This supplement to the 37th edition of the IIAS Newsletter on publishing in Asian Studies is the fruit of a long and intriguing process of discussions among publishers, editors, writers, readers and academic institutions on how to increase the visibility of Asian Studies worldwide. This supplement offers us the opportunity to elucidate several new initiatives to boost this process, which is closely interlinked to the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS).

In the past twelve years we have tried, in co-operation with a host of parties, to build a transparent Asian Studies community where everybody can indiscriminately enjoy the scholarly fruits of the work of Asian Studies scholars. Our main and most visible vehicle in this endeavour has been – and is – the IIAS Newsletter. From the beginning, its main goal was to inform the Asian Studies community both in printed form and online about the activities of their colleagues in other parts of the world or, dare we say, sometimes even in the room next door.

With a readership close to the 100,000 mark, we do not feel that we have reached our final destination but should give it a new boost in tandem with ICAS. Over the past years the number of books and catalogues reaching the editorial desk of the IIAS Newsletter has risen steadily. Due to space restrictions only a limited number of books can be reviewed, more will be listed in the Books Received section. Doubtlessly, editors of other newsletters and journals are familiar with this situation. Therefore we suggest bringing a site for recently published books (less than a year old) online with a search engine where all books published by partner publishers are listed under both regional and disciplinary headings. Information on each of the books will include all factual information plus an image of the jacket and the cover text. Reviews, if any, of the book can be added. Interactivity will be the key word of this site because scholars and students will be asked to give impressions of the books they have read, not unlike the Zagat Survey which is based on the findings of costumers. This bottom-up approach will be linked to the already existing initiative of the ICAS Book Prizes for the best books in the Social Sciences and Humanities, which are judged by an international Reading Committee more in line with the Guide Michelin approach (see page 5).

Last but not least ICAS will be setting up an ICAS General Proceedings Series containing Capita Selecta of the ICAS 4 panels in co-operation with European, Asian and American publishers. All panel chairs that are interested in this venture should send a book abstract to the ICAS Secretariat before 1 November 2005. The books chosen will be published before the next ICAS in Kuala Lumpur in 2007. We are convinced that this series will represent the state of the art in publishing Asian Studies to which this supplement is completely devoted.

We would like to thank all contributors to this supplement for their insightful contributions on publishing in Asian Studies.

Colophon
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Responsibility for copyrights and for facts and opinions expressed in this publication rests exclusively with the contributors. Their interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of IIAS or ICAS.
Publishers and authors can find themselves with diametrically opposed interests. While it is extremely rare for authors of academic books to make much money out of their publications (yes, publishers pay for the royalties, but because the CV demands it), profit is the point of all commercial publishers, and profit – or at least the absence of loss – is increasingly becoming a necessity for university presses. This has great implications for the type of manuscript that can make the successful transition to published book, and thus the type of scholarship available to the academic community.

What gets published, and how?

In the old good days, many university presses had the luxury of being able, at least occasionally, to publish books because they were good, solid, important contributions to a field of scholarly research, without necessarily considering whether this field was large enough to make the book a profitable proposition. Now, although many university and institutional presses still receive some level of financial support from their parent institutions and can also hope for the occasional outside publica- tion grant, they are increasingly subject to far more stringent demands on profitability, and thus their editorial policies can no longer differ much from those of commercial presses. At the same time, the growth of the university sector generally, and the increased demand on academics to ‘publish or perish’ means that most press releases are a large number of manuscripts to pick and choose between. An unedited collection of conference papers now stands little chance of being published, as does an unreviewed Ph.D. thesis. And the brilliant book on an obscure subject which might earlier have caught the attention of a specialist editor no longer stands up to the rigorous demands of the profit ratio.

So how does one go about making a manuscript attractive to publishers, and how does one find the very best publisher for it? Based on years of experience as a commissioning editor, Gerald Jackson offers some advice on this in his article Breaking into the Gilded Cage on page 3. For those who want far more detail than can be provided in an article, Bill Hamilton brings his many years of experience as director of a university press to bear in his review of two recent books of advice to authors, in the article Books on Books on page 12.

As with most other businesses, the larger and more successful a publisher is, the more it must rely on highly structured systems and guidelines in its daily work, from benchmarks for sales projections used by editors in deciding what to publish to timetables employed by the production department in bringing out books. Smaller publishers, on the other hand, can be much more flexible in almost everything they do, but lead precarious lives where the failure of just one or two titles can mean the company can create serious financial problems. It is interesting to note, though, that while there is a very great deal of activity on the mergers and acquisitions front, with larger publishers buying up small and medium-sized ones and merging with one another in a constantly shifting for- mation dance, there is a very steady supply of new small publishing houses set up by people who have other, more enthusiastic hopes. In his article Small, But Perfectly Formed on page 5, Nick Ardo shares his experiences of the joys and dangers of life as a small independent publisher.

Does this matter to authors? It should, as the choice between a large and a small publisher, or a commercial and an institutional publisher, is likely to affect many aspects of a book project – from the terms on which the project is signed up to the level of attention lavished on it during the editorial and production process, to the efficiency with which the resulting book is promoted to the world at large. But one suspects that what really matters to most authors on an individual, day-to-day level, is the relationship with their editor. Although the brillant book on an obscure subject which might earlier have caught the attention of a specialist editor no longer stands up to the rigorous demands of the profit ratio, reviews the particular pressures on Southeast Asian publishers to embrace new electronic media for both selling and marketing in her article South- east Asia: Reaching a Worldwide Audience on page 9, while Paul Kratoska, who has spent many years involved in academic publishing both as publisher and as an academic, reviews the range of Academic Publishers in the United States, the United Kingdom or the Unit- ed Arab Emirates, but it is highly likely that many of the processes have varied, perhaps a little, perhaps a lot. For instance, Australian and New Zealand university presses do not concentrate exclusively on academic books as do their US counterparts, but also publish significant numbers of fiction and poetry titles. In the United States, the home market is so huge that many smaller presses choose to devote very little time to export sales, a choice that would most likely bring a European publisher to the brink of disaster. Parts of Asia and the Middle East are subject to various degrees of censorship, so publishers there may have to reject manuscripts that elsewhere in the world would raise no eyebrows. The Chinese publishing industry (and book distribution) is overwhelmingly run by state-owned enterprises which may have a very different approach to business than the rest of East Asia. Enough said.

How are books sold?

When even the academic credentials of a journal or a book are not up to scratch, the writing and editing flawed, and the university world thirsting for more research on the subject, the publication will remain locked in obscurity unless it is efficiently marketed. There has traditionally been much that could be said about the way in which this was done between editorial and marketing staff, with editors unhappy that marketers would focus on sales potential over aca- demic worth, and vice versa. For many, many years, editors were the clear winners in this contest and most publish- ing houses were headed by editors or ex-editors. However, while that is still firmly the case among university presses, marketing folk have recently come to play a much-enhanced role with many commercial presses. This should be a cause neither for concern nor jubil- ation-selecting and producing a book on the one hand, and marketing and selling it on the other, are simply two sides of the same coin, and no pub- lisher can survive without both functions. In my article Selling the Ivory Tower on page 8, I look at some of the challenges faced by marketing profes- sionals, and as how authors can help us to make the most of their books.

Once a book has been published and successfully sold to its potential readers, that is likely to be the end of any involve- ment on the publisher’s part. Although it is now technically possible to keep a title in print indefinitely at little cost by using the electronic journals’ publishing-swiftly followed by established journals’ publishers quick to spot the advantages of this development. A vast number of journals are now available online only, or online in addition to a print version. A few are free, many are cheaper than the print editions. Publishing online cuts out the cost of print- ing, posting, warehousing and re-stocking of back issues, leaving mainly an investment of editorial time. Even some these publish- ers are now trying to recoup in advance by asking authors to pay for the peer review process and editing work, and in return slashing subscription costs. It is an area in flux, with many eager to pre- dict the imminent death of the print journal, decry the pressure on low-paid academics to fund their own publica- tions, or rejoice in the increasing prolif- eration of free or cheap scholarship available to all. But whether a journal is provided in print or online, at great or at negligible cost, it will only be read if its academic credentials are in order. Expe- rienced journal editor Anand Yang sets out what he believes makes a good jour- nal and good journal editing in his arti- cle Journal Publishing in Asian Studies on page 7, where he also lists the canons of Asian Studies journals today.

by Marie Lenstrup
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Editorial

Publishing in Asian Studies

The brilliant book on an obscure subject which might earlier have caught the attention of a specialist editor no longer stands up to the rigorous demands of the profit ratio.
Like it or not, anyone wanting to succeed in today’s academic world quickly finds themselves running up against three imperatives: • Academic advancement follows the dictum ‘publish or perish’. • Publishers are the gatekeepers of disseminated knowledge. • Published works must pay their way.

Together these imperatives form a gilded cage that not only constrains those within it but also often acts to exclude those outsiders looking to enter it. The rights and wrongs of this situation are not discussed here. Other articles in this section describe how authors and publishers can survive and prosper inside this cage; the focus of this article is breaking into the cage in the first place.

Here, I shall give a lot of attention to the transformation of a Ph.D. thesis into a research monograph. Obviously, this is not the only publishing model. Most scholarly books are not derived from theses. Moreover, many theses fail to be published as a book but often are successfully mined for journal articles instead. And sometimes we see scholars publishing material (not just articles but even books) based on their doctoral research long before their thesis is finished. But discussing the thesis in detail allows me to be more comprehensive in my comments, some of which may also be useful to the more experienced author.

Decision time OK, so you’ve finished your thesis. Where to now? The normal junior scholar will have been living off a doctoral grant, which has suddenly disappeared; a new source of income is imperative. For those looking to make a career in the academic world, this is the crunch time. What may be available is a junior teaching position or a post-doctoral grant for a very limited period. But invariably also involved is the expectation that a series of publications will be delivered, not least a monograph. The pressure, then, is on from Day One.

Thesis fatigue, the pressures of new projects, sheer laziness or ‘attitude’ – there are many reasons for looking to take a short cut. If one really must publish a monograph, why not simply slap a new title on it and run a quick final replaces on the text, swapping all occurrences of ‘thesis’ or ‘dissertation’ with ‘study’ or ‘book’? You can (and people do). Just don’t expect to get the work published.

Why? Because a thesis is not a monograph. Given that its intended audience is a committee of evaluators and that it is often defended in a mock courtroom battle, a thesis is almost always overly cautious and defensive in its approach. This leads for instance to over-referencing of sources and excessively lengthy theoretical and technical sections. Moreover, a dissertation may have had good critical input from the candidate’s supervisor(s) but the final critical evaluation – often by international authorities in the field – only comes after the dissertation has been produced. Add to this the critical contribution made by any good academic publisher and the conclusion is inescapable that a dissertation is quite inferior to a monograph. For these reasons, most publishers decline to publish raw dissertations.

They are not interested in sifting through mountains of data or wading across acres of technical knowledge to find these golden nuggets. And what does your publisher expect? Bear in mind that modern commercial realities demand that every publication must pay its way. This usually means that a book needs to address a number of audiences spanning several disciplinary niches.

Thinking about the market As such, not only will you need to think strategically, you will also need to ‘think market’ and consider the following points:

Author. Who are you? What qualifies you to write on this subject? Do you belong to any associations whose members might be interested in your book? Have you any experience dealing with the media that might help you promote your book?

Audience. If academic, what are the subject area(s) and readership level? If a wider readership, are there defined niches among the professionals and interest groups? Are there specific localities where a wider interest in your book might be likely? Is there any upcoming anniversary that could be tied to in your book?

Purpose. Is the intended use only as a research monograph to inform a specific field or might it double up as a textbook, supplementary text or professional reference work?

Value. What would be the strengths of your book? What benefits would it offer the reader? How does it compare with other books dealing with the same issue (both direct competitors and related works)? How and why is it superior? More appropriate to the reader? More up to date? If breaking new ground, how? If offering a new approach to the subject, how is this beneficial?

To concentrate your thoughts, you will find it useful to write four different descriptions of your book:

• Key points – a (say) three short bulleted selling points (especially ideal for a salesperson when presenting your book to a bookseller where typically there is less than 30 seconds to win an order)
• Short description – a 50-word paragraph both describing and indicating the uniqueness of your book (often all the information that an acquisitions librarian has to go on when making a purchase decision)
• Long description – 250-300 words ideally broken into three paragraphs that (a) describe the work in broad, less-technical terms that a librarian or bookseller might understand; (b) elaborate on this at greater length in more technical detail for the specialist; and (c) by way of its findings, unique selling points, etc., spell out its value to its intended audience.

Preparing the manuscript It is wise to wait until a lot of time and effort in writing your book without first insuring yourself with a commitment from a publisher? Perhaps not. Submitting a well-written proposal backed by a specimen chapter is all that most publishers want initially. Indeed, it may be enough to make a decision; quite a few publishers are happy to offer a contract to publish an as-yet-unwritten work, their position being safeguarded by a catch-all clause allowing them to cancel publication if the work submitted is not up to expectation. (Such a clause is found in almost every publishing contract.) If you do decide to go ahead, here are a few brief comments:

• Do not look at revision as just a butcherer’s job. Your book is in fact a diamond that careful cutting and polishing can be revealed in its full glory. As regards presentation and readability, follow the KISS rule (keep it short and simple). If yours is a typical dissertation, you will need to drastically reduce the length and number of your notes.

Finally, remember your readers will determine the success of your book. They must always be borne in mind, treated with courtesy and coaxed along from start to end with interesting text connected by a subtle and organic narrative thread.

Then, what you will end up with is not only the manuscript of a monograph, one that external reviewers will suggest needs strengthening, while in-house editors may require you to restructure and clarify inclusions, equations may criticize your language, etc. One proof confirms another till finally the finished text is ready to be typeset. This can be an exhausting process and not all publishers will be well-placed men to help you accomplish this task. Choose your publisher with care.
Finding the ‘right’ publisher

Let’s be honest from the beginning and say that there is no right publisher. Your task is to find the one best suited to you. This is simpler than many people think. (The difficulty is to actually persuade that publisher to publish your study.) If you know your subject, you should be the person who knows best. Knowing your intended readership, you should have a good idea as to who publishers books for them. You can often see this, for instance, in the publishers in your list of references.

But do not go thinking there is only one right publisher. Usually there are several. Narrowing down your choices involves posing yourself several questions.

How important is it to you that the book is published quickly? What about quality? Speed must be achieved at the expense of quality. Getting a monograph out in 6-9 months is usually impossible if a proper job is to be done, and that is without taking into account the time that must be spent on evaluation beforehand. This process is notoriously slow.

Do you want a big publisher offering ‘the standard treatment’ or a smaller publisher where the service is more personal? Small publishers tend to be quick on their feet but may stumble with serious problems while huge publishers are far better resourced and generally able to offer a smooth (if bland) service.

Do you want a commercial publisher or a university press? While ultimately the former is motivated by profit, this focus demands that its operations are fast and its standards are very high. Nowadays the university press is also expected to pay its way much more than in the past, it is then also subject to commercial pressures but also to the pressures and restrictions associated with its not-for-profit status.

Do you want a prestigious publisher? A precondition for getting tenure at many American universities is publication of a set number of books at certain, major university presses, even if they do not specialize in the author’s field.

A publisher focused on your area of study? Be warned that a publisher focused on your field need not be the best for you. They may have a similar study in press or already published and will certainly discourage any competing work.

A publisher whose books are widely available? A surprising number of American university presses have no presence outside North America; their authors may thus have a large readership at home but abroad they are unknown. On the other hand, a relatively small press like NIAS has been able to create an increasingly high international profile via its global partnerships.

Does it matter if a publisher’s books are expensive? If a book is expensive, then it is unlikely to sell many copies. That is expensive? If a book is expensive, then it is unlikely to sell many copies.

In addition, it is worth examining each publisher’s catalogue as you would your own field data. Have they many books relevant to your field? What is the specialization? Is this a mainstream (‘mainstream’) list or one at the forefront of your field? Do you recognize any of the authors? Are they bright young newcomers, aging celebrities cruising before retirement, or what? Where are the books distributed? Do they look overpriced, unlikely to sell many copies? Answering these similar questions will help you come to a gut reaction about the suitability of each publisher.

After deciding which is your first publisher of choice, you are now at the tricky stage of approaching the publisher, the stage where things can go horribly wrong.

Approaching a publisher

You will have slightly more time than the 30 seconds of a bookseller’s attention span to interest an academic publisher in your manuscript – but not a lot more. Seven minutes on average is all the time a manuscript will get in a busy American commercial press. At NIAS we may take a little more time to mull over a proposal but even the final decision is influenced by initial impressions, the gut reaction.

Working in a publishing house can feel like playing air traffic controller at Heathrow or JFK – but without the salary that goes with it. Given the complexity and chaos of a publishing office, it is not surprising that mistakes occur – many good manuscripts are rejected. What I would argue, however, is that good manuscripts have a high chance of acceptance but this requires that a decent proposal for publication is prepared and offered to the publisher most appropriate for that work. If you are to avoid rejection, it is crucial that you formulate a convincing proposal that not only shows your knowledge of your subject but also your appreciation of what is needed to make the book a success.

What is immediately obvious to me as a publisher is whether the author has indeed thought about who the readers are and offers the book that best serves them. That is the essence of the market analysis described earlier. It is rarely offered.

The book proposal

Whether or not you preface your approach with a ‘warm-up’ inquiry, ultimately you should make a written approach to the publisher. Ideally this is in the form of a covering letter (if at all possible, addressed to the appropriate commissioning editor) together with a proposal to publish. These two items are best kept separate as the proposal may be referred for an expert opinion. Some authors also submit the full manuscript but that is unnecessary at this stage. Instead, envelope a sample chapter but make sure it is a good chapter that enhances the impact of your proposal.

As a minimum you need to cover the following points in your proposal:

- contents (a proposed table of contents is useful here)
- description
- subject area and specific discourse
- what’s fresh and different (compare with competing works)
- what qualifies you to write on this
- estimated length (a word count is particularly useful)
- the state of the manuscript and your availability to work on it

Some authors send book proposals to or more publishers simultaneously. Be warned that publishers hate multiple submissions.

The publisher’s evaluation and response

Now comes a period of relative powerlessness when you must await the publisher’s response to your proposal. Usually you will hear something quite quickly, either an immediate rejection or a (form) letter acknowledging receipt of your proposal. Do not assume that the longer a publisher takes to respond to your proposal the more positive that response will be. As a rule of thumb, within a month you should expect a letter either simply acknowledging receipt of your proposal or requesting that you submit your manuscript for more in-depth evaluation. If nothing has been heard within this period, then you should inquire if your proposal was received and if a decision will soon be forthcoming. If even after prompting no answer is forthcoming, seriously consider cutting your losses and looking elsewhere for a publisher truly right for you.

Evaluation procedures vary between publishers but an idealized process would have these steps that progressively sift out unsuitable proposals:

- Initial vetting and rejection of obviously unrealistic and unsuitable proposals.
- More considered reading of the surviving proposals.
- Informal consultation about the merits of the surviving proposals.

The author is requested to submit the manuscript, which is then referred for evaluation by external readers who are experts in the field. The usual period given is two months but obviously the process can take longer. Here the ‘not recommended’ rate should be low (especially as publishers cannot afford to burden their reviewers with poor prospects).

The final decision to accept or reject the few survivors is taken. Just who makes this final decision and how depends very much on the publisher.

Rejection is not inevitable

Most book proposals are rejected, especially those received in their thousands by the big and/or prestigious publishing houses. While the rejection rate is high, a quality manuscript that is appropriate to the publisher and presented in a viable and convincing proposal has a good chance of being accepted. No matter that you are a newcomer from an obscure institution, the prospects for your proposed book need not be dismal. Acceptance depends to a large extent on how much forethought and effort you have put into both your proposal and the actual study beforehand.

Further Reading

Small, But Perfectly形成ed

by Nick Arudz

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Publishing is at a crossroads. As an industry that notoriously lags a good decade behind the rest, it is still facing the upheavals of the take-over culture. Specialist small publishers and university presses – the lifeline of trade and academic books and journals – are being snapped up by faceless globals, often simply in a bid to buy out the competition or acquire tax losses to offset profits. The majority are eventually absorbed, their specialist editors discarded, prestigious backlistsremaindered, and the writers cherrypicked.

The good new is that there are more books than ever being published. In the United Kingdom alone 180,000 new titles hit the bookshops each year, an increasing number of them self-published. And the exact number produced on the internet with its numerous forms such as e-books and online journals is impossible to estimate. That brings its own problems, especially for book sellers, who can hardly be expected to stock every title, although for readers there is the mixed blessing of internet bookshops such as Amazon.

And this huge number of new books is the basic problem facing us all, small publishers, writers, independent book-sellers and readers alike: working out how to get around the twin obstacles of the stagnant large publishers and the giant bookselling chains with their threshold on the market. There is no doubt that publishing is in great need of fresh energy and new attitudes – and this is fast on the way, in the shape of new, independent publishers who specialize, as all small non-fiction publishers must, in publishing books within the fields that they know best.

Disillusioned at the whittling away of the publishers’ margins, the increasing take-overs by the majors, and the growing distance between author and publisher, we took the plunge and upped a new publishing company a few years ago. But we had to first ask ourselves why this seemingly mammoth undertaking seemed worthwhile. The answer was clear: satisfaction at being able to facilitate the organic process of taking a book from idea to reader.

Small publishers with a small number of staff cannot expect to be able to handle everything. But the one important factor that gave us the confidence to go for it was that we were able to contract with a specialized marketing agency to help us publicise and distribute our books, deal with the complexities of warehousing and help raise our profile on the academic conference circuit. We also took inspiration from a variety of models such as that of Hippocrene Press, a small and highly focused press that has been going since the early seventies. This New York-based company has refused to compromise and has steadily developed a wide-rang-ing popular list that includes phrasebooks, coursebooks and dictionaries for more than 120 languages at the time of writing. It is hard to think of any other publisher today who offers that many languages actively in print.

Our own objectives are simple: to narrow the gap between writer and reader. After all, both must be involved at every stage. The accepted idea that small publishers are much more nimble than large commercial or university publishers – bearing in mind that all small staff and many freelancers must be able to fill more than one role. Our commissioning editors must also do the work of copy editors and proof-readers, our designers must also act as typesetters and print buyers – and nobody gets much of a salary, but the bonus is that absolutely everyone can be involved in guiding the business forward.

This inter-weaving of roles is probably the real reason that small publishers can be quick off the mark. The obstacle is that publishing is in great need of fresh energy and new attitudes – and this is fast on the way, in the shape of new, independent publishers who specialize, as all small non-fiction publishers must, in publishing books within the fields that they know best.

One of our writers was told by a major multinational publisher that he could have a maximum of ten illustrations for his book, but it would rather it was less than five. Flexibility here is an obvious way for a new press to distinguish itself as today’s technology means authors can have as many black and white illustrations as they like at no extra printing cost. On pricing, we are obviously aware that any publisher has to make money, but it seems that many publishers are being run by their accounts departments and shareholders who are interested mainly in their dividends. The trend among large publishers is for small print-runs and high prices, which can be good for the bottom line, but we prefer instead to risk our necks with large print-runs at lower prices in order to help our books reach the readership we feel they deserve. Indeed, low prices are an essential element of our business strategy, and, backing good marketing, we believe that far from limiting our books to the specialists and libraries, we can bring them to the shelves of the general reader and even cash-strapped students.

What makes life as a small publisher worthwhile is really knowing each author and being personally invested in every project. What makes life difficult is the lack of marketing and the lack of support systems. It saddens us when big publishers drop their specialist staff, or when they reject many book proposals that deserve success. But rather selfishly, it also cheers us up, because it means there will always be a place for the likes of us.

In many ways ultimately counts is communication – with authors as well as with readers. In a world where corporate anonymity seems to rule, we would like to think we’re putting a bit of heart back into the business.
The Author-Editor Relationship Explained

by Stephanie Rogers, Taylor & Francis
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In Marie Lenstrup’s introduction to this article she mentions the notion of ‘the ideal interaction with an author’. The reality is that each editor, author and book are different and that prescribing an across-the-board answer to this is impossible. What I’m aiming to do in this article is give an overview of how an author-editor relationship can develop, and who else might be in direct touch with an author before their book finally rolls off the printing press.

Whether you have published with the same publishing house your entire academic life or whether you have just defended your PhD and are embarking on publishing for the first time, the first person you are likely to come into contact with is a commissioning editor, also known in some publishing houses as an acquisitions editor. Each commissioning editor’s job description differs from the next, but the one thing we all have in common on our job spec is the responsibility to commission new books onto our respective lists in line with whatever our company’s publishing strategy might be. With this comes a whole myriad of specific tasks: researching new areas to publish in and keeping abreast of current market trends, considering speculative proposals, making decisions about commercial and academic viability, finding readers to review manuscripts, negotiating contracts, setting deadlines, answering queries from contracted authors, liaising with other in-house departments, attending conferences and university campus visiting. Add to this the usual bits of office work that always need to be done, and you can guarantee that a commissioning editor will be a pretty busy one, for all the pressures we might be under, and whether it is on the phone, by email, or in the flesh, commissioning editors spend a large part of their working week speaking to their authors.

It sounds an obvious thing to say, but the secret to a successful author-editor relationship is regular communication. At any stage between signing a book contract and having the finished product hit the shops authors should not be afraid to contact their editor, no matter how minor they think their query might be, because usually the queries turn out not to be minor at all. If an author is unclear as to what a certain clause in the contract means, the editor will be able to clarify. If teaching commitments have eaten into writing time and an author is not going to be able to deliver by the agreed deadline, it is vital to alert the editor immediately so that the editor can then go back to various colleagues and let them know. Or, if the book is going to be significantly longer or shorter than the editor is expecting, the author should alert the editor right away. These are just a few examples of situations authors might find themselves in where they need to contact their editor. And of course this communication works both ways. Your editor should respond in a timely fashion to your queries or problems, although ‘timely’ may not mean the same day.

Between a book being contracted and actually published there are other people whose job titles end in ‘editor’ that an author might hear from directly. There might be a production editor, or desk editor, whose job it is to deal with the physical aspects of turning the manuscript into an actual book. There might be a copy editor, whose job it is to mark up the manuscript for re-setting and catch any last-minute typos that haven’t already been spotted. There is also the marketing department who may well contact an author direct about the promotion they have planned for a title. This may all seem confusing, but these people all bring certain specialist knowledge to the mix that will give a book the best possible start in life. And there’s a lot that the author can do to help at this stage. In terms of the production process, the first thing is to respond to the copyeditor’s queries, and there probably will be some, and then turn proofs around by the deadline given. Any delays at these early stages can have dramatic effects on publication schedules.

From a more proactive point of view, authors can really work with the marketing department to enhance their plans for the promotion of their books. For instance, make sure your marketing contact is told about all the appropriate journals your department or university library subscribes to where a book review might be possible. Chances are they’ll have the majority on their radar, but there so many journals out there now that maybe some aren’t known. The marketing department should also be told about any impending conferences or symposiums the author might be attending – maybe they could put together a flyer for the author to hand out or leave somewhere prominent. Or maybe they will be attending the conference themselves so a flyer could go on the book stand. Generally, informing them about any handy contacts, associations, mailing groups, all these things give the marketing department additional avenues for promotion. If there isn’t a marketing person to contact, tell the commissioning editor all these things. I work for a large publishing company where we have marketing teams assigned to each individual list, but in some of the smaller presses the commissioning editor takes on not only the editorial, but also some of the production and marketing responsibilities themselves.

Throughout the whole of a book’s pre-publication life, the commissioning editor is an ever-present constant who is equally as anxious to see the book appear from the printer as the author. The author-editor relationship should not grind to a halt the moment the book is published, though. The hope, from an editor’s point of view, is that each book will lead to the next book, or even a new edition, with a view to building up a successful list of well-established authors who have a publishing history with their particular press. As such, the editor is on hand to advise and encourage their authors to get the next book underway, as well as charting the success of books just published. When it works, there is nothing better than letting an author know that his or her book has sold out its first print run and is going on to be reprinted again and again. And if you can say this face-to-face over a glass of wine, so much the better! ☛
S\o many journals exist in the field of Asian Studies that keeping up with them is virtually impossible, or perhaps only possible ‘virtually’. If at all. Nor is it a simple matter to figure out what your best prospects are if you are an author because there are 10,000 words or so (roughly the length of most articles) that you have fine-tuned into a model of clarity, rigor, and originality. And with most publications prohibiting multiple submissions, and with the review process typically taking anywhere from three to seven months to complete, finding the right outlet is critical, as is making sure that your journal of choice is reputable. This essay will first discuss recent developments in digital publishing that are transforming the world of journals and then profile some of the principal English-language journals in Asian Studies. It will conclude with a brief discussion of the manuscript review process.

An expanding field

Scholarly journals are proliferating, including in Asian Studies. They have increased in number and, equally significantly, in variety because their audiences have grown and because the disciplines most closely associated with the field have greatly expanded their intellectual parameters, including bybranching out into new theoretical and methodological directions. Consequently, the many journals that now cover specific regions, countries, and approaches and methodologies.

Commercial publishers have played a major role as well in this growth spurt. They have made their mark by taking over the production and distribution of many publications that were formerly managed by committed scholars and scholarly organizations. While such takeovers have rarely, if ever, impressed on the intellectual integrity of the journals – these editors have invariably remained in charge of their content matter – they have generally led to other changes, most notably a hike in prices. Many journals, nevertheless, have sought commercial backing. For some it has been the difference between going under and staying alive; for others it has provided the start-up for a new launch, an especially difficult undertaking with a built-in membership base.

For commercial publishers there is strength in numbers. (For instance, the Taylor and Francis Group, consisting of Routledge, Carfax, and Frank Cass, has a roster of 936-plus titles, including several Asian-related ones.) Extensive holdings enable them to produce, distribute, and price their wares advantageously. In the medical and natural science fields, where great premium is placed on the prompt and widespread circulation of research findings because of their potential use value for industry or government, for-profit publishers often capitalize on their significant titles and substantial lists by setting outrageously high institutional subscription rates. They also bundle their products strategically by offering package deals that make their high- and low-demand publications.

Digital journals publishing

Commercial publishers have also strengthened their hand by embracing digital technology more rapidly and fully than have university presses and university presses. As yet, few of our key publications have become full-fledged electronic (or e) journals, although an increasing number is now available in digital format.

Thus, in theory at least, most journals are only an Internet connection away, a development that was supposed to usher in a new era of greater access to scholarly communications. The reality, however, is very different, not only because of the prohibitively high subscription rates but also because of the licensing arrangements that restrict access to authorized users. No wonder many in the academy advocate “open access”, by which they mean “making digitally-formatted research and scholarship available to readers on the Internet without charge. Open access is the emerging counterpart to the current digital publishing system, in which increasingly consolidated journal publishers retain long-term control (90 years) over both price and access conditions for research and scholarship they publish” (Anne Wollert “Open Access and Research Publishing”, BiblioTech, 16. 4. 2004, http://bibliotech. mit.edu/about/scholarly/oa-wollert.html).

Access issues notwithstanding, the availability of journals in digital format has opened up new possibilities. Think of the astonishing array of user-friendly features that digital delivery systems offer for searching and browsing. “[The content you want, the convenience you need” is the way Sage Journals Online pitches its online delivery platform that allows you to search specific issues, entire journals, or all Sage titles, or “by keyword, author, or citation in the title, abstract, or full text of the article”. In addition, it alerts you when a new issue is available or when a new author is cited or published or when there is another reference to subject matter you have previously researched.

One way academic publishers have sought to keep pace is by handing together to provide comparable services, such as by participating in Project MUSE (http://www.muse.jhu.edu/journals) or JSTOR (http://www.jstor.org). The former now has almost 200 titles from 40 presses to its credit but few of these are Asia-related. The latter has many more but all of its holdings and substantial lists by setting outrageously high institutional subscription rates. They also bundle their products strategically by offering package deals that make their high- and low-demand publications.

Outstanding journals

Perhaps the premier journal in the field – and a JAS title – is the U.S.-based Journal of Asian Studies (JAS, formerly The Far Eastern Quarterly). It owes its prominence to its consistently high standards of scholarship, its wide readership (almost 10,000 individual and institutional subscribers), and its distinguished pedigree as the flagship publication of the Association for Asian Studies, the largest Asia-related scholarly organization in the world.

Another outstanding Asia-wide journal is Modern Asian Studies, published by Cambridge University Press. Like the JAS, this quarterly envisions its mission broadly to encompass “the history, geography, politics, sociology, literature, economics and social anthropology of South Asia, South-East Asia, China and Japan”. [Note the absence of Korea in this list!] In circulation since the 1960s, its articles tend to focus more on history than other disciplines, and more on South Asia than other regions.

Two other general Asia journals that are on my reading list are Asian Survey and Asian Studies Association of Australia, South Asia (Victoria, Australia, South Asian Studies Association of Australia, Carfax). South Asia Research (London, SOAS). South Asia: Journal of Modern Austrian Studies (Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Sage). Note the international mix of these journals, their varied affiliations with presses and/or academic organizations, and their different research emphases.

For China there are so many publications that just the modern period alone has several, each with its own distinct emphasis. For instance, The China Quarterly (SOAS, Cambridge University Press) concentrates on contemporary China; Modern China, (University of California, Los Angeles, SAGE) sees itself as an international quarterly of history and social science; and China Information (Leiden University, Netherlands, Sage) concentrates on “major developments in contemporary China and overseas Chinese communities”. Likewise, for other areas, there are many notable journals, of which three of the better known are: Asian Exchange Review, published by the Southeast Asian Studies (National University of Singapore, Cambridge); The Journal of Japanese Studies (Society for Japanese Studies, University of Washington, self-published); and Korean Studies (University of Hawaii, University of Hawaii Press).

The review process

Clearly, as this brief profile of journals indicates, readers and authors alike have plenty of options to engage in scholarly communication and research publishing. As the former editor of JAS and a twice failed JAS author, I can say with some authority that all our top-notch journals are peer-reviewed and strive to uphold excellence by only publishing enduring scholarship that addresses larger disciplinary and regional concerns. The JAS review process begins with an in-house evaluation by the editor and appropriate area associate editor that determines whether a manuscript is rejected right away or sent on for a double-blind review. Many submissions falter in the first round either because they are not good enough or because they are not right for that journal, although they may be of publishable quality. Fortunately, publishing options abound today.

Prospective authors would do well to scout out their target journal. What is its stated aim and scope? Will members of its editorial board be responsive to and interested in your manuscript? After all, one or more of them might be involved in assessing your piece. To what extent does your article engage its recent and past concerns? And don’t forget to submit your manuscript in the specified format. Good luck!
Academic Publishing in Southeast Asia

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University and other academic publishers are found across Asia, and account for a significant output of books each year. Most major universities support a publishing programme as part of their educational function. Some of the universities that support academic presses in Southeast Asia are shown in the accompanying table. Other universities have at least small publishing programmes, but the institutions on this list account for the majority of academic titles published in the region (see table 1). In addition, a significant number of private publishers and research institutes publish academic material (see table 2).

Most university presses in Southeast Asia publish between 20 and 40 titles per year, although Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City puts out around 280 new titles annually. The large number of students attending universities across the region create a large potential market for academic books (VNU-HCM, for example, has 57,000 full- and part-time students), but students rely heavily on photocopying to acquire course reading materials, and efforts to encourage the purchase of books in connection with courses have had only limited success.

A majority of the publications issued by university presses in the region are in national languages. Singapore University Press publishes exclusively in English, and the university presses in the Philippines produce a substantial number of English titles. University presses in Malaysia also publish in English, but the greater part of their output is in the national language. The markets for books in English and books in vernacular languages are quite different, with the latter relying heavily on a domestic market, while books in English sell to local English-speaking elites, and to an international audience. Catering to these two distinct markets is a major challenge for publishers.

Although University presses receive support from their parent institutions, the resources set aside for this purpose are always limited, and finances are an ongoing problem. Moreover, books published in Western countries are often given greater weight in promotion and tenure exercises than those published locally, making it difficult for regional presses to attract top-class manuscripts. Some university presses rely on textbook sales to bolster their income, and some offer a significant range of trade publications, semi-academic works that appeal to the general reading public. But all university presses see the academic monograph as the basis of their publishing endeavors, and in Asia as elsewhere the monograph is facing a crisis.

The market for academic works is limited. Although some countries within Southeast Asia have very high rates of literacy (for instance, around 94% of adult Filipinos are literate and 68% of the population reports reading non-school books), the region lacks a tradition of book buying, and relatively few people establish home libraries.

Publication costs for academic books are rising. As recently as 30 years ago, major academic publishers in the United States accepted almost any manuscript deemed to be of good quality, and could count on selling 8,500-10,000 copies to libraries. Print runs averaged around 2000-2500 copies. Today, library sales are limited to 150-200 copies. University presses in Southeast Asia have never had the luxury of library sales on this level within the region. English-language books sometimes are sold to institutions outside the region, but the costs associated with worldwide marketing are high, and the returns limited.

Historically, the number of retail outlets for serious books was very small in Southeast Asia, and there were major cities where it was difficult to locate bookshops selling anything other than school textbooks. Conventional wisdom held that bookshops could not be successful because the market for books was too small. Over the past decade retailers such as Borders and Kinokuniya have enjoyed considerable success in the region with huge bookshops stocking tens of thousands of titles, and local retailers such as MPH in Malaysia, Gunung Agung and Gramedia in Indonesia, and National Bookstore in the Philippines, have followed the same model. To the extent that these bookshops have promoted a reading culture, the development has been positive, but the near monopolies enjoyed by these retailers have allowed them to squeeze the profit margins of small publishers, including university presses.

The future for academic publishing in Southeast Asia, as in other parts of the world, almost certainly includes increased use of electronic resources. There are advantages to this arrangement, as an e-press is able to offer materials such as video clips or color photographs that could not be included in printed books. Singapore University Press, for example, has made available an online open access resource Geoff Wade’s translation of Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu, a massive work that would have been prohibitively expensive to publish in conventional book form (available at www.epress.nus.edu.sg/mdl). However, universities continue to depend on print monographs as a key element in their credentialing process for academic staff in a number of academic disciplines, and many readers still prefer to read conventional books rather than text presented on a computer screen. The challenge for university presses is to find the financial resources to meet this demand.

Sources
Information in this article is drawn primarily from submissions made at a symposium on academic publishing in Southeast Asia held in Manila in July 2004, sponsored by SEASREP with support from the Toyota Foundation, and from the Presidential Panel on University Press Publishing at the 2005 meeting of the US Association for Asian Studies held in Chicago. The Manila meeting was attended by representatives from university publishers at the following institutions: Universiti Brunei Darussalam, the University of the Philippines, Gadjah Mada University, Universitas Indonesia, the National University of Singapore, the University of Malaya, University Kebangsaan Malaysia, and Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City. The Chicago panel included presentations from the University of California Press, Columbia University Press, the University of Chicago Press, and the University of Washington Press.

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Southeast Asia: Reaching a Worldwide Audience

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It is the desire of all authors to ensure that their books are read by as many people as possible. It is the hope of all publishers that they will sell as many books as possible. And it is the objective of all libraries to ensure that as much material as possible is available for access by their users. In essence, we all want to reach a worldwide audience.

However, it is no mean task for a publisher to tell the world about every new book, to promote it and make it easy for the reader to obtain a copy. For the publisher, there are costs involved, market knowledge, business experience, and many years of building a worldwide network and reputation for quality books.

Publishing in the West

Western publishers issue books from their offices in North America or Europe that have been – and still are – out of reach of readers in Southeast Asia, either because the books are far too expensive, or there is little attempt to promote and sell them widely in the region. This dominance of books published in the West is now being reversed.

Excellent academic books are being published in English in Southeast Asia, by scholars of Southeast Asia – the young and the eminent alike. The scholars may themselves be Southeast Asian, but increasingly Western scholars, too, are choosing to publish in the region. In other words, there is a trend for scholars now to publish in Southeast Asia, rather than look exclusively to the West.

Why publish in Southeast Asia?

One reason for this reversing trend is that authors have found that if they publish in Southeast Asia, their books still reach the rest of the world and at a reasonable price. The reputation of the publisher is obviously also an important factor, as is the quality of content, production, design and marketing. Often a book issued in Southeast Asia is jointly issued with a co-publisher in the West. This is a happy situation all round, as the author becomes better known in different parts of the world, the two co-publishers sell more copies of the book, the author receives more royalty payments and the readers have easier access to the book through the different publishing networks.

Another reason for the rising trend to publish with regional publishers is the dynamism and versatile approach of some Southeast Asian publishers to meet the expectations of scholars. The publishing industry in the region is reaching a level of maturity and sophistication that cannot be found in bookshops. And perhaps even the latest blogging to discussion groups like H-Asia, e-journals, and even the newest blogging to discussion groups like H-Asia, e-journals, and perhaps even the latest blogging to discussion groups like H-Asia, e-journals.

Databases and aggregators

If the scholar chooses not to buy such e-content direct from the publisher, he can also refer to it in libraries that have e-books and e-journals, as well as aggregators such as CROSSREF and other specialist databases like EBSCO. In such cases, the publisher would have made arrangements to deposit copies of the electronic books, chapters, journals and articles in such databases under licence. The advantage is that these databases are accessed by thousands of people all over the world. By plugging into such varied networks, a publisher from “distant” Southeast Asia reaches the same audience as publishers in the West. CD-ROM and hyperlinks

Another use of digital media is CD-ROM. These can enhance the content of a printed book if sold together. For example, the book Power Plays: Wayang Golek Puppet Theater of West Java by Andrew Weinstab (jointly issued by Ohio University Press and ISEAS) includes a multimedia interactive CD-ROM – bringing colour, sight and sound to the reader. A picture is worth a thousand words, but a CD-ROM does it even better!

Creating a balance

Publishing from Southeast Asia is growing as the region develops. As world attention today seems to be focussing on the rise of China and India and the continuing fascination with Japan, Southeast Asia has to compete for attention. The onus is on publishers, book-sellers and libraries to ensure that the wealth of knowledge and information is shared and accessible all over the world. The Internet is here to stay and we must avail ourselves of the opportunities. Publishers are having to re-examine the economics of doing business while at the same time bearing in mind the trend towards open access. Quality of content and effective marketing strategies are still key factors in publishing.

Within Southeast Asia, the grouping of ten ASEAN countries is also one that represents a range of extremes of socio-economic development. We cannot assume that all libraries, publishers and end-users in Southeast Asia have access to fast Internet broadband so readily. The extremes in the range of stages of socio-economic development can lead to a digital divide within Southeast Asia. Publishers need to factor this into their strategies to ensure that readers in Southeast Asia do not get left behind on the highway of information. Having sung the praises of electronic publishing, I don’t think that Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press will become obsolete for many years yet. As a Southeast Asian publisher, one is more attuned to meeting the needs not only of the Western scholarly community, but also our neighbours in the region – a balance of serving the academic community at home and abroad.
Selling the Ivory Tower

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Even the most wonderful book – beautifully written, richly illustrated, presenting exciting new material, daring analyses and paradigm-shattering conclusions – will sit in splendid isolation on some obscure warehouse shelf if the world is not told that it exists. All the best efforts of author, editor, designer, typesetter, and all the other people involved in bringing out a book are pointless without marketing. And conversely, of course, even the best book in the world will not shift many copies of a book that is ill-written, badly conceived and shoddily produced. But while most authors will find their relationship with their editor to be of great importance, and many will take a lively interest in the physical appearance of their books, marketing is often overlooked by authors who feel that their work should fly or fail on its own intrinsic merits. Yet to marketing is yet another vital step in the long chain from an initial idea in the author’s mind to the answering spark it can create in a reader’s mind.

Serious marketing – that is, the marketing of serious books – is less about persuading customers with florid language and tempting discounts to buy a book they may or may not really want, but more about keeping the academic world, the high-end libraries, and the specialized bookshops well informed about what is on offer.

The job is to reach this audience with the right information in the right format at the right time. What could be simpler? Well, actually, there are quite a number of “challenges” involved.

Standing out from the crowd

With the huge number of new titles published each year and the even more staggering number of titles in publishers’ back lists, it is no surprise that even the most specialized bookshop or library can carry a tiny proportion of what is available. Just take a look around the book displays at the annual Association for Asian Studies conference in the United States, and then consider that this rich display only represents books from perhaps 70 or 80 of the largest publishers, and only their most recent offerings. There are at least three, four, five times as many smaller and regionally based publishers producing academic books on Asia. And for each title shown at AAS, there are at least ten more titles that the publisher could not find space for. With so many books on offer, it looks like Asian Studies is the new black.

So the first challenge of good marketing is to produce a description of the book that will make it stand out from the crowd, and make clear exactly what the book is about and who it is aimed at. Very often, this will start with a description provided by the author which the marketing department can edit, add to, or rewrite. It is surprising how little interest many authors take in this process, even though it is the foundation upon which all other sales and marketing work will be based. The description needs to be comprehensive enough that libraries can tell whether the subject falls within their remit, yet concise enough for booksellers who take an average of maybe ten seconds (yes, boring, but unfortunately true) to look at a book. It also needs to appeal to end-users by setting out how the work adds to what has already been published in the field, and by stating who outside the community of professors and lecturers should consider buying the book – undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate students, informed and inquisitive non-experts, practitioners in the field, such as NGOs, collectors, epatists, etc.

Small budgets and large chains

Having produced, with the help of the author, the perfect book description, and having distributed this as widely as possible, the next challenge for the sales and marketing team is that even when a shop or library would like to buy the book, they may not be able to do so. Libraries almost everywhere have suffered for years from dwindling budgets, and book budgets have been particularly hard hit as funds have had to be allocated to new media such as CDs and online subscriptions, and as libraries have been understandably slow to make the painful decision to discontinue subscriptions to journals they have been taking for decades. A recent survey of libraries in the United Kingdom showed that just 3% of the total budget went on book purchases (the rest going towards other media, salary, maintenance, IT, etc.). Library suppliers – who collate information on new books from hundreds of publishers to present libraries with lists of what is new in their particular fields – are feeling the squeeze quite badly, in what they see as a flat and oversupplied market.

Likewise, bookshops can be hard work. The growth of bookshops with their centralized buying and high turn-over means that most large bookshops will prefer to stock not two copies each of the 50 most important titles, but 50 copies each of the two most popular ones. Independent bookshops, on the other hand, often specialize in a particular field and favour depth of range over the latest fad, but they are few and far between, and are under great competitive pressure from the chains which can command impressive discounts from publishers. Independents are also squeezed by internet bookshops which will list millions of titles while carrying tiny stocks, preferring instead to purchase only when they have a customer order. Although the browsing experience may leave a lot to be desired, internet shops are extremely successful in gaining market share. Amazon, for instance, increased its global sales by no less than 46% last year. An additional pressure on chain and independent bookshops alike is the fairly new Amazon Marketplace where anyone can sell books second-hand – great for those with growing shelves, but less great for publishers’ turnover and authors’ royalty payments.

In recognition of the difficulties of selling through bookshops, and the increasing pressure on library budgets, many publishers have stepped up efforts to contact end-users directly. The traditional methods of sending out catalogues and other direct mail pieces, advertising in journals and newsletters (such as this one), showing books at academic conferences, and providing review and reading copies of new books have been complemented with new information channels provided by IT. All publishers worth their salt now maintain websites with detailed book information, many have regular e-mail newsletters where they flag up newly published titles and special deals, quite a few also use academic newsgroups such as the H-family to announce new publications and to mention relevant books on discussion strands.

Efficiency and effectiveness

This all leads to the final challenge of marketing work: gauging how to divide time and budgets between these various activities. Some cost a great deal of money, such as printing and mailing catalogues, others cost a great deal of time, such as maintaining an up-to-date website. Some are aimed mainly at known customers, such as direct mail, others are aimed more at potential new customers, such as advertisements. But since very few orders result from direct mail, I found out about this book on your website/in your catalogue/through your journal ad/from a review”, it is rarely possible to tell which of the many marketing activities resulted in an order, and thus what their relative merits are. In fact, most of the time there is no way even to tell who an order originally came from, because customer orders are often channeled through bookshops, while bookshop orders in their turn may arrive through wholesalers. So while there is a gut feeling in academic publishing that marketing ‘directly’ to end-users is becoming increasingly important, it can be frustratingly difficult to locate these end-users, and equally difficult to know what medium is best used to reach them. In the end, most marketing departments end up doing as much as possible in as many areas as possible, but always with the sneaking suspicion that perhaps we never do quite enough of anything.

An author actively interested in promoting a new book can make a great difference to its success. Marketing professionals will know the potential trade customers fairly intimately, will be well aware of the annual conferences where the book should be shown, and will have a good general knowledge of the section of the academic community to which a particular title will appeal. But no-one can have as much detailed knowledge as the author about the exact people who will make decisions on whether to use a book on courses and who should therefore be offered a reading copy, or about the one-off conferences and events which will gather academics working on the exact topics that the book deals with and where it should therefore be displayed. And no-one is likely to meet more potential readers than the author simply in the course of a normal working day.

Tips for authors

• Give your book a chance to be found in searches of library holdings and internet bookshops by ensuring that the most important key-words are part of the title or subtitle
• Help your publisher’s marketing team by providing a comprehensive but concise description of the book’s contents, its unique points, and its main market
• Tell all your colleagues and contacts when the book is published, through notices, newsgroups and at meetings – word of mouth is an extremely powerful promotion tool
• Add your own comments about the book in the author section of internet bookshops such as Amazon
• Ask your publisher for fliers describing the book and how it can be ordered, and whip one out at the slightest provocation
• Use your contacts. Get journals you have peer-reviewed articles for to review your book. Get colleagues to consider your book for inclusion on recommended-reading lists. Get your campus bookshop to stock the book. Get your publisher to promote the book at the conferences you attend.
• Be creative, and be a nuisance!
A
bout twenty-five years ago, as a
weekly-minted acquisitions editor for a large educational publisher, I
walked in (in industry jargon, a cold call) to a young assistant professor’s office at a prestigious US west coast university.
Well into our conversation the professor mentioned that he had just finished a manuscript and he was about to contact publishers. Would I be interested in reviewing it? I not only reviewed the manuscript, I later signed the professor to a publishing contract, and the book became an instant academic and finan-
cial success. The book is still in print and, several editions later, is now con-
sidered a classic in its field.

If the young assistant professor had read either of William Germano’s excellent primers on book publishing I doubt that the professor’s manuscript would have been sitting on his desk awaiting an edi-
tor. The professor would have known exactly what to do and been able to gen-
erate considerable interest among pub-
lishers. Thankfully for me, two decades ago books on how to get published were in short supply and the mystery of the publishing process was far more wide-
spread among professors than it is today. Germano takes the mystery out of
getting published.

William Germano’s two books are part of the outstanding series that the Uni-
versity of Chicago Press publishes, Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing, now containing over twenty
titles that explore practically every aspect of the printed word. The newest series addition, From Dissertation to Book, provides the dissertation author with sensible, real world advice on how to rethink, reshape, and rewrite a dis-
sertation into a manuscript coveted by publishers. The nine chapters in this concise written work are packed with valuable suggestions on repackag-
ing into a commercially publishable work
material originally intended for a small
committee of scholars. Germano inten-
tionally limits his advice to authors plan-
ning to rewrite their dissertations into
serious works published primarily by
university presses and commercial scholarly publishers. However, I think
that much of his advice is universal and of value to anyone who is writing a book, especially a first book.

Germano guides the new Ph. D. through the mental anguish one experiences after spending so much time on one project –
do I really want to rewrite this thing that has consumed so much of my life? Should my dissertation become a book? How about using the chapters that are the best as a springboard to a book with a slightly different thrust? Realistically who would want to read my book – a
lofty few, a limited number of scholars, or a much broader audience? There is a huge amount of soul-searching that needs to be done by the author before a decision is made on revising the disser-
tation. Honest answers to Germano’s thoughtful questions will aid the disser-
tation writer in their final decision.

If the author moves forward to repack-
age the project, Germano presents in the book’s middle chapters the publisher’s acquisitions editor’s mindset. He details what editors look for in every proposal and manuscript that reaches their desk: audience, voice, structure, and length. If the editor isn’t convinced that all four elements are present there is little chance the editor will offer a publishing contract. Chapters five through eight are the chapters that a dissertation writer
should read, reread, and reread again. I consider them the author’s business plan to preparing a product for market. A firm understanding of these chapters will increase exponentially the author’s chance of having his/her manuscript reviewed. The book ends with three key checklists that convey the basics of the entire book:
• the differences between a dissertation and a book – dissertation=a few long chapters, book=several chapters of readable length,
• things the author should not do – never assume that even an award-win-
ning dissertation is already a scholarly book; and
take care of manuscript basics – dou-
ble-space throughout...no exceptions.

From Dissertation to Book is a gem. Although Getting It Published was pub-
lished in 2001 it is a natural follow-on to the just-published From Dissertation to Book. It offers all who read it –
authors, editors, publishers – funda-
mental insights into writing and pub-
lishing serious books, primarily non-
fiction. The author draws on this vast pub-
lishing experience to provide succinct yet amazingly thorough background material on every aspect of the publish-
ing process. He clearly knows his stuff.

The thirteen chapters cover book pub-
lishing in a systematic order from what publishers do to a published book. The book begins by describing the various
categories publishers fall into – trade, textbook, scholarly, reference, and self-
publicating and cautions the author to write a focused book that fits a publish-
er: “No publisher wants to take on a manuscript with multiple personality disorder.” Chapter three on writing the manuscript is a wonderful, brief sec-
tion on the fifty-page rule followed by all editors – consciously or not – “If the man-
script doesn’t work in the first fifty pages, it’s out.” Chapters four and five on selecting an appropriate publisher and preparing the book proposal describe the enormous amount of non-
manuscript work an aspiring author must undertake to ensure that the book has a chance the editor will offer a publishing contract. Chapter six repeats key information appearing in From Dissertation to Book as Germano looks into the acquisitions editor’s psyche and how that should shape the book proposal. The last half of the book covers a variety of useful writing-related topics: single-authored works and anthologies, copyright issues, the publishing contract, manuscript delivery, and just when an author signs

no publisher wants to take on a manuscript with multiple personality disorder

An Invitation to Join the Academic Publishing Session at ICAS 4

by Albert Hoffstedt, Brill Academic Publishers
hoffstedt@brill.nl

Academic publishing is an extremely diverse field: university press
es, commercial presses, small presses, large presses. Within this
diversity, factors such as the local economic and political situation
as expressed in tax regulations or limitations on free enterprise –
and realised in various ways in practice – make the publishing indus-
dustry differ almost from country to country. It also means that each
press faces different problems and opportunities. It is very much in
the interest of authors to be aware of this variety of ‘press cultures’,
as an insight into these may help authors improve their publication
proposals, and thus their chance of being seriously considered and
getting published.

The session on Academic Publishing at ICAS 4 is meant first to give
PhD students and scholars insight into the criteria for admitting manuscript for publication of different kinds of press; to this end, there will be lectures by a Western university press representative, by a commercial press editor, and by an Asian publisher. By nature of their roles and the specific interests involved, a book proposal from a budding author is read from different perspectives by author, publisher, purchaser-and reader. One of the main discussions in (academic) publishing pertains to
the promotion of publications – e-books, cd-roms, online databases and open access. What will happen where, and at what pace, remains uncer-
tain, but it is clear that electronic availability will change the ways in which scholars will access and process information. And this means that the role of the academic publisher as an intermediary between writer and reader will also change. A separate paper will be devoted to this particular feature.

Inevitably, matters such as the promotion of publications – includ-
ing digital marketing, the role of libraries, the future of the printed book, academic (and thus publishers’) overproduction, and specif-
ic problems within each country will come to the fore. Leading themes, however, will be how to ensure the maintenance of quality, how to achieve optimal distribution, and how to keep up with the fast pace of changes affecting academia and the publishing indus-
try alike.

Speakers at the session will include Triena Ong of ISEAS, Singapore, who will talk about her experiences as an Asian publisher, with an emphasis on electronic publishing and digital marketing. Mark Woltering of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, The Netherlands, who will concentrate on electronic publishing; Albert Hoffstedt of Brill Academic Publishers, the Netherlands, who will speak from the per-
spective of a Western commercial press, and lastly a representative who will speak from a Western university press perspective.
During the three years I worked for Beyers, I saw a plethora of books of all ages ranging from medieval texts to books for the modern bibliophile. Several large libraries were auctioned down that period. My work consisted of describing the books for the catalogues. In doing so, I learned all the books (verify that they are completely) and to carry our research for background information about the books. I have seen books on every possible subject books about theology, law, medicine, history, biology, ethnology, and so on. I was able to build up considerable general knowledge which has been the basis for the rest of my career. After three years I needed the challenge of a new experience and I started working for an internationally-oriented antiquarian bookseller in Utrecht, where I worked for another three years.

Travel books

During the six years I had been working in the antiquarian business, I had become especially interested in books about geography and ethnology, or, as we now say, travel books. In 1981, when I started my own antiquarian business with my wife, I knew exactly which specially we would choose: travel books. We cleared the attic of our home and set up all our bookcases and desks there.

Our first purchase was a large library containing books on Indonesia. I described these books for our first catalogue. The sales results from that first catalogue were good. With the money we earned from it we were able to purchase new assets, and this way the business slowly grew. Around 1980 the first books books on Indonesia began to rise steadily in the Netherlands, and foreign universities also began to show an interest in the subject. Our first catalogue turned out to be along the right lines.

My personal interest is in old and rare books. Seventeenth-century Dutch travel books, such as the journals and travel books of Joan Nieuwhof, Wouter Schouten and Cornelis Matelief are my greatest joy. These books are expensive, so I could not afford to specialize in this category of books. The bulk of our starting stock consisted of 19th and 20th century scientific books. I did not wish to concentrate exclusively on Indonesia, so in compiling our second catalogue I added a selection of books on the former Dutch colonies in the West, the area of the Dutch West India Company: Surinam, the Dutch Antilikes, the West Africa, Dutch Brazil and New Netherlands.

All the other areas of the Dutch East India Company were represented as well: Southeast Asia, the Far East, Australia, and South Africa. Later on, I expanded the selection with books about maritime history, whaling and travel in general. Now, 25 years later, we have grown into an international antiquarian bookseller with large sales of antique and scientific books about the former Dutch colonies form an important part of our turnover. The rest consists of 16th-19th century travel books.

Each new acquisition is collated and described in English. A lot of attention is paid to the description of the condition of the book, the binding and, if applicable, the artist who created the illustrations. In the notes, we provide information about the author and the printing history of the book and we refer to national and international bibliographies. Most of our books are sold through our catalogue. Five or six times a year we make a selection from our stock and make this into a catalogue. Our entire list of books and prints is mailed all over the world. Universities, libraries and museums are our regular customers. We also sell to clients personally by fax or letter.

Travel books are an expression of the exquisite, the picturesque, the outing and the voyage. The group of serious collectors means the book will not dry up by selling to official authorities. The number of Dutch books about this period is not excessive and the Dutch language descriptions of Japan by Montanus, Kaempfer, Tislingh, Overmeer Füsscher, Von Siebold and others are much in demand in Japan. Also, Dutch scientific books, which entered Japan via the island of Deshima in the harbour of Nagasaki and were translated into Japanese, are coveted objects.

In Asia, studies are being carried out on buildings, mostly fortresses and churches, which are the legacy of the Dutch East India Company. The upheaval is an expanding interest in books which include descriptions and illustrations of these buildings. Photo collections, which may be used for examining the architecture or for studying costumes and utensils are now being put together.

Before the Asian economic crisis (1998), demand for the work of Western artists who chose Indonesia as their theme was strong in Asia, especially in Singapore and Indonesia. In the absence of any reference work on this subject we published such a book. The lexicon by Leo Hak and Gius Maric: Lexicon of Foreign Artists Who Visited Indonesia (1600-1960) has turned out to be a useful tool for the librarian and for the collector. In 2002 we published a vademecum on the Dutch East and West India companies. We are now nurturing plans to expand this publishing venture.

Future developments

The acquisition of antiquarian books is becoming more difficult. We ourselves are also guilty of causing the stream to dry up by selling to official authorities. Doing this means that a book will not appear on the market again, while selling to private collectors means the book will be re-entered into circulation. The sales are much in demand in Japan. Also, Dutch scientific books, which entered Japan via the island of Deshima in the harbour of Nagasaki and were translated into Japanese, are coveted objects.

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