



Open Education Network

PREPARE TO SHARE

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First, let's go over some terms



Conventional printing & distribution

- Print runs
- Distributors: sales and order fulfillment
- Sale on consignment to wholesalers and bookstores at varying discounts off retail price; unsold inventory is refunded if returned to the distributor or destroyed



Digital printing (short-run & print-on-demand)

- Allows replenishing inventory in small increments
- Facilitates the “long tail” of publishing books for niche audiences
- Available in the supply chain (for publishing houses) and direct to consumer (set up & purchase online)

A note about versions of open books



Continuous updating

Even though tools like Pressbooks let you continually update a book and its print-ready PDF, there aren't really workflows for readers to order the current version on demand.

Anyway, it's confusing for students if you update a book mid-semester.



Implications for new editions

- Readers expect that all copies of an edition will be identical.
- If you make changes beyond fixing errata, you really should:
 - Update title page to clearly identify the new edition
 - Assign a new ISBN
 - Stop selling the old edition (?)

Questions to consider



Will you sell books at cost or aim to generate revenue?

Sell at cost

- No income-tax implications
- No ethical implications about profiting from students

Generate revenue

- Will it go to author, to institution, or be split? Flow through institution to author? (If institution owns copyright, does author even have right to any revenue?)
- Accounting & tax implications for institution & author
- Institutional policies about instructors assigning their own books? And ethical considerations?



Print run vs. POD?

Print run

- Requires upfront investment, but you get a lower unit cost
- Need to store unsold copies, receive orders & payment, and ship to whatever countries you are taking orders from.
 - You can pay a distributor to do these things. They charge by storage volume!

POD only

- No upfront investment, but unit cost is higher
- POD printers handle all fulfillment (receiving orders & payment and shipping to customers)
- Will bookstores stock? Does it matter?
 - Financial aid and scholarships tied to a bookstore
 - Policy requirement to refer students to campus bookstore?



Color printing?

Interior in grayscale

- Cheaper to print

Interior in color

- More expensive to print
- POD printers usually require that the whole interior be in color even if only a few pages take advantage of it.
- Photo-quality paper is more expensive than paper that is sufficient for simple color diagrams.



Binding type?

- Covers are always in color!
- Hardcover bindings (case binding and cloth binding) are more expensive than paperback.
 - You cannot print less than 500 copies at a time with a color interior and hardcover binding and sell for a reasonable price. Trust me.



Where are your customers? (1)

- Lots of options if you are willing to sell only to domestic customers
- Shipping abroad raises extra complications – are customs and mail/parcel services reliable?
 - Distributors will ship overseas but only with traceable shipping (more expensive)
 - Largest POD vendors have printing locations around the world to speed things up, but even they won't ship to certain countries.
- Keep in mind online students in other countries taking courses at your institution



Where are your customers? (2)

If you are printing mostly for the benefit of users in a region of the world with poor connectivity, consider printing there rather than trying to ship from here to there!

Have you considered distribution options with a connection to your institution?



Connections at your institution

- Campus bookstore?
- University press?

They might even be willing to work directly with your authors!

If the author owns the copyright and will receive all revenue

Let them set up the book directly with a POD service so you don't have to be in the middle!

Questions?