Sheridan
A CJK Group Company

Recap of AUPresses 2019 Sessions
Attended by Laura Baker, Books Marketing Manager

The 2019 Association of University Presses annual meeting took place June 12-13 in Detroit, MI. The following is a summary of my notes from the sessions I attended.

Session: Frontlist Digital Printing: Who Decides and How
Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2019
Chair: *Lisa Tremaine, Director, Texas Review Press*
Panelists: *Jennifer Comeau, Assistant Director and EDP Manager, U of Illinois Press; Ami Reitmeier, Sales and Course Adoption Coordinator, U of Illinois Press; Wynona McCormick, Business Operations Manager, Texas A&M University Press*

Printing our new books digitally for print-on-demand or short runs allows us to maximize sales and minimize storage fees and excess stock. This moderated round-table discussion featured two pairs of University Press colleagues—one EDP and marketing and one design and business—to talk about their decisions around frontlist digital short-run printing.

For the purpose of this session, frontlist was defined as 6 months to the present.

Ami, U of Illinois Press (marketing perspective)
- Good things about going POD/digitally upfront – ability to make changes and don't have books sitting in the warehouse; blurbs and awards can be added to cover; inventory control
- Not so good things/problems – quality issues can arise; you can't do special cover treatments
- Who decides
  - It is a collaborative effort. From the beginning when the book comes in to the Press they are talking about possibilities.
  - Marketing finds that talking with acquisitions is important to learn what they have learned and what the author wishes for
- How
  - Marketing research and looking at comp titles and their sales
  - Look at course adoption. Is the book going to be used in courses? Is the author going to use it?
  - Is the author going to be active and do events?
  - Does it need a jacket or special cover treatment?
- Quantities
  - Usually start at 300 and then the title immediately goes into their POD program
  - Will watch backorders to know if they are on the right track
- Quality
  - Quality is not a frequent problem. But, it depends on what the problem is as issues do occur.
- If you are starting something like this (frontlist digital printing) just make sure that you are all talking and collaborating and know each other's expectations across departments

Wynona, Texas A&M University Press (business perspective)
- Format – majority is paperback, doing some printed case

- Cost
  - The time it takes to get books is better with digital
  - Can see the amount of resources and effort now required to keep books warehoused as a savings
  - Not having to pulp the books saves resources
- Customer service: quality / complaints
  - She sees the quality and is the person that inspects the book
  - Compared to offset, she has experienced more issues with offset printing, but that is not to say there are not issues on the digital side
  - Offset takes longer to get issues corrected
  - Feels that as the industry makes changes and advances, digital is something you have to do
  - They don't have consumer complaints or returns like they previously did on digital; the only complaints they ever hear come from the author, not the consumer
- Big fan of digital

Jennifer, U of Illinois Press (EDP perspective)
- Though paper choices are more limited, there are still a lot of choices
- Think about trim size up front, if you think a book may go digital not all digital printers can accommodate offset trim sizes
- Ability to make changes – yes changes can be incorporated faster, but it still takes time to update the file
- When they have a surprise hit they can do a combo of POD while a second digital printing is being ordered
- Do not need a crystal ball to be perfect at the beginning – digital printing gives flexibility
- Scatter color has become more affordable in digital printing
- Very easy to setup so it can print in multiple locations – print in the country it will distribute in
- They do a digital printing and activate it for POD so other printers can print it

Lisa, Texas Review Press
- Does all frontlist digitally, nothing offset
- Pricing is based on trim size, and page count is hugely important – think about your low page count books, it could be cheaper to print them in higher quantities (700) digitally compared to offset
- Trim sizes from offset to digital can be an issue, talk with your printer first to find out their sizes and pricing
- POD is separate from printing digitally upfront – they really don't want to put anything out of print
- Does everything on 360ppi so that it can go digital or offset
- If a book goes offset up front it stays offset so that the quality and cover embellishments won't change

Attendee comment during the open discussion
- A member of the audience ran a test last year around digital and offset printing. 69% couldn't tell the difference or tell which book was printed digitally. Quality as a concern just isn't there anymore.

Session: Better Off Dead? Or, Backlist Reprints, are they Worth it?
Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2019
Chair: *Puja Telikicherla, Digital Publishing and Rights Manager, Georgetown University Press*
Panelists: *Kenneth Reed, Assistant Director, Publishing Operations, Princeton University Press; Brian Roach, Sales and Marketing Director, Catholic University of America Press; Lynn Benedetto, Cornell University Press*

Many presses have turned to their deep backlist to bring back old titles and reinvigorate the publishing program, with varying degrees of success. In this nuts-and-bolts session on the triumphs (and tragedies) of these projects, panelists shared actual strategies (rights research, file management, contracts) as well as lessons learned on what's better left in the past.

How the panel came to be? – At an AUPresses meeting ten years ago there was an energy around revitalizing the backlist thanks to POD. So, this is a ten years later recap of success stories and a few of the lessons learned.

Lynn, Cornell University Press (picked for the panel due to complexity and size of project)
- Project team created to go from 350 to 3,000 backlist titles; conversion to eBooks
    - Team met every 2 weeks for about four years
    - Committed to delivery of eBooks (web enhanced) by June 2019
- Scope
    - Large scale digitization motivated by the fact they could put in eBook aggregations and earn revenue
    - eBook revenue made up 16% of net sales last year and 30% this year
    - Content now in print forever as POD
    - Results – brought back some hardcover titles and generated revenue
- Production workflow
    - Titles evaluated
    - Created new e-ISBNs: changed some covers, new mechanicals, updated LIC
    - Put some titles back in print
    - Determined publishing dates – about 200 to 300 a month
- What we knew
    - Basic workflow existed for small number of backlist eBook conversions
    - Scaling up to several thousand books required additional resources
    - Bringing back content with value – basic philosophy "if you don't do this you might end up dead"
    - Books usage now equivalent to journal usage – which is huge
- What we learned
    - Two approaches to making digital use of deep backlists: curatorial and bulk
    - Takes a lot of work to get the books revitalized
    - Cost about $3k per title to clear rights, digitize, and publish open access titles
- Knowing what you know now, would you do it again? Absolutely

Brian, Catholic University of America Press (picked for the panel due to nature of their books)
- Gave example of moving a book out of print due to sensitivity of the title based on current events around the author – this title was better off dead
- Books are better off dead if you don't have the institutional knowledge to produce them again
- There are some things that are not worth it, or if you don't have the rights to do it

- If you bring an older title back into print, reviving the dead ISBN is a terrible idea. Find some way to justify calling it a 'new edition' so it can have a new ISBN (for example a new cover) – this makes it worth it.
- Issuing titles in POD paper and eBook when you can do it with minimal costs and make influential "friends" on campus happy is worth doing. Especially when you make a little money doing it.
- Bringing back 400+ Canon law dissertations in cloth POD is a LOT of work and probably not worth it, although if you are generating the kind of campus good will they did it may be worth it…
- If you know what you know now, would you do it again? Have since abandoned the idea

Kenneth, Princeton University Press (picked for the panel to learn more about the nuts and bolts)
- Overview
    - Project manager on bringing books back into print, he has been working on this for seven years but the project was going even prior to then
    - Scope: bring out-of-print titles with pub dates prior to 1999 back into print
    - Format: paper, hardcover, web pdf (initial goal was to bring them back in paper POD, added hardcover POD later)
    - 2,700+ titles to date have been brought back
- Metadata
    - Had to do mapping since digital printing has limited formats (this is what it will now be if x trim size on y stock)
    - Where to find metadata info:
        - Catalogs – finding that descriptions were pretty light
        - Card catalogs – would look to card catalog info if they didn't have it else where
        - In very worst cases, would take info from the TOC to use for the descriptions, but not many titles had to go this route
    - Metadata is a lot of work when you are doing 12,000 books; wish they had chunked it. About 2,700 titles done so far.
    - Worked on how to present the info on the website and made sure ONIX data had original publication date
- Production
    - Adding ISBNs, pub date, LIC,…
    - Weren't going to make changes but were getting requests to make changes
    - Scans – if they couldn't find originals or the scans were bad, they would *consider* making changes
    - Covers – setup a design template
- Sales
    - Tracking units by the three disciplines they have – it is doing well
    - Excluded books with color, like art history
    - Top six are all monographs
    - To date, they have made back the investment they put into this
        - Hardcover is selling
        - Paperback and web pdf are pretty close in sales
    - Top ten books, units wise, match the bottom 100
    - Average unit is 13, mode is 1 (number that shows up most frequently in print)
    - It is worth it to have back in print

Session: Sales Projections: How to Get Real or Learning to Love Sales Forecasts
Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2019
Chair: *JD Wilson, Director of Marketing and Sales; Northwestern University Press*
Panelists: *Gianna LaMorte, Marketing and Sales Manager, University of Texas Press; Elizabeth Scarpelli, Director, University of Cincinnati Press; Stephanie Williams, Director, Ohio University Press*

This skills-building session about sales forecasts welcomed people from any press department and assumed no prior knowledge or experience in sales projections. In this session, panelists answered the perennial question: "What's a good comp?", and, using real-world examples, revealed strategies and tips for forecasting frontlist title sales based on different forms of information, such past history, logic, and even intuition.

JD, Northwestern University Press
- Sales forecasts are about looking at and recognizing patterns. Regardless of your area or subject, if you can look at it and see a pattern, you can do sales projections.
- People freeze at sales projections because they wonder how do we know what a book will do
  - Look at your data closely, get comfortable with it, see patterns, and apply to the future
- Why do forecasts?
  - Provide the director and press with a financial roadmap
  - Set internal and external expectations (if you don't, nobody will)
  - Inform resource-allocation questions
- The basic 3 part framework
  - A book's expected BASE
  - External ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS – competitors
  - Book-specific ADJUSTMENTS – what causes it to go up and down
- Net sales or gross when we talk about sales?
  - Recommends focusing on net sales

Gianna, University of Texas Press
- The lifecycle of a book
  - Sales in Y1
    - First thing she does every day is she looks at backorders, helps guide her and keeps her in check
  - What backlists well and why?
    - Comb through the backlist a few times a year and tie in global events and current trends
  - How to breathe life into backlists
    - Cycle in relevant backlist titles to your upcoming catalog
    - Backlist stock offers – you have gems on the backlist but, for example, Baker & Taylor may not know about it
    - Get someone to write a forward and reissue it

Elizabeth, University of Cincinnati Press
- Comps – probably the biggest factor in what you think sales will look like
- Two types of comps
  - Competitive – is a book that can replace another book
  - Comparative book – walks and talks and performs like other books in the market place. It is alongside another book.

- Considerations
  - With your comp, you want to have something relatively current
    - Do not use titles more than three years old
    - It is tempting to use an older book by the same author but don't use it if it is old
  - Select a book published by a similar type of press
    - First choice would be another university press, if not available go to an academic press that is smaller and niche that performs in a similar fashion
    - Have a go-to press for each type of category
  - Places to look for comps
    - Your own press
    - A peer press
    - Pub Alley
    - Will lastly look at Amazon (good resource if you have an orphan book and have never published in the category before)
  - Format and price are also key to consider when looking at comps – find something similar in all categories, format, and price
  - Lastly, you have to think sincerely about how you are going to market the book
    - She uses a ranking system A-D, to indicate what she is going to actually do for the book in terms of marketing
    - This impacts your forecast of how your book will do
    - Don't build up marketing that isn't there – the comps are for those that don't know the books and can help them assimilate them into their own buying patterns
  - Limit comps to two or at most three
  - JD commented that a comp is more about how a book will sell rather than what it is like
- Environment (external factors) – things that can influence the sales forecast
  - Open access format
    - Adds this into the forecast mix using a rule of thumb based on her experience – *a book is going to do about as good as a book would have done anyways*
    - 25-40% of the print sales to be influenced by this. Example: if she thinks it will sell 1,000 copies without OA, she will deduct 25-40% due to OA (would rather guess in the negative and then be surprised it is positive)
  - Shifting library market
    - Honest reality is that about half of their budget is based in collections and other half is operations
    - The library mission is changing, they are fighting to stay relevant on their own campus; they are becoming less focused on their budgets
      - Need to understand the needs of the library and the library needs to stay relevant to maintain their budget
  - Inclusive access factor
    - This is new on certain university campuses, where basically your book purchase is tied to a registration in a specific course
    - Gives books more exposure, concern is that it is tied to a discovery system and if the University Press books are not part of the inclusive access discovery system then the books won't be a part of the system flag
    - Be a part of what is going on at your campus regarding open access

Stephanie, Ohio University Press
- Has a book financial forecast spreadsheet that is filled out to help determine how a book will do
- Look at it (sales projections) as a decision to publish, then look at it again at end of season, then look at it again when book comes into the warehouse, and possibly again after a year – doing this provides a way to talk about it across departments
- Things we can control
  - Author's first book?
  - Size of the author's nearby market
  - Confirmed, *not speculative*, special sale
  - Monograph or edited collection?
  - Any pre-published material?
- Is the press positioned to maximize on the audience for the book?
- Can you bring resources to bear to accomplish this?
- The author is important
- Along the lines of comps… What factors make this book inside or outside of the mean of other books of this type?

Recommend doing an anniversary sales report – how it performed 12 months after the publication date

Session: Managing Multiple Job Titles
Date: Thursday, June 13, 2019
Chair: *Elisabeth Maselli, Assistant Editor, Assistant to the Director, Rights and Permissions Manager, and eBook Coordinator, Rutgers University Press*
Panelists: *Allison Means, Marketing Manager, University of Iowa Press; Liz Hamilton, Copyright Librarian , Northwestern University Press/Northwestern Library; Carrie Hudak, Paperbacks Manager, Princeton University Press*

Many University Press publishers, from entry level to senior management, and from small to large presses, work in more than one capacity, a necessity in non-profit environments. Managing multiple titles is exciting, but it requires high attention to detail, creativity, an ability to prioritize, and awareness of and ability to use the resources around you. These are all skills that can be strengthened by sharing.

Elisabeth, Rutgers University Press
- Positive of multiple job titles: See the book along many parts of its path which gives a 360 view of the book
- Recommends a calendar system, she uses a paper notebook for her calendar system – lets her build a timeline far in advance that she can look at immediately
  - Gives a foundation to put core stuff in and schedule other things based around the core stuff
  - Helps her see how long things are taking
- Know when you are at your best in every day – your "focus cycle" – and plan your tasks to fit those times
- It is great to be able to use your network and other University Presses to see what they are doing and to ask questions

Carrie, Princeton University Press
- Thinks of her job as a type of triathlon
  - Needlepoint – very close detail work, looking at capitalization and punctuation
  - Steeplechase – overview of goals that are to be met in a time frame; hop over obstacles
  - Kite flying – when able to step back and see how she is doing; time to ask "Is there another way to approach this?"
- Spoke about when the institution was faced with a challenge, but also an opportunity, when it adopted a new title management system in the last year
- Themes and takeaways from the challenge/opportunity
  - Blocks out time on her calendar when she has competing priorities (ex: block out time to review proofs). Won't check emails during this time and others can see the time blocked out.
  - Communicate regularly with everyone
    - Even in regards to the times you can't communicate
  - Document whatever you decided, or decided in the moment
  - Ask for what you need
  - Be patient
  - It takes a village to raise a book and we are all on the same team

Liz, Northwestern University Press/Northwestern Library
- Serves two departments
  - Works for her press and her library – has 2 offices and 2 bosses
- Challenges she faces
  - Competing priorities
    - Library work doesn't stop when she is at the press and vice versa
  - Busy periods in the academic year
  - Multi-part projects
    - There are lots of layers and changes and back and forth
- Strategies she undertakes to manage this
  - Communicate more than you think you need to
  - Be as flexible as you can
  - Track projects in a way that is meaningful to you
    - She created a spreadsheet for projects and added dates in for when events take place

Alison, University of Iowa Press
- How to work with students
  - Practical things she does with her students
    - Only so many things you can trust with an undergrad – check what they do
    - Take time during the first several weeks to work next to them so they know what you are particular about and why
      - Overexplain
      - Have templates
      - Do not give tasks that require a deeper knowledge
  - Resource tip: Keeping track of email strings is impossible; she uses Trello and loves it, especially when working with the students
  - Resource tip: Started using Slack, which helps track things
  - All things come back to communication

Session: What Librarians Want Publishers to Know
Date: Thursday, June 13, 2019
Chair*: Geoffrey Robert Little, Interim Associate University Librarian and Interim Director, Concordia University Press*
Panelists*: Gerald Beasley, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian, Cornell University Library; Susan Gibbons, Stephen F. Gates '68 University Librarian and Deputy Provost, Collections & Scholarly Communication, Yale University;*

While librarians and publishers are natural allies, these two groups may not understand each other fully. University librarians have a distinct and extremely valuable vantage point over the scholarly communications landscape and insight as to how changes there may affect our work. This panel featured university librarians who set out some of the things they are thinking about today that impact University Press publishing. The session featured time for discussion of how to advance common interests with the goal of supporting authors, readers, and researchers.

Packed session with people standing and sitting on the floor. Theme – collaboration and communication.

Gerald, Cornell
- Spoke to the "intersecting mission" with publishers
- Said lightheartedly: "Libraries have never had a business model that works. Libraries have been trying to put their selves out of business for years. Libraries are moving upstream."
- The role of libraries has extended as the research lifecycle, and within this lifecycle presses and publishers have an important part
- Libraries continue to value quality
- He believes that whether you like it or not, research takes place in an open access (OA) environment these days. Not everything has to go toward OA, but your business model does need to change to account for it.
    1. Experimentalism is something we all need to share to move forward when thinking about your business model (we are working in an experimental environment)
    2. Have you considered the research you are putting out there in an OA way? You don't have to require it, but think about it and have a shared thoughtfulness on it
- The landscape is changing
- Libraries are having financial challenges despite looking like they have a sizeable footprint on campus
    o In a financially constrained environment, libraries hope to make what they think are rational decisions based on price points
    o Librarians behaviors are often a result of financial constraints
- Libraries will be *oriented* toward an OA environment – they recognize there are multiple ways to think about it and take an ethical position on it
- OA is a means and not an end, it is one way to try to achieve what they are striving for
- Collaboration is important but we (libraries) have more to learn from presses than presses have to from libraries

Susan, Yale
- Her remarks focused on collection development and the trends that are there, how they are responding, and the data they are seeing (focusing on books and not journals)

- Trends
  - Budgets are tight
    - Inflation
      - Example: their subscription costs for journals are increasing by 5-7%/yr but budgets are not increasing; what happens is that books are being cut
    - Increase in number of publications
    - Expansion of acquisition mediums
      - Instead of just buying books and journals the library is also buying data science and software
  - Staffing is down
    - Everyone is doing multiple things
    - They are focusing on approval plans
    - Looking for shelf ready materials
    - Reshuffling of roles has crowded out what is largely in the print world
      - Recognizes that print is still preferred, but it takes less bodies and resources to add an eBook than a print book
  - Space for collections is tight
    - Library renovations tend to focus on new study and program space
      - Responding to university pressures
      - Running out of space to put their books in
  - Circulation decline
    - Use of physical books is going down
    - Hard to justify acquiring physical books when circulation is going down
      - It is not just a youth problem, it is occuring across all levels (faculty, staff, graduate, undergrad)
    - There is growth in resource sharing – lending to other institutions
    - Don't assume reading isn't happening – content is getting used more thanks to the access of electronic books and articles
- How are libraries coping with this?
  - Purchase on-demand as print books are requested – less perspective and more reactive
  - E-preferred – buy access to more electronic as preferred format then bring in print copy as needed (space saver too)
  - Stronger emphasis on library services – less about library as collection and more and more about services
  - Interlibrary loan – have a system to loan a book within two days to another institution in the system
  - Partnership/consortium/confederation (so that not all institutions are buying the same titles …)
    - Cooperative collection development
      - Approval plans
      - Shared librarian
    - Cooperative print retention – make sure they are not all tossing the same books or are all storing the same book
    - Data sharing across institutions – trying to create the system that has the greatest diversity of titles in it by cutting down on duplication
- There are incredible partnerships that are possible

Session: Designing Covers for Scholarly Books
Date: Thursday, June 13, 2019
Chair: *Rob Ehle, Art Director, Stanford University Press*
Panelists: *Amanda Weiss, Freelance Designer, formerly at Princeton University Press; Justin Kehoe, Associate Acquisitions Editor, The MIT Press; Parneshia Jones, Sales and Subsidiary Rights Manager and Poetry Editor, Northwestern University Press*

A designer, an editor, and a sales and sub rights manager take you behind the curtain of the book cover design process, revealing the petty rivalries, grandstanding, and tortured genius that go into the high stakes world of scholarly graphic design.

During this lighthearted session, each speaker shared stories of their struggles and successes in delivering a cover that is true to the type of book it is and that the author approves. Through these stories, the speakers offered tips on methods that have worked, and a common theme of collaboration emerged.

Amanda, formerly at Princeton and now a freelancer (designer perspective)
- Has an author fill out a cover design form to get a sense of what the author is thinking. Form includes:
  - Message
  - Tone
  - Author requested imagery
  - Appropriate images/colors/symbolism
  - Covers the author likes and why – it helps to know aesthetically what the authors like in order to get approval down the line
  - Similar book covers within the genre
- Does the form matter? How much control does an author really get?
  - It depends on the author; the contract; have you published with them before;… these are all variables to consider
- Cautions that there is a fine line between sacrificing the design to make someone happy
  - This is where a strong team comes in (acquisitions, sales, design, etc.) to make sure everyone is on board

Justin, MIT (editor perspective)
- There are several steps to the cover design process and several people are involved along the way
  - The cover design process for trade titles is more complex (has more steps and more people involved) than professional monographs
  - Communication and collaboration are critical

Parneshia, Northwestern (acquisition and author perspective)
- Believes that her job as acquisitions editor is in part to let authors know that the press is good at what they do and that authors need to trust what the press is going to do
- Will ask authors for keywords in terms of the book itself along with themes so that designers can have a type of guide to go off of
- Trade titles do tend to require more time for the design process
- Will sometimes send cover designs to bookstores so she can use their feedback as ammo when going back to an author to convince them that the design is appropriate for the book

- - Will often ask the author "Are you going to buy the book or do you want someone else to buy the book?"
- Wants to make the author happy and it is a collaborative process
- Things she suggests you can do to make it collaborative without giving the author control
  - Ask basic questions to help them feel involved in the process such as
    - What colors do you like?
    - What singular objects are you drawn to?
  - Only send 2-3 cover design options
  - Establish how much control you are giving authors up front – whether it is in the contract or not
  - Explain to authors that sometimes they are too close to the project, that they need to let someone else come in with fresh eyes and ideas and allow a professional to come up with the design
  - Tries to navigate her authors into trusting them (the press) to do what is right for them
  - Finds that having conversations in the beginning helps authors be more accommodating