Oxford Handbooks Online

Abstract and Keywords

This chapter on academic publishing covers the origins of the field; the impact of the two major drivers of change—the printing press and the Internet—on the spread of knowledge; Open Access; the monograph; university presses; academic libraries; commercial academic publishers; trade publishers and the cross-over book; peer review; journals; HE textbook publishing. It looks at all these areas through the lens of change, stressing the need for greater connectivity between the various communities of practice involved in the academic publishing field, and underlines the historic and existing collaborative and innovative strengths it contains.

Keywords: Academic, scholarly communication, open access, university press, monographs, books, policy, Research Excellence Framework (REF)

ACADEMIC publishers provide a critical set of services to scholars. Without their expertise, co-ordination, and reach, research could not be commissioned, peer reviewed, edited, produced, and disseminated. These processes ensure academic rigour, resulting in trustworthy outputs that form the intellectual capital upon which scholarly reputations, and our collective access to learning and ideas, relies. Academic, or scholarly, publishing is an area that covers a universe of traditional and emerging, constantly changing subjects, formats, and practices, so it is not surprising that attempts to define this are elusive and hard to find. The term 'academic publishing' includes monographs, journals, editions of texts, higher education textbooks, and collections of essays, all of which have undergone some sort of peer review process. Simply put, the field covers the production and dissemination of knowledge and research, but, intricately involved with political issues around education and the value of the knowledge economy, accessibility, and status, it is, and always has been, a complex, innovative, and reflexive industry. As one leading UK academic publisher explains,

Original, cutting-edge research is the fire that fuels knowledge and education. Without the dissemination of new thought, new ideas, and challenges to current thinking, textbooks don't advance. What we publish today will impact what our children study tomorrow, our social policy, and how businesses are run.

(Burridge 2013)

This emphasizes the potential influence of academic publishing, wherever in the world it takes place. The sheer diversity of different publishing models has meant it has not been possible to show global academic publishing statistics before, or, indeed, comprehensive statistics of any area of publishing as a global industry, but the International Publishers Association is collecting data in 2017 to enable the publication of the first annual world publishing statistics survey in 2018. However, in the UK, the Publishers Association reported that academic and professional publishing was up 10 per cent to **(p. 260)** £2.4 billion in 2016, and that while the share of journal subscriptions income fell to 79 per cent the income from Open Access article processing charges increased by 46 per cent to £81m. (Publishers Association 2017) Those statistics show that, in the UK at least, academic publishing is expanding: and that it is changing. The drive to create content that is Open Access, that is, 'peer-reviewed academic research that is free to read online and that anybody can redistribute and reuse, with some restrictions' (Eve 2014: 1) has been one of the transformative factors in academic publishing since the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, the impetus to spread research and knowledge widely has arguably underpinned academic publishing since its beginnings in the late medieval period.

Academic Publishing Origins

When, in the late fifteenth century, printing began to overtake (but not entirely replace) manuscript culture in the West, it 'revolutionised all forms of learning'. (Eisenstein 2005: 3) Before this point learning was communicated via limited, handwritten texts, produced in scriptoria, and situated, in the main, in monasteries or in university towns around Europe. Academic publishing was quite literally circumscribed by the geographical location of manuscripts and the difficulty of travelling to access them, and by the lack of reading skill in the larger population. However, with the coming of the printing press, it was possible to reach more people more quickly, and print smaller, more portable books, pamphlets, and tracts, and this in turn encouraged a wider reading public to emerge. By 1480 there were printing presses in over 110 towns in Western Europe; in 1638 the first printing office in the United States was opened in Massachusetts Bay close to what became Harvard University. The first book in Russia was printed in 1563, the first in Constantinople in 1727, and the first in Greece in 1821. Presses were in use in Abyssinia in 1515, in Goa by 1557, in Macao by 1588, and in Nagasaki by 1590. In China, where printing was already highly developed, the European printing methods were brought in and an initiative, under Father Ruggieri from Naples, collected and translated great works of western science and philosophy into Chinese. (Febvre and Martin 2010: 182–

215) The spread of learning was transformed by printing: since the arrival of the World Wide Web and the Internet, in the late twentieth century, another major transformation has occurred, allowing for faster, almost instantaneous access to resources from across the globe. This has brought with it new issues and questions around copyright and IP, a very current and key area of debate as this chapter is being written. In 2004, for example, Google Books announced partnerships with several of the largest research libraries in the world to scan, digitize, and make available texts in their collections, and this initiative has caused ongoing legal battles with publishers who challenge Google's right to reproduce copyrighted work without compensating authors or publishers.

(p. 261) Open Access

These large-scale digitization projects underline the ubiquity of the online developments, which, coupled with the explosion of different ways to self-publish (either online via blogs or websites, or via ebooks and ebook providers) have questioned the role of the publisher. This is increasingly and particularly the case in academic publishing, where the value of the publisher's services to the author has become fiercely debated (e.g. Meadows and Wulf 2016). As publishers move away from being content providers to providers of services enhancing and changing the user's access and consumption practices, and as content therefore becomes more open, will the core publisher assets of brand and aggregation continue to hold value?

These debates are most evident in the science subjects, where the main focus is on the costs of journal access; it is no surprise, therefore, that this is the area in which the Open Access (OA) movement has gained the most successful traction. Open Access has its origins in the free culture movement of the late twentieth century, developing alongside the growth of technological innovations. The movement sought to break free from the commercial company boundaries which restricted the use of software to proprietory contexts. It thus confronted copyright practices head on, and was soon being applied to knowledge and the dissemination of that knowledge within the science disciplines. The principles were brought together for the first time in the Budapest (2002), Bethesda (2003) and Berlin Declarations (2003). In the humanities, where imperatives around the need for fast and wide publication are not as pressing, and funding is not as readily available, the Open Access movement has been slower to progress, but it is now one of the key issues within academic publishing, and has strong government support in the UK and in Europe, while in the USA many university presses are exploring OA models (see Crossick 2015; Jisc 2016; Maxwell et al. 2017). Peter Suber, an early advocate of OA, argues that academic authors should embrace it: 'It's enough to know that their employers pay them salaries, freeing them to give away their work, that they write for impact rather than money, and that they score career points when they make the kind of impact they hoped to make' (Suber 2012: 2).

This is one compelling perspective: other voices, particularly in some areas of the creative humanities, argue that their outputs are artistic, and often produced outside of

core working hours, and that they should be able to hold onto the right to publish where they choose. It is a zone fraught with anxieties and misapprehensions about what OA means. OA publication still incurs costs, and the questions of who pays, and when, and how, are still obfuscated by a multitude of different business models and approaches (see Jubb 2017: 189-95).

There are two main models, called 'green' and 'gold' OA. The green route is where work is deposited in an institutional repository, and the gold refers to OA from the publisher's website. There are a growing number of additional kinds of OA, such as 'diamond' (free to both authors and readers), but it remains to be seen how the OA landscape will finally establish itself.

(p. 262) The push towards OA is helped by policy: in the UK, the Research Excellence Framework mandates that all journal articles submitted for consideration should be OA, and research funders require that findings and outputs from funded projects are OA, too. Although there are no comparable large-scale reviewing systems in other countries, OA is gaining traction in Europe and the USA via other routes, such as the Digital Public Library of America, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, or the OAPEN project, spearheaded by the Netherlands (Eve 2014: 82–3). In Japan and China, OA is continuing to grow in importance, and in India, the National Knowledge Commission recommended an OA policy for academics in 2007 (Eve 2014: 80). In Australia all universities now have an institutional repository, and two of the major research councils require green deposit of articles with a maximum of a twelve-month embargo (Eve 2014: 81).

OA is a global publishing shift, and a helpful starting-point from which to examine other academic publishing issues. Not only does it ask questions about the purpose of research and how it should be disseminated, but it provokes the different groups involved in academic work to reconsider the value of their own role in the publication circuit. All of the various communities of practice that connect via academic publishing help create a structure of complex working relationships. These communities are: scholars, teachers, students, publishers, booksellers, librarians, intermediaries, policy makers, and learned societies and organizations. All these agents collaborate to write, produce, disseminate and preserve academic work; in the twenty-first century these collaborations become more vital, as 'new, genetically modified digital formats force us to rethink what an academic book can be' (Mole 2016: 11).

What is an Academic Book?

John Thompson claims that 'there is one key development in the field of academic publishing over the last few decades that stands out above all others: the decline of the scholarly monograph' (Thompson 2005: 93). As academic library budgets shrink, so does the market for book sales. This perceived crisis for the scholarly monograph does not represent the full picture, however. As Geoffrey Crossick reveals via a study conducted for his *Report on Monographs and Open Access*, figures gathered from Cambridge

University Press, Oxford University Press, Routledge, and Palgrave all showed 'very significant growth' in the numbers of new monographs being published (Crossick 2015: 21). Sales may be dropping, but there are new types of publication and new kinds of production which means the number of ways books are being consumed and found is increasing rapidly. OA, as discussed above, is just one of these drivers. Michael Jubb says:

> Demand for books is not necessarily expressed in sales: for many academic books, the great majority of readers and readings come via libraries, where demand may be buoyant, and for OA books, demand is expressed almost wholly in views and (p. 263) downloads. Nevertheless, for books published under traditional models, sales revenues underpin the publishing process. We have referred at several points in this report to declining sales for academic books in the arts and humanities, particularly in the per-title level; increases in prices per title; constraints on library budgets for book purchasing; and reduced exposure to consumers. There is a notable absence, however, of comprehensive and robust data to facilitate a full examination of such trends.

> (Jubb 2017: 48)

Jubb's point about the lack of data shows why attempts to precisely map how far the sales of monographs have declined have been so problematical. He also emphasizes that although sales figures currently come from sources like the Publishers Association's annual *Statistics Yearbook*, which collects data from its members, and Nielsen Bookscan, which collects data from the electronic point of sale systems in retail environments, there is no clear definition of what an academic book is for either of these sources, and the Book Industry Communications (BIC) subject codes do not map neatly onto those used by academia. In addition, subjects are often aggregated, and finally, the retail sales data from Bookscan does not cover sales to libraries, bulk institutional sales, or individual titles within custom packs, all 'critically important' parts of the market for academic books (Jubb 2017: 48).

So, the question, 'what is an academic book?' is not an easy one to answer. Not only are the subject codes different, depending on the context in which they were added, but defining them by their origins from an academic publisher throws up dilemmas, too.

University Presses

Academic books are produced by a wide variety of different publishers: the university press is the most traditional, but commercial academic publishers have also grown respectable credentials, and this has created a mixed and dynamic publishing ecosystem for scholars.

In the UK, the university presses based at Oxford (established 1586) and Cambridge (established 1534) have the longest and most prestigious reputations. Known the world over, their heritage in academic publishing is unrivalled, and their brands attract work

from top scholars in all subject areas. In the USA, the university press is the dominant part of the academic market, with publishers such as Harvard University Press (established 1913), Chicago University Press (established 1890), and Yale University Press (established 1908) producing lists which include journals and key reference texts. Donald Bean, the business manager of Chicago University Press, was appointed the first president of the American Association of University Presses (AAUP) in 1938. Today the AAUP has 142 members in 14 different countries, including Jamaica, China, New Zealand, South Africa, and Egypt (AAUP, About AAUP). In 2016, a University Press Redux conference was held in the UK, an event stimulated by the Arts and _(p. 264) Humanities Research Council/British Library Academic Book of the Future Project, and delegates represented over forty university presses (Liverpool University Press, Redux). The number of new university presses starting up in the UK is significant: several, like UCL Press and the White Rose University Press are OA only presses, but others, like Goldsmiths Press, are attempting a different business model.

The significance lies in the shift back towards academic institutions, and particularly their libraries, as providers for publication of research, and away from more commercial academic publishers. Although university presses have been around for hundreds of years, the changing needs of researchers, librarians, and policy makers in recent years have provoked a renaissance via university libraries. Research carried out to investigate why this is happening concluded that more growth is on its way (Keene et al. 2016); Lockett and Speicher, two new university press managers, suggest that this is because:

> Libraries are significantly affected by the rise in serial costs, and therefore they can identify significant potential in supporting their own press, both in practice, as a cost saving, and in principle, as a reaction against profiteering. As a department of the library, a significant cost centre already, university presses can be supported in many ways: office space, use of the institutional repository which is usually managed by the library, OA funding often managed by the library, dissemination expertise, and technical infrastructure. Libraries of course also play a crucial role in supporting staff and students at the institution, and as such are embedded in the institution's strategies and make a significant contribution to them—there are mutual benefits to be derived from this relationship, that can help the university press deliver the mission of its institution.

> (Lockett and Speicher 2016: 325)

The successful partnerships between academics and academic libraries need nurturing, however: Jubb's Report for the Academic Book of the Future Project concluded that, as libraries' roles are changing significantly, 'there remains the risk of disintermediation in a world in which for many scholars the role of the library is increasingly unseen and/or misunderstood'; this risk means that 'it is critically important that libraries should redouble their efforts to build open lines of communication and active consultation with as wide a range as possible of the academics that they seek to serve' (Jubb 2017: 82).

Alison Mudditt, Director of the University of California Press, summed up the challenges university presses face:

> The current system of scholarly communication is all too often antiquated, inefficient, and slow. Along with increases in quantity of and access to information, we need to develop tools that will help users make more efficient and effective 'expert' use of our accumulating knowledge. We do not just need to publish more; we need to make it easier to find the necessary information from the increasing ocean of information and then to connect it with what we know.
>
> (Mudditt 2016: 333)

There is a recognition then, from all sides, of the tasks that need addressing, and plenty of evidence to show the effort needed to do that is being delivered. Despite the (p. 265) daunting amount of change and adaptation ahead, however, there is a definite optimism about the future: 'university presses can rise phoenix-like through 21st century digital environments and the reworking of scholarly communication frameworks' (Steele 2008: abstract) The sophisticated tools and services that the digital capabilities of the Internet offer mean that academic publishers are the most innovative sector of publishing, utilizing powerful search tools, or tracking and mapping the use and reach of texts, to sell content and support their authors.

Commercial Academic Publishers

For commercial publishers, contexts are both similar and very different. These publishers do not merely have a mission to advance knowledge: their remit includes the need to make the spread of knowledge profitable as well. This means that, in an arena increasingly concerned with OA publication, relationships between these publishers and academics can 'become increasingly strained, as the trajectories of field migration propel publishers in directions that do not coincide with, and in some respects directly conflict with, the aims and priorities of academics' (Thompson 2005: 166).

Size matters: some academic publishers are huge international operations, such as Elsevier, which was founded in 1880 as a small Dutch publishing house focusing on classical scholarship. Now it is a global multimedia publishing business with over 20,000 products for educational and professional science and healthcare communities. Elsevier often comes under attack for its business models, which help create massive profits: in 2010, Elsevier's scientific publishing arm reported profits of £724m on just over £2bn in revenue. This represents a 36 per cent margin—higher than Apple, Google, or Amazon posted that year. (Buranyi 2017) This is a staggering amount; defendants of Elsevier underline that large amounts of that profit are ploughed back into the academic community, via initiatives like the Elsevier Foundation, which funds innovations in health information, research in developing countries, diversity in science and technology for development, but other researchers worry about the ethics of providing content, essentially for free, to a company that takes such a large profit from it. Elsevier's focus is

on scientific, technical, and medical (STM) publishing, all very fast-moving areas of research, where speed to publication is often critical. Its success is in large part because it has essential content which users are willing to pay for (e.g. Science Direct), and so, despite predictions to the contrary, it is so far surviving threats to its core business.

Libraries subscribe to journal packages created by companies such as Elsevier, and the costs of these can eat significantly into budgets, often causing tough decisions to be made regarding other content. As Buranyi says, 'it is hard to believe that what is essentially a for-profit oligopoly functioning within an otherwise heavily regulated, government-funded enterprise can avoid extinction in the long run' (Buranyi 2017).

Other commercial publishers, such as Bloomsbury Academic (an independent publisher), or Macmillan (owned by the Holtzbrinck Publishing Group) or Routledge (p. 266) (owned by the Taylor & Francis Group) publish in broader areas covering the STM, professional, humanities, and social sciences disciplines, while smaller publishers, such as Boydell & Brewer, focus on more niche areas like medieval academic publishing, music, and African Studies. To maximize reach, some of these smaller companies, like Boydell, have partnered with initiatives like Cambridge University Press's Cambridge Core, which brings together much of the Press's journal and book content on one platform, along with content from other publishing partners. Commercial academic publishers are responding to the changing needs of researchers, and are now offering services which include author dashboards, where downloads and citations can be viewed, or new ways of publishing, like the short monograph format launched successfully by Palgrave Pivot.

Peer Review

Both commercial and university presses share a commitment to a peer review process, which lies at the heart of the scholarly publishing system. It is, however, 'one of the more paradoxical elements of academic research and dissemination: it is common for academics to complain about unhelpful feedback from their latest review, but the process is simultaneously seen as one of the bedrocks of assuring the quality of research' (Butchard et al. 2017). Peer review comes in many forms: double blind peer review, where neither reviewer nor author knows the name of the person writing, single blind peer review, where the reviewer is given the name of the author, open peer review, where the reviewer's name is revealed, and post-publication peer review, where reviews are invited after the article or book has been published. Peer reviewing activity is rarely counted as a factor in an academic's promotions application, and, as workloads become heavier, the time and effort it takes to conduct peer review, along with questions being raised about the integrity of some peer review processes, mean that this has become an area of keen debate. There is, a recent report stresses, 'an urgent need to address issues with communication, consistency, efficiency and credit outlined by scholars who critique traditional peer review models' (Butchard et al. 2017).

The Cross-over Book

Commercial publishers must factor in economic considerations when choosing which books to publish, but Thompson stresses that this is true even at university presses and contrasts the tension this creates with academics, whose whole field is 'governed largely by a symbolic logic of peer recognition and acclaim (Thompson 2005: 46). This acclaim comes mainly from reviews and citations, but is also the reason why publishing with a (p. 267) trade non-academic publisher can also hold appeal: books published via this route (the cross-over book) can reach much wider audiences, if pitched right, and published with the support of a major publisher's marketing team.

The cross-over book, which is often (but not always) published by a trade publisher, proves that it is possible for an academic book to have a more general readership. The classical scholar Mary Beard, for example, has had considerable sales success with books like *SPQR*, published by Profile Books, which became a *Sunday Times* Top Ten bestseller in 2016. Profile describe themselves as publishers of 'stimulating non-fiction in a wide range of fields, including history, business, economics, science and biography, with a sprinkling of humour' (http://www.profilebooks.com). They are a good example of an independent publisher who has grown a reputation for engaging and high-profile cross-over books; they have expanded with collaborations with other partners like the Wellcome Collection and have developed imprints such as Third Millenium Publishing and Serpent's Tail.

Independent publishers like Profile compete with the larger companies, like Penguin, who also operate in the cross-over academic book market. For Penguin, history and biography and literary criticism lists include international academic authors like Stephen Greenblatt, whose *Swerve: How the Renaissance Began* won the Pulitzer Prize for Non-Fiction in 2012. In the USA, university presses are particularly good at this kind of hybrid book:

> they break out of the narrow circle of specialists and out of a particular discipline, selling to a wider range of academics and students than a typical scholarly monograph would do. On some occasions they may also break out of the academic world and sell to a broader non-academic readership.
>
> (Thompson 2005, 150)

An academic author, then, has a bewildering choice of publisher before them. The drivers towards a trade publisher or an academic one are complex: as Thompson says, in the academic field, 'the importance of a publisher's symbolic capital is accentuated by the existence of various scholarly mechanisms, formal and informal, which endow differential degrees of symbolic reward on academics who publish with certain publishers' (Thompson 2005: 32). Scholars must decide on the best fit for their work, weighing up, for instance, the likely prestige a certain publisher will have with a promotions committee, against the rating another might help attain for, say, the UK's Research Excellence Framework. Often prestige can be conferred on an author just by

association with a certain academic editor, who has built a reputation for being the best in an academic discipline. The importance of the role of the editor in academic publishing should not be ignored: often it is only because of the intervention of editors that editions of canonical texts exist in the forms they do, or that monographs or collections of essays ever reach publication. These often untold histories reveal a great deal about the value and impact of academic publishers on the integrity of texts that have been used to take scholarship further, and would provide fruitful research ground of their own (see, e.g., Rayner 2015).

(p. 268) Journals Publishing

Books are just one part of the academic publishing context: journals publishing accounts for £1.8 billion in the UK alone, and worldwide journals account for sales of several billion just in the area of STM publishing (Clark and Phillips 2014: 101–2). Academic journal content is not usually commissioned (except for special issues on particular topics); academics submit articles to the journal, and these are then sent out for peer review, before decisions are made about publication. Journals can be run by academic groups, professional bodies, or learned societies; they can be non-profit or, if published by larger publishing corporations like Elsevier, for significant profits. Journal sales are aimed almost entirely at the academic library market, and the rise of journal platforms and the bundling together of a collection of different journal titles has made the consolidation of these sales easier to manage. Societies may give their members their journal as part of their membership fee package, and the rapid growth of OA models for journal publishing has helped create a more dynamic and accessible route for scholars who need to consult these journals. Enterprises like JISC Collections, which 'works on behalf of the UK higher education sector, to negotiate and license high-quality digital content that meets the requirements of institutions to support academic research, teaching and learning' (Jisc Collections website) have transformed the way scholars work with journals.

There are more STM journals than in any other area, and they are big business for publishers. The fast-moving nature of much of research in these fields means that journals are often the main way to disseminate research, and the exploitation of contact information by publishers so that mailing marketing can target individual researchers to make them aware of new content has helped boost initiatives like the pay-per-view model, or the digitization of back issues. The role of intermediaries in the journal chain should also not be overlooked. For journals, the work that bibliographic data aggregators provides is critical in a context where accurate information can mean the difference between locating an article quickly or very slowly, which has an impact on the level of citations that an article could attract.

Unlike books, journals take time to establish and create an academic brand. As Clark and Phillips emphasize, however, 'once a journal is established, the sales pattern is more predictable than books, the demand for capital lower (as are staff overheads), and the value of sales per employee is higher' (Clark and Phillips 2014: 103).

As digital publishing practices continue to open up new ways of disseminating research, journal publishing is evolving further. The first mega-journal, *PLOS One*, was started in 2006, by the Public Library of Science. The journal covers primary research from any discipline within science and medicine, and has facilitated connections in research which might not otherwise have happened. It has not been without its controversies, but the model, which won the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers Publishing Innovation Award in 2009, has spawned other mega-journals, and it looks like this format is here to stay. The mega-journal model engages with the (p. 269) challenge of finding efficiencies in peer review processes, and efforts to keep Article Processing Costs (APCs) down. Cascade journals, where rejected articles from one publication are passed down to another with a focus on the same field, are another result of engaging with these key issues.

Journals publishing is the most innovative area of academic publishing, and as new models arrive, and OA turns others inside out, the questions around peer review processes, about the value that a publisher can offer, new services to authors around metrics and altmetrics, and use and reuse, are stimulating reflection and change within scholarly communication at all levels and within all communities. It is not all positive change, however: alongside the genuine scholarly journals, there has been a growth of online journals which are 'predatory', in that they solicit manuscripts and charge publication fees without providing robust peer review and editorial services. They may promise these services, and entice scholars in with legitimate sounding editorial boards, but they are not legitimate setups. Early career researchers (ECRs), in particular, eager to be published, are the targets for such journals, who employ aggressive email marketing techniques. Research has now been done to expose this practice and to try and educate researchers in how to recognize if they are being scammed, as it is not only ECRs who are falling for these traps:

> Established researchers should beware of predatory journals as well. There are numerous anecdotes about researchers (even deceased researchers) who have been put on a journal's editorial board or named as an editor, who did not wish to be and who were unable to get their names delisted. Aside from this potentially compromising the reputation of an individual that finds him or herself on the board, their affiliation with a potential predatory journal may confer legitimacy to the journal that is not deserved and that has the potential to confuse a naïve reader or author. As our findings indicate, this phenomenon appears to be a clear feature of predatory journals.

> (Shamseer et al. 2017: 12)

In an interview with Kelly Cobey and Larissa Shamseer, two of the authors of the research quoted above, they also stressed that:

> The running narrative had been that predatory journals were mainly a problem affecting lower income countries. The fact that this is not the case really demonstrates the universality of the problem—researchers across the globe lack

training and knowledge on how to select an appropriate (and legitimate) venue to publish their work in.

(Meadows 2017)

This is a major concern for academic publishing: how can the integrity of publication be protected, so that the intellectual capital it contains is trustworthy and does not contaminate the scholarly communications circuit? In a global environment, where the Internet allows for direct contact of researchers and the fast spread of false information, training to ensure academics are able to recognize genuine operations is going to become more critical than ever before.

(p. 270) Textbook Publishing

Integrity in the area of higher educational textbook publishing is fiercely protected by the academic publishers who provide for this market, in the main because it generates such large sales. John Thompson's research into the US and UK higher education textbook field gives a very detailed analysis of the differences and similarities between the two countries, and a clear perspective of the stakes this potentially lucrative form of publishing contains (Thompson 2005: 195–306). To begin with, a textbook is 'as slippery and difficult to define as "monograph"' but a good starting point is to say it is 'a book which is written for and used by teachers and students for the purposes of teaching and learning' (Thompson 2005: 196). Thompson admits this is a very broad description, and points out that in higher education, curricula are much more widely diverse than those at school level, where national schemes of education mean children pursue very similar lines of study. The higher education textbook market, in contrast, has to cater for innumerable different courses and syllabi. In the USA, where large numbers of students do take common introductory courses, however, if a publisher can provide a key text of use to all those institutions, and get it adopted, the rewards are high. In this scenario, the book is marketed at the course leader; the academic in charge of setting the reading materials. In this sector of academic publishing, it is therefore the sales rep who has the most vital role: they must connect with the academics, make them aware of new titles, and coax them towards adoption, or, to put it another way, 'the textbook business is somewhat idiosyncratic in that the people who are recommending the books through adoption for their courses are not the ones who have to pay' (Green and Cookson 2012: 118). Thompson contrasts this with the UK market, where he suggests that the modularization of courses has helped to cause a drop in textbook sales at university level, as the students spend much less time dedicated to any one subject or topic: 'the ability to use a book over a long period is one of the most important factors influencing a student's decision to purchase the book' (Thompson 2005: 273).

Textbook sales can be global; if content is customized to different cultural markets, competition to sell into burgeoning academic markets like India and the Arab States can be repaid with strong sales. With the global explosion in higher education (the number of students around the globe enrolled in higher education is forecast to reach 262 million by

2025, with nearly all of this growth in the developing world, more than half in China and India alone), the potential is huge. Against this positive, the counter challenge for publishers is to work to protect copyright, and work out effective systems for monitoring piracy, when there are now so many different geographical areas to cover and so many easy opportunities for copying textbooks illegally. Losing income because of copying is a growing concern, and the quality of the pirated textbooks is harder to detect. The ubiquity of online retail sites like ebay and Amazon mean that students and academics can easily buy books they believe to be legitimate, when in fact they are being provided by pirate book producers.

(p. 271) The issues the textbook market faces are of rapidly changing higher educational contexts, of rising fees for students, making the sale of any books harder, and the need to respond to ever-more flexible materials for study, to help lecturers meet the teaching objectives becoming increasingly monitored and reviewed. There is a hopeful ripple in the UK market, caused by the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework, instigated in 2016, which aims to increase the status of teaching within universities. Publishers and booksellers are optimistic that this will herald a renaissance in textbooks and published materials: Scott Hamilton, head of retail at Blackwell and chairman of the Bookseller Association's Academic Booksellers Group said 'we hope the TEF will encourage lecturers to recommend particular titles and place primacy on the most effective books for teaching and learning' (Hamilton 2017). It remains to be seen if this will happen, but the excitement it is causing (and it is significant that academic booksellers are leading the articulation of this) makes it a key area to watch in the future.

Conclusions

Academic publishing has always engaged, and is still engaging with big questions around the shape of knowledge and its accessibility to readers. Since the first manuscripts began to circulate, debates about authenticity, impact, and dissemination have existed. Arguably these debates are more important than ever in an age where #fakenews is promoted every day, and the rapid increase, and evolving shapes of, academic output defies any clear definition. So many articles, blog posts, and conferences, symposia, and other events are now produced, by all of the different communities involved with academic research, that it is becoming impossible to connect them with meaningful cohesion. This is a major challenge going forwards, but there is plenty of evidence to show how engaged all communities are with the issues academic publishing is facing. As Kathleen Fitzpatrick warned:

> Change is here: we can watch our current publishing system suffocate, leaving the academy not just obsolete but irrelevant, or we can work to create a communication environment that will defy such obsolescence, generating rich scholarly discussions well into the future.

> (Fitzpatrick 2011: 196)

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