

## Recap of AUPresses 2021 Sessions Attended by Laura Baker, Books Marketing Manager

*The 2021 Association of University Presses Annual Meeting was held virtually, June 7-18, 2021. The following is a summary of my notes from the sessions I attended.*

### Views Your Own: Navigating Twitter Landmines in 2020 and Beyond

**Panel:** Elisabeth Maselli, Acquisitions Editor, Rights Manager, eBook Coordinator, Assistant to Director, Rutgers University Press; Adriana Ferreira, Social Media Coordinator, Cornell University Press; Becky Elmuccio, Social Media Manager, Princeton University Press; Bailey Morrison, Digital Media Producer and Direct Promotions Manager, University of Texas Press; Shannon Wood, Web Marketing and Data Manager, McGill-Queen's University Press

*During this collaboration lab, panelists provided takeaways for handling hot topics and inquires on social media (specifically Twitter).*

#### Elisabeth, Rutgers University Press

- Used Twitter lightly prior to the pandemic. As everyone shifted online due to the pandemic, it was used more.
- Questions to the Press came in through social media. For example, they received a post about someone commenting on eBook prices. People that handle social media for presses and companies get questions like this often, and don't always know how to answer them.

#### Adriana, Cornell University Press

- Tips for how to navigate trying times like 2020
  - 1. Take a step back
    - Who are you, what is your role, what is your message and how can you interact with what is happening?
  - 2. Rethink/integrate your platforms
    - For example, on their website there are no books on home page. It is current content.
  - 3. It's good to speak and even better to listen
    - Take a moment every day and just listen and see what is happening on Twitter. Not just what is trending, but what others on your lists and groups are interested in.
  - 4. Use what you've got and don't be afraid to reach out
    - Don't assume your authors are connected, sometimes you have to open the door and reach out to them
    - Reach out to others at your press
    - Don't be afraid to direct message and ask for followers
      - Look for others that have an audience that you would benefit from and ask them to follow you
  - 5. Think diverse
    - You may have pockets of audiences here and there that have their own languages and try to adapt to that and integrate it into your posts
  - 6. Do your homework
    - Look at the data and see what caused engagement, what didn't work, and use that for future decisions

### Becky, Princeton University Press

- Social media managers cannot operate in a silo. It's important to navigate social media landmines as a team. It's important to have a team to collaborate with.
- Greet each question or comment on social media with care, you don't know what has happened in that person's day
- Each landmine that appears has the opportunity to be a learning opportunity for the team or other authors
- To make posts more accessible:
  - Employ #camelCase and #PascalCase in hashtags so that screen readers can recognize the individual works in the hashtag and read them accurately
  - Add closed captioning to videos with YouTube (it has an auto generated captions feature), once they are added they go in and edit them. The Press then takes the created captions and creates their own SRT files to upload on social media
  - Use alt tags on still images

### Bailey, University of Texas Press

- Use Twitter lists – look to the content that is coming out in the Press and in other departments
- When composing copy – 3 maximums to remember:
  1. Trust your gut – if something feels off, look to others for input
  2. Ask for help – identify members of a team that you can turn to
  3. Let the author lead the way
- Personal vs Press platform – Found that not maintaining a personal Instagram page gives the mental headspace to deal with authors and followers on the Press side of social media

### Shannon, McGill-Queen's University Press

- Navigating feedback on backlist titles, specifically on titles that a university press wouldn't publish today. What happens when these titles that have yet to go out of print get called on Twitter?
  - Sometimes the choice is to NOT respond
  - Takeaway for navigating negative feedback:
    - Consider your authors, editors, reviewers, parent institution, board of directors, leadership, internal staff, and readers
    - Each group may have a different perspective and opinion on the matter that you need to consider because once you publish publicly, all these groups can see it
    - Other things to consider before you respond:
      - Do university presses have a responsibility to engage in these discussions?
      - What does institutional or organizational silence as a response communicate?
      - How might an UP's response (of lack thereof) impact the publishing program?
      - Does your parent institution have an equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) or antiracism statement/action plan?
      - Has your press aligned itself with these initiatives or perhaps created your own steps? (mission statement, values, EDI action plan, etc.)
    - Incorporate a social media response plan on how to handle responding when these things (hot topics) come up. Consider a few scenarios and responses to help guide this. It will be different for each institution.

### Breakout Takeaways/Tips/Resources

- **Becky** – Quality over quantity. Take your time. Princeton is reducing the amount of text they use on quote cards and reducing the length of video.
  - For Princeton, closed captioning is not being added at the time the video is being made. When they upload to Instagram it will auto generate a closed caption. And they have a process for YouTube as well. They do it this way for workload reduction. But, it does take a while.

- The line between personal and professional on social media are blurring all the time.
- Always check with your team and respond as fast as you can.
- How to engage with socio political topics when you get called out?
  - Think about different scenarios and try to respond; develop a plan on how to address
  - Are stakeholders really going to push back if you engage in these topics? When considering stakeholders, weigh the costs of the consideration of not responding at all vs the costs of participating in the conversation or responding
- Accessibility resources:
  - Facebook group for Alexa Heinrich on Twitter and FB <https://twitter.com/hashtagheyalexa>
  - <https://www.faceBook.com/groups/110948031049165>
  - <https://www.shondaland.com/act/a26294966/make-your-social-media-more-accessible/>
  - <https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/>

## Stepping Up to Support Racial Justice Movements

**Moderators:** Melissa Rodman, Editorial Associate, Harvard University Press; Caitlin Tyler-Richards, Acquisitions Editor, Michigan State university Press

**Panel:** Tiffany Adams, Associate Marketing Director, Journals Division, The University of Chicago Press; Sharmila Sen, Editorial Director, Harvard University Press; Emily Hamilton, Assistant Director and Marketing Director, University of Minnesota Press

*During this general session, panelists shared how their presses stepped up in the summer of 2020 after the George Floyd murder, They shared what they have learned from the experience that can help guide thinking going forward about how to respond to and serve social justice movements.*

### Sharmila, Harvard University Press

- As a press, they did what they do best and made a book, *Racism in America: A Reader*
- The only thing different about this book is that they are not selling it, they were making it available for free around the world, forever
- Book focuses on African American voices but does include a few white authors
- Released in August 2020, to date it has about 24,000 unique downloads
- Looked at existing titles and decided that they needed to do what they do best, publish a book

### Emily, University of Minnesota Press

- Created the *Reading for Racial Justice* collection
- The collection was made available, free to read, online last summer (about 3 months)
- Made up of a range of articles: scholarly trade, regional, memoir, history...
- Created in the immediate aftermath of George Floyd's murder and the protests
- Was made available again after subsequent murders
- How did it come to be? It was a group effort. There was a sense of urgency and discussion on what the Press can do to contribute

### Tiffany, The University of Chicago Press

- On June 4, the Press launched a simple webpage with about 60 free articles (initially) on racial justice. In the end there, are about 100 articles on the page.
- Goal was to provide a central resource for scholars and students with free access, and also to provide it free to others looking for information on social unrest
- Page is still active. They are now looking at improving the page to make it easier to navigate.

**Q: How do you ensure that you center black voices while attempting to speak for them?**

- **Tiffany** – Take what the author has written; monitor on social media so they can amplify or retweet without rewriting what has been written. Don't focus on racism necessarily, but things that celebrate black history.
- **Emily** – This is a question we need to be asking all the time and not just in the context of these projects; these projects are hopefully elevating the work of the authors involved and bringing their work forward
- **Sharmila** – Checked in with every single author that was included – not only because it would be offered for free, but to get their feedback and opinion on what they were doing

**Q: What impact did your project have on the Press?**

- **Tiffany** – The exercise of looking for articles to include made them realize that they didn't have as many articles on the topic as they thought they did. The page was tagged in a Tweet and in turn it may impact reading lists for syllabus and may make an impact on course materials going forward.
- **Emily** – When available as open access, there were more than 200,000 page views and over 20,000 new users to the site it was hosted on. It was important to do justice to the authors' contributions and it had a personal impact for many at the Press as they live nearby.
- **Sharmila** – 54,000 page views; 24,000 downloads.

**Q: What do you wish you had done differently?**

- **Tiffany** – Wish they could have done it sooner. Goal is to not have to respond to tragedy, but to be proactive and put together lists now that have been identified as areas needing lists as a result of this project.
- **Emily** – Wish they could have worked more individually with authors in terms of promotion. Also, this helped to build a platform to respond, but it was an undertaking to get this moving.
- **Sharmila** – Wish they had the time to put together a reading guide or questions at the end of the book. Also, wish they had time to do something more to feature the authors or have them create some sort of asset or push them on social.

## Small Presses and Big Campuses: Developing Strategies for Campus and Community

**Moderator:** Dan Williams, Director, TCU Press

**Panel:** Molly Spain, Assistant Editor, TCU Press; Nadine D. Buckland, Acting General Manager, The University of the West Indies Press; Jon Miller, Director, The University of Akron Press; Brian Roach, Sales and Marketing Director, The Catholic University of America Press

*The panelists during this general session shared their experiences and offered how-to guidelines for creating collaborations that aim to strengthen a small press's connection with its campus and community.*

**Molly, TCU Press**

- TCU suffered massive budget cuts and diminished support from the larger university thanks to COVID
- How to remain involved on campus while remaining budget conscious?
  - Collaborative publishing projects
    - Drew attention from community and across campuses
    - Ex. Coloring book with memorial landmarks around campus
  - Course collaboration
    - Fall semester Editing & Publishing course; students work on a TCU Press project throughout the semester
      - Students help work on style sheets, launch meetings, copy editing, discussion with authors, and Q&A about careers in publishing
  - Student internships – went virtual due to COVID but they made it work
  - Undergraduate Journal – this is another student focused collaboration and also collaborates with an advisory committee of faculty the college, admissions, and the TCU library

- TCU Press' strategy is to make themselves indispensable on campus and in the community; they want the university to recognize their contributions during a time when everyone is struggling for financial support

#### **Jon, The University of Akron Press**

- Publish about 10 books a year, report to the library, have about 5 different lists
- How are they staying connected?
  - A good strategic plan – With the plan they tell everyone what they are doing and what they intend to do
    - Top 3 items in the plan: 1) making books in carefully selected areas; 2) developing partnerships with community organizations to make and promoting books; and 3) to provide educational opportunities for students by making and providing books
      - These goals are all central to the university's mission, "creation and dissemination of knowledge"
  - Acquisitions – rely on series editors and other supporters for acquisitions
  - Created crowd-sourced book celebrating 150 years of the university
  - Edited collection of essays about news reporting in Akron – suggests doing this for your local news area. Contributors had all written for the paper.
  - Publishing services – help people in the community make a book (ex. a church history, history of prominent local foundation, book about a local polymer business, history of local bank, etc.)
  - Big on supporting student publications
- Budget was not cut last year

#### **Brian, The Catholic University of America Press**

- Working with administration
  - President – is blurbed, has written forewords, hand delivered catalogs
  - Provost office – make sure they are aware of all faculty involved in publishing with the Press
  - Manoel Olovera Lima – a Brazilian author that donated all of his papers to them. The Press put a book he had back out as an eBook and print (tip: goodwill is invaluable)
- University Research Day – the Press would bring books. They never sold any to students but the Provost would come over and a visiting Cardinal might be there and they would see the books and what the Press is doing.
- Involve students – internships
- Editorial committee and faculty – make it easy for them to say "yes"; involve them broadly
- Make sure you are connected to as many people on campus as possible

#### **Nadine, The University of the West Indies Press**

- Their three pillars for campus and community connection are:
  - Access - ensure the UWI Press products and service offerings reach the widest audience possible and the underserved Caribbean population
  - Alignment – build relevant and value-added relationships with the administrators, authors, funders, researchers to ensure that the UWI Pres offerings answer the needs of the community and society it serves
  - Agility – anticipating and responding to customer needs in a changing COVID 19 environment, creating aspects of an entrepreneurial university press with a diversified revenue base, product offering, improved global presence through partnerships and collaborations, and operational efficiencies.
    - Ex. provide audio books to supplement some printed products or use audio excerpts to promote printed series

**Tip:** Stay in touch with former editorial board members and backlist authors as they are supporters of your Press. Keep them on your mailing lists and invite them to events.

## Imagining Our Way to a More Equitable Literature

**Moderator:** Kyle Gipson, Associate Editor, Basic Books

**Speaker:** Lisa Lucas, SBP and Publisher, Pantheon & Schocken Books; Penguin Random House

*During this plenary session, Lisa Luca talked about how big the audience for books could be if we just dream bigger.*

- Step back and look at how young people are engaging and learning from this art form
- Take a step back and look at what including, diversity, and equity mean for books
  - This is moment that we not only have to think about what we are publishing, but we have to reimagine our institutions to allow us to sell books, share books, with a larger readership
- Start with regional inclusivity
  - Not everything related to publishing is NYC centric
- We have to remember that we have power wherever we are, and the resources that we have in front of us wherever we are. We are important as the ones that we perceive that have all the power.
- On the front of diversity, we have had some profound resistance to look at the things that really need to happen
- Where we fail the most is not in who we hire or what we publish, but in thinking “that what was, will be;” thinking that things must always look backward to where we come from
- We really don’t remember to equate resistance to innovation to our resistance to diversify
- When we look at the future, and we look at change, we have to look at how we change our work
- We often fail to dream because we are so used to looking backwards
- Donate books to housing authority, senior centers, etc. – consider these in your outreach efforts beyond just schools
- To widen our audience we have to:
  - 1. Think nationally; have value in every single corner of this country
  - 2. Image that your audience is more diverse than you’ve ever considered
  - 3. Look inside all these nooks and crannies of people who are readers or would be readers that we have actually been ignoring ... and we have maybe the beginnings of a way to grow an audience
- Don’t restrict our imagination and fight over our resources vs being driven toward innovating, towards changing the way that we all read in a way that is irrevocable, in a way that is so beneficial to all of us to do things. When we restrict, we are harming the future and our own businesses and the opportunity of so many people that should be invited to this party.
- You are involved in the process of making books and selling books. You may underestimate the impact of the book. When selling books, it is even easier to be cynical about who the audience could be. If you put some belief and effort and innovation in, there is an opportunity to take a different look at what we do, how we do it, who we do it for, and what is actually possible.
- Now is the moment where we understand the value of the content, but the innovation is going to come in the selling of the books, figuring out how we want to get the book in readers hands.
- How do you reach more people and get more innovative? If you don’t change how to sell them, you’ll never reach anyone else. Invest in not just the work and the staff to create the work but we need to invest in the actual process of selling the books.
- Every dollar we earn selling the book is the value of the transmission of the idea
- Pivot our thinking away from simply thinking editorially, to also thinking about putting the weight behind books that need to find new and diverse audiences the same way we put our weight behind something we know is going to hit. This is important.
- We need to widen our imagination to bring more readers in and to invest in the functions of how to communicate with those people and to make sure that they too are diverse and equally considered and they are included in our calculus of how we build a future for literature.

## Making Content Accessible

**Moderators:** Laura Brady, Director, Cross-Media Group, House of Anansi & Groundwood Books

**Panel:** Jillian Downey, Director of Publishing Production, University of Michigan Press, Michigan Publishing; Anna Pohlod, Editorial Associate and Acquisitions Coordinator, University of Michigan Press; Erika Suffern, Head of Book Publications, Modern Language Association; Thom Holmes, Development Manager, Oxford University Press; Barbara Lopez, Digital Accessibility Consultant, University of Arizona

*During this concurrent session, panelists discussed how to include inclusive procedures and policies so that products and content can be usable by all people, including those who use assistive devices.*

### Anna, University of Michigan Press

Acquisition's point of view on working together with authors and vendors to create accessible ePubs.

- Get the authors on board
  - Authors know the content of their images much better than acquisitions does. Best way to get authors on board is to explain what is needed and why.
- Getting accessibility materials from the author
  - Include alt text instructions and examples in final manuscript instructions, it reduces the time spent on alt text
- How accessibility materials affect acquisitions workflows
  - Let the author know what you need early in the process. Make sure they understand the work they're signing up for.
  - If the materials arrive before transmittal, account for this time in the transmittal process

### Jillian, University of Michigan Press

Production's point of view on working together with authors and vendors to create accessible ePubs.

- Production's process with file tagging
  - The tagging system they use on the manuscript at the start aims to meet the needs of both print and ePub; it has limitations as their ePubs are created from InDesign
  - Catch and fix content that will cause accessibility issues in the ePub, while they tag
  - Language-shift tagging – still a work in progress
  - Add callouts for audio/visual material, and clarify what non-Fulcrum readers will see or not see, related to that material
- Production's ePub checking process, and a little about metadata
  - They have additional requirements that they added to the ePub standard for their Fulcrum platform and for accessibility, so they make sure any vendors they use always have the latest version
  - Provide metadata about the accessibility features of the ePub, for the vendor creating the ePub to include
  - For ePub checking software, they use the latest version of ePubcheck and Ace by DAISY
  - For all ePubs, they open in a text editor and search for some key elements so they can look to make sure they are as expected
  - Random monthly checks on a few ePubs using Benetech's tool called the Ace SMART ePub checker
- Resource list: AUPresses' Digital Publishing Committee's document: *Selected Resources for Creating Accessible Publications*

### Erika, Modern Language Association

Things to consider when involving authors in the creation of alt text

- Who should write alt text?
  - Started doing this in house but has now started to shift this to the authors
- When should alt text be written?
  - When writing alt text in-house, do it after the book has been typeset to minimize changes
  - Ideally authors should submit alt text with the final manuscript

- What do authors need in order to write effective alt text? What guidelines do we need to give them?
  - Guidelines for authors are based on the guidelines of the DIAGRAM Center at Benetech, images fall into one of four categories:
    - 1. Purely decorative: no description needed
    - 2. Caption or surrounding text sufficient: provide only a label
    - 3. If caption or surrounding text does NOT sufficiently describe the image, write a description that:
      - Exhibits a high degree of subject matter expertise
      - Follows a genera-to-specific structure, i.e., begin with an overview before noting the visual details presented
      - Does not exceed 200 characters
    - 4. If the image's complexity warrants more than 200 characters, provide a label and a long description
  - Use bias-free, inclusive language
    - Use *person* in place of *man* or *woman*
    - Avoid references to race and ethnicity, age, and ability unless relevant
    - Use neutral language that avoids making judgements
  - Use plain language
    - Use short sentences (15-25 words)
    - Omit redundant words
    - Avoid jargon
- They used a vendor this year to prepare alt text for the *MLA Handbook*. It was a critical time save but also confirmed that subject matter expertise is crucial.
- In summary: authors and alt text
  - Authors have
    - Subject matter expertise
    - Knowledge of the art's intent
  - Authors need
    - Guidance on determining what kind of alt text is needed
    - Clear instructions and examples

### **Barbara, University of Arizona, Disability Resource Center**

The disability resource center perspective in serving students with disabilities and why it is important to supply accessible content.

- Goal of the disability resource center at the University of Arizona is for disabled students, employees, and visitors to have a similar, if not identical, experience to that of their non-disabled counterparts
- When materials are not accessible for students
  - Students have a process and many hoops they have to jump through to get accessible materials
  - It is time consuming for students and the disability resource office, and it may require the office reaching out to the publisher
  - Disadvantage and timeline for when student may need to access materials and when it is available
  - Materials may not be secure – it may end up just being a copy of copyrighted material
- When materials are accessible for students
  - There is an ease of access for more than just disabled consumers – identical experience
  - Compliance for University Accessibility Policies (VPAT)
  - Security – DRM protection. You can keep your publication content in the original format, copyrighted and DRM protected.

### Thom, Oxford University Press

The perspective of someone that creates textbooks for colleges and universities.

- VPATs - Voluntary Product Accessibility Template
  - Report by an independent party following extensive testing
    - Explains the extent to which a digital platform or digital content complies with WCAG guidelines
    - Colleges and universities request VPATs during the textbook selection process
    - VPAT measures the accessibility of a website or eBook and how it meets/supports 4 separate criteria
  - Universally recognized
- WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)
  - Refers to the detail and universally accepted guidelines established by the World Wide Web Consortium; it is a gold standard and is what everybody uses
- VPATs – Reality Check
  - There is no such thing as a perfect VPAT
  - 100% compliance is not expected
  - Their goal is to communicate the limits of your digital products transparently and clearly
  - Reduce the need for the customer inquiry
- Product Accessibility Reports (PARs)
  - Oxford product accessibility report
  - Customer-facing title-specific document
  - Created in-house
  - Whereas the information in a VPAT might be read by IT department, the information in a PAR might be more relatable to an instructor
- Providing Accessibility Guidelines
  - Oxford has a vendor that creates alt text, but they have to provide guidelines on their standards for what they expect and require
  - Guidelines for:
    - Authors
    - Vendors (external)
      - Alt text
      - Art and figures
    - Editors (internal)

### Tips & Resources

- Anna – When writing alt text, pretend you are describing the image to someone over the phone. It gets you in the habit of visually describing an image.
- DAISY's <https://daisy.org/> accessible knowledge base
- W3C <https://www.w3.org/>
- WebAIM, <https://webaim.org/> has easy to read and understand accessibility documents

### Library Budgets: What Does the Library Market Look Like in the COVID Era?

**Moderator:** Barbara Kline Pope, Director, John Hopkins University Press

**Panel:** John Culshaw, Jack B. King University Librarian, University of Iowa Libraries; Jon Elwell, Director of Content Strategies, EBSCO; Wendy Queen, Director, Project MUSE, JHUP; Elaine Westbrooks, University of North Carolina-CH

*This panel brings together librarians and aggregators to provide an update on the scholarly marketplace from their vantage point. Panelists shared how things changed since COVID hit in library purchasing along with insights for the future.*

**Q: What are the most important impacts that COVID has had on your organizations?**

- **Elaine, UNC-CH**
  - A shift in strategy. Adopted a digital first strategy and immediately stopped buying print books and that will continue on after the pandemic.
  - Budget and economic impact
  - Don't have space (for physical books) and users want to read electronically
  
- **John C., University of Iowa Libraries**
  - Nothing is going back to how it was. We are facing a very different future. Space issues and purchasing electronic has changed things.
  - Thinking about what workspaces will look like; who will be fully remote or hybrid
  - Those not as receptive to eContent before are now embracing it
  
- **Wendy, Project MUSE**

How MUSE was able to help provide access to content in a remote environment

  - A few MUSE publishers reached out at the start of COVID and asked what MUSE could do to help researchers and students to access materials they needed to research in a remote environment
  - MUSE contacted all of their publishers about the option to temporarily offer content for free on the MUSE platform (optional, not mandatory)
  - 79 publishers responded and they were able to create the "COVID 19 free content period" which for most lasted until June. It was free for any user and not just MUSE users.
    - Freed about 2,400 books, about 35% of the books on the platform, and just over 189,000 articles from 306 journals which is about 42% of the journal content on MUSE
  - Usage went from an average of 2 million hits a month to over 12 million hits a month in the peak period in April
  - After the free period happened, they found themselves asking "now what?" They found out that it paid off. Opening the content of books did not have a negative impact on book sales; it is too early to tell about journal subscriptions
  - Usage increased, value was demonstrated, and they are now taking the lessons learned in this period to create new avenues for the future
  
- **Jon E., EBSCO**
  - Saw a huge digital shift. It wasn't a disruptive shift, they were gradually moving there anyways but it jumped ahead. Happened across all markets: trade, university press, etc.
    - They are not seeing the shift go back to print. People that were hesitant or against digital before have learned to like it.
  - Digital first strategy is important. What is driving this?
    - 1) What is available. Librarians need to see both print and eBooks available at the point of release.
    - 2) How they get the right books and in what format are they available. Where is eBook revenue spent, how is it allocated by libraries? About 45% of all digital spend goes towards unlimited user DRM free content.
  - COVID takeaway: Acceleration of eBook adoption is not going away.

Print is still preferred. But the eBook is preferred when nothing else is available.

**Q: According to a recent Ithaca survey, 75% of libraries surveyed experienced a budget cut. What was your experience like this past year?**

- **John C.** – Anecdotal, would assume that cuts were similar to the Ithaca survey. Many libraries reported significant cost savings (less travel, shorter hours, less students on board) and some were able to reinvest while for others the savings were scooped up by the campus.

- **Elaine** – Publishers need to know that every library has to deal with inflation. They are paying more for content, yet they have a flat budget rather than getting increases, so they have to cut back on what is purchased (monographs and serials). Collections and people are two big pots of money.

**Q: Are backlist eBook purchases going to take a hit? What does it look like for backlist eBooks?**

- **Elaine** – It is great to know they can always go back and get them, but they are already in a downward trend having significantly decreased the amount of monographs over the past several years.
- **Jon E.** – During COVID there were massive p to e digitization projects happening and a lot of it was one time grant money, so it will be interesting to see what happens moving forward. Was it sustainable? Probably not, but what that allocation looks like in the future is an interesting question.
- **Wendy** – Saw an uptick in purchasing eBooks during COVID

**Q: In terms of acquisition strategies, what do you see going forward and how can university presses support this?**

- **John C.** – More emphasis on e going forward. Also, will be more intentional about making purchases at the time of need, or being more specific about the buying and collecting policies. There won't be funds lying around anymore for "just in case." The collective collection is going to be key to the future. We are going to have to share more and rely on centers of excellence to do deep collecting.
  - Seeing a huge spike in AV and video content and the Press made a significant investment in this area during COVID. Will this change or will users continue to expect this???
- **Elaine** – Consortia is increasingly becoming more important. Need a future of sustainable scholarship so we need to be looking at open access more. And as part of open access, we need to be looking at equity.

**Q: Is there a preference for the eBook format (ePub, fixed format, PDF)? What does data indicate?**

- **John E.** – Libraries are putting accessibility as a priority over open access. You can't have an accessible PDF, so it has to be ePub to begin with. Formats are mattering more these days.

**Q: Are you restricting purchase of books and journals equally?**

- **Elaine** – No. Science is always going to be more expensive, and journals are always going to be more expensive. At the end of the day the journals budget is likely to see a bigger cut than monographs.

**Q: What do you see on the horizon for Open Access?**

- **Wendy** – Make sure discovery records are available in library catalogs. There has been a lot of activity to support OA monographs and they are now looking into models that will work on their platforms for journals.

**Q: If you had one wish for what libraries/university presses would do or change what they are doing what would it be?**

- **Jon E.** – Sustainability and the academic book ecosystem is critical. An understanding from the librarian side that the course adopted textbook that the university published will never be DRM free; it will bankrupt the university press. From the UP side, an understanding that they have to make books as accessible as possible in the right model and make sure the libraries have choice.
- **Wendy** – More trust as we go into the OA space. That both sides are aiming toward the same goal of getting the content to reach as many users as possible. And trust that we are not going to get it right in the beginning, but we will get there.
- **John C.** – Trust and sustainability. We've got to do the collective collection together. We need to build these structures together going forward.
- **Elaine** – The prestige system, that promotion and tenure is based, is not serving us well and needs to change

## The Independent Bookstore as a Cultural Partner

**Moderator:** Jeff Deutsch, Director, Seminary Cooperative Bookstores, Inc.

**Panel:** John Sherer, Director, University of North Carolina Press; Joy Dallanegra-Sanger, COO, American Booksellers Association; Paul Yamazaki, Principal Buyer, City Lights Booksellers; Elizabeth Branch Dyson, Executive Editor, Assistant Editorial Director, University of Chicago Press

*The panelists during this general session reflected on the cultural value of physical bookstores and the various services they provide in addition to sales, including marketing, author relations, community building, and elevating the work of serious presses for their general readers. The panelists shared ideas on how to build and leverage partnerships with independent bookstores throughout the country, including emerging stores, in order to fulfill what is a shared mission on behalf of a shared community.*

- **Paul, City Lights Booksellers**
  - Consider themselves a backlist driven bookstore, 80% of sales come from backlist titles
  - Over 5% of their total book sales is short discount university press titles
  - We have a younger generation of booksellers that are very engaged (like they were decades ago). They understand the challenges of what they are stepping in to. They are well versed as businesspeople, but many have not worked in a place that sells UP books and need to be trained on it.
  - Don't prejudice the reader. It is up to us as booksellers to bring the book out to the reader.
  
- **Joy, American Booksellers Association**
  - Short-discount is a difficult term for many to understand
  - The business model is hard for indies, especially during a pandemic
  - We need to work together to find models that work to bring UP's books into the stores. How can we work more closely together? Our goals are all the same. The terms discussion is hard, but it is critical. Simplicity in terms is also needed.
  - Shared a story about a small bookstore that doesn't turn art books, so that bookseller consigns her art books to a local art center and the books are turning there.
  
- **Elizabeth, University of Chicago Press**
  - Indie bookstores are a good place to see other titles that the bookstore and buyers are comparing to your title
  
- **John, University of North Carolina Press**
  - There is a generation of booksellers now that is wiser and more capable than years past
  - The independent bookstore has become more a hub for serious non-fiction, it is a place that can now identify itself as more a part of the community because of these serious works
  - When people are discovering through social media, it is easy for them to click the "buy on Amazon" button
  - As Paul noted, UPs are almost publishing instant backlist books
  - Consider a consignment model. If you've already printed it and it is sitting in the warehouse, why not have it sitting at a bookstore?
  - We have to be willing to take some bold steps. There may be some risks, but there is risk in the status quo too.
  
- **Jeff, Seminary Co-op Bookstores**
  - The model we have today is an inherited model, it is not based on the book business. We need to work together to create a new model.
  - Don't lose sight of the reader; the reader doesn't care about the publisher or author
  - 90% of Seminary Co-ops expenses go toward two things: 60% is inventory, 30% is labor and benefits. They have room for 40,000 more titles, if they had the money for it.

**Q: Does the serious general reader exist?**

- **Paul** – There is so much cross pollination now it is hard to categorize a reader. UPs are our roadmap to the future, titles they have published years ago are relevant now. It is almost impossible to make presumptions about the readers, they will delight and surprise you all the time.
- **Elizabeth** – Many of the books UPs publish are not meant for the general reader, they are meant for a specific niche. One of her greatest achievements as an editor was to find philosophers to write for the general reader.
- **Jeff** – There are many readers that are not in academia that are reading across disciplines

**Q: What are your thoughts on academic trade discount as a medium between UP and trade books?**

- **John** – Simplification of discounts is the easiest thing UPs could do. Also, we need to see value in the placement – as publishers we need to think about these softer value points and is there a way to quantify that in the P&L.
- **Joy** – One thing they have been trying to teach booksellers is that carrying UPs and small indie press publishers is a way to distinguish yourself from the big trade sellers and it is a selling point. Indie bookstores are highly curated places, and they need to distinguish themselves from the big box stores or other places that people are shopping for books.
- **Jeff** – Short discounts are perceived as the publisher’s way of saying “this is not for you.” There is something about the academic trade discount that signals that they want you to stock the book.

**Q: What is the most effective way for UPs to communicate frontlist titles to bookstores? In person? Edelweiss?**

- **Joy** – Edelweiss is probably critical for most bookstores. Another thing the pandemic has done that may help is to do some virtual events with several stores at one time, this could be worth exploring.
- **Paul** – UPs are now in Edelweiss. It is important, but staff needs to be trained to use it effectively. Print catalogs are still used. The knowledge that the reps bring is invaluable. He couldn’t do the lists without conversations with the reps.

**Q: What are your thoughts on virtual events and their value?**

- **Joy** – On behalf of booksellers, virtual events have not sold as much as anyone would want. A virtual book event is more labor intensive than an in-person event and more expensive. However, it has made authors available in more places that they never would have gone. Hopefully, going forward there will be a mix of in person and virtual events.

## **Open Access for Books and Journals**

**Moderators:** Jason Gosnell, Managing Editor, Marine Corps University Press; Stephani Miller, Managing Editor, Marine Corps History Journal

**Panel:** Angela Anderson, Director, Marine Corps University Press; Tony Sanfilippo, Director, The Ohio State University Press; Beth Bouloukos, Director, Amherst College, Press; Fredric Nachbaur, Director, Fordham University Press; Aaron Javscas, Editor-in-Chief, Temple University Press; Theresa Schmid, Marketing Manager, University of Michigan Press

*During this general session, panelists discussed different models of open access as implemented by a number of university presses. The approach to this panel was to illustrate that open access publishing can be accomplished in a variety of ways and included presses that have used open access models in ways that work well with their respective institutions and publishing models.*

**Angela, Marine Corps University Press**

- They are an open access military publisher
- Everything they publish is open access – books, journals, articles
- Publish 3 scholarly journals a year along with 10-15 scholarly monographs a year
- They never had to transition into open access; funding comes from taxpayers’ dollars which allows them to remain open access

- Open access issue for them was never about budgetary problems, it was about awareness and educating their publishers and readers and bridging the conception of money and quality
- Cons of open access:
  - Acquisitions – Many of their authors don't understand what OA is and means for them so they shy away from it. This puts the Press in direct competition with large UPs that have budgets.
  - Can't offer bonuses or royalties to authors
  - Defining who they are as an OA publisher makes it hard for them to join memberships or join EBSCO because they don't generate revenue
  - They do not hold copyright on any of the content, that responsibility falls back on the author. So, for example, if someone steals the content and puts it on Amazon, it falls to the author to resolve.
- Need to make sure that their OA model is working through grassroots efforts top down, and bottom up
- Need to be transparent to authors in what they are getting into and what OA means

#### **Aaron, Temple University Press**

- Don't have a comprehensive OA strategy. Their OA efforts are a series of experiments.
- OA does seem to be working for them
- Authors are full participants in making their OA titles happen
- Connecting thread for their experiments: OA initiatives are a way for Temple to show that they are interested in serving their community and that when their costs are covered, they can reach new audiences in ways they couldn't before

#### **Fredric, Fordham University Press**

- Fordham publishes 60 books per year
- Funded models
  - TOME – a 5-year pilot project; four grants awarded at \$15,000 each
  - Sustainable History Monograph Pilot – Two grants awarded at \$7,000 each and EDP costs covered by the grant
  - Humanities Open Book program – Awarded \$81,000+
- OA has breathed new life into backlist titles and has generated print sales that might not have been seen otherwise
- Fordham's OA model is funded, it is author approved, and expands readership
- They also participate in Knowledge Unlatched

#### **Tony, Ohio State University Press**

- When he came to OSUP six years ago there was already an OA program in place. Every monograph that came in would be digitized upon publication, and after 5 years it would open.
- About 700 books are open on the platform
- Sales on monographs have been declining across the board:
  - This was one reason they started their trade program,
  - They also looked at individual title subventions
- OSUP participates in TOME and Knowledge Unlatched and also goes to author's institutions to look for money there
- They will exclude trade books and books that have textbook potential
- They will include some regional books that are on the scholarly side
- Feels that OA is a part of their mission and important for equitable access
- The pandemic made an impact on their OA program
  - OSUP made their textbooks available via OA for students
    - Found that doing so had very little impact on sales; in fact eBook sales increased for that textbook
  - EBSCO and ProQuest sales doubled and helped make for one of their best backlist years for eBooks
- It is possible to be both a commercial publisher and an OA publisher

### **Beth, Amherst College Press**

- Platinum Open Access model
  - They don't charge any fees to their authors or institutions; they are completely library funded
  - Everything they do is made available open access as soon as it is published
  - They make print editions available for everything they publish, though it may be delayed a few weeks
  - Everything is peer reviewed
- Lists are closely aligned with the college so they can be relevant on campus
- Partnered with Lever Press and Fulcrum
- All of their digital projects are static – it is like a digital version of the print book
- They do a lot to make their titles discoverable
- They make them accessible (audio and alt text)
- Make them flexible – all multimedia can be searched for independently; can use annotation

### **Theresa, University of Michigan Press**

- U of M Press operates as part of Michigan Publishing, which is part of the university library
- With support of Mellon, they were able to open their own OA platform, Fulcrum
- Launched a Free to Read initiative last year making all their eBooks free for 6 months. Downloads skyrocketed. They also saw downloads in new geographic areas that they had seen little or no engagement with previously.
- Now launched Fund to Mission
  - Can convert 80 books a year to open access without any author every having to pay for the production of their book
  - Secured stable funding for it comes from: 1) library, 2) the university, and 3) subventions and grants
  - The Press is incentivizing library investors by offering perpetual access to the front list and back list
- While the business model is important to enabling OA publishing, the Press also considers how they produce, distribute, and market OA to be key to the success to the Fund to Mission model
- Support multimedia accessibility
- Engagement with authors, both in the decision to publish OA and in the reach of their publications
  - Also provide the usage of their titles with authors