

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AS PUBLISHER

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The eScholarship Publishing Service of the California Digital Library and the University of California Press have partnered on a range of scholarly publishing projects since 2000. In 2007 they will formalize their collaboration.

The publishing initiatives of the California Digital Library (CDL) and the University of California Press (UC Press) reached an important milestone this year. After a half dozen experimental publishing efforts and a growing sense of urgency about transforming scholarly publishing, we realized we had gone as far as we could in our current ad hoc arrangement. Early this year, under the guidance of the university-wide standing committee on scholarly communications, we set out to survey the landscape of scholarly publishing at UC and to determine our next steps. Our aim was to evaluate current and emerging faculty publishing needs, identify opportunities to strengthen publishing support to emerging research areas, and recommend an appropriate role for the university in scholarly publishing. Concurrent with our study, a university-wide long-range planning effort was coming to a close, which added both context and urgency to our fact-finding effort. This auspicious intersection has resulted in a set of broad aims and ambitious goals for UC scholarly publishing services and a program that has at its heart a new model: the university as publisher.

The vision for the university that surfaced in the long-range planning process, and was endorsed by the regents in May 2007, is simple in concept but profound in its implications. Captured in the phrase “the power and promise of 10,” it is built on three interrelated propositions:

- the university’s research, teaching, and public service missions are served best by 10 campuses that distinguish themselves from one another by building unique profiles of complementary strength;
- by working together as a single institution, bringing together the complementary strengths of 10 distinctive campuses, the university will more effectively bring together the sum of its creativity and resources;
- by working together when it makes sense, the university can provide and continue to enrich, extend, and support scholarly innovation with

basic infrastructure that is commonly required by the campuses but not as effectively supplied by them when acting independently.

As part of our long-range planning, we have set a goal to strengthen our support of faculty efforts to discover and communicate new knowledge. In addition to building research capacity and advancing scholarship, the university aims to integrate the research, teaching, and service missions more closely. For us, there could be no clearer call to strengthen the communication of research results in ways that will also allow us to extend access to and improve the quality of education, better inform public policy and public opinion, and appropriately shape professional and industry practice.

What Do UC Faculty Need?

Our research, which forms one segment of this broader discussion, elicited a number of important if not surprising findings. Together they provide a compelling case for focusing and redoubling our efforts to provide in-house scholarly publishing services to the faculty and researchers of the University of California.

- Traditional formats—books and journals—remain the primary vehicles for scholarly publication, but they are subject to serious economic pressures; in addition, there is a need to adapt these formats to the digital environment.
- Most traditional publishing remains discipline-based, while scholars’ research and teaching is increasingly interdisciplinary in nature. Faculty feel the need to publish in discipline-based journals because of the journals’ prestige, yet express concern about whether they are reaching audiences beyond their specific disciplines.
- Scholars’ experimentation with nontraditional kinds of publication is growing, but we lack accepted procedures for evaluating, publishing, and preserving this kind of work. Such work is not routinely accepted for tenure and promotion, in large part because we lack such procedures.
- Informal scholarly communication is becoming increasingly digital and interactive. Scholars continue to make a distinction between informal communication and formal, archival publication, but it seems likely that the lines will blur in the future. (On this point, our interviews corroborate the research of C. Judson King and Diane Harley at UC Berkeley, who are studying faculty attitudes about publication practices, with particular emphasis on variations among disciplines.)²
- In fact, many scholars are interested in exploring more interactive, collaborative methods for

disseminating their research results, a trend that is likely to blur the line between informal and formal scholarly communication still more and accelerate the trend toward publishing in digital formats. Paradoxically, absent the procedures for validating nontraditional publications, the distinction between informal digital communication and formal print publication appears to be temporarily strengthened.

In light of these findings, we have identified several emerging research priorities that are likely to create a need for new publishing programs. These new or expanding research fields—notably environmental sciences, health care, global studies, and digital arts—are broadly interdisciplinary. Most deal with major social issues, and thus have significant potential for wide dissemination to audiences beyond the university.

Publishing of a New Type?

To respond to changing needs and opportunities in scholarly communication, we are beginning to work in three arenas that build on the work of the UC Press and eScholarship, the publishing arm of the CDL. First, drawing on our combined experience in the publication of print and digital journals and monographs, we will develop more effective ways of publishing in these traditional formats and thus extend these services to meet the rising needs of our faculty and researchers. We are especially keen to extend the model behind our monographic series, which now number five. The series seek to reduce costs by using faculty editorial boards for the selection process (following the typical journals model) and streamlining design, production, and marketing.

Second, we will focus on developing and legitimizing a process for nontraditional forms of publishing, including digital reference works, critical editions, data-rich and map-based publications, and online course materials. Consistency of presentation, version control, peer review of nonstandard scholarship, and preservation are critical issues as emerging modes of communication clash with outdated standards for tenure and promotion evaluation. The UC Press and CDL have some experience with these issues through their collaboration on Mark Twain Project Online, a digital critical edition of Mark Twain's writings, edited at UC Berkeley. This project, which will launch in October, will provide a framework that can be adapted for future projects.

A third area of emphasis will be creating new publishing programs in line with the university's research priorities. The university has the resources to act as "convener" or organizer, bringing together research results from many sources in forms that will be easily accessible not only to other scholars, but also to audiences outside the academic community. We are exploring the idea of launching one or more new publishing programs in high-priority research areas, which will include both traditional and nontraditional formats, depending on needs identified by scholars in those fields.

The activities outlined above will constitute the core of a University of California scholarly publishing program. To accomplish these plans, we are creating a more formal collaboration between the two

organizations, to bring together their different strengths, increase the visibility of UC publishing activities, and institutionalize what has been up to now a series of experimental, ad hoc activities.

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¹ On November 1, 2007, Catherine H. Candee was appointed Executive Director, Strategic Publishing and Broadcast Initiatives, University of California, Office of the President.

² Diane Harley et al., "The Influence of Academic Values on Scholarly Publication and Communication Practices," *Journal of Electronic Publishing* 10, no. 2 (Spring 2007), <http://cshe.berkeley.edu/publications/publications.php?id=260>.

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