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# “A World Not Dependent on Sales: Sustainable, OA Monograph Publishing”--P2L3 Summary and Next Steps: P2L3 Meeting June 14, 2019, Detroit, MI

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# **“A World Not Dependent on Sales: Sustainable, OA Monograph Publishing”**

## **P2L3 Summary and Next Steps**

P2L3 Meeting

June 14, 2019

Detroit, MI

ASSOCIATION  
of UNIVERSITY  
PRESSES



ASSOCIATION  
OF RESEARCH  
LIBRARIES

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Report published by the Association of University Presses and the  
Association of Research Libraries

September 4, 2019

## **P2L3 Meeting Planning Committee**

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Katie Monroe, Association of Research Libraries

Judy Ruttenberg, Association of Research Libraries

Charles Watkinson, University of Michigan Press

## **Land Acknowledgment**

Peter Berkery, AUPresses, acknowledged that the P2L3 meeting was held on the traditional territory of the Peoria, Anishinabewaki, Bodéwadmiakiwen (Potawatomi), and Miami people.

## **Participants**

Thirty-three people attended P2L3, the third meeting of university presses and libraries with an administrative relationship. Co-sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Association of University Presses (AUPresses), the meeting was held in Detroit, Michigan, on June 14, 2019, immediately following the AUPresses Annual Meeting. The following libraries, presses, and organizations were represented:

Abilene Christian University Press	Texas Christian University Press
Amherst College Press	The MIT Press
Association of Research Libraries	The University of Akron Libraries
Association of University Presses	The University of Akron Press
Coalition for Networked Information	The University of Alberta Press
Concordia University Library	The University of Arizona Press
Concordia University Press	The University of Calgary Press
Cornell University Library	The University of Delaware Press
Kent State University Press	The University of Georgia Libraries
Northwestern University Libraries	The University of Georgia Press
Northwestern University Press	The University of Michigan Library
Oregon State University Libraries	The University of Michigan Press
Oregon State University Press	The University of New Mexico Libraries
Southern Illinois University Press	The University of New Mexico Press
Syracuse University Press	Wilfrid Laurier University Library
Temple University Libraries	Wilfrid Laurier University Press
Temple University Press	Yale University Library
Texas Christian University Library	

## Introduction

In choosing as its theme a “world not dependent on sales,” the P2L3 Meeting Planning Committee situated P2L in the context of a long-running Andrew W. Mellon Foundation–funded research and innovation agenda on monographs in the digital age.<sup>1</sup> Most recently, Ithaka S+R in 2019 laid out the trend lines for university press publishing and library expenditure, which found that while library spending for university press titles is relatively steady, e-book purchases are increasing and print book purchases are decreasing. With e-books nearly twice the cost of print, on average, this steady state amounts to a decline in titles purchased. The report concluded:

As predicted by others in the industry, only a fifth of library book expenditures are for university press titles. The academic library really is not the university press’s sole or even top customer, but the nearly 20 percent fall in spending for university press titles over the four-year period [2014–2017] doesn’t bode well for the health of these presses, especially if they continue to rely on one-time print book sales as their main source of revenue.<sup>2</sup>

P2L is one of two active partnerships between the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Association of University Presses (AUPresses). The other is Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem (TOME), a joint pilot initiative of ARL, AUPresses, and the Association of American Universities. TOME is one of several active experiments aiming to flip the financial model of the press whereby the institution pays upfront for the cost of publication, rather than relying on its sales. In preparing for a post-sales-dependent environment, the planning committee considered the unique strength of the P2L community with its organizational and operational alignment between the library and the press.

Peter Berkery, executive director of AUPresses, and Judy Ruttenberg, director, Scholars and Scholarship at ARL, called the meeting to order, facilitated introductions, and invited the participants to consider the

state and evolution of the P2L community. Many had just participated in the AUPresses Annual Meeting (June 11–13), which featured programming on TOME, the Library Publishing Coalition’s “Ethical Framework for Library Publishing,” and “What Librarians Want Publishers to Know.” A key theme of this discussion was that building communities across adjacent domains involves recognizing that words are used differently in different professional contexts, for example, “acquisitions.”

Several participants provided case studies of libraries and presses as stronger and more competitive together. The University of Georgia (UGA) Press recently received a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)/Mellon Open Book Grant for the Georgia Open History Library, which will enable “the digitization and creation of freely-accessible ebooks for 50 titles on the history of Georgia.”<sup>3</sup> UGA Press director Lisa Bayer reported that the NEH reviewers specifically commended the strong relationship between the press and the library in awarding this grant. Similarly, attendees observed that libraries and presses could collaborate in their engagement with scholarly and learned societies to provide academy-owned publishing solutions for societies looking for non-profit partners, increased transparency, and high-touch services in the publication of their journals.

# Presentations

## Opening Plenary: Generous Thinking

Kathleen Fitzpatrick, director of Digital Humanities and professor of English at Michigan State University, gave an inspiring opening talk on her 2019 university press monograph, *Generous Thinking: A Radical Approach to Saving the University*. Fitzpatrick has been involved in many initiatives to make scholarship more open and equitable, including the creation of the open community platform and repository Humanities Commons, which provides a forum for scholarly societies and communities. In *Generous Thinking*, she turns her attention to the university itself, honing in on the fractured relationship between universities and the public they serve, and the erosion of trust in the university as an engine of social and economic advancement. *Generous Thinking* argues that scholarship needs to be more accessible to communities, but more than that, it needs to reflect their needs, concerns, and participation.

Fitzpatrick attended the first P2L summit in 2016 at Temple University. She credited some of the inspiration for *Generous Thinking* to UCLA provost Scott Waugh's closing keynote address at that meeting, in which he spoke of the misalignment of incentives and budget allocations:

True collaboration will require libraries, presses, university administrators and faculty to reach decisions about complex issues: how to reduce redundancies and capitalize on specialties; how to work across institutional boundaries to achieve efficiencies and lower expenses; and how to recognize comparative advantages and give priority to other institutions. Universities, faculties, presses and libraries are all part of one large, endangered ecosystem. Although competition is integral to higher education and has spurred important advances, we all inhabit the same system and need to cooperate and collaborate for the welfare of the system.<sup>4</sup>



At this third gathering of the P2L community, themes of working in the same system are acutely felt, and many participants remarked on the value of strategic thinking and practical exchange of information that the meetings afford.

### **Lightning Rounds**

Slides from three of the five presentations are available on the [ARL website](#).

“How to Encourage Faculty to Author (or Improve Existing) Affordable Textbooks and Educational Resources”

Jon Miller, University of Akron Press

[“How to Slash the Cost of Books, Give Them Away Free, and Save the World”](#)

Brian Scrivener, University of Calgary Press

[“Lever Press and Fulcrum: Sustaining a Commons Model of Library Publishing”](#)

Beth Bouloukos, Amherst College Press and Lever Press

[“Exploring Open Access E-book Usage”](#)

Charles Watkinson, University of Michigan Press

“Manifold Pilot Reports”

Geoffrey Little, Concordia University Library

Kathryn Conrad, University of Arizona Press

Mary Rose Muccie, Temple University Press

### **Promising New Models: MIT and University of Michigan**

MIT and the University of Michigan are both P2L institutions looking at deep library-press staff integration as well as comprehensive approaches to supporting author publication. At the University of Michigan, the publishing department offers author subventions for open access (OA) publication in participating university presses, and in MIT’s case, they prepare open digital files of all MIT-authored works for “green” deposit in an OA digital repository.

## *MIT*

Nick Lindsay, director of Journals and Open Access at The MIT Press, is a member of the MIT Open Access Task Force and sits on the Scholarly Communications Strategy Committee for the Library—appointments he views as critical for staff integration and internal communication. MIT Press is interested in offering scholarly and learned societies an open digital platform for their journals, and offered initial experience of *Quantitative Science Studies* as a case study.

*Quantitative Science Studies* (QSS) is an OA journal that replaced the subscription-based *Journal of Informetrics* (Elsevier). QSS is funded with a combination of grant funding for the journal, combined with low article processing charges (APCs). The goal is to reach an article submission level that will sustain the publication with a low APC.

The MIT Open Access Task Force released draft recommendations in March 2019. One recommendation was to:

Adopt an open access policy for monographs, granting MIT non-exclusive permission to openly disseminate digital versions of scholarly monographs written by any MIT scholar. Following the model of the current faculty OA policy, this policy would include a per-monograph opt-out provision. To support MIT authors whose publishers require a subvention to offset publication costs, MIT should establish an Open Monograph Fund. To assist MIT authors who wish to disseminate manuscript versions of their monographs (“green” open access, including cases where a publisher does not offer a platform or business model for offering an open version), this new policy will provide a legal mechanism for such sharing, modeled on the faculty OA policy.<sup>5</sup>

## *University of Michigan*

James Hilton, university librarian and dean of libraries at the University of Michigan (U-M), and Charles Watkinson, associate university librarian for publishing and director, University of Michigan

Press, presented the Michigan model. Opening with the lessons of the Ithaka S+R report, Hilton said:

by every indication the world is fairly rapidly moving to one in which scholars and their libraries will no longer pay for access to individual monographs. Free to read is coming to a library near you....Our challenge is to shape that transition in ways that sustain a healthy and essential publishing infrastructure.

To address this challenge, U-M has established the press as an academic unit, not a commercial unit. In practice, this meant moving the press from its auxiliary status within the budget to “designated” status. Hilton explained that this designation privileges achievement of mission over business success. The challenge is to determine, in alignment with the faculty and academic leadership, what constitutes the mission of scholarly monograph publishing for U-M, and budgeting for it. If everyone did this, Hilton argued, we would begin to see the emergence of a new publishing ecosystem.

## Highlights from Roundtable Discussions

### Digital Scholarship and Digital Humanities

Digital scholarship refers to both digital tools for creation and digital tools for dissemination. In addition to publishing tools and platforms to accommodate multimodal scholarship, the works reflect a continual investigative process, which change over time. This breakout group challenged itself and the group to consider (1) At what point should these products be peer reviewed? and (2) Should there be separate editorial or advisory boards for digital scholarship?

### Flipping the Financial Model for Monographs

While generally enthusiastic about a flipped financial model for monographs (paying for publication, rather than depending on sales revenue), the group enumerated its ongoing and unresolved challenges, including the fundamental issue of inequality. How would this model work for scholars from under-resourced institutions, and/or outside the western world? Assuming institutional funding could be secured, the group raised practical issues of implementation, including the following:

- Are libraries sufficiently capitalized to take on flipping monographs? If not, can universities take it on from another part of the institution?
- Finding a single model, given the differences across countries and presses/libraries will be difficult.
- Libraries' priorities are strained.
- For presses, full cost accounting is rarely covered by subsidy for OA.

Potential solutions raised by the group included universities banding together to create entities that can support open access publishing collectively—such as a Small Presses Open Access Publishing Consortium. Finally, the group posed the question: Are there ways of

flipping the model for monographs that do not necessarily involve open access?

### **Engaging with Library Communications and Development**

Development is relationship-based and context-dependent. This breakout group suggested that development could be a cross-promotional opportunity for libraries and presses if directors were well informed of each other's priorities.

## Next Steps for P2L

The meeting wrapped up with a group discussion and strong validation that the community finds these meetings valuable and that they should continue. There will be a P2L4 after the AUPresses Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, in 2020. ARL and AUPresses will continue to work together to pursue the issues that drew this community together in the first instance, as well as address new issues that arise as the press and library communities work more closely together.

For example, the question of flipping the financial model for OA monograph publishing was discussed at P2L3 and is the mission of TOME (Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem) that ARL and AUPresses work on in partnership with the Association of American Universities (AAU). OA monographs, “free to read,” and TOME all exist within a time of intense advocacy and experimentation around open scholarship and open science, and how to pay for it.

In these broader conversations, P2L can harness the strength of its combined professional communities, increasing institutional capacity by sharing and integrating staff for copyright consultations, permissions, and licensing, for example. By fully integrating university press publishing within the library, as organizations like MIT and the University of Michigan have done, P2L institutions increase their capacity for outreach, advocacy, and implementation of open scholarship practices.

Finally, as librarians and library services are more integrated into the scholars’ workflow and research process, as presses have always been, the P2L community is well positioned to create standards and best practices around digital scholarship, including peer review, publication, and presentation.

## Endnotes

1. Donald J. Waters, “Monograph Publishing in the Digital Age,” *Shared Experiences Blog*, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, July 22, 2016, <https://mellon.org/resources/shared-experiences-blog/monograph-publishing-digital-age/>.
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