Sydney University Press - publication, business and the digital library

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Abstract

This paper argues that the business strategies of the emerging e-press movement benefit from the values and standards that are part of the digital library.

The paper will discuss these values and standards and their relationship to the business processes of e-publishing. The paper will explore these relationships through developments at Sydney University Press (SUP), recently re-establised as an electronic publisher based on the digital library platform of SETIS, the Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service of the University of Sydney Library.

The paper will also consider the integration of repository content into these publication processes within the broader context of eScholarship

Within their walls libraries house the content of the ages, and in an age where content is a prime product – usable, re-usable, re-mixable - its potential is realised through digitisation. Google is just the latest of many corporations who have capitalised on the collections of libraries – and done very well, thank you.

The GooglePrint Library Project, the Open Content Alliance (Yahoo, MSN, Adobe) are the most recent initiatives which rely on the conversion of research library collections[1]. They follow a tradition of companies such as ProQuest, (EEBO, Early English Books Online) Chadwyck-Healey, (19th Century Collection) Research Publications (ECCO,18th Collection Online) and many others. All have capitalised on library collections, capitalised on centuries of custody, conservation and care.

The current interest in institutional and other data repositories, with libraries taking some responsibility for the intellectual output of their institutions, raises all kinds of interesting new scenarios regarding rights, publication and access. Scenarios based on those same traditions of custody, care and access.

A little bit of history…

The creation of digital collections during the early to mid 1990s, initially by a few large research libraries in the USA, opened these collections to new forms of access and interpretation. The processes of creating these text and image collections, utilising emerging technical standards developed from sources as diverse as military and humanities computing [2] enabled libraries to extend their roles as providers of information resources. The development of these collections and the application of these emerging standards allowed libraries to develop new skill sets and new collaborative partnerships. This, combined with delivery through the World Wide Web, provided new opportunities for libraries to engage in, and influence, the processes of scholarly communication.

While the development of these digital library collections provided the opportunities for libraries to re-assess their roles and re-position themselves strategically, it was – ironically perhaps - the traditional library values of custodian and provider that became the principal, and principled, drivers behind these initiatives.

In the broader sense these values, and the organisational continuity of the library as an institution, underlie expectations of libraries to act as a key part of knowledge or research infrastructures[3].

However, and central to this paper, is the case that this continuity, these values, and the technical standards that facilitate digital curation and access also provide the key drivers behind the business and management strategies for libraries engaging in new forms of scholarly communication and publication.

The dynamics of these relationships can be considered through the development of the digital collections, the re-establishment of the University Press, and the establishment of digital repository services at the University of Sydney Library. These services provide a model of the processes of integration – so far - of the digital library, publication, business, scholarly communication and eScholarship.

Scholarly communication, publication and need for viability

Sydney University Press (SUP) [4] was re-established in 2003 as a Library initiative to enable the University of Sydney to address the challenges of scholarly communication in the networked environment.

This initiative – like many in the emerging e-press movement - was the culmination of many factors. These included some of the arguments around the 'scholarly communication' debate [5] particularly in terms of institutions taking greater control of their intellectual output and breaking the hold of multinational publishing, through to the opportunities being offered by the creation and development of digital library collections, services and skills. At Sydney it was the opportunities offered by the latter that gave this initiative the practical impetus rather than the rhetoric of the former.

Fundamental to the success of the initiative was the need to put the venture on a viable footing over time to sustain the activity, so the need for a business strategy in its broadest sense was apparent from the start. This was important for operational reasons and to ensure due recognition of publication for research purposes. This business strategy introduced the need to consider matters relating to rights, contracts, pricing and marketing – a new set of processes and skills from those required in the development of our digital library collections.

Open access by itself is not a sustainable basis for a publishing operation. Where appropriate sales or subscription-based distribution can enable libraries to actively add value to the content they manage in their digital collections.

Recent interest in the development of digital repositories and the emergence of e-research and e-learning agendas have again challenged and provided opportunities for libraries to be an active partner in the fabric of scholarly infrastructure. The opportunities for the integration of repository and dataset content into the new publishing processes added an additional impetus to the business processes behind SUP

Sydney University Press – "the business of publication in all its branches"

The original Sydney University Press operated under the ownership and management of the University of Sydney between 1962 and 1987.

The objects of the Press, as set out in its incorporation in 1962 declared it *"shall be to undertake the publication of works of learning and to carry out the business of publication in all its branches"*.

Its fate, however, was that of many traditional University Presses - heavy in infrastructure and overly expensive to operate, the Press was effectively dismantled in 1987 to become, for a time, an imprint of Oxford University Press till they relinquished the imprint and business name in the mid 1990s.

During this relatively brief period of time Sydney University Press published several hundred books and many journals representing the breadth and the best of scholarship at the University of Sydney and beyond.

The business name and imprint of Sydney University Press were re-registered in late 2003 by the University for the University Library to take a leadership role in providing the Press as an electronic publishing platform. Its objects, however, remained the same "to undertake the publication of works of learning and to carry out the business of publication in all its branches".

SUP was re-established in the context of the e-press movement, but a decision was made at the outset to maintain the Sydney University Press name as brand and as an entity faithful to the original and current objects of the enterprise. While fundamentally an electronic operation it mission was indeed to carry out the business of publication in all its branches, be it electronic or print. Scholarly publication and content was of primary interest, not its forms, but the operation needed the flexibility to provide that content in the most appropriate form given its nature (as text, image, streaming media such as sound or video, or as dataset), or given the market, the audience or its creators.

Many significant members of this e-press movement, in Australia as in the US and Europe, emerged from library environments, or from those collaborations that arose to address the challenges and opportunities around scholarly communication. In Australia these operations include the Monash ePress, ANU (Australian National University) ePress, and UTS (University of Technology, Sydney) ePress, as well as Sydney University Press. All are cooperatively (through the newly formed Australian Scholarly Electronic Publishers Group[6]), or jointly exploring means of collaboration and partnership within this new environment.

A bit more history - developing a digital library, "preservation and access"

Definitions of "digital library" vary considerably, but in general terms it refers to digital collections created by libraries from their own print collections, rather than access to licenced content (such as aggregations of publisher based e-journal collections). In the context of this paper, digital library development relates to collection creation and to the services providing access and use of these collections.

Examples of early digital library development of this nature included the US "preservation and access" projects funded in the early 1990s through organisations such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation. Pioneers in such projects included Cornell and Michigan university libraries, libraries which have subsequently established their own scholarly publishing ventures – DPubS and Project Euclid at Cornell and the Office for Scholarly Publishing at Michigan.

In these early projects 'preservation' generally referred to the digitisation of original print material to provide a hybrid digital/microfilm process that provided surrogates of the originals, and provided long term preservation through microfilm and 'access' through online functionality. The development of technical standards for imaging (Cornell), the use of SGML (Standard Genralised Markup Language) and later XML, and means of tagging text itself through guidelines such as TEI, the Text Encoding Initiative articulated digital library development.

Importantly, use of these kinds of digital library standards also provided a facility for archiving and flexible use and re-use of the digital content.

The development of the SETIS (Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service)[7] digital collections at the University of Sydney Library paralleled these developments, having their genesis in the first major Australian preservation and access project, the *Australian Cooperative Digitisation Project (ACDP) 1840-45*, funded by the ARC in 1996, a collaboration led by the University of Sydney Library in partnership with the National Library of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales. Sydney developed and continues to have close relationships with Cornell, Michigan and Oxford in regard to the technical development of digital collections. .

In one form, or another, preservation and access have always been central to the philosophy and practice of libraries and librarians. Our role both as custodians of our collections and in ensuring effective use of them is fundamental to our vocation. There has often been some tension between these roles - the ambition of "preservation and access" was to, through digitisation, provide a means of resolving this tension.

The digital library, publication and Sydney eScholarship

The transformation from digital library to publisher can perhaps be better understood in the wider context of what is described as eScholarship.

While the generic term eScholarship has been used (and abused) in many ways, its prominent adoption within the digital library environment was through the California Digital Library.

> "eScholarship … facilitates innovation and supports experimentation in the production and dissemination of scholarship. Through the use of innovative technology, the program seeks to develop a financially sustainable model and improve all areas of scholarly communication, including its creation, peer review, management, dissemination, and preservation.
>
> New modes of scholarly publication include:
> * Repositories for research and scholarly output, including pre-publication materials and peer-reviewed content.
> * Web-based publications of digitally reformatted content.
> * Electronic editions of academic monographs of interest to both scholarly and general-interest readers." [8]

This definition melds in a powerful way the new dynamics and forms of scholarly communication, the need for innovative strategies, the role of the library, and the publishing and sustainable business processes that are required to facilitate this kind of vision. It has been a vision that has assisted the University of Sydney Library in conceptualising its *Sydney eScholarship* service.

This service brings together in a coherent way the strategic and operational directions for many of the Library's digital collection and publishing activities. It articulates the collaborations developed around these activities, and the new roles and expectations in integrating repository services at the University.

Sydney eScholarship provides the context and the dynamics for SUP by establishing relationships between digital content management and the process of adding value through publication.

Simply the Sydney eScholarship service can be understood as two broad sets of interrelated services: the Sydney Digital Library, managing content, and Sydney University Publishing, adding value to the content. The latter providing the publication and business processes to the former.

An overview of the service

<u>Sydney eScholarship</u>

<u>Sydney Digital Library</u>
- eScholarship repository
- SETIS digital collections
- Sydney Digital Theses
- support, consultation and advisory services
- hosting services

<u>Sydney University Publishing</u>
- Sydney University Press
- other imprints
- digital / print on demand services
- eStore, eCommerce and business services
- experimental publication

The development of Sydney eScholarship has been a strategic decision by the Library, and includes the appointment of new staff to support these initiatives, including development programmer, repository coordinator and business manager - new roles necessary to facilitate these relationships and transformations.

Sydney Digital Library – custodian of content

Fundamental to creating the Sydney Digital Library has been the technical and management expertise gained through developing the SETIS collections and services.

SETIS was established in 1996 as part of eText Centre initiatives common in major research libraries around the world in the early/mid 1990s. Essentially these centres implemented humanities computing processes and standards to develop large and accurate corpora to facilitate textual analysis and study, using standards such SGML, XML and TEI tagging.. SETIS was established initially as a platform to network major commercial text databases (eg Chadwyck-Healey's English Poetry etc) across the University. The skills developed in providing local networked access to these raw databases (rather than have them as stand alone CD-ROMS) were the very skills needed for the creation of local text collections. The SETIS Australia Studies text collections grew from the ACDP 1840-45 project, through partnership in the AustLit [9] collaboration where SETIS developed and continues to host a series of full text literature collections, to other digital collections such as the Australian Federation Full Text database and the First Fleet digital collection.

Through SETIS the University of Sydney Library developed the skill sets and a reputation for creation and management of digital text collections based on the principles of accuracy, functionality and continuity. SETIS provided the platform for publishing, the use of SGML and XML enabled flexible re-purposing of text online, with potential to publish products from ebooks to print.

The role of SETIS in providing continuity, archiving, and the use of open standards are the fundamental values enabling the production and business strategies underlying SUP.

Sydney University Press – custodian as publisher – the promise that "never again will books be out of print"

The SETIS digital collections – over 400 primary source texts in Australian literary and historical studies - are predominantly made up of out of copyright books. Over time many inquiries had been received seeking print versions of these texts, but there was no facility to meet this demand.

The reputation of SETIS for managing text collections led CAL (Copyright Agency Ltd), through referral by the National Library of Australia, to propose a collaborative print-on-demand project. CAL was interested in fostering a cost effective means of bringing out of print but in copyright works back to the market through print-on-demand. This project provided the impetus to develop an infrastructure that led to the re-birth of Sydney University Press. The CAL collaboration created the *Classic Australian Works* series beginning with 25 books from 20 Australian authors. Titles were selected upon advice from AustLit Board members seeking re-publication of books for teaching purposes.

The digital files were archived as part of SETIS and published through print-on-demand. The books would be continually available as part of the digital library commitment to maintain the collections – they would "never again be out-of- print"

The infrastructure underlying the re-establishment SUP was a technical and business integration of existing facilities at the University – a light infrastructure. The principle partners were SETIS (digital collections), University Printing Services, through digital networked printing, and University IT services providing secure ecommerce transaction services

Having established the print on demand and online ordering process parts of the SETIS collections were converted for re-publication as the *SETIS eText in print* series, and other series planned, including the *AustLit Series*, bringing significant works of literature back to print for study purposes.

SUP had now demonstrated an operational and effective digital to print-on-demand production process with a secure ecommerce ordering and delivery service. In the process many traditional publishing issues also needed to be addressed, from design to copy editing through to contractual and business processes including pricing, marketing and trade sales.

Very soon opportunities arose to provide this production and ecommerce service in different contexts. A general publishing strategy was being developed. This included external and internal print-on-demand (POD) services to other publishers such as Monash ePress (a significant collaboration sharing respective expertise – Monash for ejournals and Sydney for print on demand). It also provided a means to consider publishing content from digital repositories and discipline based datasets, such as the *Australian Beaches* series drawn from the Coastal Studies data set. The service also provided a cost-effective process for internal University services, such as print on demand publication of University Faculty Handbooks. It also provided a platform for experimental publication, such as customised products.

An essential part of this publishing strategy, however, was to ensure that the imprint of Sydney University Press was reserved and maintained as a scholarly publisher. It was critical to maintain the imprint as a quality academic publisher, particularly to preserve the listing by

the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Technology (DEST) of the Press as a recognized research publisher, necessary for university research quantum counts.

A very schematic overview of the publishing strategy is reproduced below
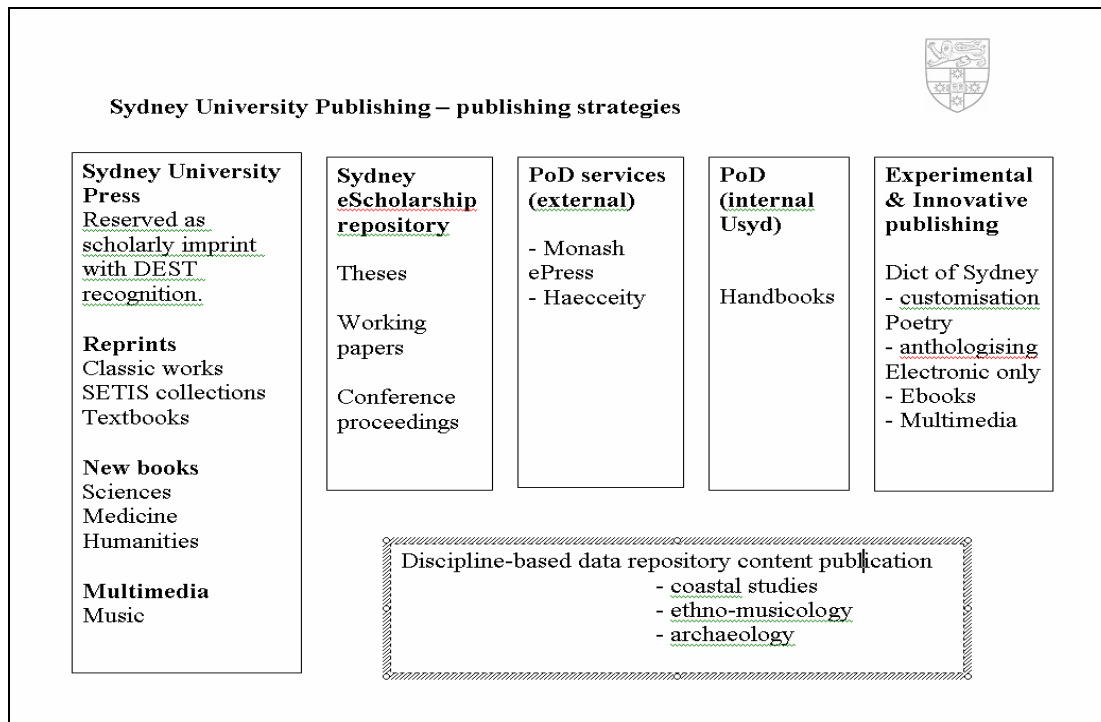
Sydney University Press and Sydney University Publishing were now operational enterprises developed directly from the digital library initiatives and skills.

The business of custodian

The development of the digital library had provided a means to address some of the tensions around preservation and access. The sets of standards and skills developed to facilitate the digital library had enabled libraries, such as Sydney, to extend their activities to the flexible re-purposing of this content through publication, exemplified through the ePress movement.

The continuity of open standards digital library content maintained as part of ongoing Library services, and a capacity to publish at any time as appropriate provided the business strategies enabling use, re-use and re-mix of this content. The continuity, goals and values of institutional library managed content, as opposed to the continuity and goals of corporate managed content was also a factor to be considered.

In this environment other new sets of tensions appeared to have developed, primarily around open access models (typified by either the institutional repository models described by pioneers such as Clifford Lynch, or the self-archiving gurus such as Steve Harnard) and the eScholarship models that look to a form of "financial sustainability". While this may appear contradictory, in reality they are not mutually exclusive.

The institutional repository view of open access can sit comfortably with the new processes of library-based publication. The process of adding value through publication need not threaten values of open access – indeed they are in some ways complementary, particularly where

academics look to add value and recognition to the richness and complexity of their research through new forms and capacities for publication.

The establishment of the Sydney eScholarship service by the University of Sydney Library is an example of a practical means of integrating digital library, data repository and publishing services, melding this content while acknowledging the core values of libraries. These are the values of custodian, ensuring the integrity of the content, and that it remains accessible and if necessary publishable over time, and through the ages.

Footnotes and references

1 Research libraries are providing access to their collections to these projects. The consequences of these strategic partnerships to the libraries, and the longer term business benefits of these projects to the corporations involved are yet to become fully apparent However, the acquisition and control of content of various forms (and the capacity to re-use it) are now key strategies of many information industry multinationals.

"The [GooglePrint]Library Project's aim is simple: make it easier for people to find relevant books – specifically books they wouldn't find any other way such as those that are out of print – while carefully respecting authors' and publishers' copyrights. Our ultimate goal is to work with publishers and libraries to create a comprehensive, searchable, virtual card catalog of all books in all languages that helps users discover new books and publishers discover new readers".
Available from <http://print.google.com/googlebooks/library.html> [15 Jan 2006]

"The Open Content Alliance (OCA) represents the collaborative efforts of a group of cultural, technology, nonprofit, and governmental organizations from around the world that will help build a permanent archive of multilingual digitized text and multimedia content. Content in the OCA archive will be accessible soon through this website and through Yahoo!"
Available from <http://www.opencontentalliance.org/> [15 Jan 2006]

2 The extensive use of Standard Generalised Markup Language (SGML) by the military in the US and Australia during the 1980s and 1990s for technical specifications established SMGL as a de facto text standard, which was largely adopted in humanities computing with the development of tagging guidelines such as the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) developed at the Oxford Text Archive.

3 The Australian Research Information Infrastructure Committee (ARIIC) is the principal body advising the Australian Government on research information issues. The role of libraries and repositories of research output has been central in its recommendations to Government. ARIIC goals are:

- to improve the access of Australian researchers to the information they need to carry out their research

- to make the results of Australian research widely available and easily accessible.

  Available from
  <http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/australian_research_information_infrastructure_committee/default.htm#ARIIC > [15 Jan 2006]

4   Sydney University Press web site. Available from < http://www.sup.usyd.edu.au/>
       [15 Jan 2006]

5   An overview of the debate and the current activities / challenges / responses around
       scholarly communication can be found at the ARL (Association of Research Libraries)
       Scholarly Communication, Available from <http://www.arl.org/osc/> [15 Jan 2006]

6   The Australian Scholarly Electronic Publishers Group is a loose grouping convened in
       2004 by Monash ePress and CSIRO Publishing. Its membership includes Sydney
       University Press, Monash, ANU ePress, UTS ePress, Melbourne University Press,
       University of Queensland Press, UWA Press, RMIT Publishing

7   SETIS services includes platforms for proprietary content, open access hosting
       services, support for new research proposals and faculty projects as well as the
       creation of the Australian Studies digital collections.   Available from
       <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/> [15 Jan 2006]

8   Available from <http://www.cdlib.org/programs/escholarship.html> [15 Jan 2006]

       California eScholarships ambition are similar to that of the ARL goals for scholarly
       communication: " the development of effective, extensible, sustainable, and
       economically viable models of scholarly communication that provide barrier-free
       access to quality information" (ibid 5)

9   AustLit. Available from <http://www.austlit.edu.au/> [15 Jan 2006]

       "AustLit's mission is to enhance and support research and learning in Australian
       literature, by. providing a discovery service for Australian literature research;
       integrating existing Australian literature infrastructure and content ; and using new
       technologies to assist discovery"