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Knowledge Unlatched

Open Access and Scholarly Books: Workshop Report

19 June 2013

On 19 June 2013 Knowledge Unlatched and the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School jointly convened a one-day workshop titled *Open Access and Scholarly Books* in Cambridge, MA.

The workshop brought together a group of 21 invited publishers, librarians, academics and Open Access innovators to discuss the challenge of making scholarly books Open Access. This report captures discussions that took place on the day.

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Introduction

On 19 June 2013 Knowledge Unlatched and the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School jointly convened a one-day workshop titled *Open Access and Scholarly Books* in Cambridge, MA.

The workshop brought together a group of 21 invited publishers, librarians, academics and Open Access innovators to discuss the challenge of making scholarly books Open Access.

The event took place under Chatham House rules. As such, it provided a unique opportunity for senior representatives of major scholarly presses, librarians, university administrators, research funders and academic thought leaders to exchange frank perspectives on the challenges facing monographs and the role that Knowledge Unlatched might play in effecting positive change in the scholarly communication landscape.

The day was divided into six sessions:

1. Open Access Mandates and Implications for Books;
2. Emerging Business Models for OA Books;
3. The Impact of OA on the Monograph Ecosystem;
4. Scholarly Publishing and Collective Action;
5. Metadata and Metrics to Support OA Monographs;
6. Roundup and Routes Forward.

Each session included short presentations from workshop participants, followed by guided open discussion on the theme of the session.

Conversations throughout the day were rich and informative. In addition to highlighting key areas that should be tackled as part of the Knowledge Unlatched research program, the event provided the Knowledge Unlatched team with an opportunity to gather feedback on the global library consortium model for funding Open Access monographs currently being piloted, as well as insight into how the model might be refined and improved.

This document is intended to provide a general overview of topics covered and key questions raised during the workshop. It draws on notes taken during the workshop and attempts to synthesize these into a summary of key points and areas for further consideration/action.

Session One: Open Access Mandates and Implications for Books

The first session began with short presentations on the state of Open Access mandates in the US, UK, Continental Europe and China. The introduction of funding mandates requiring the Open Access publication of research outputs is an important trend around the world. Although mandates requiring Open Access books have not (so far) come into play, awareness of the value of Open Access approaches to publishing research is growing.

In contrast to the US, UK and Europe, China has not so far favoured a mandated approach to the Open Access publication of research outputs. Nonetheless, large-scale, government-funded Open Access projects do exist in China and there is interest in Open Access publishing as a mechanism for improving the quality and transparency of the scholarly communication system.

Key points that emerged from the discussion that followed the presentations included:

- Open Access mandates have focused on STM disciplines (perhaps reflecting proportional distribution of research investment). In general, the humanities tend to be neglected by policymakers considering Open Access. Humanities scholars need to fight for a place in policy discussions on Open Access.
- It seems unlikely that the core outputs of the Humanities and Social Sciences will remain closed in the longer term, while STM outputs will be required to be freely available to end users. Monographs will, at some point, become subject to a requirement for Open Access publishing – at least in most subject areas, if not all.
- There is a need for a deeper understanding of how a decision to publish books on Open Access licenses will impact publishers. For example, how will the adoption of Open Access content for University courses impact publisher revenues? What will publishers need to do to absorb these changes?
- Questions remain about how established workflows and processes will be affected for publishers taking part in Knowledge Unlatched. For example, what will happen to titles that are proposed by publishers to KU but not selected by libraries for unlatching? If they are not unlatched by KU, will they be published through normal channels? In the same timeframe?
- There are also questions about how library workflows will be affected by Open Access initiatives for books, like Knowledge Unlatched. For example, how can Knowledge Unlatched ensure that libraries are not paying more than once for the same content? If a library helps to unlatch a collection of titles via KU, but also purchases content from aggregators or publishers, will it be possible to avoid paying twice for the same content?

Session Two: Emerging Business Models for Open Access Books

This session began with two short presentations that provided a general overview of the diverse business model experiments currently underway in relation to OA books. These presentations gave particular attention to the model being piloted by Knowledge Unlatched, which aims to facilitate a single, shared payment from libraries to publishers in return for front-list titles being made available on Open Access licenses; It also included a comprehensive presentation on the approach that will be taken by the Amherst College Press, when it is launched. Amherst College Press will publish new works by Liberal Arts scholars. Its publications will be made freely available under Open Access licenses. In the first instance, Amherst College Press is being supported by two positions funded by the library. It is also raising funds to support additional positions and to support its on-going running costs.

The extent to which libraries, publishers and universities are already experimenting with diverse approaches to enabling the Open Access publication of books, as well as a desire on all sides for opportunities to learn by doing stood out in this session.

Session Three: The Impact of Open Access on the Monograph Ecosystem

This session began with three perspectives - that of a publisher, a university administrator, and a librarian - on the monograph ecosystem. The session highlighted the challenges faced by stakeholders at all levels in the monograph landscape as they struggle to come to terms with changes in technology, rapid developments in markets for content, and users who expect new kinds of products, services and support.

Once again, the willingness of universities, libraries and publishers to experiment with Open Access and to work towards innovative solutions to challenges confronting scholarly communication stood out. However, this session also drew attention to the impediments to the large-scale adoption of existing Open Access approaches to books, even within mission-centred organizations that are committed to research,

scholarship and the dissemination of knowledge and which recognize the wider benefits of Open Access publishing.

The discussion that followed the presentations in this session was particularly engaged. Points that emerged included:

- The cost of providing access to content via a library can be higher than the buying price of the content itself. As a result, free is sometimes expensive.
- It is important that Open Access monograph projects are sensitive to the established systems and workflows of libraries, to ensure that the costs of integrating Open Access content are manageable for libraries.
- More granularity in choice is not necessarily better. Selecting titles individually is time consuming and can be expensive for libraries.
- Packages are important for libraries – and the capacity of Knowledge Unlatched to offer libraries useful volumes of content will be key to the project's utility for libraries.
- Scale in the number of publishers taking part in KU makes the model attractive for libraries.
- Individual consumer logic is not the same as institutional logic driving libraries.
- The challenge: How to make an intentional change in an ecosystem, for the better?
- Universities are generally concerned with the health and vibrancy of research, costs and efficiency, community and vendor relationships: compliance and innovation.
- Changes in vendor demands and new technologies demand short-term responses from universities, as well as longer-term thinking.
- Universities have an interest in moving beyond old content business models – competitively and collaboratively.
- Opportunities to understand research performance in more sophisticated ways are attractive for university administrators.
- However, affecting cultural shift across large institutions can take time. Support from the top is helpful, but it doesn't always translate into acceptance of new approaches or willingness to change at lower levels in an organization.
- Why do academic publishers largely resist OA publishing even though they are often mission driven? The challenge of reconciling conflicting pressures.
- How can demand driven acquisitions work with individual title selection?
- Collection performance is under fire pushing libraries towards PDA/DDA. However, if all monograph sales came from PDA/DDA the cash flow impact would force many publishers out of monograph publishing.
- Lack of metadata for books comparable to that of journals along with only recent shifts to digital formats can make monographs vulnerable to arguments that books are not being well used. What insights can reframe this conversation as libraries move their print collections further away from access?
- How do the sources of funding for publishing change the incentives and behaviour of publishers?
- How will a model in which funding comes from one large source, rather than many individual sales, impact how publishers approach their task?
- How well are markets working now to give academic publishers the right incentives? What new market-like mechanisms could be introduced?
- Can OA play a role in helping to stop the downward spiral in humanities publishing? (i.e. in which good scholarship is not accepted for publication).
- Is the amount of academic publishing in the humanities declining?
- How could markets be organized differently to create a healthier academic publishing ecosystem?

- What can we learn from journal publishing – in that author payment for OA publishing has not created a “race to the bottom”?
- What impact metrics should we be capturing/tracking/driving for OA monographs?
- What is the role of the selector librarian? (Packages vs. individual title selection).
- Can different value propositions that publishers bring be un-bundled and paid for separately and potentially by different payers?
- There are different ecosystems at play. Publication is part of both providing content to support learning and also allocating prestige for scholarly recognition.

Session Four: Scholarly Publishing and Collective Action

This session delved into the question of how Knowledge Unlatched might overcome the collective action challenge. Collective action problems can be defined as problems that require a change in behaviour from large numbers of actors in order to secure a benefit for an entire community. Although these changes may produce significant benefits across the system as a whole, there may be no immediate benefit to any one actor in the system.

The session began with a theoretical perspective on collective action problems and approaches to mechanism design that might prove useful in addressing them in the case of Knowledge Unlatched. It then continued with a more focused presentation on the proposed Knowledge Unlatched model, which included preliminary results from the KU survey of US libraries on the project’s model.

Points that emerged from this session included:

- What “mechanism design” will ensure that libraries participate?
 - Consortium.
 - Auction (1st price, 2nd price).
 - Blind auction (libraries propose value for them).
- Note: in addition to game theory it is worth considering institutional economics and behavioural economics when thinking about the challenge.
- Subject collection and digital content budgets are allocated differently; our goal should be to get KU in the digital budget.
- Some libraries are beginning to move towards paying gold APCs for journal articles. Not a huge stretch to support a project like KU – similar rationale.
- Different challenges as KU scales and over time. Need for model evolution over time.
- Importance of metrics and capacity to engage research communities with rich data on use and access.
- Advantages to early buy-in: Price advantage for early members/participants? Graduated increase in price as time goes on? For example, Annual v 5-year commitment, with a discount for 5-year commitment? A better deal for buying in early as an incentive to jump first.
- Different pricing based on institution size?
- Advantage of books is the existence of published RRP. Big difference when compared to journals, where price is much less transparent/fixed.
- Importance of trying to keep a RRP as part of the system, as a reference point.
- RRP for books a result of the fact that they have remained physical objects for much longer. Tendency for that to change as the shift to digital continues.
- Metadata may not need to be excludable, just more convenient.
- Librarians fed up with non-transparent models. Would welcome a transparent pricing system.

- Value of transparency in creating trust and establishing community norms.
- Transparency in pricing may be a requirement of participation for some institutions. Not just desirable, required by charter etc.
- KU as an indicator of prestige? Usually prestige indications are derived from the opinions of peers. KU provides an indication of librarian opinions, not peers. Problem?
- Why would publishers continue to put titles into KU, if most monographs lose money? Prestige. KU helps to mitigate the risk to publishers.
- KU: Not intended to replace the whole market. Value to publishers of continuing to innovate in versions sold through other channels. Value to the scholarly communication landscape of continued, market-driven innovation by publishers.
- Membership fee: most libraries that responded to the KU business model survey to date indicated that they would be willing to pay a modest fee for membership.
- Tiers – not a big issue for the first round pilot, but likely to be an issue later on as the model scales.
- Metadata as a distinguishing value proposition. Difficulty in monitoring use by a consortium of libraries using a common system.
- Governance rights – pay your fee to come sit at the table.
- Managing library expectations and challenge of path dependency.

Session Five: Metadata and Metrics to Support Open Access Monographs

This session dealt with the very important question of where metadata and metrics might fit into the Open Access monograph landscape. It also considered how Knowledge Unlatched might make the most of opportunities to gather and share information about Open Access books and considered the value to the project and the wider scholarly community of doing so.

The session began with a presentation on metadata design principles, approaches to evaluation metrics, which included relevant exemplars in scholarly publishing, before moving onto a discussion. Points that emerged from this session included:

- Metadata – ability to add value in terms of discovery, use and reuse of content.
- The value of metadata design in ensuring that information that might allow the KU project to be evaluated is collected.
- Design of metadata: design for modularity, extensibility, capacity for refinement, capacity to support more than one language.
- Value in capturing metadata early – more expensive to capture it retrospectively.
- Design for automatic extraction.
- Proxies for interest (citations), proxies for direct use (downloads), proxies for predictive value (Google rank).
- Ecosystem Integration: SUSHI/COUNTER.
- DOIs – internally within monographs, for data sets and rich content, chapters.
- FundRef – funding identifiers. Could these be used to identify/credit institutions that unlatched a book?
- ORCID/ISNI contributor identifiers.
- Aligning rewards (for unlatching institutions, for research funders, for authors) with metadata strategy.
- Leveraging points: Can KU create incentives/leverage network effects in order to encourage rich, useful metadata?

Discussion:

- A value-add of a KU publication: usage metrics for publishers.
- Challenge of making it clear to publishers how important metadata will be in this system.
- Metrics as an opportunity to engage research funders and policymakers.
- Qualitative metrics, not just quantitative. The possibility of asking readers why they found the Open Access format of a book useful? Personal stories etc.
- Trend towards more metadata in the monograph landscape, anyway (i.e. chapter level DOI records).
- Importance of discovery via content, not just via metadata.
- Information to authors on usage and downloads; requires cooperation from publishers (sharing emails).
- Measurement of impact v quality. Funding authorities eager to be able to measure and quantify impact. Market for impact metrics, impact economy among authors.
- How can the source of a particular impact be identified? Sale of additional content by publishers, or impact from OA version?
- PIRUS – a code of practice created by Project COUNTER, meant to allow accurate counts of journal article usage in all electronic situations (institutional repositories being only one of those situations).

Session Six: Round-up and Routes Forward

This session began with a thoughtful overview of the issues raised by the day, which was followed by discussion.

Points raised during the overview included:

- Lots of players all with their own interests. Importance of getting incentives right for authors, publishers, libraries.
- Mission + Self Interest = better results. How can we get this right?
- Are the incentives being offered by KU adequate? Could they be tweaked?
- 'Price' competition - can market forces help to bring prices down? How can we encourage positive movement in the market?
- Large collections v individual subject collections: The 'modest' deal?
- Market signals to control costs. Is the current system a broken market that is failing to restore costs?
- OA as an intervention that can help to restore a functioning market.
- Difficulties of big deals: Hide market signals.
- How can quality be measured? If market signals are restored, then markets become a better indicator of quality.
- Duality between disruption/non-disruption.
- Minimizing disruption will smooth the way to next steps. However, if the next step is a big one, disruption can be unavoidable.
- Disruptive/non-disruptive are not mutually exclusive. It is possible to develop a less disruptive option, and to be planning a more disruptive change.
- Market expansion effects of OA – not uniform for all books. May be changing now that digital reading is becoming more popular.
- Value of experiments in helping to identify the kinds of books that experience increased sales when available OA.

- Exploring OA book territory – lots of experiments useful. Not necessarily one solution for every market. However, intelligent experimentation is important – not deliberate failure.
- Quality – unlikely to go away, but best to avoid creating a business model with perverse incentives.
- Scale and collective action. Collective action problems associated with large scale.
- KU is a coordinated model. Are there things that individual authors/publishers/readers/institutions can do?
- We don't need to answer all questions before doing the experiment. What experiments should we do?
- Publishers – please share your data on your OA experiments.
- WHY did you decide to do an experiment as a publisher? Power of shared data to inspire experimentation among others.

Points made during the Roundup discussion included:

- Experiment: Who outside the academy is reading the books we are publishing? Where do our books go? What do they do with them?
- Finding ways to track use and impact within institutions. What is the impact of books on learning?
- How can we measure readerships more accurately?
- KU – capacity to link authors to their institution. Can we do this with ORCID?
- Can OA discussions be complemented with a symposium on how to dissociate ourselves from commitments to unreasonably priced content.
- Can publishers be forced to compete with free?
- Challenge of winning the competition for authors – not a challenge of winning competition for readers.
- OA as a route to more citations. Altmetrics and metrics to demonstrate value of publishing on OA.
- Scholarly societies and support for OA. Kathleen Fitzpatrick.
- Need to work with incentives that already exist. Prestige of publisher and existing requirements of promotion and tenure committees.
- Prestige may provide a flywheel against low quality. We need to work with prestige. Can do that and embrace open.
- Collective action possibilities: Disinvestment?
- An OA world dominated by the same big players that dominated the closed publishing landscape. Is that the world we want?
- Can we engage with Thomson Reuters to find out more about the effects of OA on citations?
- However, if Thomson Reuters are able to count citations, we should be able to.
- Importance of any KU platform being indexed by Google Scholar.
- OA doesn't guarantee visibility. Visibility requires crawling!
- What else, if anything, can libraries (and/or others) do to support on going revenue streams for publishers and rights holders once a work is OA? (i.e. solicit donations? Help promote P and enhanced E versions).

Summary and Conclusions

Developing systems that foster trust, transparency and which enable markets to operate effectively were identified as key areas that Knowledge Unlatched needs to focus on in order to maximize the initiative's chances of enabling a sustainable shift to Open Access for monographs.

Making information gathered via KU available to publishers and libraries and ensuring that the consortium provides participants in the program with an opportunity to learn more about how Open Access impacts titles, readerships and markets were also identified as important priorities for the project.

We were delighted to have the opportunity to spend the day with people willing to think creatively about practical challenges associated with trying to affect positive change in the scholarly communication landscape and look forward to taking this agenda forward. We hope you enjoyed the day as much as we did.

Thank you from the KU team