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Mainstreaming Open Access Monographs

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Thanks, Mark.

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Michigan Publishing is the primary scholarly publishing hub of the University of Michigan, and a division of its University Library. It consists of three major channels of publication--the University of MIchigan Press, Michigan Publishing Services, and Deep Blue--representing a range of approaches to publishing. For the purposes of today's talk--and given the time constraints--I will focus only on the monographs published by the University of Michigan Press.

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I think we're all aware of how the term "open access" can denote wide range of licenses, formats, approaches, etc. Perhaps what's less obvious is how this mixed bag can be the case even within a single press. To illustrate, today I'll talk through three examples from the University of Michigan Press's own history, each of which supports a particular flavor of OA monographs, and each of which has given rise to a particular (often siloed) workflow or set of practices. We'll then move to what we're doing now to--as the title of this session suggests--mainstream our open access monographs. As examples, I will take our digitalculturebooks imprint, the Knowledge Unlatched program, and a small number of "one-off," specially funded monographs (one of which happened to be attached to funding the author had from the Hewlett foundation)

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The digitalculturebooks imprint was established in 2006, and has published more than 50 titles. The books and series in this imprint engage with new media and technology, from video games to the digital humanities. It was initially an experimental partnership between the University of Michigan Press and the U-M Library's Scholarly Publishing Office. These separate organizations have since been merged under the umbrella of Michigan Publishing. For this imprint, the press would acquire and produce the book in its usual way. After the book went to press, the digital files would be delivered to the Scholarly Publishing Office and the online version would be prepared. For digitalculturebooks, we offered an HTML-only version of the book, hosted on our platform and readable for free in the web browser.

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What have we learned? Forcing access model and disciplinary area to align perfectly doesn't work very well--you wind up leaving out books you might want to include, or shoehorning in ones that don't really fit. In addition, the org chart shouldn't drive our workflows. In this case there was a one way trip of our books from the press down to the Scholarly Publishing Office. This meant that for years, information *about* the OA version never made it Press--to our website, to our metadata, etc. As a result, OA versions of each book were perfectly visible on the open web, but totally invisible to customers who looked for books on our website, or on

other platforms. This is something we've had the opportunity to address as our organizations merged--about which more, later.

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Many of you will know that Knowledge Unlatched is a nonprofit organization that brings together financial contributions from libraries that go toward "unlatching fees," individual payments to presses to make specifically selected titles from their list available on an Open Access basis. The University of Michigan Press has participated in Knowledge Unlatched since its pilot year in 2013. We currently have 10 books that have been "unlatched" through this program, and another four up for inclusion in the next round of front list titles. The program requires that we make a PDF freely available on OAPEN and in HathiTrust. Each participating press nominates titles for inclusion in the program, but ultimately Knowledge Unlatched determines how many and which titles will be included in each "round" of unlatching.

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So, what have we learned? When it comes to OA, timing matters--for publishers and for consumers. By the time we know that a book is going to be unlatched, it's too late to change anything inside the book, in our catalog, etc.--even so late that customers may have already purchased it. As well, because Knowledge Unlatched dictates which titles, how many, and in which formats/on which platforms they must appear, we can't use it as a way to offer OA for all the titles we would like, in the ways we would like to. Participation in Knowledge Unlatched also effectively "outsources" the responsibility and accountability for those OA titles: it's up to Knowledge Unlatched, not us, to ensure that their funding libraries are happy; that they are demonstrating impact and ROI. It can be nice to be relieved of that responsibility, but it also means that KU essentially remains in the shadows of our processes. We've gotten better at documenting these steps, but they are still far from mainstream.

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Our third example is University of MIchigan Press monographs that are made open access because the author has grant funding (such as from the Hewlett foundation), a suitable subvention, or has successfully made the case that it's appropriate or even necessary for the book to be open. We have only had a couple of these so far, but we expect this category to grow. This area, I would say, has had the greatest impact on our own practices and policies related to producing OA monographs.

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With only two of these books so far, in different disciplines, we tend to find ourselves re-inventing the wheel over early decisions about licenses, crediting funders, etc. One good thing is that we can plan early to make visible the fact that the book will be OA. And, there are additional expectations/burdens on us as the publisher to ensure the OA version is widely visible, and to measure and communicate impact and reach back to the authors and funders of these books.

So, we've been doing OA monographs for more than ten years, in a variety of ways. We have lots of open books--but produced using different workflows, made available in different formats, and discoverable on different platforms. What can we do to arrive at more consistent, repeatable, integrated practices for acquiring, producing, and disseminating OA? I.e., to mainstream OA monographs?

Well, we've taken a number of steps already

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We've made improvements to our **processes.** For example, in a joint project between the University of Michigan and Emory University, some of my colleagues are working on a project to develop a template for a model author contract that accommodates new ways of talking about copyright and licenses, and addresses the new role that funding bodies may have in the business arrangements of publishing monographs.

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We've made some improvements to the **discoverability** of our OA monographs. It sounds like a simple thing, but it was as late as 2015 before all of our OA monographs had a link to the OA version on our website's detail page for each title. That's now done. As well, this year my colleagues have also worked extensively with our partners at the Chicago Distribution Center to ensure that the ONIX feeds that we push out about our books include acknowledgements of any OA versions. To do this we've looked to the 2014 guidelines for describing open access in ONIX, published by EDItEUR, the international group coordinating development of the standards infrastructure for electronic commerce in the book, e-book and serials sectors.

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We're actively working to better understanding how people find, get, and use our open access monographs--how we understand the reach and **impact** of our books. In an environment where where sales are no longer the (only) coin of the realm, measures of impact are more important than ever. We're coming at this in a couple of ways. We're using Altmetric to keep better track of when and how our books are being talked about or linked to online--from Twitter to the New York Times to open class syllabi. We have another ongoing research project, which is both analyzing usage data and interviewing individuals to learn more about how people find, get, and use open access monographs. In the graphic here you see an image breaking down the sources of traffic to our open access monographs.

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Our goal in "mainstreaming" open access monographs is not necessarily that *every* book would be open access, but that *any* book could be, without derailing our other usual publishing processes. For our purposes, mainstreaming OA means not siloing OA content into a separate space or bucket of its own .So, what needs to happen for us to get there?

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We need to continue to improve processes so that customers (including libraries) can see in a *timely fashion* whether OA is (or will be) available, and plan accordingly. This screenshot shows a WorldCat record for one of our OA books. I've highlighted that there *are* links to the book on the OAPEN platform and in the DIrectory of Open Access books. So, there is a record of the open versions of these books--but only recognizable to those who already know (how) to look for it. Now that we're able to include OA in our ONIX feeds, our next question is, how do we get that information out of ONIX and into MARC?

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We need to continue to work toward systems that will ensure discovery--and discoverability--across our books. In short, that chosing to make a book OA, doesn't also mean choosing for it to drop out of all the places where it would otherwise appear--and where customers and users expect to find it. We're working with all of the aggregators and platforms with whom we have agreements to try to figure this out. The business models are difficult to sort--as we'll hear more about shortly.

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As we work to better understand the reach and impact of our open access books, we also need to be able to communicate this information back to authors, funders, and institutions. Right now we're faced with a tangle of data sources: Google Analytics configured in various ways for various projects; COUNTER-compliant download reports from aggregators various platforms, some of which count by title and some by chapter; sales reports from others; plus the usage we'll never know about: e.g., PDFs of Knowledge Unlatched titles deposited with Internet ARchive. Perfectly legal, but we miss out on that usage info unless we chase it down.

We need to gather this data, synthesize/aggregate it, and then make it available to our various partners. We also need to ask ourselves: what does this data mean? What are our indicators of success? What information do we need? And crucially, what information do we *not* need? These are problems of business, technology, data management, and policy/strategy. We're working on it.