



A University Press Ebook Consortium

**Association of Research Libraries
Membership Meeting**

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Food for Thought

- “We Have Met the Enemy and He Is PowerPoint”—
The New York Times, 4/27/10
- “PowerPoint makes us stupid,” Gen. James N.
Mattis, US Marine Corps, Joint Forces Commander



Why a UP Ebook Consortium?

- Fundamental need to improve our business relationship with a critical market: research libraries and the academy in general.
- Rapidly declining university press print book sales to academic libraries.
- University presses holding onto an outmoded print monograph publishing model.
- The library marketplace for e-books has hit a tipping point.

Context and Goals

- Shortcomings of the current UP ebook offerings to academic libraries, and opportunity for a better model.
- Gain leverage with vendors and, as ebooks gain wider use, reduce returns and used books.
- Fundamental shared interest of academic libraries and UPs to improve the relationship: a win/win approach.
- Show that university presses are innovators, not dinosaurs—we need to innovate in order to survive!



Context and Goals

- A financially sustainable business model for a consortium of collaborating university presses.
- Benefits of a consortium:
 - Destination site for peer-reviewed, “gold standard” UP scholarship.
 - One stop shopping for academic libraries.
 - Collaborative efficiencies and cost savings.
- Build it for the customer: the academic library.
 - Grant research designed to ensure project would be enthusiastically supported by the marketplace.

The Mellon Research Grant for a UP Ebook Consortium

- \$125,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
- Explore the desirability and feasibility of developing a branded consortium of university presses that would uniquely bring together university press content and sell it at fair prices to libraries.



Grant Management Team

Four Press Directors:

- Steve Maikowski, NYU Press (co-PI and lead press)
- Marlie Wasserman, Rutgers University Press (co-PI)
- Alex Holzman, Temple University Press
- Eric Halpern, University of Pennsylvania Press
- February 2010, additional directors recruited to assist with evaluation of business model: Ellen Faran (MIT); Doug Armato (Minnesota); Donna Shear (Nebraska)

Consultant Teams

- Two Consulting Groups Hired to Collaborate on the Grant Research
 1. Judy Luther and October Ivins of Informed Strategies
 2. Raym Crown of Chain Bridge Group
- Launched June 2009
- Completed final report April 2010



Major Findings of the Mellon Grant

1. Strong support for the proposed UP Ebook collaboration by both libraries and presses.
2. Significant and widespread interest in participation among UPs of all sizes: 52 presses completed surveys and analyzed their digital assets.
3. Consultants' research, business feasibility studies, and recommendations indicate that a UP ebook consortium is viable and financially sustainable.
4. Our proposed model delivers content in the way that scholars, students, and librarians are demanding.
5. Model has many advantages over the current business arrangements.



Key Features of the UP Ebook Consortium

- Participating presses: launch group to be UPs in North America who are full members of AAUP.
- Publication timing: ebook simultaneous to print, and early metadata delivery.
- Pricing: frontlist titles to cost less than print, significantly discounted backlist, tiered pricing based on Carnegie classifications.
- File formats: start with PDF; XML as a goal for next phase.
- Subject-based collections of both frontlist and backlist; individual titles could be purchased from vendors of choice.
- Hope to launch with approximately 5,000 frontlist and 25,000 backlist titles.



Key Features, con't

- Purchase Models: purchase and subscription.
- User Features: “DRM-Light” but will support (details tbd):
 - ILL, E-reserves
 - Simultaneous use
 - Cut and paste, downloading
 - Printing
- Library Advisory Board.
- University Press Governance Model.
- Counter compliance usage stats, Portico/LOCKSS/CLOCKSS archiving, excellent MARC records.
- Potential Business Partners.
- Launch Date: Spring 2011.

Next Steps for the University Press Ebook Consortium

- Additional funding needed for next stage of planning and development: May-September 2010.
- Business prospectus and commitment letter for presses.
- Consult with Library Advisory Board.
- Formal RFP out to business partner finalists.
- Continue to operate in the spirit of collaboration and transparency with both other university press ebook initiatives, as well as with libraries, scholars, etc.
- Prepare major \$ grant to support project launch.
- Business partner and each university press will develop both collaborative and individual press marketing programs.