Library-Press Collaborations

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Background

In the past, publishers sold books and libraries bought them. They were separate entities with separate roles within an institution. These lines have blurred in the past two decades: As of 2013 there are 20 members of the Association of American University Presses (AAUP) that report through their university libraries and 58 institutions participating in the Library Publishing Coalition (LPC).

In order to better understand these evolving relationships, a review of university press and library collaborations was undertaken by the University of Arizona Press and the University of Arizona Library through the Association of Research Libraries Career Enhancement (ARL CEP) Program.

During the course of nine weeks, the ARL CEP Fellow reviewed existing literature and conducted 27 informal interviews with library deans, press directors, and scholarly communications leaders. Not all questions applied to all the respondents, as each library had a different relationship with each press. The interviews addressed partnership history, structure, motivations, goals and needs, administrative support, budget decisions, key stakeholders, and thoughts on the future of their relationships as well as scholarly communications.

Similar questions were asked at the University of Arizona (UA), where the Press has recently come under the administrative umbrella of the Library. The results were incorporated with the 27 informal interviews and analyzed to consider current challenges and possible collaborative future steps.

Crisis Story

High Prices for Libraries

- Technology changes and electronic journal packages put pressure on library budgets

Low Sales for Presses

- Less money for print monographs
- Not enough money for digital conversion

Unilateral action

- Big presses sue libraries
- Libraries pursue alternatives

And, of course, there's the economy.

Commonalities

Academic Libraries & University Presses

Mission

- Believe in high quality academic research and output
- Make academic work available to the public
- Serve consumers and producers

Institution

- Emerge from and serve academic institutions
- Are feeling pressure from institutions to prove their value
- Carry out day-to-day operations that are not clearly understood by institutions

Value

- Are positioned to offer unique expertise
- Are positioned to offer and act on big-picture thinking
- Are positioned to be leaders in scholarly communication

Matching Needs and Resources for Solutions

Library Needs	Press Resources	Solutions/Outcomes
Outreach to faculty and grad students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong connection with faculty• Publishing expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect faculty to librarians• Publishing panel
Outreach to community	Strong connection with community	Programmatic partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Speaker series- Arizona/local events
Outreach to funders	Publishing and marketing expertise	Nonprofit and for-profit publishing partnerships
Partner with UA institutions and conferences	Publishing and marketing expertise	Publication of gray literature such as conference proceedings and datasets
UA-relevant subject knowledge	Editorial expertise	Resource for library staff, shared knowledge

Press Needs	Library Resources	Solutions/Outcomes
Book discoverability	Metadata and cataloging expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversation about how the Press assigns metadata and how to better improve visibility in the Library catalog
Digitization of backlist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process in place for book digitization• Institutional repository	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online text discoverability• Possible POD sales• Online public access for local/relevant materials
Technology and staff	Funding for FTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tech-savvy staff• R&D help
Development & advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development officers• Faculty status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representation and support from administration

What is your definition of “publishing”?

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