



Navigating the path: support and resources for new university presses

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As we move into a new year filled with opportunities and challenges, I find myself reflecting on some of the changes I have seen in the scholarly publishing industry over the past 12 months. One change that feels really positive is the increase in resources and knowledge sharing amongst university presses.

University presses play a crucial role in advancing scholarly communication and ensuring academic excellence. However, for newly established presses, navigating the path to success can be challenging without proper support, resources, and guidance. New university presses often find themselves struggling with limited staffing and budgets, and a lack of experience around complex areas including aggregation, dissemination and editorial strategy. Another blocker is how to demonstrate the value of the press to university leadership. Mapping press publications and strategy to overarching university strategy and key research areas can really help with this. University presses are often impactful in areas that might sometimes get overlooked, such as the postgraduate experience and researcher environment, so a mapping exercise is helpful to draw these areas out so they can be highlighted to leadership. There is a lot of information out there, and a huge network of knowledgeable people working in this sphere, but it isn't always easy to get started. I remember when I was managing the **University of Huddersfield Press** in 2016 how isolated I felt and how difficult it seemed at first to connect with those working in my area.

In my role as Director of Content and Research at The International Bunch I now work regularly to support university presses who are often grappling with some of the same issues I was seven years ago. Over the last year I have seen an increase in the amount of support for university presses, and a growing number of ways to connect with the community. Having met up with people working at university presses during various **UKSG** events, I thought an *eNews* editorial would be ideal to highlight some of the places people can find the knowledge and resources needed to thrive in their publishing endeavours.

Make the most of your professional member bodies and associations

There are lots of relevant ones out there, and they are all doing interesting work around supporting the publishing community and creating a space for networking and collaboration. I would recommend looking at the following:

[OIPA](#) – The Open Institutional Publishing Association is a UK-based organization that supports and encourages open access publishing, and advocates for established and emerging university presses. I was excited to help OIPA in setting up and launching their website this year, which is such a positive step in improving links across the community and provides a lot of [resources](#) directly beneficial to university presses.

[UKSG](#) – UKSG is dedicated to addressing the evolving needs of the scholarly communications industry, including both library, institutions and publisher perspectives. With a focus on learning, sharing, openness, and inclusion, UKSG is a great place to keep up to date with relevant research and developments. Their [webinar series](#) is full of insightful sessions, spanning everything from predatory publishing to marketing journals, and lots in between.

[ALPSP](#) – ALPSP supports and represents not-for-profit organizations that publish scholarly and professional content, and those that work with them. They have over 300 member organizations across 30 countries. They have launched a diverse range of [Special Interest Groups \(SIGs\)](#) over the years, and have a really great new one focusing on library publishing, which is a good place to start to get to know other people working in the library publishing sector.

[AUP](#) – The Association of University Presses champions the crucial role of a global publishing network dedicated to upholding academic excellence and fostering knowledge. Their goal is to advocate for the fundamental role of scholarly publishing in achieving academic excellence and disseminating knowledge across the globe. They have an extensive bank of resources directly tailored to university presses – a good place to start is taking a look at their [value of university presses section](#), and their marketing resources, which include some [handy toolkits](#).

[SSP](#) - The Society for Scholarly Publishing is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering communication and collaboration across the scholarly publishing community. Members include publishers, printers, e-product developers, service providers, librarians, and editors from various organizations. They have an [active membership community board](#) where you can browse people's questions and even add your own, as well as some [interest groups](#) around specific topics which you can join to learn more.

[OASPA](#) - OASPA promotes open access as the primary communication method for scholarly works. Members include scholar-led and professional publishers of books and journals across various disciplines and regions, as well as infrastructure and other services. I love their [best practice guides](#) for really clear information about some complex areas including data and licensing.

Don't reinvent the wheel, seek out existing resources to help you

There is a wealth of brilliant resources out there already to help in the set up, development and running of university presses, and accessing them can save you valuable time. Some of the key ones I would recommend having a look at include:

[Jisc New University Press Toolkit](#) - This comprehensive guide is designed to provide you with the support and guidance you need to establish and run a successful university press or library-led publishing venture. It covers a wide range of topics, from establishing a business model to understanding copyright and licensing, marketing and distribution strategies, and much more. Whether you're just starting out or have been in the business for a few years, there are valuable insights to be found.

[OAPEN Open Access Books Toolkit](#) - The OAPEN Open Access Books Toolkit is a free resource designed to educate academic book authors on open access book publishing and promote trust in open access books. It also caters to stakeholders such as publishers, universities, research funders, and research institutions. The toolkit provides over 30 articles covering various open access book-related topics.

[Open Access Agreement Toolkit](#) - cOAlition S and ALPSP released a toolkit to help smaller independent publishers, libraries, and consortia enter into Open Access agreements. The toolkit includes shared principles, a data template, example licenses, and a workflow guide.

Mentorship and Peer Networks

Connecting with experienced professionals in the publishing industry can be immensely beneficial for new university presses. Seeking mentorship from established publishers or joining peer networks allows new presses to learn from others' experiences, gain insights into best practices, and receive guidance on overcoming challenges. ALPSP and SSP both offer mentorship schemes, but there will be others out there too. Taking part in mentorship can help you to benefit from the experience and support of more established publishers.

Launching and running a new university press requires more than just passion for scholarly publishing. It demands access to the right support, resources, and guidance. By cultivating collaborations, exploring the immense amount of available resources out there, and seeking mentorship, new university presses can find the support they need and be more likely to thrive. As always, UKSG is a great place to start making those invaluable connections, and reading some of the latest research coming out of the knowledge community helps to keep new presses informed and current. I have loved seeing the growth in networks and support for university presses over 2023, and I look forward to continuing to be involved in this thriving community in 2024.