Bibliodiversity in Practice

Rupert Gatti
Overview

• The Monographs Market: some economics
  • REF2014 data
  • Production costs
  • Distribution costs
  • Revenue flows

• OA book infrastructure: Scaling small
## UK REF2014 Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF2014 submissions</th>
<th>All panels</th>
<th>Arts &amp; Humanities (Panel D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authored books</td>
<td>12,873</td>
<td>6,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edited books</td>
<td>2,066</td>
<td>1,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters in books</td>
<td>13,253</td>
<td>10,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly editions</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>28,628</td>
<td>18,516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Tanner 2016, Fig. 1, p. 13*
REF2014: Panel D (Arts & Humanities)

- 8513 Books submitted
- 1,180 Publishers
- Top 10 publishers account for less than ½ of all submissions
- Large majority of books published in the UK
UK REF2014 Data: Publishers with over 20 titles

Source: Tanner 2016, Fig. 4, p. 18
Bibliodiversity

• Large number of small publishers

• Adema & Stone (JISC 2017) note emergence of new OA university presses (3) and scholar-led publishers (7) in previous 10 years

• Diversity is valuable
  Editorial controls
  Subject areas
  Innovation
### Production costs

*Full Cost of a High-Quality Digital Monograph (Excluding In-Kind Cost)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher Size</th>
<th>Group Average</th>
<th>Group Median</th>
<th>95th Percentile</th>
<th>5th Percentile</th>
<th>Highest Cost Title</th>
<th>Lowest Cost Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>$30,091</td>
<td>$27,955</td>
<td>$57,991</td>
<td>$18,678</td>
<td>$65,921</td>
<td>$16,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>$44,906</td>
<td>$42,851</td>
<td>$69,417</td>
<td>$26,292</td>
<td>$129,909</td>
<td>$19,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>$34,098</td>
<td>$33,199</td>
<td>$53,084</td>
<td>$18,149</td>
<td>$76,537</td>
<td>$15,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Large</td>
<td>$49,155</td>
<td>$48,547</td>
<td>$73,885</td>
<td>$31,760</td>
<td>$99,144</td>
<td>$24,234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Maron et al. 2016*
Production Costs (cont.)

• Dutch publishers (2013) in the range of €5,000 - €10,000 per title. (Ferwerda et al 2013)
• Open Book Publishers (2016) £5,555 ($8,333) per title

• Why so much lower than in the US?
  • No good studies to answer that
  • But born digital workflow may be one aspect for OBP

• Lesson:
  No evidence to suggest production costs are lower for larger publishers.

Economics: Industries with constant/decreasing returns to scale typically have a large number of producers.
Distribution

Dominated by a small number of big players

Differ by:
- Content (print or digital)
- Region
- Market (retail or library)
Distribution: Printed works (pre-digital)

Distributors: reduce publisher/library relationships
supply book metadata to library
MAKE PURCHASE DECISIONS for libraries!
Distribution: Printed works (pre-digital)

Authors → Publishers → Distributors → Retailers → Customers

Revenue (rides with the book)

Distributors: reduce publisher/library relationships
supply book metadata to library
MAKE PURCHASE DECISIONS for libraries!

Libraries
Distribution: Printed works (digital)

Authors  Publishers  Distributors  Retailers  Customers

Distributors: reduce publisher/library relationships
supply book metadata to library
MAKE PURCHASE DECISIONS for libraries!
Distributors: reduce publisher/library relationships
supply book metadata to library
MAKE PURCHASE DECISIONS for libraries!
Distribution: e-books (nonOA)

Authors → Publishers → Distributors → Retailers → Customers

Same distribution system (different distributors)

Distributors supply metadata from library
Distributors determine ebook collections
Distributors HOST the digital content for libraries

Libraries
No change in distribution to libraries
Distributors supply metadata from library
Distributors determine ebook collections
Distributors HOST the digital content for libraries
APC/BPC finance flow

- Reverses the financial flow
- Payment moves from the author to publisher, and publisher pays the distributors

Key thing: payments ‘travel’ with product. Institutional payments dependent on the object (book/article).

Maintains the status quo in production and distribution of books.
No incentives for industry wide cost reduction, innovation or disruptive processes.
No payments for infrastructural development or structural reform
Martin Eve, Graham Stone et al. (2016) ask the question – how much would it have cost if BPCs were paid for books in REF2014

Assumptions
- BPC of £7,500,
- 75% of the books submitted
- (but doesn’t consider number of books NOT submitted, but eligible for funding)

Then total cost of approx. £96m - that’s about £19.2m per year

Is this a big or a small number? Depends on your reference point:
As a proportion of all research funding for Arts Humanities Research Council budgets this is small
But maximum allowed annual UUK OA block grant funding of for OA outputs is only £24 million.
Alternative models

Just as most OA journals do not charge APCs,
There have been many new OA university presses and scholar-led initiatives founded over the past ten years.

Institutional support (UCL Press, White Rose University Press)
Collective library/uni funding (TOME, Lever Press)
Mixed models (Open Book Publishers, punctum books)
MEMBERS

African Minds
AMERICANA
Ariadna Ediciones
BABEL Working Group
Capacious
Collaborations
Counterpress
Culture Machine
CLACSO
Dancecult
darkmatter
Discover Society
electric.press
ePress
Ephemera
ÉSBC
FQS
Goldsmiths Press
Humanities Commons
Institute of Network Cultures
Internet Policy Review

Journal of Peer Production
Journal of Political Ecology
Journal of Radical Librarianship
Kyngervi
Limm
Mattering Press
MayFly Books
MedArXiv
Media Theory
Minor Compositions
MediaCommons Press
meson press
OA Media Studies
Open Access India
Open Book Publishers
Open Humanities Press
Open Knowledge Foundation
Photomediations Machine
Public Philosophy Journal
punctum books
REFRAME

Roving Eye Press
Scalar
sdvig press
Sounding Out!
Spheres
Studies in Arts and Humanities
sub\urban
Textshop Experiments
The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest
The Operating System
thresholds
Trespass
Tuwhera
tripleC
An Uncertain Commons
Vectors
Writing from Below
Zapruder World
OBP Funding Model

- Sales of printed works (and some digital editions – e.g. epub/mobi)
- Publishing Grants.
  - NO BPC – but ask authors to apply for grants if available
- Library Membership (over 120 libraries) $500 pa

Roughly 1/3 of net revenue comes from each source.

Crossick (2015) observed: a new environment for OA books will need a variety of business models.
Danger: Enclosure and Capture

“[e]verything we have gained by opening content and data will be under threat if we allow the enclosure of scholarly infrastructures”

Geoffrey Bilder, Jennifer Lin, and Cameron Neylon (2015)

Enclosure and capture are the dominant IT business strategies

SPARC_NA (Aspesi et al. 2019) documents the business models of the major journal and textbook publishers and their strategic manouevring to capture users and usage data across the entire research cycle.
Infrastructure to support (biblio)diversity

- We need infrastructure to support diversity of publisher, business models and technologies.

- Allowing competition, innovation and efficiency - and this needs to be protect from ‘enclosure’ by single entities

Enclosure and capture are the dominant business models for commercial IT platforms
Open and community managed infrastructures: Scaling small

• “Yes – but how do you scale?”
• “Yes – but are you sustainable?”

• At OBP we decided “it is better to support 10 other publishers, than to publish 10 times more titles”

• Now involved in a number of international communities
  OPERAS/HIRMEOS
  ScholarLed
  COPIM
OBPs contribution:

Creating open source software to collect and collate usage data from multiple platforms
  • Inefficient for each publisher create their own systems

  • Creating an open standard for usage data – to allow sharing of data between publishers/platforms etc
Five OA publishers

Collectively we
have published over 500 OA books,
will publish 80 new titles in the coming year

Not one of us use BPCs

First projects: development of
shared catalogue and
distributed metadata database
- Working with the Coko Foundation to create modular, open source software to improve book production workflow.

- **PubSweet**: A collaboration with eLife, Hindawi and EuropePMC
  - open source framework called based on the React JavaScript library

- **Editoria**: Collaboration with CUPress and California Digital Library
  - Book publishing platform using PubSweet

OBP developing PubSweet module for uploading of digital assets (images etc) – can slot into all PubSweet workflows
Collaboration with
• Universities of Coventry, Leicester, Durham, Birkbeck, UC Santa Barbara
• OAPEN, JISC, British Library ....

• Revenue platform
• Business model development and knowledge exchange
• Open and community controlled governance
• Experimental publishing methods and content use
• Open dissemination and discovery infrastructure
• Archiving and preservation
Conclusion

• Open access publishing processes are at a critical juncture.

• In journal and textbook publishing large commercial players are moving to dominate the digital publishing landscape
  • control the revenue streams
  • control technological development
  • control of definitions of scholarship itself of open access publishing processes.

• Such dominant players have not yet emerged within the open access monograph space
  there is a window of opportunity!
Enabling Diversity: Scaling Small

We need to recognise and embrace diversity - Avoid looking for a single model to scale
Develop infrastructure collectively - across ALL sectors of the scholarly community
Move away from an emphasis on BPC funding

But that will not be enough:
  we also need to actively develop systems resistant to capture and control by any single entity
  (be they commercial or non-commercial).

To do that we need to create open, community controlled and interoperable systems, protocols and standards – rather than just products.
Thank you

rupert.gatti@openbookpublishers.com

http://www.openbookpublishers.com/