

UKSG webinar Q&A

‘Back to the Future: Lessons learned from the Jisc Open Access Textbook project’

Speakers: Emma Thompson | Catherine McManamon | Paul Catherall | Alison Welsby

Questions that came during the presentation:

“Q: Has this project had any impact on the institutions allocation for the Library's budget for information resources?”

Part of the Library’s bookfund is now helping to fund the hosting. In principle, as these books were additions to the curricula rather than replacements, they have not created room in the budget.

“Q: Alison, would it be possible to re-cap the points you made with reference to the EbookSOS campaign? They could be used to inform good practice in licencing for other publishers.”

A summary of LUP’s position on #eBooksSOS

We always make books available as ebooks unless there is a rights issue, and we’ve worked hard to digitise as much back list content as possible.

Our ebooks are for unlimited use and multiple downloads.

Our licenses and sales models are intentionally clear and we have revised them considerably over the years to be more transparent.

Our ebooks are released two weeks before print.

If an ebook goes into a collection we are creating, if an institution has already purchased the ebook then they still have perpetual access to it.

And we don’t use the etextbook models as identified in the ‘Campaign to investigate the academic ebook market’.

“Q: Who created the metadata for the OA titles, and will the titles be available via DOAB collection?”

The record was created internally by the Library. When originally launched, the Biblioboard system listed its titles in third party OA directories. The titles aren’t currently in DOAB, we will look into adding them.

“Q: About the PDF format: were there accessibility issues addressed by the team?”

EPUB alternatives were provided alongside the internal Biblioboard text viewer (HTML5), PDFs were not available to users to download. The output was an HTML5 based viewer/interface with zoom/magnify, text labels for media and similar accessibility options, with compatibility for screen readers such as Jaws, Supernova etc.

“Q: Have you considered the "5 Rs" in the difference between OA and OER? From a North American perspective, they tend to make a huge difference in use of that material in class. When we can remix resources, with students involved, OER is about more than cost.”

We informally refer to Using Primary Sources as a resource rather than a textbook, because readers can access any chapter, section or source in any order and still find value in and make sense of the content. This text does not have to be read chronologically, cover to cover, like a traditional book, and many users dip in and out, consulting the relevant sections for their topic or assignment. It is not an OER as measured by the North American 5R model. It is licenced on a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 licence, so while wide access and reading is encouraged, the other elements of the 5R model are not covered.

“Q: When you say the book is used by other institutions, were these contributing institutions?”

The UPS book is used at other institutions by staff who were contributors to the project. However, the analytics also tell us that the books are accessed and read beyond this, by readers in multiple countries.

“Q: Is there any form of form of forking that happened?”

I presume this refers to forking i.e. content pathways. There was a hierarchy based on modules, anthologies, content etc. the display changed based on the user’s location in the hierarchy, the content itself was presented in a linear format, hyperlinking between content became possible eventually but cross-linking or ‘forking’ (presumably presenting pathways) for content was not inherently part of the platform. We did seek to provide links between media/text however.

“Q: Can you say something about how you reached the decision to use quite a restrictive licence for both titles? Did you consider creating open textbooks instead (as opposed to open access textbooks)?”

At the time, it was decided that both books would be CC-BY-NC-ND open access, allowing HEIs nationally and internationally to access the material but protect the University of Liverpool brand by avoiding repurposing Liverpool content. This was developed as a teaching tool under the University of Liverpool imprimatur and therefore at the time it was not felt appropriate to opt for CC-BY.

“Q: Do you have any other open access textbooks in the pipeline?”

LUP has lots of open access monographs and journals, and continues to support this, but currently no textbooks are in development.

“Q: Would this be possible without a publisher working closely with the Institution?”

The Library would have found this challenging without LUP as a partner. It would be achievable without an institutional press, but it would have a steeper learning curve. Likewise, LUP, would have found it challenging to include the rich content without Library support.

“Q: I'd be interested to hear more about wider, non-Liverpool impact of the etextbooks you published? Has there been uptake/adoption from non-Liverpool academic course leaders? How do you track these?”

We have had feedback from some of the chapter contributors to UPS who are not based at Liverpool, telling us that they use the work within their own teaching at their respective institutions. The available analytics also confirm that the book is accessed and used by readers in multiple countries.

“Q: Is LUP planning to publish more open access textbooks and if yes for which subjects and which levels of study?”

LUP has lots of open access monographs and journals, and continues to support this, but currently no textbooks are in development.

“Q: Do the Library and LUP believe that universities in the UK should work together in a consortia to publish open access textbooks that meet the needs of a wider set of students and produce savings for university libraries on a bigger scale?”

This might be possible where curricula are aligned, but in practice there is much variety (especially in the humanities and social sciences). This might be more feasible to support vocational courses.

“Q: Open access textbooks are widely used in the US but have little use and awareness in the UK. What do the Library and LUP believe are the biggest challenges to achieving wider usage and awareness in the UK?”

We'd love to learn more about the US experience. We understand the HE landscape and the models for adopting textbooks and purchasing can be different, but the biggest challenges here seem to be funding and advocacy of the benefits of OA textbooks.

“Q: How large of a funding did you receive from JISC for this pilot and how much did the University need to invest from its own budget (including human resources)?”

For the two books, we received enough to cover payments to the authors and contributors, third party images and permissions, copy editing and type setting, marketing and travel. We'd be happy to discuss how the funding was allocated across the project.

“Q: Are the books available to faculty and students outside the UK. Is there a license if other faculty wants to use or adapt the textbook?”

The books are available on a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 licence. They can be accessed and read by anyone with internet access to support teaching and learning. The books cannot be adapted as part of the terms of the licence used.

“Q: As the publication was considered, what I think was termed, a living educational resource, how did the team decide on a publication date for the catalogue record?” “Q: How is the publication date managed if the content is added to and updated?”

This is a tricky element of online publications where the contents can grow. The publication date is the first time it is released for cataloguing purposes, and on the platform we do have an 'updated date'. We could also look into seeing how we make this clearer for users.