# Publishing by Academic Libraries

Kevin S. Hawkins

**I.      I'll give a brief history of academic libraries' involvement in publishing scholarly literature and teaching materials, especially in open access, and then tell you a bit about the Library Publishing Coalition, a consortium that is providing a home for this activity.**

**II.      Origins in addressing serials crisis**

   **A.      Libraries have long been facing cost pressures on acquiring all the journals and books that they want.**

   **B.      By the late 90s, some major research libraries had created their own digital libraries in which they hosted digitized versions of selected materials from their collections. They realized this could be leveraged to host new content as well (not just materials digitized from print), so they started experimenting with publishing student theses and dissertations, journals, and books using this infrastructure.**

   **C.      In the 2000s, these platforms were increasingly packaged as open-source software for other institutions to use.  The most popular for publishing became DSpace (for dissertations and eprints) and Open Journal Systems, with later related products from the Public Knowledge Project for conferences and monographs.**

   **D.      More recently, following a trend in software, there's been a move away from systems you install on your own to shared infrastructure, where an institution pays to use software hosted elsewhere.  The most common product in this area is Digital Commons from bepress, which hosts not only institutional repositories of eprints but also online journals. Bepress hosts over 750 law reviews and has a unified submission system for them, so it's even more of a player in law reviews than other open-access journals.**

   **E.      There are also prominent platforms for open-access publishing in Latin America and in France that receive major government support to**

sustain their operations. These provide services to scholarly journals that remain independent of the platform itself.

## III.    The OER movement

A.    Meanwhile, since the 2000s, there's been growing interest, especially from UNESCO and major philanthropies, in making education more accessible in the developing world. Some institutions began sharing recordings of lectures, slidedecks, lecture notes, exercises, and more online. These efforts weren't usually based at libraries.

B.    As more public attention has come to the rising cost of textbooks, there's been increasing interest in this. A few platforms for creating and remixing coursepacks and textbooks have developed—notably, Connexions, which is behind OpenStax College, and H2O, which is geared towards law faculty creating casebooks.

C.    Academic libraries are moving into this area as well, often partnering with administrators on campus to provide incentives to and support for faculty to create, adapt, or review alternative textbooks.

D.    Frankly, alternative textbooks have more traction with the public, and sometimes even with administrators, than open-access scholarship because the costs are felt directly by the students or their parents.

## IV.    University presses and libraries

A.    We've seen dozens of university presses come under the supervision of the library on their campus. This may lead to more collaborations between the staffs of the two, and at some institutions we're actually seeing an integration of library and press staff and functions.

## V.    Library Publishing Coalition

A.    Seeing the increasing activity around publishing by academic libraries, Martin Halbert and some other leaders in academic libraries launched the Library Publishing Coalition, which has become a consortium of 61 academic libraries involved in publishing.

**B.**     It produces the Library Publishing Directory, whose latest edition provides information on publishing activities at 124 institutions around the world.

**C.**     While originally based in North America, effective July 1, membership in the LPC will be open to academic libraries around the world. There's been a lot of alternative publishing happening in Australia for a while, with an inter-institutional community just starting to form there.  There's some activity based at academic libraries in the UK (where, as in Australia, they are sometimes reviving long-defunct university press brands) and also in continental Europe.

**D.**     It's exciting to see new university presses being launched, tied to libraries and with radically new models: Amherst College Press and Stockholm University Press come to mind. The latter has embraced the model of using shared back-end operations, which is much more common in commercial publishing than in university press publishing, by outsourcing a lot of their work to Ubiquity Press.