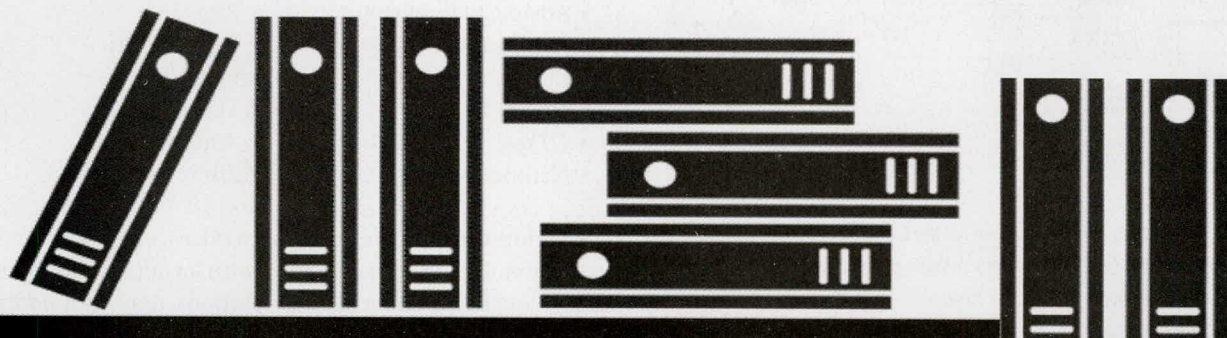
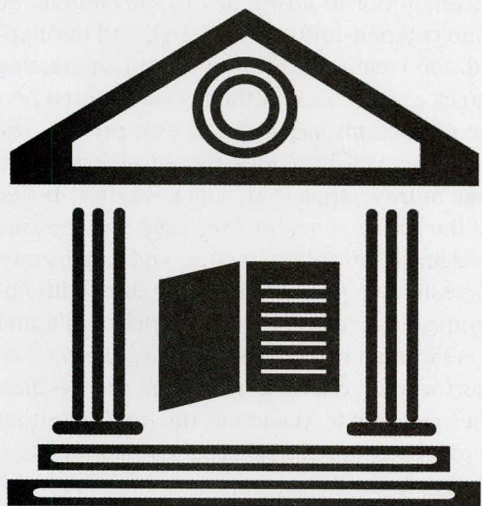


Libraries as Publishers

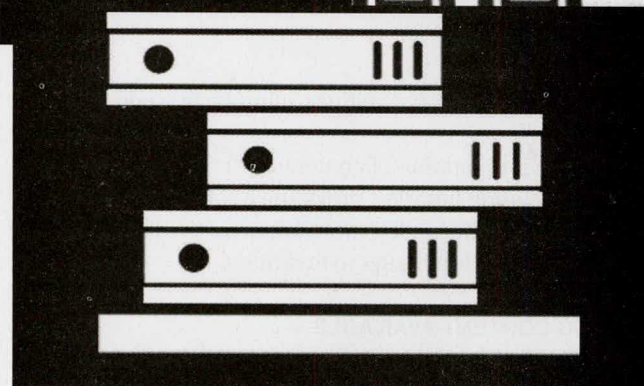
Easy to Create, Hard to Find



By Stephen E. Arnold



New initiatives for libraries puts them into publishing roles. In Provincetown, Mass., the public library started its own digital imprint, The Provincetown Public Press, to publish original works and “empower the arts community” (provincetownpublicpress.org). In Sacramento, Calif., the public library’s I Street Press encourages people to self-publish via its Espresso Book Machine (saclibrary.org/istreet).



Even more publishing opportunities exist in academic libraries. The *Library Publishing Directory*, compiled by the Library Publishing Coalition (librarypublishing.org), “provides a snapshot of the publishing activities of 115 academic and research libraries, including information about the number and types of publications they produce, the services they offer authors, how they are staffed and funded, and the future plans of institutions that are engaged in this growing field” (librarypublishing.org/resources/directory-library-publishing-services).

The Library Publishing Coalition’s mission is to “promote the development of innovative, sustainable publishing services in academic and research libraries to support scholars as they create, advance, and disseminate knowledge.” Founded in response to changing norms in scholarly publishing, including open access and social media, the coalition strives to supply a central location for academic publishing initiatives.

The directory can be downloaded in PDF or EPUB format, or purchased in print from the Purdue University Press (press.purdue.edu). Brigham Young University’s library provides a searchable interface to the directory, with both basic

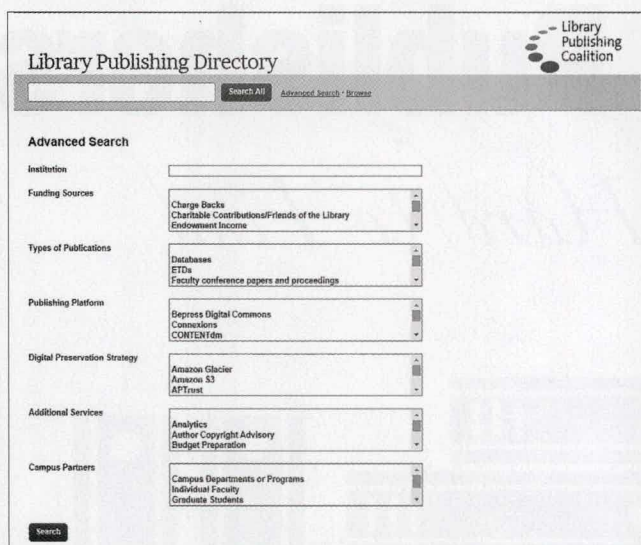


Figure 1: The advanced search screen for the Library Publications Directory on the Brigham University Library website provides search options for seven limiters; six have pull-down menus.

and advanced search capabilities (atom.lib.byu.edu/lpc). (See Figure 1.)

With the proliferation of content from nontraditional publishers, including libraries, providing a robust search and retrieval system is becoming more important. It's easy to create published works but harder to find them.

MAKING CONTENT AVAILABLE

The interest in making information available to patrons is fueled by a combination of factors. Libraries often have unique content that is not available elsewhere. The University of Louisville, for example, has an extensive collection of images (louisville.edu/library/archives). The Library of Congress has a treasure trove of information that is not available online. I was stunned when I worked on the American Memory project (memory.loc.gov) more than a decade ago—its knowledge resources were the equivalent of the Comstock Lode.

Budget constraints and the rising costs associated with certain types of content are persistent. Most libraries struggle with what seems an intractable problem—more demand and fewer resources. Also, a broad shift to self-publishing has increased interest in easy-to-use digital publishing software. Unlike the expensive and complex professional publishing tools, a new generation of online systems makes it possible to produce a wide range of information and make it available to anyone with internet access.

For research-centric content, online searchers are familiar with open source repositories of high-value content. Open access journal publisher PLOS (plos.org) is more than a decade old and publishes seven journals. Another, even older, service is ArXiv.org (arXiv.org), technically an eprint archive. These and other digital publishing services are extremely valuable and offer an alternative to

the often expensive information available from traditional professional publishers.

ONLINE DIGITAL PUBLISHING

A few months ago, my team reviewed a list of online digital publishing services for a print publisher. The list of services the publisher provided included familiar names as well as several that surprised me. Some of these will prove useful to librarians wanting to move their libraries into the publishing realm.

- Advanced Publishing
- Apple's iBooks Author
- BlueToad
- ePaper Flip
- GTxcel
- Nxtbook Media
- PageSuite
- PageTurnPro
- typeWares
- YUDU
- Zmags
- Zinio

I will do a quick flyover of these services, explore one system not on the list, and conclude with a caution that information locked in some digital solutions may be findable only if a searcher uses advanced retrieval techniques.

On the List

Advanced Publishing (advancedpublishing.com) operates as a service bureau. The system requires Adobe PDF files and allows an author to post a link to the content via social media. The company offers web design and development, digital edition creation and delivery, and emarketing services. It charges a setup fee and then costs are on a per-issue basis. The page count has an impact on pricing. The company will provide a custom price quotation on request.

Apple's iBooks Author (apple.com/ibooks-author) is free and available at the iTunes store, but Mac-only. The software is elegant, interfacing with Microsoft Word and Apple's own Pages word processing software. The software ships with Apple-designed templates, supports hyperlinks, rich media, and customization. A librarian can create interactive books customized to patron needs. For some applications, authors have to create another, non-Apple, version of the publication for distribution on other platforms, which could be a problem.

BlueToad (bluetoadpublishing.com) has an ideal approach if the customer has the ability to generate a PDF. The pricing is per-page, ranging from \$4 to \$7.50, which includes hosting and up to 100,000 page views per month.

ePaper Flip (epaperflip.com) allows an author to convert a PDF file into "an interactive, enjoyable digital slip book experience in minutes." Like other services, ePaper Flip uses an "upload, design, and publish" workflow. The company charges from \$80 to \$500 per issue. The cost may be a limiting factor for some libraries.

GTxcel (gtxcel.com), formed via the fusion of Godengo and Texterity, focuses on magazines. The company offers a ClassApp so that academic content can be made available to a student using a mobile device. The company offers a wide range of monetization strategies, including support for digital advertising, subscription services, and sponsorship

support. The company's digital publishing system integrates with Xerox's FreeFlow Digital Publisher system. For libraries with high-end Xerox technology, GTxcel integrates with Xerox workflow systems. Custom price quotes can be provided.

Nxtbook Media (nxtbookmedia.com) asserts that it "was one of the first companies to bring a full-service digital publication platform to the marketplace." Like ePaper Flip, Nxtbook Media's service outputs content that can be consumed on mobile devices as well as traditional computers using responsive design. Custom price quotes are available.

PageSuite (pagesuite.com) focuses on the European market and provides a robust solution for digital editions, or what the company calls "a Dynamic App." The content is available in an application for the iTunes Store, Google Play Store, Amazon Kindle Store, and the Windows 8 Store.

PageTurnPro (pageturnpro.com) uses PDF to Flash and PDF to HTML methods. The company's approach allows publishers to offer "an interactive and search optimized version of your print materials that provide your readers with an enhanced experience through our Reader View." The pricing varies between the self-service version and full-service offering. The self-service approach is less expensive than PageTurn's full-service solution. The pricing in either category is based on the number of publications or editions per year.

typeWares (typewares.com) includes a search engine that supports keyword search, dates, and "specialized parameters." The service does not include hosting, and a custom price quote is provided by the company.

YUDU (yudu.com) offers digital textbook support via the YUDU app. The company offers self-service and full-service options. Academic options are explained on Lesson Wizard (lessonwizard.co.uk), a companion website. According to YUDU, the benefit of using its service is that customers save money spent on photocopying course materials. YUDU offers custom price quotes to prospects.

Zmags (zmags.com) focuses on digital publishing with an emphasis on brand experience, ecommerce conversion, and website page views. The Zmags' system offers self-service tools. Once the content is in the system, it is automatically converted so that content renders on most output devices. The service includes metrics to allow customers to keep track of user activity. A free trial is available. The company uses a subscription model, and a custom price quote is required.

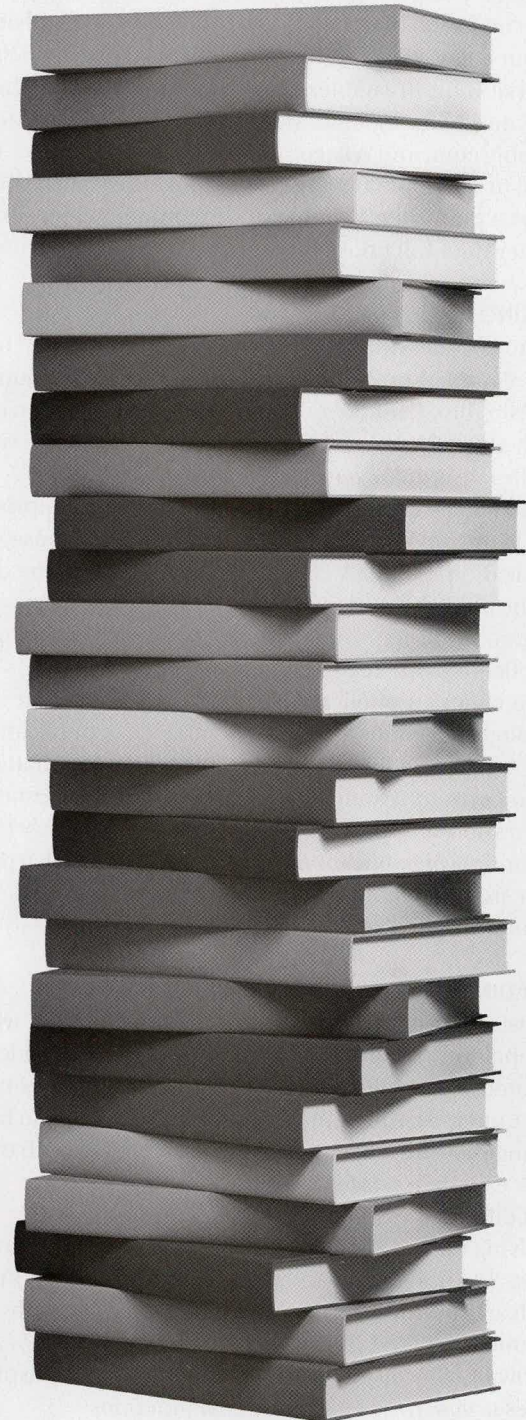
Zinio (zinio.com) sees itself as an "online newsstand," which is more of interest to a publisher looking for ways to sell subscriptions to a digital magazine than to library as publisher. Of course, many libraries include magazine subscriptions on the Zinio platform as part of their collection. A glossy interface makes it easy to subscribe to digital magazines. There are free articles and free magazines, which are usually sample issues.

What Was Omitted

The list was skewed, not surprisingly, to traditional publishers of both books and periodicals. A number of digital publishing systems were omitted from the list, including a

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number of high-profile publishing services. For example, Scribd (scribd.com) makes it easy to publish content online. Well-established as facilitating self-publishing for book authors, Lulu.com has published 1.8 million books in the past 12 years. CreateSpace.com, owned by Amazon, boasts many award winning titles. Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP; <https://kdp.amazon.com>) allows authors to upload their finished works, which Amazon then converts to Kindle format.

Website-centric systems, which concentrate more on building websites for content rather than going the traditional publishing route, were omitted, possibly because the conflation of websites and publishing had not occurred to our client. Google Sites (google.com/sites/help/intl/en/overview.html) enables sharing of group sites. Other website designers include Moonfruit.com, Squarespace.com, Weebly.com, and Wix.com. If that is too much, give Tumblr.com or the popular WordPress a look. Even LinkedIn wants to be a publisher, although it's encouraging blog-like posts rather than full books or journal issues.

TAKING ISSUU

I took issue with Issuu (issuu.com) being omitted from the list. Founded in Denmark in 2006 and now headquartered in Palo Alto, Calif., Issuu has 15 million publications online, with about 25,000 new publications added each day. Traffic to the site is in the tens of millions.

Issuu has received \$20.3 million in venture capital funding from Sunstone Capital and KDDI (crunchbase.com/organization/issuu). A chunk of that money will be directed to the publishing framework that underpins the system and to graphic design. Two components are at play—choosing a publication and reading the chosen publication.

To choose a publication, use the navigation bar to scroll through categories and view thumbnails of publication covers. A click on a title opens the publication. Alternatively, enter a keyword search in the search box on the homepage. A user who wants to explore content serendipitously can click on images of publication title pages. An icon is also provided that permits additional zooming for readers who require greater magnification of a display.

READING AN ISSUU

Issuu sports a reasonably easy-to-use interface, which attempts to replicate the interaction between a reader and a printed magazine. The digital version of a magazine is usable, but it does require some experimentation and behavior changes by the reader to become comfortable with the Issuu user experience. Issuu's interface is not necessarily bad; it is just different.

Using the navigation screen, I clicked on *Amateur Magazine*. The issue available was dated 2012. The interview with artist Conor Harrington is representative of the type of content included in the graphics-rich *Amateur Magazine*. A row of icons at the lower right corner of the display provides access to several additional functions:

- One-click access to a carousel of thumbnails for 10 two-page spreads preceding or following the pages you're viewing. (See Figure 2.)
- One-click expansion of a single page. To view the full page in the expansion display, a scroll-down icon renders the lower half of a page with a mouse click.
- Search within the issue you're viewing.

Issuu's rectangular icon expands the display to a full-screen view. When the display screen renders, a separate tool bar appears at the top of the full-screen display. This secondary toolbar provides one-click access to social media postings of the content and the search function and the expansion of the top half of the page. I found this function redundant. Additional scrolling buttons are provided in the full-screen view.

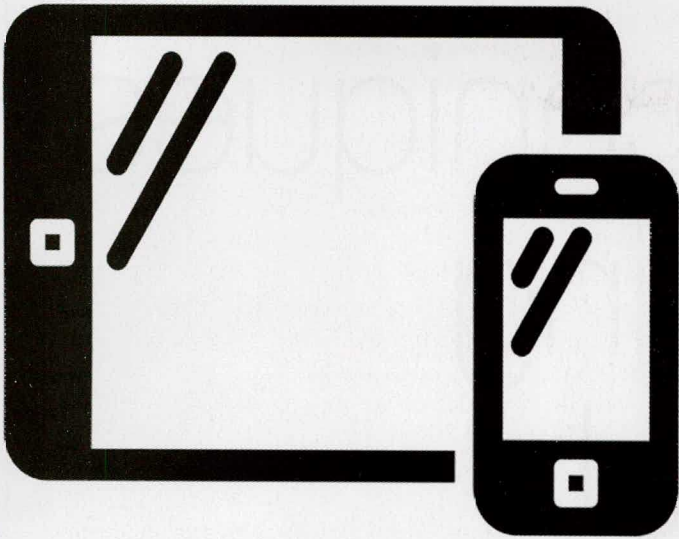
The mobile version, which is automatically generated, shows the benefits of responsive design, as it preserves the look and feel of the full-sized publication. Zooming and scrolling are required to make the page readable. Those with vision problems may want to stick with the desktop-sized monitor and comparatively generously sized controls.

Using its Clip function, via the orange bubble icon, a reader can save content from an Issuu publication and share it with friends via Facebook and a half-dozen other popular services, including email. Publishers pay for access to enriched features, but the basic Clip feature is available without charge and illustrates the fresh thinking the Issuu team is doing to add interactivity to periodical content and revenue from value-adds.

Issuu provides an upload interface that allows an author or publisher to submit content in formats that include PDF, Word, PowerPoint, Rich Text Format (RTF), WordPerfect, and Open Office ODT. When documents are uploaded, Issuu allows documents to be public or unlisted. This feature makes



Figure 2: The two-page spread for an article in *Amateur Magazine*, as displayed by Issuu, features navigation tools at the bottom right-hand side and social media sharing tools on the bottom left.



The rendering of PDF content on mobile devices requires quite a bit of scrolling, resizing, and dragging. I had difficulty figuring out what controls to use to achieve a desired effect.

it possible for an author or organization to make information available to individuals who receive the document location from the author.

The cost of the Issuu service ranges from \$30 to \$40 per month. A basic service available without charge can be used for documents with fewer than 500 pages that are less than 100MB in size. The conversion of uploaded content in a supported file format is the same for free and for-fee services. My test documents uploaded correctly. I suggest, however, that authors read the Issuu file conversion information on the site's Help Center. The information about hyperlink inclusion, graphics, and fonts is of particular interest to anyone who wants to avoid file conversion errors.

WHERE AND HOW TO SEARCH

In my view, it is not particularly important which publishing service is better. If you're in the market for a publishing service, you'll need to compare features, but information professionals need to be able to find the content created in these systems. When searching these services for content, I found that I was working at the pace I did when I struggled with microfilm readers in the university library.

The rendering of PDF content on mobile devices requires quite a bit of scrolling, resizing, and dragging. I had difficulty figuring out what controls to use to achieve a desired effect. A user with better eyesight and more experience using smartphones may not encounter the user experience challenges I met.

Issuu is optimized for web search engines, particularly Google. When you run a query on Bing or Google, their links point you to the authoring system's service. Issuu's approach works in this manner: Bing and Google index the content on the Issuu.com website, but I could not determine if Bing or Google (the two systems I tested) indexed comprehensively. Therefore, I recommend running queries on the Issuu.com website as well.

The approach that yielded useful results required sending queries to Bing, Google, and the vendor's site if the vendor provided a search function.

A relatively straightforward query for "management missteps" worked best when I used the Bing and Google site operators:

- For Bing, `site:issuu.com "management missteps"` retrieved eight hits.
- For Google, `site:issuu.com "management missteps"` retrieved 25 hits.

The same search in Issuu's search box retrieved three titles in Stacks and 23 individual titles, although one was a duplicate.

I prefer to seek topics via the web search services. Google continues to index more content in my experience. Your experience with comprehensiveness is likely to vary.

Exploring these personal and professional digital publishing systems makes it clear that finding information is not a slam dunk. For libraries that publish content using Issuu or another digital service, creating a record in the library's public online access catalog to the particular article is important so that it can be surfaced by one of the library discovery services.

At this time, the volume of content on digital publishing systems is expanding. Unfortunately, search and retrieval systems are lagging behind. For a researcher or library patron, pinpointing content germane to a query is a challenge. The widely held perception that most information is available online is correct. However, finding relevant information is easier said than done.

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