



Case Study 4

UCT Press

*Eve Gray
and Michelle Willmers*

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Authors:

Eve Gray

eve.gray@gmail.com

Michelle Willmers

hushpub@mweb.co.za

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAUP	Association of American University Presses
ASSAf	Academy of Science of South Africa
CAS	Centre for African Studies
DoE	Department of Education
DST	Department of Science and Technology
UCT	University of Cape Town

Introduction

The University of Cape Town (UCT) Press was established in 1994 and is one of four¹ university presses currently operating in South Africa. The modern-day university press presents an interesting mix of challenges and conflicting agendas, and the OpeningScholarship project chose UCT Press as a subject for case study in the hope that an examination of the operations and dynamics of such a press would throw some light on the tensions inherent in the academic publishing exercise. It should be noted at the outset that UCT Press is unique among South African university presses in that it is owned by a private company – namely, Juta and Company Ltd. Private ownership of a university press which enjoys a close, synergistic relationship with its parent institution is not unique in the global academic context, but it does present interesting challenges in terms of commercial and non-commercial entities working side by side, often with very different markers of success.

The case study of UCT Press, its history and current situation, needs to be evaluated against the background of recent developments in scholarly publishing, as well as the more general background of conventional print-based university press publishing in the last two decades in an increasingly commercialised context.

The prevailing atmosphere in smaller university presses worldwide during the period that UCT Press has been in existence has been one of crisis. At the 1994 Association of American University Presses conference (in the year that UCT Press was founded), the discussion on the conference floor revealed rising levels of concern as university press directors confronted falling markets on the one hand, and increasing pressure from their parent institutions for them to break even, on the other. Discussion therefore centred on how to develop scholarly titles that could do well in the trade market and on the marketing strategies that would need to accompany this strategic direction. At the same time, in one of the very first workshops on electronic publishing that was held in the two days before the conference, there was considerable excitement at the potential that the new phenomenon of a universally accessible internet might offer for scholarly publishers. Examples of early implementers of digital strategies emerging at the conference certainly suggested that there could be hope for the isolated presses of the developing world to overcome geographical barriers by exploiting the reach of online publishing.²

In the intervening period, this pattern has persisted: the continuing crisis in conventional university print publishing has run alongside the development of new models of electronic publishing which aim to restore the potential for scholarly publishing to reach wider markets while still preserving its scholarly mission (Steele 2007).

As both the Ithaka Report (Brown *et al.* 2007) and Esposito (2007) argue, the commercialisation of university press publishing has created a distance between universities and their presses which has led to a loss in the strategic alignment of presses with their institutions. Both argue that every university should have a publishing strategy, as does Steele (2007), and Esposito even argues that every university should have a press. Or, as Steele (2007) puts it, '[s]cholarly communication frameworks need to be reassessed so that the presses become an integral part of the research framework of the university'. In the digital environment a university press is able to undertake a wider range of publishing

¹ The others being the University of South Africa (Unisa) Press, the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) Press and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Press. Note that this count does not include foreign-institution presses (such as Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press) which have publishing divisions operating in the country.

² Conference report by lead author of this case study, Eve Gray, who attended the conference on behalf of the Witwatersrand University Press (Washington 1994).

activities, beyond the traditional scholarly book format prevalent in the humanities and social sciences. A further trend has been the increasing involvement of university librarians in managing new-look scholarly presses, built on electronic publishing platforms (Steele 2007; Esposito 2007; Brown *et al.* 2007; Henry 2007), as online publishing offers the potential for universities to take on a wider range of publishing activities on their own account.

Finally, there is the question of public support for scholarly publishing. Evidence of the failure of the 'publish and perish' syndrome and the mismatch between expectation and capacity in the publication of scholarly books for tenure purposes has resulted in widespread agreement that there needs to be a reconsideration of the current system. A re-conceptualisation of scholarly publishing in the digital age would have the potential to restore the central purpose of scholarly publishing – the communication of research findings that are of interest and importance to the scholarly community and the potential to translate these research results for a wider readership and for community impact.

In addressing the case study of UCT Press against this background, the question arises not only of the role of a university press of this kind at UCT, but also what other publication activities the university might undertake, not necessarily through a university press, but through other channels in the institution.

Most of all, however, the question that lies behind this case study is what the responsibility of a South African research university should be in supporting the dissemination and publication of its research to deliver the university's mission and ensure that research investment is delivering research impact through effective dissemination strategies.

If one reviews the list of the roles of a university publisher produced by the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), for example (Appendix A) – admittedly the result of an attempt by a threatened industry to promote itself – it is clear that the university press not only occupies a central role in the dissemination of academic research, it also occupies a complex space in the academic community and the knowledge industry. Item 19 on the list – 'University Presses extend the reach and influence of their parent institutions, making evident their commitment to knowledge and ideas' – is a central objective for every university, providing the reason for establishing and supporting a press. Ensuring that this objective is met does, however, require that a number of factors be in place, not least of which is that the strategic focus of the university press needs to match the strategic profile of the university.

A history of UCT Press

As already stated, UCT Press was started in 1994 with the support of Professor Martin Hall, then chair of the Board of the Centre for African Studies (CAS) at UCT, and it was managed from the CAS by Rose Mény-Gibert, as press director. At the time, the UCT Press Board was chaired by Brian Warner, a professor in the Department of Astronomy, and comprised a cross-section of academics aligned to the publishing focus of the new press.

At its inception the press was not envisaged as a conventional university press, but hoped instead to use what were then new digital publishing technologies to produce small print runs by printing on demand or printing to order.³ While this strategy was forward-looking and has now become standard practice in many, if not most, university presses across the world, it encountered obstacles in the mid-1990s because the available digital publishing services in South Africa could not produce the quality required, while market pressures were pushing South African university presses towards the production standards of the trade market. In

3 Digby Sales, 'Pressing matters for UCT', *Monday Paper*, 27(15), 8 September 2008.

other words, this was a visionary strategy, but one that would have needed more support from the university as the technology developed, if it were to reach its full potential.

By the mid-1990s, therefore, UCT Press was looking for alternative business models in circumstances in which UCT was expecting it to be self-sustaining (a not very realistic expectation in the context of the South African publishing market). This brought it into line with the majority of universities in South Africa and beyond, who were facing increasing pressure to be commercially viable and publish books that could compete in general markets (Gray 2000). The potential for a combined South African university press was explored, modelled on the University of New England Press in the USA, but this foundered on the competitiveness of the existing presses. Ultimately, UCT settled for a commercial partnership as a way of trying to provide sustainability for the press (Gray 2000).

A commercial partnership

In 1996, the press moved to the Old Medical School Building on UCT's Hiddingh campus. It had become clear that investment was required in order for the press to build a backlist and sustain itself. Funding was not forthcoming from the university, and the press looked outside the university for a commercial partner. As a result, Juta and Company Ltd bought two-thirds of the shares in the press, took over its existing debt, and paid rent to UCT for the Hiddingh premises. Rose Mény-Gibert continued as director and was joined by Glenda Younge, formerly a publisher at Oxford University Press. The press was, at the time, producing 15 to 20 books per year.

This strategy was not unusual at the time. In Australia, for example, Sydney University Press was taken over by Oxford University Press Australia in 1987, while Australia National University Press was owned by Pergamon. For both presses, the result was ultimately failure of the model, with Sydney University Press closing in the mid-1990s, and the imprint reverting to the university. Both Sydney University Press and Australia National University Press have subsequently been reincarnated by their respective universities as e-presses with new strategic approaches built on the potential of digital communications and managed through the university library (Steele 2007).

From UCT's perspective, in the 1990s the commercial partnership offered the potential for economies of scale in the provision of production, editorial, marketing and distribution services. Most of all, Juta was able to provide financing against a loan account that the partners aimed to pay off through profitable publishing. The collaboration appealed to Juta because it offered the publisher strategic positioning with authors from the leading research university in Africa. This was in a context where Juta's legal and financial publishing was already heavily dependent on UCT authors. In terms of its academic list, the merger also offered Juta the opportunity to build high-quality authorship for its textbooks.⁴ The disadvantage for the company was that it was committed to publishing titles which were not necessarily commercially viable in a company that, as the schools market declined, was becoming more and more insistent on the need for profitability in all its operations. However, the idea was that subsidy would be sought where necessary, with UCT's presence in this partnership acting to attract donor support.

In order to try to cut back on overheads, UCT Press outsourced its sales, marketing and warehousing to Book Promotions distributors. It continued, however, to run at a loss and in 1998 Juta moved the UCT Press offices to its premises in Wetton. In order to maximise economies of scale, it also took over the sales, marketing and warehousing of all titles published by the press.

4 Additional information on this period of the history of UCT Press has been supplied by Eve Gray, who was Academic Publisher at Juta and ex officio Director of UCT Press from late 1996 to 2000.

At this stage the Editorial Board acted as an advisory body for the publishing team, helping to formulate publishing strategy and build a list profile. There was also a clear understanding that UCT Press would respect the scholarly judgement of the Editorial Board when it came to evaluating the scholarly merit of titles, but that the final decision on publication rested with the press director and depended upon publishability, market potential and financial viability (with or without subsidy).

A period of decline

The late 1990s were, unfortunately for UCT Press, turbulent times for educational publishing in South Africa – and for Juta, in particular. The publishing house went through a difficult period in which it lacked the capacity to leverage the strategic advantages offered by its share of UCT Press, and, in the face of retrenchments across the company, lost the capacity and the will to market these specialist books effectively. As a result the press went into rapid decline, with publication of UCT Press titles tailing off almost completely. Faced with increasing losses and in circumstances in which the university did not see the advantages offered by a university press, UCT sold its remaining shares in UCT Press to Juta at the turn of the century. In the early 2000s there was a focus on psychology books (many of which were textbooks), which did well financially, but a restructuring at Juta in 2004 led the Editorial Board not to meet again until 2007. Very little was published by the press in this period.

A new start

In 2007, discussions were undertaken with Juta about the state of UCT Press and, as a result, the Editorial Board was reconstituted by Professor Cheryl de la Rey, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at UCT. The Editorial Board was chaired by Digby Sales of UCT Libraries, and had representatives from most of the faculties (there was, and still is, no representative from the Science faculty). The idea was to encourage resumption of publishing activities, with UCT Press producing scholarly works for public consumption and UCT willing to try to raise subvention for individual titles where these were not commercially viable.

A strategic approach

As stated by UCT Press Publisher, Sandy Shepherd⁵, the new strategic approach adopted by UCT Press in 2007 was ‘for the Editorial Board (representing UCT) to encourage academics within their faculties to submit manuscripts for publication and to identify suitable works within the categories agreed upon’. UCT Press would, simultaneously, commission works (on approval from the Board) and co-publish with international publishers, as well as identify suitable unsolicited works submitted to it for publication. The Press deliberately chose not to limit the subject areas in which it would publish; a strategy which, says Shepherd, tied in well with UCT’s objective that the Press would provide a vehicle for the publication of work by UCT authors. While Juta’s strategy appears clear, there is however little evidence as to UCT having a clear articulated strategy for its relationship with the Press, and how this relationship could be leveraged to serve the core mission of the institution.

The situation reflected here is inherent in a number of university presses across the world whose universities have sought to ‘outsource’ publishing activities, treating their presses as independent commercial entities. Increasingly, research dissemination and publication has ceased to be seen as part of the university’s core mission. As Esposito (2007) points out,

⁵ S Shepherd, In lit., 29 January 2009.

universities willingly spend millions of dollars on their libraries, but seem to begrudge much smaller amounts spent on supporting publishing activities. This is the 'free rider syndrome', Esposito argues, that assumes that 'a press can be stinted because it is always possible that a particular book will be published somewhere else' (Esposito 2007); and which needs to be challenged in the South African context, where it is in fact not easy to ensure adequate levels of research publication in a global scholarly publishing system that marginalises scholarship from the South.

The Ithaka Report, *University Publishing in a Digital Age*, points out that university presses have become increasingly distanced from the core activities and missions of their associated institutions (Brown *et al.* 2007). The report states in no uncertain terms that 'every university that produces research should have a publishing strategy' (p.4), and that it is crucial for institutions to develop effective publishing strategies that 'reflect [their] core mission and circumstances' (p.29).

The report points out the following requirements for successful development of a research strategy:

- University leaders should take a strategic approach to the communication and dissemination of the knowledge they produce.
- A publishing strategy should take the services needed for scholars to create and disseminate content into consideration.
- The university should take a coherent position on issues relating to intellectual property.
- The university should identify which activities should be fulfilled by it and which should be outsourced.
- The university's strategy should encompass peer review and its relationship to publishing.
- There should be consistency with regard to the value placed on scholarly publishing (in terms of tenure and promotion, for instance), and the resources devoted to making this publishing possible.

The report goes on to state that 'the more a university's publishing portfolio evolves to mirror and extend that institution's reputation and intellectual strengths, the more ambitious administrators can be for their presses and other publishing entities' (p.29).

In addition to these considerations, deciding what kinds of research the university wishes to foreground is key to the articulation of its dissemination strategy. As Brown *et al.* (2007) have noted, a publishing list needs to be focused in order to have a clear identity and a strategic direction, something that is dissipated by publishing indiscriminately across disciplines. When UCT Press's Editorial Board was reconvened in 2007, it comprised representatives from most of the UCT faculties, the idea being that Editorial Board members would identify titles that UCT Press could publish from within the university, together with the efforts of the publisher to source additional works from elsewhere. Added to this, Juta appointed a publisher to manage and commission titles for the scholarly list and formulated a five-year strategy for UCT Press. In terms of subject focus, the Press was open to submission across disciplines, but was especially interested in focusing on the sciences (which no other university press in South Africa did) and areas such as urban development, rather than on areas such as literature.

The question of textbook publishing

In the South African context, textbook publishing is often specifically excluded from the publishing programmes of university presses, as universities generally wish to maximise revenue to from publication subsidies and there is therefore a greater focus on publishing scholarly books and journal articles. UCT Press has, however, not precluded this form of publishing from its agenda and its submission guidelines for publications⁶ states that UCT Press will consider academic texts with potential for prescription at tertiary institutions. UCT Press has, to date, built up a creditable list in psychology and has published a range of textbooks or books that could be prescribed in architecture and town planning, medicine, business studies, research methodology and education, among others.

Added to this, in a workshop with Juta Publishers held at the Centre for Educational Technology in 2008, it appeared that there might be opportunities for innovative approaches to the production of course materials for students through collaborations between commercial publishers and university lecturers in the context of the online environments in which teaching and learning now takes place. This shows that there might be benefits from including the publication of student materials in a partnership such as that between UCT and Juta in UCT Press.

Publishing strategy in a commercial partnership

In terms of strategic vision, the fact that UCT Press is owned by a private, commercial company complicates matters. The vision for the press therefore needs to fit not only UCT's vision, but also that of Juta.

One of Juta's aims, says Shepherd, is to create a press that 'would highlight topics of public interest' and to communicate them in an accessible fashion while still being academic in nature.⁷ Shepherd is aware of the different facets of the university's strategic research focus and seeks to take these into account in her commissioning. Juta is therefore pursuing a vision of scholarly publishing that is very familiar internationally: a press that does not focus on scholarship alone, but also on reaching a broader, non-specialised market, 'translating' research for the general reader. Shepherd sees this approach as a good fit with UCT's mission of community engagement, and believes that the more general trade books 'would be the main arm reaching out to the community from campus'.

In terms of a strategy for commissioning, Shepherd states that there is an expectation on the university's part that UCT Press will actively commission content from UCT authors, and the approach so far has been to do so through the Editorial Board. 'We agreed that Digby Sales [Chair of the UCT Press Editorial Board] and the other members of the Board would approach faculty and hold a meeting at the faculty research meetings to promote UCT Press,' says Shepherd. She adds, however, that because she has not been present during these meetings she is unsure of the impact that has been made.

Another aspect of UCT Press's strategic approach to its list-building is that of attracting good quality authors from other institutions. Through UCT Press's contact with the academic community and international academic publishers, it is attuned to South African academics (from all institutions) publishing elsewhere and has been involved in various negotiations with foreign publishers to co-publish these works locally under the UCT Press imprint. The

⁶ Available at http://www.uctpress.co.za/AuthorGuidelines/submissions.jsp?nav_id=9096&tier_id=9098&qsWithChildren=true

⁷ Interview, 22 August 2008.

Press is also sometimes approached by non-UCT academics working at other institutions in South Africa and abroad.

The question of whether a university press publishes only – or predominantly – authors from its own faculty, or seeks out leading authors from other institutions, is a crucial one. If the list-building strategy of a university press is built around key research areas that are of strategic importance to the institution, then the university can gain considerable prestige for the institution and exposure for its own scholars by seeking out the leading authors worldwide in the field concerned. There is, moreover, a risk of parochialism in publishing authors from a single institution.

In terms of a strategic vision, Juta is driven by commercial sustainability. Speaking on the revival of the press, Shepherd states that one of her intentions is to target faculties that have specific research projects under way. She explains that her strategy ('commercially speaking') is to find those research projects that have funding attached to them which can assist in their publication. She goes on to state that it is necessary to have various revenue streams in research funding so that one is able to produce works which may not be financially feasible otherwise.

Another option for making scholarly research more financially viable, says Shepherd, is co-publishing with an international university press, something which UCT Press is actively pursuing on a number of titles. Print runs are also being kept to a minimum to avoid wastage on excess stock and warehousing. Shepherd states that the average print run on a UCT Press title is around 1 000 copies, and that digital printing is used for reprints and print runs of between 100 and 300 copies. Economies of scale dictate that Juta needs to print an initial basic minimum of around 1 000 copies for a title to be financially viable.

In light of Juta's approach to publishing UCT Press titles, it is clear that there is a strategy for the way in which the press is to function. The question, though, remains as to how Juta's strategy fits in with UCT's strategy, and to what extent the university is supporting the growth and development of the press. Shepherd feels that, although the university is aware of Juta's strategy, it is 'not putting in the energy to promote that strategy and to encourage commissioning'. There would appear to be a disconnect between the aspirations of Juta's commissioning of titles and the functioning of the Editorial Board.

Shepherd adds that she has always had the expectation that 'it was going to take time to make things happen' in terms of making contact with people in the university and getting momentum going. Shepherd also mentions that the press has considerable work to do to overcome negative perceptions that exist on campus, and is aware of authors' concerns about how little marketing the press did in the past.

UCT Press focus and peer-review policy

The UCT Press website⁶ states that it will consider non-fiction titles in the following categories:

- Academic monographs.
- Scholarly works.
- Academic texts with potential for prescription at tertiary institutions

The press has also articulated a policy that it will not publish theses unless they have been reworked into monographs. In fact, there is increasing discussion internationally of changed publishing paradigms now that theses and dissertations are being placed online in institutional repositories. With effective access being provided in this way, there is support

for the idea that book publication need no longer be geared to the reworking of theses, but should be focused on the commissioning of original works (Thatcher 2007).

The UCT Press policy on peer review is that all manuscripts will undergo blind peer review by at least two experts in the relevant field prior to publication. Authors are asked to identify potential reviewers, and Board members also solicit names of potential reviewers from relevant faculty colleagues. The Board bases its approval of manuscripts on the evidence provided in peer-review reports. This in effect ensures that UCT Press titles should qualify for publication subsidy in terms of the Department of Education (DoE) reward system for scholarly publication. Editorial Board members may recommend possible peer reviewers for manuscripts, but are not allowed to review manuscripts themselves, unless they fall within their areas of expertise and they wish to add their views to those in the peer reviewers' blind reports. The UCT Press website further states that, for DoE accreditation purposes, 'a statement on the nature of this peer review process undertaken prior to publication should be included on the back of the book, or in the introduction' – presumably also a way of ensuring compliance with DoE requirements.

With the DoE publication reward system for books under review by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) at the time of writing, it may be that UCT Press will need to review its peer-review process to ensure compliance with a new set of criteria.

The role of the UCT Press Editorial Board

The role of the UCT Press Editorial Board, as it has been redefined in 2007/08, is a largely administrative one that in fact overlaps with what is commonly the publisher's role: to maintain contact with faculties through Faculty Research Committees in order to identify potential manuscripts and to pass these on to Juta for consideration. The Chair of the Editorial Board identified a number of problems with this model, including the difficulty of persuading academics to publish with UCT Press rather than with prestigious international presses and the difficulties of maintaining clear communication lines in the face of confused roles. The problem of persuading authors of the benefits of publishing locally is, however, not unique to UCT Press, as local publishers across the board struggle with perception issues in terms of local publishing standards. Local publishers therefore face a constant uphill struggle in attracting top-quality authors; a factor which makes their reputation in the industry and in the academe all-important.

In a case like that of UCT Press, the Editorial Board's job ought to be to ensure the fulfilment of the strategic function the university wants its press to play, providing input that could create synergies between the university press's list-building strategy and the university's strategic research priorities. The Editorial Board's role in list-building should therefore represent UCT's institutional interests and seek to find ways in which this can complement Juta's five-year strategy for building UCT Press's list.

The UCT Press Editorial Board currently comprises seven UCT academics (including the Chair). The Charter for the Functioning of the UCT Press Editorial Board on the UCT Press website⁸ states that the primary function of this Board is to 'champion UCT Press in their particular faculty and encourage academics to submit manuscripts for publication with UCT Press'. In addition to this, '[t]he Editorial Board will assist Juta & Company to identify appropriate journals that might publish reviews of books produced by the Press, and to which review copies should be sent'.

The UCT Press Editorial Board meets quarterly in February, May, August and November, but revitalising a university press requires concerted, constant effort, and the press therefore

8 http://www.uctpress.co.za/index.jsp?nav_id=2006&qsHasChildren=false [Accessed 30 October 2008]

requires commitment from its Editorial Board to promote the reputation and further the objectives of the press at every available opportunity. For this to happen, they need the support and buy-in of the university, as UCT Press is in competition for authorship with some of the world's leading scholarly publishers (both university press and otherwise). This is a challenge for the press, as Sales mentions that there has never been a full quorum at an Editorial Board meeting, which has a knock-on effect of making those who do attend the meetings see them as a waste of time. Sales is unsure of the reasons for not reaching full quorum, but feels it may be due to a lack of commitment on the part of Editorial Board members and lack of buy-in from senior university management.

Sales explains that when he was approached by De la Rey to participate in the revitalisation of the press, she intended UCT Press to become a 'serious' academic (rather than textbook) publisher. He adds that the Editorial Board spent the greater part of 2007 setting out the parameters of what the press would be doing and defining what they would and would not be publishing. After the initial push by De la Rey to revitalise the press, it now stands at an event-horizon in terms of its future, especially given that De la Rey has left the university and UCT is in the process of recruiting new members of the senior administration. Sales mentions that he is unsure of where UCT Press stands in the current institutional context.

Finally, there is potential for conflict between the different visions of the Editorial Board for a scholarly press and Juta's need for all titles to be commercially viable. Financial sustainability tends to be a requirement at all South African university presses. The problem is therefore probably one of communication and confusion in the commissioning role and a distance between the university's strategic vision and that of the press rather than purely the question of commercial viability. The experience of other university presses would suggest that this particular conflict is better managed when the Editorial Board also contains members who are experienced authors with an understanding of how the publishing process works and a strategic sense of the academic market.

Future plans and ambitions

Both the Editorial Board and Juta's management are united in their desire to produce more titles. Shepherd states that the press is aiming to publish 12 titles in 2008, and is building up to doing about 30 titles a year in the next five years. In order to realise this ambition, Shepherd mentions that she would like to see UCT Press advertise more and have UCT's *Monday Paper* (an internal, weekly newspaper and key communication forum within the university) direct people to publishing proposals. She adds that she 'would like to see the [publishing] ventures made more open and publicised more'.

This vision was demonstrated in the recent successful launch of *Land, Power and Custom: Controversies Generated by South Africa's Communal Land Rights Act*, by Aninka Claasens and Ben Cousins, a highly topical book that was launched at UCT with a seminar on land rights legislation. What this event succeeded in doing was to underline the strategic focus and policy relevance of UCT Press's publishing activities and their relationship to the university's mission.

Financially, one of the biggest challenges facing the press is how to keep its prices competitive while still building its list. Large commercial publishers have economies of scale to their advantage and have options of cross-subsidising during periods of growth or transition. Sales bemoans the price of academic titles from a library-purchasing point of view, but admits that libraries in some cases still have budgets to acquire desired titles, whereas the person on the street might find the cost of academic titles prohibitively expensive. This presents particular problems in terms of Shepherd's vision of taking research to the community. One of the solutions for getting around exorbitant print, warehousing and distribution costs is to increase the focus on electronic publishing.

Conclusion

While the history of UCT Press and its relationship with Juta has been turbulent, there has been, in the two years prior to the writing of this report, a genuine willingness on both sides to revitalise the publishing activities of UCT Press and to leverage the potential advantages on both sides. However, there does appear to be a need for clarification of the roles of publisher and Editorial Board, and the need to create a more coherent alignment with the university's strategic research mission.

That said, the vision at the moment appears to be a conventional 20th century view of a university press and its role: a print-based publishing operation that focuses on scholarly titles with high production values that could have general market appeal and hence financial sustainability. As the UCT Press publisher put it:

Our vision was to create a press that would highlight research at UCT, that would in addition highlight topics of public interest that could be communicated in a way that was accessible, so that it is still an academic work but it's written in a way that would have more general interest.⁹

As long as this is UCT's vision for its scholarly book publishing and provided that the problems of strategic vision, communication management and commissioning processes identified in this case study are dealt with, this relationship might have the potential to deliver what a number of academics, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, seek. What many academics explicitly want is a book that they can place in the bookshelf and show to their dean and colleagues. Moreover, such publications, while reaching a relatively small readership in print, if strategically focused and effectively marketed, can provide prestige and profiling for the author and the university. Such books also have the potential to attract subsidy from the DoE, a major advantage to the university when authors are UCT-based, with the attendant risk of parochialism and loss of quality if publishing decisions are subordinated to the desire for subsidy.

Whether or not the relationship with Juta could deliver a more forward-looking vision of scholarly publishing – one that makes use of the potential of digital media and of flexible licences – remains to be seen. A further question is whether there would be space to expand publishing operations to include, for example, open access journals in line with DST policy and the ASSAf scholarly publishing programme, or whether this would be better dealt with within a separate university-based structure.

It might also be that a conventional press such as UCT Press would exist alongside or ultimately be replaced by more radical re-visioning of e-press publishing in which the scholarly monograph and journal article are transcended by newer, more integrated forms of electronic publishing (Thatcher 2007). As Steele (2007) puts it (from an Australian perspective): '[t]he 21st century may be one in which university press publishing goes "back to the future", in that institutions return to take a responsibility for the effective distribution their scholars' research. This process will result in scholarship that combines authority with public accessibility within digital frameworks.'

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⁹ Interview with Sandy Shepherd, August 2008.

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Appendix A: The roles of university presses

The Association of American University Presses (AAUP) has outlined the following 24 ways in which a university press adds to society, scholarship, and the university community:

Society

1. University Presses make available to the broader public the full range and value of research generated by university faculty.
2. University Press books and journals present the basic research and analysis that is drawn upon by policymakers, opinion leaders, and authors of works for the general public.
3. University Presses contribute to the variety and diversity of cultural expression at a time of global mergers and consolidation in the media industry.
4. University Presses make common cause with libraries and other cultural institutions to promote engagement with ideas and sustain a literate culture.
5. University Presses help to preserve the distinctiveness of local cultures through publication of works on the states and regions where they are based.
6. University Presses give voice to minority cultures and perspectives through pioneering publication programs in ethnic, racial, and sexual studies.
7. University Presses bring the work of overseas scholars and writers to English-language audiences by commissioning and publishing works in translation.
8. University Presses rediscover and maintain the availability of works important to scholarship and culture through reprint programs.
9. University Presses encourage cultural expression by publishing works of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction and books on contemporary art and photography.

University Presses and Scholarship

10. University Presses sponsor work in specialized and emerging areas of scholarship that do not have the broad levels of readership needed to attract commercial publishers.
11. University Presses, through the peer review process, test the validity and soundness of scholarship and thus maintain high standards for academic publication.
12. University Presses add value to scholarly work through rigorous editorial development; professional copyediting and design; and worldwide dissemination.
13. University Presses are based at a wide array of educational institutions and thus promote a diversity of scholarly perspectives.
14. University Presses encourage and refine the work of younger scholars through publication of the first books that establish credentials and develop authorial experience.
15. University Presses make the works of English-language scholars available worldwide by licensing translations to publishers in other languages.
16. University Presses commit resources to longterm scholarly editions and multivolume research projects, assuring publication for works with completion dates far in the future.
17. University Presses add to the richness of undergraduate and graduate education by publishing most of the non-textbook and supplementary material used by instructors.
18. University Presses collaborate with learned societies, scholarly associations, and librarians to explore how new technologies can benefit and advance scholarship.

University Presses in the University Community

19. University Presses extend the reach and influence of their parent institutions, making evident their commitment to knowledge and ideas.
20. University Presses demonstrate their parent institutions' support of research in areas such as the humanities and social sciences that rarely receive substantial Federal or corporate funding.
21. University Presses help connect the university to the surrounding community by publishing books of local interest and hosting events for local authors.
22. University Presses generate favorable publicity for their parent institutions through news coverage and book reviews, awards won, and exhibits at scholarly conferences.
23. University Press staff act as local experts for faculty and administrators, providing guidance on intellectual property, scholarly communication, and the publishing process.
24. University Presses provide advice and opportunities for students interested in pursuing careers in publishing.

Appendix B: Ithaka Report recommendations to press directors

Recommendation 1: Tell a compelling story

Within higher education, much of the recent agenda for change in scholarly communication has been centered in libraries. From open access advocacy, to institutional repositories, to tools for the creation of electronic content, libraries are leading the university's response to the high cost of published scholarship and the demand for robust technology platforms on which to build the electronic scholarship of the future. University presses have a big role to play, but they need to make that role more concrete and persuasive to the academic community by making clear how they can:

- Lower the cost of scholarship through fair pricing
- Return the revenues of scholarly publishing back to the parent institution for reinvestment in educational, research, and publishing activities
- Offer cost recovery and sustainability models that depend heavily on commercial discipline, accountability and recognized value (as opposed to the gift economy or institutional funding)
- Extend the reach of their institution's prestige and reputation through the press's imprint and through applying the university brand to university-sponsored publishing projects
- Ensure that universities can rely on support for credentialing through the high standards and mature vetting and peer-review system developed by their presses
- Ensure that young faculty have opportunities to publish, even in niche fields where the commercial return may not justify publication
- Offer faculty and graduate students the opportunity to develop as authors through mentoring and professional training programs sponsored by the press

- Offer faculty, academic departments, and graduate students publishing environments in which to build 'virtual labs' that enable a continuum of research and dissemination options for dynamic online content
- Develop compelling cases to bring outside funding to the university through the inclusion of a branded publishing component in research grants
- Team up with libraries to pursue a powerful coordinated advocacy agenda and technology infrastructure.

For all of these reasons, presses should position themselves to be a much bigger part of the university's portfolio of strategies to manage scholarly communication as a core component of its mission.

Recommendation 2: Create a strategic plan

Articulate a long-term vision that inspires local constituencies (and those who hold the purse-strings). Universities need to have a better grasp of what is possible for their presses. To that end, every press should create, and regularly update, a 5-year strategic plan, complete with ambitions for their publishing programs and a financial framework. This document can form the backbone of discussions with owners about where the press is headed, how it contributes to the 'public good' agenda for higher education, and how it aligns with the interests and ambitions of the particular university. It will create a framework for long-range discussions about publishing priorities, investment and subsidy expectations, and shared criteria for success. Each press will have a different approach to this vision, which will depend on conditions at the host university.

Recommendation 3: Realign with university

Presses should take advantage of being 'inside the tent', and having access to

scholars and scholarship while it is still in formation. They should make sure they have a copy of the university's strategic plan, and initiate discussions about ways to help the university deliver that plan through publishing solutions. They should fight to be at the table when major new academic programs are being planned, and to have a publishing component built into major research and capital campaigns. They should take an inventory of the exciting new academic ventures at their institutions, and consider which ones might lend themselves to publishing programs. They should reach out to the professional schools to form publishing alliances and joint ventures.

A key question this raises is how to ensure that presses do not evolve into vanity publishers (the concern that got them where they are now). What we heard is that university presses do and should act as the sector of university publishing that relies on peer review and rigorous standards of selection – that is the prestige of the imprint. Other types of publishing will arise from the parent institution, and university presses may play a role in this publishing through service functions (editorial, marketing), or through collaborative linking to unrefereed content on campus, but the press proposition remains the protection of standards of selectivity, credentialing, and refinement (cooked rather than raw content), as well as setting a price for that selectivity and refinement. And to the extent that the programs of the press can be realigned with the institution's academic priorities, the desires to be close to the institution and publish the best scholarship can be compatible.

Recommendation 4: Focus

Publishing the occasional book in a discipline that is not at the center of the press's priorities is a distraction and does not serve the interests of the author either. Presses should carefully

select areas where they can excel, set ambitious targets, and concentrate on building those programs.

These programs will no doubt include traditional areas of excellence built over time by presses. But every university, no matter how small, also provides ample opportunities for press specialisation in areas that reflect its intellectual ambitions. The best drama school in the country might well set out to publish the best drama list. Georgetown University Press has built the leading Arabic studies list in collaboration with the university's Arabic studies department. A university that has set a goal to build interdisciplinary programs could work with its press to create model online interdisciplinary publishing centers in targeted areas.

Recommendation 5: Reframe conversations with development offices

Presses should seek to work with development officers to build a publishing component into campaigns related to a major new academic program or center. They should help to create scripts for potential funders about how dynamic publishing helps to accomplish their goals, create global reach and impact, and brand campus initiatives.

Recommendation 6: Collaborate with libraries to co-develop tools and programs

Work together to identify content of institutional value. Co-develop products, tools and professional educational and training programs for faculty, researchers, and students around traditional and electronic publishing issues, procedures, etc. Co-develop joint programs for preservation and archiving or collaborate in support of third party platforms that ensure preservation. Co-develop tools for content creation and online collaboration (Brown *et al.* 2007: 38–9).