

## Who are we and what we do

Michigan Publishing is the hub of scholarly publishing at the University of Michigan, and is a division of its University Library. We publish scholarly and educational materials in a range of formats for wide dissemination and permanent preservation, provide publishing services to the University of Michigan community and beyond, and advocate for the broadest possible access to scholarship everywhere.

The University of Michigan Press is our most prestigious and recognizable imprint. Founded in 1930, the Press today publishes about 100 books per year, including academic titles in the humanities and social sciences, works of regional interest on Michigan and the Great Lakes, and textbooks and teaching materials for scholars and teachers of the English language.

Michigan Publishing emerged in its current formation when the Press became a unit of the University Library in 2009, reflecting an increasingly common trend among small- to medium-sized university presses. Today, over 25% of AAUP member presses report to university libraries. In creating this new organization, the Press joined the Library's existing publishing operations, which date back to the early 1990s, when the University of Michigan participated in the creation of the Making of America project, which funded the digitization of primary source materials documenting American history. In the decades between Making of America and our merger with the Press, the Library's publishing operations grew to include over half a million historical reprints available for purchase, nearly three dozen journals, ten database projects, an institutional repository, and an Espresso Book Machine.

Today we are a staff of nearly 40, and both our organization and our publications continue to adapt and evolve in a changing landscape of scholarly publishing.

## Cultivating Sustainable Library Publishing Services at the University of Michigan

**Meredith Kahn**  
Women's Studies & Publishing Services Librarian  
University of Michigan

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### What we do:

- Publish books in print & electronic formats
- Host & publish journals, with an emphasis on open access publications
- Develop new digital publishing models
- Create permanent, accessible versions of faculty publications
- Provide publishing consultations & outreach
- Perform rights advocacy for U-M authors
- Reissue materials from our collections & our faculty in new formats

**[publishing.umich.edu](http://publishing.umich.edu)**

**9,000,000** annual downloads from our repository  
[deepblue.lib.umich.edu](http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu)

**500,000** historical reprints available for purchase

**751** journal articles published in 2014

**40** FTE staff

**10** digital projects

**1** Espresso Book Machine

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## What we talk about when we talk about publishing

What do we mean when we say “publishing”? We think of what we do as a spectrum of activities. One end, you’ll find our pre-prints, post-prints, and re-prints. This includes our institutional repository and our print-on-demand services. It also includes products like conference proceedings and technical reports. Continuing from the “services” end of the spectrum to the “publishing” end, you’ll find our journals program, our books, and our digital projects. When we say “publishing,” we’re not referring only to the action of “making public,” but also to functions like validation or certification, and a legal and ethical responsibility as a publisher in a formal, traditional sense. Under our definition, our institutional repository isn’t “publishing,” per se, given the policies that guide what goes into it. On the other hand, our journals program is “publishing” under this definition.

For our organization, it’s not the platform that determines whether something is publishing, but rather, the way in which content finds itself there. Our institutional repository preserves and provides access to previously published works, gray literature, data, supplementary materials, and student work. Much of this material has undergone an editorial process elsewhere, though not all of it. The mission of our institutional repository is to reflect the research and creative output of the university community, and to ensure its long-term accessibility. This mission does not include any kind of validation or certification—there is no “imprimatur” associated with deposit, because any University of Michigan faculty member can do so, and we have a holistic definition of what is appropriate for deposit. By contrast, each of our journal partners has distinct editorial policies that match the norms and requirements of their disciplines, and set their own requirements for review and acceptance. And of course our University Press is guided by an executive board, composed of University of Michigan faculty, a cohort



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of editors, an editorial director, and a press director who also serves as the Associate University Librarian for Publishing.

We are exceedingly careful about what we mean when we talk about publishing because we are a hybrid organization that includes a university press. The author pools, funding structures, and expectations for activities that appear on the “publishing” end of the spectrum are different from what we consider “services.” We want to avoid confusion and maintain the sterling reputation of all of our imprints, while guarding against accusations of vanity publishing or “pay-to-play.” Library publishers without a university press certainly share these concerns. I merely want to emphasize that the presence of a university press heightens them. Reputation is the coin of the realm, and the academic community depends on the ability to trust the imprimatur of a university press, or any publisher for that matter.

### Mission alignment & context

Alignment with the mission of our library and our university governs much of our publishing activity and policies. A few examples include:

Agreements:

- The standard author agreement for our University Press allows authors to retain copyright, and has an option for authors to apply a Creative Commons license to their work.
- Our standard publishing agreement with our journal partners does not require them to transfer copyright to us as the publisher, and we encourage our journals to make agreements with their contributors that are similarly author-friendly.

Open Access:

- Nearly all of our journals are open access publications, and we consider OA to be an important part of evaluating new journal partners.

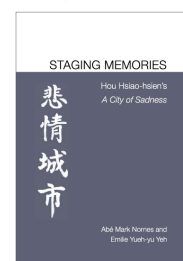
### Publication Agreements

- Allow author to retain ©
- Allow for choice of appropriate CC licenses
- Retain only the rights we need in order to publish
- Encourage journal editors to use author-friendly contracts



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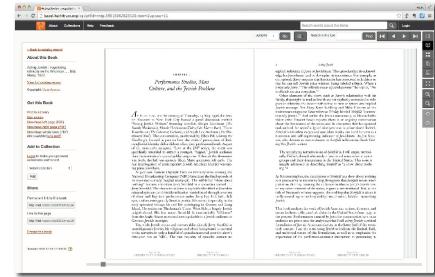
### Open Access



- We have published a number of open access monographs under our University Press imprint, primarily on topics like digital humanities and technology. These books are simultaneously available to purchase or to read for free online in a highly discoverable and accessible platform called DLXS.

HathiTrust:

- We have made almost 800 titles from our press's backlist openly available via HathiTrust.
- We negotiated with publishers like Sage, Wiley, and Elsevier during our normal subscription renewal process to add backfiles for articles authored by University of Michigan faculty to our institutional repository, making them openly available to the world. Because of this, our repository contains almost 90,000 items, and served up more than nine million downloads in 2014.



*Acting Jewish: Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage & Screen*, Henry Bial  
University of Michigan Press, 2005

### What does sustainability mean to us?

For us, sustainability has a few key themes. Firstly, we balance a need for cost recovery with our core values. As a hybrid organization that includes both library-based publishing operations and a university press, we have a responsibility to make sound financial decisions. In practice, this means that we still pay attention to the bottom line. Our press still uses profit-and-loss statements when evaluating potential book projects. We encourage our authors to seek subventions when possible, and we ask journal publishing partners about the resources—both financial and editorial—that they bring to the table. When we evaluate a potential digital project, we look for the ability to reuse or repurpose platforms and workflows we're already familiar with, rather than creating "special snowflakes" from scratch every time. However, revenue isn't the only thing that drives us. Our explicit mission to ensure that the benefits of scholarship accrue to everyone and to serve both our campus and the broader community of scholars pushes us to keep advocating for open access, to respond to the needs of our readers and our authors, and to develop new products and services

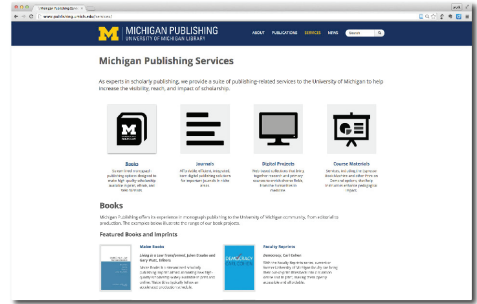


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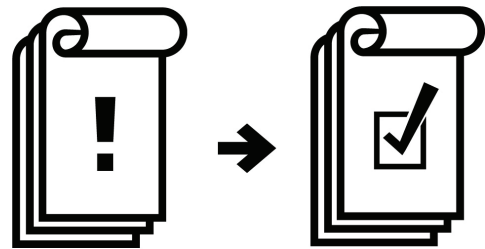
accordingly.

Our newest imprint, Michigan Publishing Services, demonstrates this balance. It is a response to the fact that members of our campus community are looking for specialized, skilled services like web design, copy editing, typesetting, ebook conversion, printing, distribution, and marketing. We can provide these things, but not for free. While we are setting modest rates for many of these activities in order to recover costs, there are some services we will never charge for—including consultation, deposit in our repository, and hosting and preserving openly accessible versions of these publications. These rates have been calculated to allow us to take on projects without having to rely on sales as the primary mechanism for cost recovery, which transfers our focus from the marketability of a given project to its merit and the contribution it will make to the scholarly conversation.

Our publishing services imprint also demonstrates a second component of how we approach sustainability—a balance between our identity as a publisher for the scholarly community at large, and as a publisher serving the needs of the University of Michigan. At this point, it is important to explain the financial structure behind our hybrid library/press environment. Our university press recently transitioned from having a budgetary status as an “auxiliary” unit to one that is considered “designated.” We are the first AAUP member press to make this transition, and it exemplifies the University of Michigan’s commitment to the production and distribution of scholarly works as a public good, while still recognizing the special status of a university press. At many campuses, “auxiliary” units are expected to generate revenue, and include things like housing, athletics, and hospitals. Their activities are important, but are not considered integral to the central mission of the university. Here at Michigan, our press and our library publishing operations are now one financial entity,



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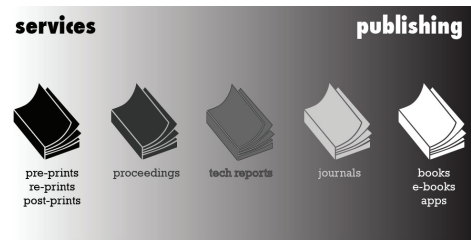
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and both are considered to be mission-aligned. We no longer receive a “subsidy,” but rather a budget.

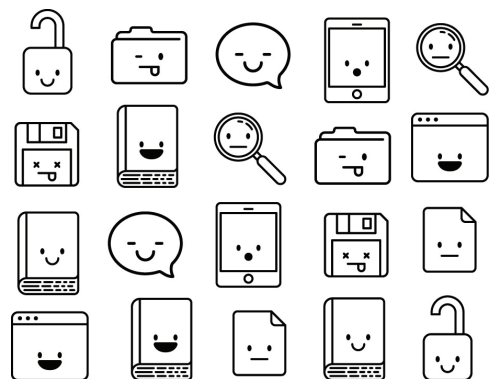
But bringing the press into the library and changing its financial status does not change how the press makes editorial decisions. Our university press will continue to exercise autonomy and authority in its selection of authors and publishing partners, while our library publishing operations are oriented to serving the University of Michigan community. It would not be appropriate to ask our press to take on projects or authors simply because they have a university affiliation, nor would be appropriate to use our library publishing shop as a place to send proposals that don’t meet the press’s standards. Both parts of the organization benefit from combined infrastructure and expertise, but maintain slightly different orientations. In practice, we maintain this balance by developing separate channels for intake and approval of projects, and a shared understanding of how each end of our spectrum contributes to a shared mission.

Finally, sustainability means influencing the larger conversation about publishing in the academy as whole, taking an active, leading role in the generation of new business models to ensure the longevity of our industry. I’ll discuss this aspect of sustainability via our participation in two Mellon-funded initiatives—one on the cost of publishing academic monographs, and a second on direct subventions for books in the humanities.

We are one of twenty AAUP member presses participating in a study conducted by ITHAKA S+R and funded by the Mellon Foundation, which seeks to generate comprehensive, empirical data on the costs undertaken by university presses in publishing scholarly books. The data this study will generate will be useful for individual presses, allowing them to set benchmarks and expectations about what publishing entails and costs, improving their ability to plan and budget for an array of publishing activities. In addition, this data could be used in the development of disciplinary norms



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surrounding funding for open access monographs, allowing scholars to see what a “typical” book in their field costs to produce, and giving funding agencies, universities, and professional societies a more accurate picture of the money required to bring “gold” open access to the world of books.

Our second Mellon-funded project is a collaboration with colleagues at Indiana University to study direct author subventions for publishing humanities books at our two institutions. On each of our campuses, we will explore three interrelated questions:

- Through what processes could a university solicit, evaluate, allocate, and award funding to sponsor publication at all levels of the professoriate? Under what terms would those funds be made available via authors to publishers?
- Who would be eligible to participate in such a program? And what challenges and opportunities would implementation of such a model present?
- Through what sources of funds existing within the university might this model be funded? What is the magnitude of such funding? And what could be the consequences of redeployment?

The final outcome will be a white paper proposing a new model for funding book publishing in the humanities and qualitative social sciences, and recommendations for how to implement such a model on each of our campuses.

Our participation in both projects positions us to make concrete recommendations for a new business model for book publishing, informed by data from our own operations and institutional context. This is the contribution a large, research-intensive university with a well-developed library publishing operation can make—driving the development of the future

#### **A Study of Direct Author Subvention for Publishing Humanities Books at IU-Bloomington & U-M**

Generously supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Through what processes could a university solicit, evaluate, allocate, & award funding to sponsor publication at all levels of the professoriate? Under what terms would funds be made available?

Who would be eligible to participate? And what challenges and opportunities would implementation present?

Through what sources of existing university funds might this model be funded? What is the magnitude of such funding? And what are potential consequences of redeployment?



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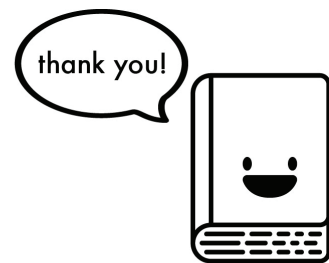


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scholarly publishing itself, of which library publishing is an important part. To be frank, we are big, and we have resources. And as we all know, “with great power comes great responsibility.”

However, we are cognizant that this is not the only role possible, nor the most important. Today you have heard from three different institutions, but what we all

share is a common desire to create a responsive, high-quality library publishing operation that can withstand change and uncertainty while charting a course into the future.



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