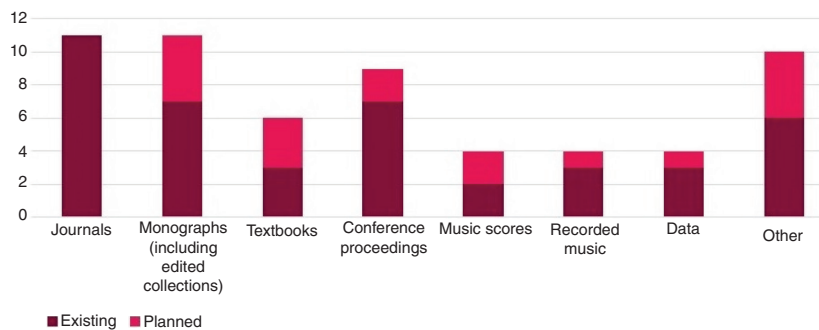
Fig. 1: Publishing formats and availability for established and planned NUPs.



The majority of NUPs (nine) are providing a fee waiver to university authors, so are not charging article or book processing charges.

A number of NUPs are considering monograph and conference publishing in the near future (see Figure 2). Music scores and recorded music is also of interest. The amount of NUPs looking at publishing data seems low. However, this could be because other means are being used, e.g. Figshare. 'Other' formats include enhanced and experimental publications; videos; subject-specific overlay journals; short-form monographs, and grey literature.

Fig. 2: Potential number of NUPs by format.



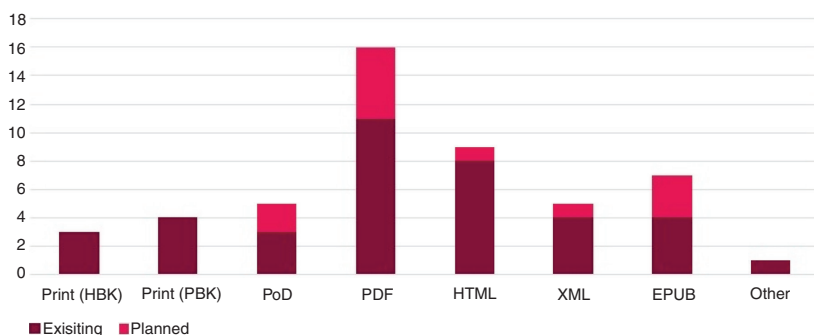
When existing and planned NUPs publishing formats are combined, PDF is still the dominant format (see Figure 3). HTML and EPUB is also a popular choice.

Regarding platforms, Open Journal System (OJS) was the most popular (perhaps reflecting that more journals are published than books in this survey), more so if use of Ubiquity Press is included. No NUPs were using Open Monograph Press (OMP) for monographs and use of repositories was fairly low. Although most universities considering a press had not yet decided how they were going to host their content, OJS was a popular choice for journals publishing. The three institutions that selected 'other' answered with a variety of hosts: OAPEN, Worldreader, unglue.it, Ingenta, JSTOR and Project MUSE.

5. Academic-Led Presses Interviews

As outlined in the methodology, the ALPs interviews were divided into 3 parts, the first part focused on the background, motivations and goals of the various initiatives, the findings of which have been integrated into Section 2.2 of this article. The second part of the interviews aimed to get an overview of set-up of the various presses and included questions on their business and publishing models, licenses and policies used, and their preservation and dissemination strategies, the findings of which are summarised below. The third part of the interviews, which will be discussed in Section 6, looked at

Fig. 3: Publishing formats combined for established and planned NUPs.



where the initiatives (still) need support and explores specifically how Jisc can help support them.

5.1. Publishing Field and Formats

The academic-led initiatives interviewed publish in a wide range of fields and subjects. Various presses [i.e. *meson press* (media), *Mattering Press* (science and technology studies) and *Language Science Press* (linguistics)] specialise in a specific field, where several welcome submissions from all Humanities' fields. There is a lot of focus on interdisciplinarity (also across the sciences and the humanities), and on non-academic and para-academic content.⁷ With respect to types of publications, almost all presses publish books or book-form projects. Most also publish or want to publish multimodal and experimental works—*electric.press* and *Media Commons Press* are perhaps most fully committed to this. However, although some are quite involved in experimental publishing, others mentioned they do not have the finances nor the technical skills to support these forms. Next to books, *Open Library of Humanities*, *Open Humanities Press* and *Ubiquity Press* also publish journals. Except for the presses that focus specifically on the publication of web-only experimental digital projects, all others publish in print, mainly with the help of PoD technology (where several also offer hardback and paperback versions). PDF is the most common digital format where Mobi, Epub and HTML are also frequently used.

5.2. Publishing Models

Almost all ALPs are small and have developed organically. They use a wide variety of forms of incorporation, although most were chosen to reflect the charitable objectives of the presses. Despite their small size (and often small scale) most presses draw heavily on support from their communities as a source of volunteer labour and for governance in editorial and advisory boards. They rely on these boards—made up of senior or esteemed scholars—for governance, advice and support. However, some of the presses profess a more 'informal' set up, partly intentional, reflecting their principles. For example, *Mattering Press*, which has six editors, all early career scholars, emphasises that it has a 'flat hierarchical structure', without an overall managing editor, where the editors have allocated themselves various roles.

5.3. Business Models

Although many initiatives proclaim to not having a formal business model, what stands out is that all depend on a variety of income sources. As *Ubiquity Press* states with respect to their business model, all presses rely on ‘multiple streams of revenue’. Sale of print books next to open access editions (the hybrid model) is the most popular funding strategy where all presses (except for digital-only ventures and *Open Library of Humanities*, who do not publish books) deploy this method. Various initiatives mentioned that they could draw on start-up grants to set up their press, where occasional grants (e.g. for travel and workshops) have also been essential to support their publishing endeavors. There is often also institutional support, which takes many forms with ALPs, from providing scholars with time off or a salary to work on their publishing endeavours, to providing them with academic collaborators on projects. Several initiatives also use institutional subscription models. The core model *Open Library of Humanities* pursues is a library partnership subsidy model, for example. Cost-efficiency is important too, where both *Open Book Publishers* and *Open Humanities Press* stress that they manage their finances predominantly by keeping costs down. Reader-side charges (e.g. donations/reader-pay/crowd-sourcing), albeit controversial in an open access context, are also being explored by the initiatives. Finally, *Counterpress* is experimenting with a freemium model, where they provide e-book versions of their online publications on a ‘pay-what-you-can basis’.

5.4. Licences and Policies

Most, if not all, ALPs are proponents of open access, clearly visible when we look at their preferred copyright licences. Many are open to using any ‘open’ or CC licence in consultation with their authors, others prefer to use a specific CC-licence, or a Copyleft licence in the case of *Counterpress*. The presses all adhere to some form of peer review, yet they also professed critique towards the peer review process. Subsequently a lot of experimentation with alternative review mechanisms has taken place within these communities. Sarah Kember mentioned that *Goldsmiths Press* operates an evolving peer review system, which is both pragmatic and aware of the politics of peer review. The non-transparent nature and power relations at play in review practices are seen as problematic, where, as Martin Eve states, peer review is also “poor at recognising excellence in advance”. With reference to the earlier mentioned

‘ethics of care’, several presses therefore stated that they want to do more than just peer review. For example, *Mattering Press* is keen to provide additional support for early-career scholars during the review process, by putting authors and reviewers in contact to “really have that dialogue as the project developed”. Open review was most famously trialled by *MediaCommons Press* for Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s book *Planned Obsolescence* (2009).

5.5. Platforms, Dissemination and Preservation

ALPs mainly use their own websites/servers, using a mixture of open source and commercial products to publish their works, e.g. Wordpress and OJS (and OMP in the case of *Language Science Press*). This reluctance to using external commercial platforms (e.g. *Ubiquity’s* platform, popular with NUPs) might be related to ALPs’ politics and value systems. On the other hand, the use of commercial products for services and software seems quite abundant with scholar-led initiatives, even though this is something they do profess their concern about. Many mentioned they make use of commercial products to design their books (i.e. Adobe InDesign), for example. For production and dissemination, LightningSource/Ingram and CreateSpace seem to be popular for the printing and creation of on-demand versions of books. One of the more pressing issues is that most ALPs, in common with NUPs, confessed to not having a systematic preservation strategy in place, which can have serious consequences with respect to the continued availability of the long tail of science, an issue which most if not all ALPs also express their grave concerns about.

5.6. Marketing

Academic-led presses tend to not have active marketing strategies. Word of mouth, also considering the scale of their operations, is often enough to attract authors and submissions. Where the press is strongly grounded within a certain field or community the use of their own academic networks is highly important. The editorial board plays an essential role here too in suggesting and recruiting authors and in promoting their works. Academic conferences are also important promotion opportunities, for scholar-publishers to present at and as an occasion to set up a book stall. *Counterpress* and *Open Book Publishers* mentioned they also send out books for review, where the latter also approaches suitable web venues for reviews. Author self-promotion

is seen as enormously important. Making use of their social networks and contacts, authors, as *Open Humanities Press* explain, “take on a lot of the promotion themselves using Twitter and their own blogs, organizing their own launches”. Building a brand has been very important for ALPs, where most are still relatively new initiatives. Strategies to build brand awareness focus on both publishing outstanding and high quality humanities research, and attracting world-leading senior scholars to publish with the presses and be part of their editorial boards.

6. Recommendations for Support

Our study focused on both groups of presses separately. However, it was set up in such a way that comparison would be possible. For example, both sets of presses were asked where they needed the most in terms of support and guidance with respect to various aspects of the publishing process. A lot of overlap concerning needs of and issues was established here. However, a clear contrast was visible between the more established presses and those starting up or at the planning stage (See Figure 4 for NUPs). The newer or smaller initiatives showed more of a need for support related to almost all aspects of the publishing process, whereas more established presses professed more specialised

Fig. 4: Support and guidance required from Jisc for NUPs.



needs, as they had already found solutions for many of the issues in the publishing workflow. For example, for NUPs, universities planning to start a press required more help than existing presses, in all but one case (marketing). ALPs needed least support with issues related to academic governance. Both NUPs and ALPs also cited peer review as an area that did not require further support.

For NUPs in general, it would appear that, except for peer review, there is value in pursuing all forms of support and guidance shown in Figure 4.

When it comes to support, although ALPs declared a clear need, there also exists a scepticism towards too simplistic solutions. For example, Eileen Joy (*punctum*) stressed that there is not one solution or one kind of model to the crisis of academic publishing to put one's resources behind. Proposed solutions, she argued, should not "impose some kind of uniformity upon publishers, but (...) encourage a biodiversity of partners and players in the game".⁸

A specific question was asked regarding the need for a Jisc publishing platform to support the presses. ALPs were largely sceptical on this question. Although NUPs were interested, one Press commented that they "would want to clearly understand the added value". What became evident from the research was that a best practice guide or toolkit would be a far more pragmatic approach and that this could build upon some of the comments regarding support and guidance.

6.1. Toolkit

There were several areas in both sets of data that could be used as a basis for the development of a set of best practice guides. Much of the work towards establishing best practice is already being undertaken by ALP/NUP operations within a communal setting. As such, any toolkit needs to be a combined effort of the community sharing its own best practice, with Jisc offering a coordinating role alongside certain areas of expertise.

6.1.1. *Justifications and Governance*

HEIs expressed a need for guidance in building a case around strategic objectives for a press in their institution. For example, there was a feeling from

senior management in some universities that a press would cost, offering no financial return. The toolkit could provide supporting information on how to evidence value for money and institutional reputation.⁹ This might also support ALPs to help them strengthen their relationship with existing or future affiliated institutions; but it might also, in some cases, take away (some of) the need to set up an independent press instead. Even though there was some criticism from ALPs towards working with universities or libraries—as they then are dependent on an institution that has other priorities besides them—on the other hand this could provide these community organisations a certain commitment from a hosting institution, which could (potentially) aid them in their publishing enterprises.

NUPs require support in the area of governance. Even those that already had an existing governance structure wanted further assistance. The survey revealed that there was a mixture of governance: six NUPs had cross university editorial/advisory boards, while three reported that they had no formal governance, but did have journal editorial boards/governance structures. Hahn's (2008) two levels of business planning in library publishing, programme level and publication level, could be explored in this respect in order to help NUPs define their governance structure.

6.1.2. Support with Incorporation, Finances, and Legal Issues

For ALPs, incorporation was a larger issue than governance. Often it was unclear which form of incorporation would best suit their initiatives. Many presses mentioned the process of incorporation and the costs involved as being a tedious and complicated process. In this respect, financial and labour issues topped the list of enduring problems ALPs face. Support with various financial aspects and accounting, next to the availability of more funding for publications was mentioned as being of real use to their operations. For example, *meson press* insisted that finding ways to fund content is essential for their continued existence. *Mattering Press* also stated that what is needed is "some form of financial support from the centre", which could include "a grant scheme that makes it possible to apply for really quite small amounts" for publishing projects and infrastructure. Such a grant scheme or even one-off funding would go a long way towards supporting academic-led endeavours, which at the moment often tend to function with limited or no funding at all, and this could also potentially help to offset some of the issues around

free labour that continue to plague ALPs, both on a practical and ideological front. Funding of content was also seen as essential to support a more diverse ecology of publishing that would include not-for-profit and ALPs.

Licensing and contracts was an area where presses required further support. For example, 11 NUPs publish journals, but only six have author licences. Legal advice around which copyright licence to use (i.e. clear and easily understandable advice on what the different forms of copy left and copyright are and what their relative merits are) and more specifically on the drawing up of author and journal editor contracts, is an area that could be supported by a number of model contracts supplied by Jisc. Alternatively, existing presses could be encouraged to share their own contracts for others to consult. However, as some of the ALPs professed that their licences were sometimes drafted in a rather ad hoc manner, any best practice in this area could not be constituted as legal advice and would always have to be approved by a (university) solicitor.

6.1.3. Production, Distribution and Dissemination

With respect to production, ALPs welcomed support where it could assist in a move away from corporate partners dominating all aspects of production. As *Mattering Press* explains, going through Amazon to sell books is not in line with the politics of many of the Academic-Led Presses. Indeed, for OA operations dedicated to open source technologies it is not a viable solution to be reliant on commercial partners—especially commercial software—for accounts, design related issues and production/distribution. A toolkit could potentially involve an inventory of open source tools, technologies, software systems and platforms that could assist in production, distribution and dissemination, plus, perhaps, a wishlist of specific services presses would like to see developed in the future to support these elements of the publishing workflow.

With respect to dissemination, for NUPs, the use of DOAB, DOAJ and OAPEN is encouraging as these platforms act as a seal of quality, although there could be a role for Jisc to offer further advice with dissemination, as a number of NUPs do not use all appropriate methods considering the breadth of publication types. A guide to best practice regarding DOAJ, DOAB and OASPA membership would ensure that presses were listed in the appropriate targets for discovery services.

Libraries are an important source of support, both in providing technical and infrastructural services and as a means to fund open access publishing through various library subscription schemes and publishing partnerships. However, ALPs mentioned that integration into and distribution to libraries and bookstores was a very involved process, which becomes even more difficult when libraries (and other institutions) do not have a mechanism to deal with open access works. Distribution to libraries is an issue all presses face. Support for matchmaking between libraries and presses would be very useful in this context. As Rupert Gatti (*Open Book Publishers*) explains, it would be helpful to have a service that “looks at how to bring academic content into the catalogues and the digital learning environments of the universities and to allow universities to also relate back to the publisher, so that there is a flow of information going back both ways”. Further work is required in this area in order to draw NUPs/ALPs to the attention of acquisition librarians, subject liaison and academics, especially regarding reading lists. Specifically, there is an opportunity for Jisc to assist ALPs in gaining entry into the library market through a licensing agreement.

6.1.4. Metadata and Preservation

Not all NUPs assigned ISBN/ISSNs or DOIs to their content. Considering seven NUPs sell their monograph content, only four registered it with Nielsen BookData. This reduces the possibility of sales via book suppliers. Indeed, two presses did not use any metadata. *Punctum books* also stated the need for help with metadata management in this respect. Therefore, it appears there is an opportunity to assist presses further in this area. A best practice guide, such as *Metadata for open access monographs* (Jisc/OAPEN, 2016) could be embedded into a set of best practice web pages to serve as a one-stop-shop. Furthermore, the recently launched National Bibliographic Knowledgebase (Jisc, 2017) intends to include a work package on OA monographs, which could include a simple metadata input form.

Only one NUP surveyed was not using any form of preservation. However, further work would be of use in this area, as institutional repositories and ‘in-house systems’ were often listed as a preservation system. All planned NUPs stated that they were undecided with respect to preservation. Indeed, a number stated that coverage of this topic in the survey had actually alerted them to the issue of preservation. Preservation was also a big issue with

ALPs. Martin Eve (*Open Library of Humanities*) suggested that it would be great if Jisc ran a preservation service. Although this may not be viable in the short to medium term, preservation services from other providers, such as Portico and CLOCKSS/LOCKSS is an area that may warrant further investigation as part of an OA publishing services offer.

6.2. Building a Community

It also became evident from the data that there was a need for community building for both ALPs and NUPs. This would be a complimentary activity to a toolkit/best practice guide approach.

ALPs called for the establishment of a collective, consortium or association as this could upscale their endeavours significantly. It could help establish guidelines on behaviour and assist in creating certain ethical standards for publishing. Related to that, such an organisation could further aid in legitimating the scholar-publishing enterprise as a model. *Open Humanities Press* mentioned that there have been some moves afoot to form consortiums among small presses (i.e. Radical Open Access Collective, PKP's Cooperative Study, Libraria). Such a consortium could be helpful where it concerns marketing too. Joe Deville (*Mattering Press*) suggested that, as ALPs do not generally see themselves in competition with each other, the consortium could set up a shared marketing platform, which would allow them to co-promote each other's works, both online and with collaborative book stands at events. A number of NUPs also touched on the idea of a collaborative approach, perhaps in the shape of a European LPC. Comments received after the 2016 LIBER conference (Keene, Milloy, Weigert & Stone, 2016) suggest that there is also interest from German and Nordic NUPs and from LIBER itself. In a further attempt at building a community, a new listserv for NUPs has been established since the survey was completed.¹⁰

6.3. A Typology of Support Levels

One NUP commented, "I think Jisc can facilitate sharing of best practice amongst institutions and work with sector to provide national deals/services where relevant e.g. OLH or OJS or Ubiquity?" However, publishing services

offered by NUPs vary greatly between libraries (Perry et al., 2011), therefore not all external supporting services are appropriate to each and every press.

Accordingly, the NUP survey asked HEIs to describe themselves in relation to four publishing tiers as defined by Mattson and Friend (2014) (see Table 2).¹¹

The survey showed that, all levels of support as per the four tiers were offered. However, on further reflection, NUPs (and ALPs) may change tiers based on their maturity. Regarding potential Jisc negotiated agreements with OA publishing suppliers, the type of suppliers and the services offered may differ depending on the publishing services tier offered by a press. In addition, the publication format may also have an impact. For example, journal and monograph publishing may require a different set of support services. It became apparent that further work was required in this area to develop a typology of support levels based on that described above to better define the services that each level may require. This would enable institutions looking to establish presses indicate the level of support offered and potentially choose from a suite of services and support appropriate to their requirements.

There is a further need to define the publishing process or workflow as part of this work. For example, from manuscript to published book, even where processes are different and can even be highly idiosyncratic, it would be beneficial to understand which publishing service would be applicable at a given point in the workflow. In the ALP interviews, *Open Book Publishers* mentioned that it took a lot of time to formalise this and that there were issues around time management, how to address certain publishing aspects such as marketing and branding, and concerns around dealing with authors on a day-to-day basis. This remains a big strain for the ALPs, often lacking any formal

Table 2: Levels of publishing (after Mattson and Friend, 2014).

Publishing tier	Description
Tier 0	A self-help consultation level, e.g. hosting of journal software
Tier 1	Base level where the customer does most of the work, hosting plus some further support, e.g. licence templates, logos, etc.
Tier 2	Intermediate where responsibilities are negotiated, e.g. full publishing service and support for authors/editors
Tier 3	Extensive where a full service is provided, e.g. full publishing service and support for authors/editors

experience in the publishing industry. This work is now being taken forward by Jisc as a continuation of the *Changing publishing ecologies* study.

7. Conclusion

After a number of years of decline, this article has demonstrated that the transition to digital output combined with the rise of open access has provided opportunities for the development of New University and Academic-Led Presses. The Jisc landscape survey has established that, by 2021, there may be as many as 27 NUPs in addition to the seven larger university presses in the UK.

The survey and interview questions provide a snapshot of the services provided by NUPs/ALPs in 2016 and their needs and aspirations. Despite a few clear differences between the two types of operation, there are some very clear commonalities, particularly the need for support around licences and contracts, financial and labour issues, metadata and preservation, penetration into the library market and the need to build cohesive communities. This article recommends that there is further work to do for Jisc and the wider community to support these ventures. It would also be useful to hold a number of workshops with both communities to collect communal know-how. Most prescient is the need to establish a set of best practice guidelines or toolkit in order to support this movement and to allow the presses to become established and thrive in the future.

Finally, the survey and interview questions are available as an appendix to the report to Jisc (Adema & Stone, 2017). The authors would like to encourage others, particularly in other European countries to build upon this research by adapting the questions asked. This would allow for a more complete view of European NUPs and ALPs and the demand for a shared approach, such as a wider set of best practice guidelines, workshops and a European Library Publishing Coalition for library presses.

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Notes

¹ <http://www.northerncollaboration.org.uk/>.

² <https://sparcopen.org/>.

³ <http://librarypublishing.org/about-us>.

⁴ Crossick's report on Monographs and Open Access does not mention Academic-Led Initiatives at all (it focuses on Learned Societies and mission-driven presses instead) and Martin Eve's *Open Access in the Humanities* only mentions them shortly in passing as part of a 'a Do It Yourself approach' to publishing (Crossick, 2015; Eve, 2014, p. 24–25).

⁵ The Radical Open Access Conference (2015), which took place at Coventry University was an important face-to-face setting where many Academic-Led Publishing initiatives gathered together to discuss issues around scholarly communication, publishing and open access in the humanities.

⁶ Joe Deville from *Mattering Press* explained that Annemarie Mol's counterposing of the logic of care to the logic of calculation lies at the basis of this (Mol, 2008). Here the focus is on attending to the diverse forms of relationality at play within publishing, which includes an acknowledgement of the various agencies involved in the publishing process, both human and non-human.

⁷ Eileen Joy from *punctum books* describes this as "material that is kind of academic but then it is also doing other things".

⁸ This does not mean, Joy stressed, that there should not be uniformity in things such as preservation.

⁹ See Stone (2016) for an example on financial return for NUPs.

¹⁰ University Press and Publishing News: UNIVERSITYPRESS@JISCMAIL.AC.UK.

¹¹ Other authors have contributed to this discussion, listing a variety of services that can be captured within each tier (De Groote & Case, 2014; Hahn, 2008; Mullins et al., 2012; Perry et al., 2011).