Establishing an Academic Library Publishing Program

Ruth Ann Jones • Michigan State University Libraries

Why Publish?

- Make rare material more widely available to scholars and the public
- Use on-demand printing capability to create opportunities for students and scholars
- Attract positive attention to the library

Selling & Marketing

Sell through Amazon:

- Individual seller account (0-40 units monthly)
- Library handles fulfillment; customer pays \$3.99 shipping
- Amazon charges \$1.35+\$0.99+15% of retail price per book sold

Identify opportunities for free advertising:

- Newsletters, social media for professional groups: archivists, librarians, historians
- Blogs and websites with review opportunities to reach potential customers in the general public

Future plans:

- Invest in paid advertising after a critical mass of publications are available.

Characteristics of Our Program

Books printed as needed:

- Pro: less financial risk, no inventory to manage
- Con: high unit cost per individual volume

Reprint and original content:

- Subjects related to our collection strengths
- State/local/campus interest
- Student publishing opportunities

Indirect Cost Contribution

Pricing example: \$14 retail

Cost-recovery pricing model:

- Cover direct costs+token amount toward indirect costs
- Publishing viewed as a service, not a business

Opportunities for Networking & Collaboration

MSU Press

- Distribution for out-of-print works
- Alternative publishing method for valued authors who propose specialized works with low anticipated sales

Faculty/academic units

- Publishing opportunities for students
- Demonstrate educational outcomes

Press attention

- Local press coverage of student publishing
- Specialized press outlets – comic art

Potential donors

- Reprint subject areas (cookbooks, comic art) attract donor attention

Stephanie Zang, a contributor to *The MSU Student Comic Art Anthology*, with a copy just printed on the Espresso Book Machine.

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MSU Libraries Espresso Book Machine