Guidelines on publishing open access digital textbooks

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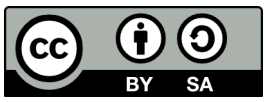

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Introduction

Universities play a fundamental role in the production and dissemination of knowledge, serving as pillars of intellectual, scientific, and cultural advancement. As dynamic centers of research and innovation, they generate groundbreaking ideas, technologies, and discoveries that shape societies, drive economic growth, and address pressing global challenges. The knowledge produced within universities not only fuels progress in science, medicine, and technology but also enriches the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, fostering a deeper understanding of the world and human experience.

Beyond knowledge creation, universities bear the crucial responsibility of transmitting this wealth of information to students, equipping them with critical thinking skills, specialized expertise, and the ability to tackle complex societal issues. By nurturing creativity, curiosity, and intellectual independence, universities prepare individuals not only for careers but also for active and informed citizenship in a rapidly evolving world.

However, access to education should not be restricted by financial barriers. The democratization of knowledge is essential to ensuring equal opportunities for all, regardless of socioeconomic background. Offering higher education without costs reinforces the principle that knowledge is a public good, meant to benefit society as a whole rather than being confined to those who can afford it. Free education fosters social mobility, empowers individuals, and strengthens economies by cultivating a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. More importantly, it upholds the fundamental belief that education is a right, not a privilege—one that fuels innovation, promotes social justice, and paves the way for a more equitable and prosperous future.

These guidelines are dedicated to university presses, particularly open access diamond ones, and do not focus on organizational and management issues but solely on the publication of textbooks, a specific type of publication.

The guidelines can be useful also for university presses that are not diamond but are interested in publishing open textbooks, possibly as a step to transform the university press to a diamond one.

1. From open education to open digital textbooks

1.1 Open Education

The advancement of technologies associated with publishing, particularly in electronically disseminating scientific advancements, saw a notable acceleration in the late 20th century. The emergence of open access and the potential to share research data openly aimed to provide alternatives to the restrictive subscription-based access model. Given the technological capabilities enabling swift and unrestricted access to publications and research findings, the shift towards a fully equitable and affordable open scientific publishing model (**diamond open access**) appeared desirable.

Furthermore, learning and training, traditionally provided within formal education systems, have recently expanded beyond those boundaries and are frequently facilitated through online and distance education methods. Education has embraced openness, symbolizing the elimination of obstacles that could impede both opportunities and recognition for participation in institution-based learning. A crucial element of this openness, or the "opening up" of education, entails the **development and application of open educational resources** to bolster open educational practices; in fact, the European Commission's definition of open education is "a way of carrying out education, often using digital technologies. Its aim is to widen access and participation to everyone by removing barriers and making learning accessible, abundant, and customisable for all. It offers multiple ways of teaching and learning, building and sharing knowledge. It also provides a variety of access routes to formal and non-formal education, and connects" (European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Inamorato dos Santos, A., Punie, Y., & Castaño Muñoz, J., 2016).

The publishing landscape has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, with a pivotal shift being the advent of open access, allowing for the universal and free use of digital publications as well as scientific and educational content. This innovative approach, focused on facilitating unrestricted access to knowledge and the widespread dissemination of scientific accomplishments, has revolutionized our perspective on scientific publishing. Another crucial aspect is the drive to **enhance access to higher education by minimizing costs for students**, including expenses related to textbooks, following the original spirit of open access as an alternative to the restrictive subscription model; along these lines, open science publishing also includes research data to be openly available for use by researchers, students, and society at large.

The production of open educational texts, **free for students and authors**, should be one of the responsibilities of public universities, and the issue of sustainability should be addressed from a broader perspective, reallocating resources to support scientific communication, as outlined in the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER) (2019) and in various governments guidelines for universities.

Another important factor in the development of open textbooks is the **growing trend of international collaboration among universities**, especially within the European Universities framework. As courses led by educators from different countries and regions become more common, the need for **tailored resources** – such as **open textbooks specifically designed** for targeted courses and student cohorts – will continue to grow.

1.2 Open Educational Resources

Open Educational Resources (OER) encompass materials for learning, teaching and research, presented in **various formats and mediums**. These resources either exist in the public domain or are under copyright but have been released under an **open license ('libre' or 'gratis')**. This open license allows for cost-free access, as well as the freedom to use, share, modify, reuse, repurpose, adapt, and redistribute these resources.

For example, instructors may download the resource, tailor it to fit their courses, save a copy locally to share with their students and share it back out with attribution. OER include textbooks, course materials and full courses, modules, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.

The wide range of openly licensed educational materials and technologies is covered in the UNESCO OER (2016).

1.3 Open Textbooks

What is an open textbook?

One type of open educational resource is the open textbook, **a digital "editorial object"** that provides detailed information on a subject for its learners. To this day, textbooks continue to be the predominant format for educational materials.

An open source (or just open) textbook is an OER textbook

Open textbooks involve the practice of making these educational publications **freely accessible online**, allowing anyone to access, read, and utilize them without incurring any costs or encountering legal restrictions. This approach challenges the traditional model of expensive and inaccessible textbooks, with the goal of alleviating the financial burden on students and learners and enhance the accessibility of educational resources (OER, Open Educational Resources).

Open textbooks **can be downloaded, shared, and even modified by users**, aligning with the increasingly collaborative nature of the learning environment. The interactive features enable content adaptation to meet the specific needs of particular groups of students, facilitating timely updates. The availability of such learning resources empowers more and more educators to download materials and customize them to suit their own courses.

Open access textbooks **foster inclusivity, equity and innovation** in education by dismantling barriers to content access not only at a local level but also globally, as they are accessible online to any interested party.

What makes an open digital textbook?

An open textbook is a textbook created with digital tools and platforms and has the aim to **change the way students access, interact with and learn** from educational materials.

Some of the most relevant and recommended features of an open digital textbook may already be present in the author's project or, if not, could be developed through collaboration with the publisher's staff.

» Definition of Educational Objectives

Clearly define the learning objectives and the target audience of the textbook, starting from a clear understanding of concepts and considering the student engagement and the achievement of educational goals.

Structure and Organization: Establish a logical framework for the textbook; define chapters, subchapters and sections coherently to enhance understanding of the subject.

Student Engagement: Include activities, exercises, case studies or other tools that actively engage students in the learning process; active involvement can enhance student participation in learning.

Multimedia Support and Additional Resources: Include suggestions for using multimedia resources, such as videos, websites, simulations or practical examples, to enrich the learning experience.

Review and Feedback: Incorporate mechanisms for reviews and feedback from teachers, industry experts, or students to continuously improve the textbook; regular evaluations from educators and learners can help refine the textbook's effectiveness.

Adaptability and Flexibility: Consider the need to adapt the text to different educational contexts or teaching styles; provide suggestions on how the material can be personalized or adjusted to meet specific needs.

» The digital textbook features

The attributes of a digital textbook can vary significantly, spanning from the traditional educational text supplemented with eventual external digital resources to a comprehensive course exclusively crafted within a digital setting. Nevertheless, certain essential characteristics persist:

Interactive and engaging contents: Multimedia elements such as videos, infographics, simulations, quizzes and interactive exercises to engage students and reinforce learning; ensure that these elements enhance understanding and engagement – complementing the text and reinforcing key concepts – without overwhelming or distracting the learner.

Collaborative Tools: Provide resources that enable real-time collaboration among teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, allowing them to work together on assignments, projects and discussions, thereby fostering a more interactive learning experience.

Cross-Platform and Mobile Compatibility: Ensure compatibility across various devices, platforms, and operating systems, including an optimized version for mobile; access to educational materials should be possible anytime, anywhere and on any device.

User-Friendly Interface: Design an intuitive and user-friendly interface; navigation should be easy and straightforward, allowing students to access and interact with the content seamlessly.

Accessibility Features: Tools designed to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs, such as text-to-speech, adjustable font sizes and language translation options. Enhance these features with accessibility in mind, ensuring they are usable by all students, including those with disabilities. Provide alternative text for images, captions for videos and ensure compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technologies.

» Analysis of the typical reader's level of computer literacy

The characteristics of a textbook should align with students' level of computer literacy, educational objectives and the current state of technology, namely regarding the availability of software tools for creating textbooks with optimal features and educational resources defined during the planning phase.

Enhanced textbooks, often referred to as interactive or digital textbooks, incorporate multimedia elements and interactive features to improve the learning experience.

Creating enhanced textbooks requires careful consideration of how multimedia and interactive elements can complement traditional text to foster a more engaging and effective learning experience. It's essential to balance these elements to support learning objectives while ensuring usability.

Training and resources can be provided to students to effectively use the enhanced features of the textbook.

Analytics and Insights software can provide educators with data-driven insights into student progress, enabling targeted interventions and personalized support.

Students should be able to give **immediate feedback** on quizzes or exercises, helping them gauge their understanding. **Assessment tools** for teachers are useful for monitoring student progress.

Chatbots or AI assistants embedded in the enhanced content of the textbook can provide immediate assistance, answer queries and offer personalized recommendations to learners; however, university presses should verify the reliability of such tools.

» Textbook metadata

Particular attention must be paid to metadata, as it enables discoverability and reuse of the textbook in a digital environment. An open digital textbook should always have a **DOI** (possibly one for each chapter), an **ORCID ID** for each academic author and other identifiers, like **ROR** for affiliations, should be considered.

Additionally, an open textbook should be released under an **open license** that allows others to freely use, share and, when desired, adapt and distribute the content.

Both metadata and licensing should be integral to the choice of the platform used for producing the textbooks.

2. From university presses to Diamond University Presses

2.1 What is and what does a university press?

In the academic environment, a publisher owned by a research institution is referred to as a university press, which can be **either commercial or non-commercial**.

A **commercial** university press can publish only closed and paid contents or a mix of both closed and open access materials. If it offers some or all of its content as **gold open access**, the publication costs are typically covered by authors (known as **article processing charges** or book processing charges) or by institutions through programs like "Subscribe to Open" (S2O).

Conversely, a **non-commercial** university press publishes all its content in open access with costs covered by the research institution or other financial support, and is termed a **Diamond University Press**.

2.2 Diamond University Presses

What does a Diamond University Press?

A **Diamond University Press** is dedicated to releasing all types of publications related to the university's activities – whether in research, education or third mission – at **no cost to both authors and readers**.

Diamond University Press publications are primarily digital due to lower costs and greater circulation opportunities; therefore, they should be as innovative as possible.

A university press can be established as a Diamond University Press from the outset or can transition to a diamond model over time. Transitioning from a commercial or open access university press to a Diamond University Press presents significant challenges.

The **first step** in establishing a Diamond University Press is to emphasise in its mission that all content will be openly accessible and that no charges will be incurred by either authors or readers.

It should employ **specifically trained staff**, first in open science and then in publishing competences. In fact, while some publishing tasks can be outsourced (e.g. book layout), **open science skills** cannot be, as they are integral to the university press's mission and encompass its overall editorial project– from ideation to execution and beyond.

The university press can then initiate several diamond projects, such as a diamond open access journal and/or diamond open access books, including textbooks. The first books projects selected for publication should align with the university press's identity, as they serve as its public face. Careful selection by the designated university press bodies is crucial, ensuring that these initial publications reflect the press's mission and set a high standard for future works.

A Diamond business model: funding and author rewarding

As a non-commercial publisher, a Diamond University Press generally has to cover all its costs (e.g. staff and publishing tools) **through institutional funding**, typically provided by its parent institution.

In this business model, the parent institution allocates both staff and budget to the university press.

The university press should be an **administrative unit within the institution**, with a mission and scope focused on advancing the institution's **open science policies**.

Its **staff** should be **dedicated** and trained primarily in open science, with secondary training in publishing workflow. Other aspects of the publishing process, such as book layout, can be outsourced as needed.

The **budget** should primarily be allocated to **content publication** and some funds should be reserved to cover expenses not provided by the institution itself, including **extraordinary projects** and **unforeseen costs**, such as staff training or the implementation of useful tools (for reporting, analysis, etc.). Additionally, the budget can be supplemented by participating in projects funded by both public and private bodies.

The university press should produce an **open report** of its activities, at least yearly, and if it demonstrates success and positive impact, the budget should be increased accordingly.

In this business model, Diamond University Presses are viewed by their institutions as a means of publicly disseminating scientific results for both the scientific community and the general public. Consequently, a Diamond University Press can cover the publication costs of all content produced by researchers affiliated with the institution while **charging a fee to external authors**. This fee should be intended as **a necessity for sustainability**, rather than as a profit motive like that of a commercial publisher. External authors can cover this fee by accessing funding from their institution or a grant-making organisation.

Author rewards for textbooks

A Diamond University Press **does not pay authors**, whether internal or external.

For scientific books and articles, author **rewards stem from evaluation processes** that researchers must undergo to advance their careers. This is a critical issue within a university press framework, as textbooks have traditionally been excluded from academic evaluation processes, although this is beginning to change. For instance, the CoARA agreement (2022) recommends incorporating various types of work, including textbooks, into the evaluation of researchers; simultaneously, it advocates for rewarding researchers who engage in open science across its many dimensions.

To **raise awareness** of open science practices and to reward the work of researchers beyond traditional scientific publications, a Diamond University Press should **recognise these changes** and **advocate for its parent institution** to revise its evaluation processes to give greater relevance to textbooks.

Another form of author reward, in which a Diamond University Press could play a role, is assisting authors in obtaining **grant time off** to produce, complete and refine their textbooks through dedicated sabbatical leaves.

What a Diamond University Press needs to publish?

A Diamond University Press is the ideal platform for open textbooks aimed at university students.

The following paragraphs will outline how a Diamond University Press can plan, produce, disseminate and preserve open digital textbooks.

The essential requirements for a university press, like any other press, are not exhaustive but should adhere to general publishing standards and legal requirements in the country of operation.

These include:

- a logo and a website;
- a kit of templates for the books and guidelines for authors;
- specific software for publishing;
- policies regarding the openness of published content;
- etc.

In addition to these essentials, a university press requires an **editorial board** to develop the editorial plan and make decisions about publishing proposals. The editorial board should **represent the scientific areas** covered by the institution, **its governance** and **the staff** of the press. **Periodic meetings** should be organised by the press staff to facilitate both strategic decision-making and proposal discussions.

3. Planning and making an open textbook

3.1 The acceptance process

A university press receives proposals from authors and, in some cases, these could be for textbooks. If the university press has a dedicated editorial line for textbooks, such proposals will be handled by the staff of that line.

Another course of action for the university press is to remain constantly **aware** of the **materials promoted, adopted and used by its parent institution** for its courses, paying attention to their affordability and availability. When issues regarding course materials are identified, the university press should seek support from researchers and its staff to **plan specific editorial projects** (e.g. a textbook or a booklet) to address these concerns.

Like any other proposal, a textbook proposal should undergo a **desk review**, during which the university press staff conducts an **initial evaluation**.Desk reviews should be based solely on the press's editorial guidelines and, where applicable, on prior decisions made by the editorial board. In other words, a proposal **may be desk-rejected** if it does not align with the **university press's mission** (e.g. it is not academic content) or the **subjects covered** (e.g. the university press may decide to publish only subjects treated by the institution). Additionally, a proposal may be rejected if it involves content the editorial board has generally chosen not to cover (e.g. conference proceedings or grey literature).

A desk review will lead to a **response to the author**, either providing a reasoned rejection or an acceptance with instructions on how to present the proposal to the editorial board; such instructions should be outlined in the university press's editorial guidelines.

Generally, proposals to the **editorial board** should be submitted by completing a **proposal form**, that includes the following information:

- author's details (personal information, affiliations, etc.);
- information about the text (subject area, topic, etc.);
- targets
- an extract from the text.

If the university press has a dedicated line for textbooks, the information about the text should be specific (e.g. Does the textbook include exercises? Was it created in collaboration with students? Does it contain advanced or multimedia content?).

The editorial board does not receive proposals directly from the author via the proposal form; instead, proposals should be **presented to the board through specific channels** (e.g. scheduled meetings), by a **researcher** identified, for example, by the university press staff, who possesses **expertise in the subject area** covered by the author. It's not necessary for the researcher responsible for presenting the proposal to be a specialist, as the editorial board will not conduct a review of the book but will decide whether the textbook can be accepted for submission, considering factors such as the presentation and the editorial line of the press.

The presentation to the editorial board will result in a decision on whether to publish the textbook. If accepted, an agreement will be signed between the author(s) and the university press, and the textbook will enter publication workflow. If rejected, a reasoned notification of rejection will be sent to the authors by the editorial staff.

3.2 The workflow

This section outlines the steps of the workflow through which a textbook progresses to become a published book.

The workflow is presented as a **general process**, without reference to specific tools or platforms selected by the diamond university press for managing and publishing books; these tools and platforms will be introduced in the subsequent section (3.3 Publishing a textbook: Platforms and IT Tools).

Submission

The submission marks the **initial step** of the workflow. The author is required to submit the **complete manuscript** along with the proposed design for any additional features.

At this stage, a **volume editor** is assigned to oversee the project and the peer review process.

The volume editor may be assigned based on recommendations arising during the presentation to the editorial board, if applicable, or selected directly by the press staff; the author may also provide suggestions for consideration.

Ideally, the volume editor should have **expertise in educational editorial software** and be able to guide or assist authors in developing advanced digital teaching materials. Alternatively, support for this task can be sought from the university's educational engineering department, if available. If the university press maintains a specific editorial line for textbooks, the staff managing it should be adequately trained in educational engineering.

The **volume editor should collaborate with the author** to establish an **appropriate schedule** for the textbook's development and delivery, ensuring it aligns with the press's ongoing activities. The delivery date agreed upon at the outset of the project must be adhered to by the author to maintain the press's publishing timeline and meet the educational requirements, such as the start of courses or examination periods for which the textbook is developed.

On his part, the volume editor should **monitor the author's progress** to ensure adherence to the approved project and the established timeline. This can be done by contacting the author at regular intervals, offering support if needed and, if possible, reviewing the textbook during its development; a valuable addition would be to carry out these steps using collaborative tools.

Once the manuscript and any additional content are ready and deemed satisfactory by the volume editor, the **author submits them to the press staff**, who will verify that all material is consistent with the editorial guidelines.

Which review?

While a peer review process is not always required for textbooks, it can be **highly beneficial**, particularly if it is a prerequisite for securing funding and if the workflow is **open and transparent**.

The **main purpose** of a review is to ensure that the textbook is **well-structured** and **suitable for classroom use**. A good textbook review should provide critical feedbacks and suggestions for improvement, ultimately strengthening the educational material in its different aspects (main publication, attached material, digital content, etc.).

Reviews **can occur at various points throughout the project**, from the initial scoping phase through the development of the material to the actual use of the textbook in the classroom, where feedback from both students and teachers can be collected. This inclusive approach helps create valuable resources that prioritise student experiences, foster equitable classrooms and effectively support student success.

The review process serves as a **public validation of the text's utility** and an important signal to potential users that the textbook has undergone thorough **quality assessment**, ensuring its suitability for classroom application and, when properly justified, highlighting the **added value** of that specific textbook in the educational journey.

The involvement of external reviewers can create a **positive feedback loop**: they often become advocates and adopters of the textbook they have reviewed, serving as powerful promoters, and may even choose to become authors themselves in the future. This is particularly true if reviewers are known and review reports are published with the book or in a dedicated platform.

Reviewers' activity should be acknowledged (especially if the review is open) and rewarded.

Feedback and input on the text can be gathered in various ways, whether from **peers**, **experts in material accessibility**, **educators** who implement the book in classroom settings, or **students** themselves.

Comments should be made possible after the publication process by the diamond University press itself.

Copyedit

Once the manuscript is completed by the author and, if applicable, after peer review, **it must be revised** by a **copyeditor** from the university press.

Copyediting a textbook typically follows a standard process, with the copyeditor's role being to enhance the clarity, coherence, consistency and correctness of the text.

Additionally, the copyeditor must consider **any supplementary content and features** (whether digital or in other formats), checking them for consistency and ensuring they are seamlessly integrated with the main text.

After this phase, the **copyedited manuscript is returned to the author**, who must review it and may make further corrections or additions. If additions are deemed appropriate or if the author makes significant changes, the manuscript will undergo another round of copyediting.

Metadata, copyright, licenses and disclaimers

This section will discuss the elements that, although they may change during the editorial workflow, **should be finalised before typesetting** to avoid issues during the layout process: title, abstract, DOI, keywords and other metadata, copyright statement, licenses and disclaimers. These elements should be included in the layout as early as possible and, ideally, should not be subject to further changes.

» Metadata

Metadata are a **crucial element** for all digital content, as they provide both identification and discoverability of the material.

Metadata identifying a textbook includes elements such as the title, author, publisher and page numbers, among others. These metadata must always be **open and machine-readable**, ideally accompanied by **persistent identifiers** (PIDs).

In the research environment, the main PIDs are ORCID, ROR and DOI, while ISBN is primarily used for selling books.

ORCID and ROR identifiers help resolve homonymy by pointing to a specific individual or organisation: **ORCID** is used to **identify researchers**, while **ROR** is used for **institutions**. A diamond university press should use both of these identifiers, along with the names and affiliations of its authors, for example, on the textbook landing page and in the colophon.

DOI stands for Digital Object Identifier: a persistent – **permanent** – identifier that refers to a digital object. Due to its fundamental role in Open Science, a DOI should be assigned by the press to all publications, including textbooks. Major registration agencies, such as Datacite and Crossref, continuously update their data schemas to allow for the inclusion of various types of data within a DOI. In addition to the elements mentioned previously, a DOI can accommodate references, funding information, and more. DOIs can also be assigned to different versions of a book (such as manuscripts) and to funders. Furthermore, DOIs are linked to services; Crossref, for example, offers an anti-plagiarism service (iThenticate) and is connected to an important open references project, Open Citations.

As DOIs require a **fee** to be assigned, they should be **included in the budget** due to their crucial role in the digital environment. However, the registration fee for a DOI is relatively small.

» Copyright

University presses should always **formalise an agreement with authors**, whether they are external or affiliated with the same university. For books with multiple authors, the contract can be signed by all contributors or solely by the editors on their behalf.

The agreement is established between the author(s) and the diamond university press or the governing research institution (typically represented by the Rector) after the proposal has been accepted. The agreement must specify that the **author non-exclusively assigns the economic rights** to the university press for that specific edition, while retaining these rights for potential future uses. This allows the author to **reuse the textbook materials** in other publications, provided the original venue of publication is properly credited.

The agreement should also clearly specify the terms for the **reuse of third-party materials**. The author must ensure that permission has been obtained to reuse any third-party images, graphics, data, photographs or text. The final check, however, remains the responsibility of the editor in charge of the volume.

Copyright statements must be **included within the textbook**, along with declarations specifying the copyright and reuse terms for each third-party material (e.g., cover, images, exercises; see, for example, this case study).

» *Licenses*

The agreement should also specify the **type of licence** under which the textbook will be distributed. The terms of the licence will inform users about the **correct and legal use (and reuse)** of the textbook materials, including digital and additional features.

Within the Open Science framework, Creative Commons licences are the most commonly used.

There are six types of Creative Commons licences, each identified by a common deed that briefly explains its terms of fair use, listed here from the most to the least permissive:

CC BY, enabling reusers to distribute, remix, adapt and build upon the material in any medium or format, provided that attribution is given to the creator. The licence also permits commercial use. **BY** stands for **credit must be given to the creator**.

CC BY-SA, enabling reusers to distribute, remix, adapt and build upon the material in any medium or format, provided that attribution is given to the creator. The licence also permits commercial use. If the material is remixed, adapted or built upon, the modified material must be licensed under identical terms (i.e., a CC BY-SA licence). **BY** stands for **credit must be given to the creator** and **SA** means **Share Alike**, requiring adaptations to be shared **under the same terms**.

CC BY-NC, enabling reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. **BY** stands for **credit must be given to the creator** and **NC** permits only **Non-Commercial** uses of the work.

CC BY-NC-SA, enabling reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. If the material is remixed, adapted or built upon, the modified material must be licensed under identical terms. **BY** stands for **credit must be given to the creator**, **NC** permits only **Non-Commercial** uses of the work and **SA** (**Share Alike**) requires adaptations to be shared **under the same terms**.

CC BY-ND, enabling reusers to copy and distribute the material in any medium or format in unadapted form only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. The license allows for commercial use. **BY** stands for **credit must be given to the creator** and **ND** means that **No Derivatives** or **adaptations** of the work are permitted.

CC BY-NC-ND, enabling reusers to copy and distribute the material in any medium or format in unadapted form only, for noncommercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. **BY** stands for **credit must be given to the creator**, **NC** permits only **Non-Commercial** uses of the work and **ND** means that **No Derivatives** or **adaptations** of the work are permitted

In addition to these six Creative Commons licences, it's worth mentioning also the CC0 Public Domain Dedication (or CC Zero). This is a public dedication tool that allows creators to relinquish their copyright and place their works into the worldwide public domain. CC0 enables reusers to distribute, remix, adapt and build upon the material in any medium or format, with **no conditions**.

» *Before licensing*

Before applying a CC license or CC0 to a work, several important considerations must be taken into account.

Licences and CC0 **cannot be revoked**. Once a CC licence is applied to a work, anyone who receives it may rely on that licence for as long as the material is protected by copyright, even if the original distributor later ceases distribution.

The copyright of the work must be owned or controlled by the individual applying the licence. Only the copyright holder, or someone with express permission from the copyright holder, can apply a CC licence or CC0 to a copyrighted work. Moreover, in cases where a work is created as part of employment, the individual may not be the holder of the copyright.

» *Which license for a textbook?*

A diamond university press should allow the author to choose the licence for their work, while offering guidance on the most suitable options based on the desired level of openness and reuse.

In most cases, the press should express a preference for the **CC-BY-SA licence**. In fact, this licence is as permissive as CC-BY but ensures that all reuses **maintain openness** and **promote the dissemination** of open derivative works; in contrast, the simpler CC-BY licence allows reusers the possibility to impose subsequent restrictions.

Other Creative Commons licenses may be suggested if the author wish to limit the creation of commercial or derivative works based on its textbook.

Additional content (such as exercises or educational materials) should be released placed in the public domain (i.e., under CC0). A recommended practice is to distribute this type of content on open platforms (e.g. GitHub for open software).

» Disclaimers

University presses, as publishers, must consider all necessary disclaimers related to specific contents that may be included in textbooks. This section discusses the types of contents that require a policy and a disclaimer within the textbooks itself

» *Artificial intelligence*

The growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) also in scientific publishing is transforming the way research is conducted, reviewed, and disseminated. AI-powered tools are streamlining the peer-review process, enhancing manuscript editing, detecting plagiarism, and improving data analysis, ultimately increasing the efficiency and accuracy of scholarly communication. Additionally, AI facilitates the discovery of relevant literature, assists in language translation, and enables the creation of automated summaries, making scientific knowledge more accessible to a global audience.

However, while AI presents significant opportunities for innovation, it also raises ethical concerns, such as biases in automated decision-making and the need for transparency in AI-generated content. As AI continues to reshape the publishing landscape, it is crucial to **develop guidelines that ensure its responsible and ethical use** while preserving the integrity and rigor of scientific research.

The university must develop guidelines on the use of AI in scientific publications in accordance with the broader guidelines on the use of AI within the university, for exemple requiring authors to disclose in the textbook if AI tools were used in its making, specifying which tools were employed and how they were used. Examples of AI tool application include manuscript editing, production of images or graphical elements and the collection and analysis of data.

A brief summary of the policy on AI use should be included in the textbook, for example, at the end or as the final lines of the colophon (see Appendix 5).

The policy should not be limited to the author's use of AI tools but should also extend to editors and reviewers. For example, it should state that editors are not permitted to upload manuscripts to AI tools due to privacy and copyright concerns. Similarly, reviewers should be prohibited from using AI tools to evaluate manuscripts, as this could undermine the critical thinking and originality that is essential to their role.

The policy should take into account editors and reviewers too, e.g. stating that editors are not allowed to upload received manuscripts into artificial intelligence software, in order not to risk compromising privacy and copyright and reviewers undertake not to use artificial intelligence tools to evaluate manuscripts in order to guarantee the application of critical thinking and original assessment, as required for this work.

» *Plagiarism*

A statement on plagiarism is essential, for example, like the following one:

The University Press is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and originality in all published works. Plagiarism, including but not limited to the unauthorized use of text, ideas, data, or images without proper attribution, is strictly prohibited. Authors submitting manuscripts must ensure that their work is original and properly cites all sources. Any detected instances of plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, may result in rejection, retraction, or other corrective actions.

The University Press employs plagiarism detection tools and follows ethical publishing guidelines to maintain the credibility and integrity of scholarly communication. By submitting a manuscript, authors acknowledge their responsibility to adhere to these ethical standards.

Page layout and proofreading

Once the manuscript (along with any additional content) has completed all the necessary rounds of copy-editing, the page layout phase can begin.

Page layout is the arrangement of visual elements on a page and consists in preparing one or more galleys depending on how many formats the book will have. Galleys should have all the text and related materials (images, exercises…), adding all other paratextual parts like cover, title page (gathering the most of metadata), page numbers, running titles and so on.

Page layout is normally conducted following a style of the press that is implemented in a specific desktop publishing template. A single press can have multiple templates, e.g. for series, different formats, and so on.

Normally, a digital university press always has a PDF format for its books, and the possibility to print its books (print on demand). Both PDfs and print on demand has the same template for page layout, with the possible difference that PDF is single-page and with front and back cover splitted and without spine.

If dynamic digital formats are decided, like ePub or HTML, page layout becames very format-specific, with contents that need to be added (e.g. hypertextual links) and features to manage (e.g. different ebook readers for e-books or mobile devices for HTML).

For digital textbooks, page layout should pay attention to readability in choosing fonts and setting line spacing and other spaces, and to make exercises and other elements accompanying text visible.

Page layout can be made inside the University Press, or outsourced. In any case, templates and visual appearance of books should be revised from time to time.

After the page layout is completed the text is normally revised a last time, paying attention only to typos; only minor changes not affecting the layout should be made.

» Publication

After page layout and typesetting are completed, the book is published.

If different formats have been planned, they can be released on different dates, but excessive delays between formats should be avoided.

A pre-publication version of the book, such as the manuscript or the reviewed version, can be made available before the final publication, for example, in a repository like Zenodo. This allows for the collection of comments before the final publication.

During publication, the DOI is registered, and the registration process must be checked to ensure that metadata are complete and the registration is successful.

3.3 Publishing a textbook: Platforms and IT Tools

The selection of the technological environment for the development and distribution of textbooks by a diamond university press should prioritise **Open-Source resources**. Only when suitable Open-Source solutions are unavailable should paid software from commercial providers be considered, while ensuring that no costs are incurred by the end user.

An **initial survey of the state-of-the-art** technological tools is required, ensuring their continuous updates and support from their governing institution, to guarantee that the editorial project remains aligned with current standards and adaptable to future developments. Following this assessment, the press must **determine the software to be used** for authoring, editing, formatting and publishing the textbooks. It should be noted that, while there are many different formatting software options available, not all of them produce a wide range of formats, which can affect accessibility for users.

Selecting the right tool at the outset of the project enables a focus on refining content throughout the entire process.

The following sections will list the **tools most commonly used** by cultural and research institutions, as well as universities, which align with the previous recommendations and are designed for creating and managing various types of published content, including textbooks.

All of these tools are open source (except Pressbook) and can publish open access content. Some manage the peer review process and content submissions, the majority accept academic IDs, but only a few allow for management functions such as DOIs registration and ORCID integration, which, as previously stated, are fundamental features of open science. Finally, only a select few enable the production of additional content.

OMP (Open Monograph Press)

Introduction

OMP (Open Monograph Press) is a platform designed for publishing **all types of books**. It can manage monographs and edited volumes with full metadata "for worldwide dissemination and discovery", covering the entire publication workflow **from submission and review** (both internal and external) **to final publication**.

OMP is developed by PKP, a Canadian research and development initiative within Simon Fraser University's Core Facilities Program. As an open-source software, OMP can be **downloaded and hosted for free**, with its primary support provided through a **community forum** where anyone can participate.

The main features of OMP include comprehensive coverage of the editorial workflow, support for **multiple languages** (both backend and frontend), rich publication **metadata** (including DOI registration, ORCID, ROR and ISBN) and the ability to publish books in **various formats** (PDF, ePub, HTML).

OMP can manage users with **multiple roles** (readers, authors, reviewers, editors, managers, etc.) and **across several presses**. This allows the press to assign **specific tasks** to each role on the platform, such as enabling authors to directly upload their content. Additionally, a diamond university press can create **separate branches of its presses**, each with distinct boards and identities (or the press can also use this feature to give more relevance to several of its series, as it will be said in the next section). For example, a user who is a reviewer on one press could serve as an editor on another.

Among the many functionalities available within the platform, OMP provides an internal email system to manage peer reviews and inform readers about new books. Through this system, users involved in the editorial process – such as authors, reviewers and editors – can communicate seamlessly via the platform, ensuring they remain informed and on schedule throughout the process.

Moreover, OMP can track the book production process and generate statistics, such as the number of downloads, which can be displayed on the book's landing page.

This and many other functionalities can be expanded through plugins (additional software developed by PKP or third parties, such as from GitHub community). PKP has also developed a powerful set of APIs to further enhance the platform's capabilities.

How it works

For each press established on OMP, specific data must be defined (e.g., name, contact information, editorial board). Once this setup is complete, the press website is generated and ready for publication, even if the catalogue is initially empty.

The publication of a book follows the **standard workflow** outlined in the previous chapter: a submission must be accepted, reviewed, copyedited and subsequently published. Most of these steps is conducted **within an online back-office environment**, with the interface and tasks tailored to the user's specific role.

However, **certain tasks**, such as copyediting and typesetting, **must be performed outside the OMP platform**. Within the platform, only the final files are uploaded, and notifications of the upload are sent to relevant users, such as editors.

The platform supports the management of both monographs and edited books. Series can also be managed, albeit with certain limitations, such as a single landing page and minimal structured data (e.g., a single description field is provided for all series-related information, such as the editorial board or scientific committee text field). To give series greater prominence, some publishers choose to treat them as separate OMP presses.

OMP facilitates the management of **all the primary identifiers** associated with digital books, including ISBN, DOI, ORCID and ROR. Each book is published with a dedicated landing page and, as of version 3.4, individual chapters can also be assigned their own landing pages.

However, **OMP does not provide features specifically tailored to certain types of publications, such as textbooks**. While textbook can indeed be published on the platform, any additional rich content is typically handled using separate, specialised tools, such as Pressbooks or Moodle, which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Conclusions

OMP is widely adopted globally and is recognised as one of the leading open-source applications for managing the digital book publication workflow.

Pros

- open-source
- comprehensive publishing workflow
- simplified book publication process
- support for key identifiers
- availability of multiple formats
- multilingual support for both backend and frontend

Cons

- lack of open peer review functionality
- limited features tailored to textbooks
- copyediting and typesetting must be performed outside the platform

Pressbooks

Introduction

Pressbooks is a platform specifically designed for creating, adapting and sharing "accessible, interactive, web-first books". Open education initiatives are prominently featured on its homepage as one of its key supported activities, alongside institutional publishing programmes and other use cases.

Pressbooks operates as a subscription-based platform. A free 7-day trial is available in a test environment, after which users can choose from various plans for production use (see Pressbooks' Plans and Pricing).

Book creation and adaptation are managed through a back-office interface similar to WordPress, from which it incorporates standard functionalities, alongside features developed and/or customised by the Pressbooks team. Notably, the latter are not available as open-source software.

Books created or adapted on the platform are published as websites hosted on Pressbooks. While they can be linked from other websites, they are typically not hosted elsewhere. This is particularly true for textbooks enhanced with proprietary features or content requiring specific software – whether proprietary or open source – to function (e.g., H5P, discussed below).

How it works

Pressbooks allows new textbooks to be created in two ways: either from scratch or by cloning an existing volume.

In the first case, Pressbooks prompts the user to create a subdirectory and specify the book's title and language (currently limited to English or French). The user can then choose to write a new chapter using the platform's built-in writing tool – which offers functionalities similar to common word processors – or to import content from files in formats such as .epub, .docx, .html, .odt or .xml. In both cases, plain text can be enhanced with additional content (e.g., images, media files) and styled using predefined templates or custom themes. Authors can also edit style metadata, add terms to a glossary, create multimedia content (e.g., with H5P, discussed later), or include LaTeX content.

In the second case (cloning a book), the platform requests the source URL and creates a subdirectory for the cloned book. Once cloning is complete, users can continue developing the volume using all the tools mentioned above, such as editing the original book data, adding new chapters, reorganising existing ones and more. Additionally, users can preview the display data of the book as it will appear once published.

While cloning a book is a relatively simple process – enabling even users unfamiliar with the platform to build on existing work – creating new texts from scratch, even when importing content, is less straightforward. Imported content still requires significant editing, as importing alone does not produce a book ready for export to formats like PDF or ePub. In some respects, this makes the process more complex than using traditional publishing tools, such as Adobe InDesign, which offer faster content editing within a more user-friendly interface.

The most notable and textbook-specific feature of Pressbooks is its ability to incorporate H5P content.

» H5P

H5P (see h5p.org, h5p.com, h5p.group) is "an open-source, community driven project" designed to create interactive content aimed at facilitating learning. Examples of such content include games, quizzes, knowledge checks, interactive videos and small oral. H5P content can be created, stored and shared via H5P.com for a fee (see H5P.com pricing) or self-hosted for free and integrated with platforms such as WordPress, Moodle or Drupal (see installation details).

To use H5P content in Pressbooks, it must first be created and then inserted into a chapter by editing it and clicking the H5P button. A wide variety of content types are available (as mentioned above), making this feature particularly well-suited for developing materials aimed at learners under 18 years of age. For instance, a small oral test might prompt students to say "city" aloud in a foreign language.

It is important to note that Pressbooks is not the only platform that supports H5P files, as they can also be created and integrated through other platforms. However, the main advantage of suing Pressbooks' built-in H5P functionality lies in its seamless integration. H5P content can be directly embedded in the HTML file of a book, enabling textbook creators to include interactive content in a single step. By contrast, using external software to generate H5P content requires additional steps to manually embed the content into the HTML file.

Conclusion

Pressbook is widely used by academic institutions (see the "Institution" filter on Pressbook directory) and university presses (e.g., University of Groningen Open Textbooks). The platform facilitates the creation of digital textbooks enhanced with H5P content and offers resources such as guides, a blog, and webinars to support users.

Pros

- easy to use
- specialised for digital publishing
- supports H5P content

Cons

- subscription fees
- closed-source software
- limited to English and French

Moodle: Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment

Introduction

Moodle is a widely used open-source **Learning Management System** (LMS) designed to help educators create online courses, administer assessments, manage learning content, and engage with students. It provides access to a range of resources and tools typically available in an LMS.

Although Moodle is not specifically designed for book publishing, it allows textbook authors to create collaborative content related to their textbooks, such as documents, videos, quizzes, and assignments. These resources can be organised into modules or topics and integrated into a structured learning path.

How it works

Teachers use Moodle's back-office interface to upload materials, organise workflows, and schedule lessons. Students can actively contribute to the course by creating content themselves or editing materials provided by the teacher.

Moodle's functionality can be extended through plugins, including one for creating H5P rich content exercises (see previous chapter).

However, Moodle does not include tools specifically designed for creating or publishing books. Instead, courses or content related to a book can be developed and linked to books published on other platforms, such as OMP. For example, see this textbook page from the Milano University Press, which links to a Moodle course for students; exercises for this course are distributed via GitHub.

Conclusion

Moodle is widely used worlwide and is arguably the best open-source application for managing online courses and learning contents. While it cannot be used to publish textbooks, it is an excellent tool for managing courses or creating and organising learning content related to a textbook.

Pros

- open-source
- comprehensive course creation tools
- extensive features for managing learning content

Cons

- no dedicated features for textbook publishing
- page setting and copyediting must be performed outside the application

Manifold

Introduction

Manifold describes itself as "the friendly, scalable, sustainable way to add the web to your publishing workflow".

Manifold is a web application designed for creating and publishing scholarly content, primarily as websites. Both books ("texts") and journals can be produced, although most presses currently seem to use Manifold primarily for books (see "What are people making with Manifold?" on its home page).

The platform allows various resources, such as multimedia, to be associated with a book. Texts can be read online in a user-friendly reading environment, which, after sign-up/login, enables both private and public annotations.

How it works

Manifold supports five distinct user roles: administrators, editors, marketeers, project creators and readers. The default user role is "reader", while the other roles provide varying levels of backend access and permissions for creating and managing projects or, in the case of editors and administrators, overseeing the entire installation.

Users with the "project creator" role can create, edit and publish projects, including textbooks (e.g., Cuny Student Editions).

Manifold offers the option to add existing texts in various formats (e.g., reflowable ePub, HTML, Markdown, DOCX Microsoft Word documents, Google Docs) or to start from scratch. During the ingestion process, Manifold applies transformations to the uploaded content, which can then be refined using an internal editor.

During the editing process, Manifold provides the option to automatically generate an ePub version. Other formats, such as PDF, can be hosted alongside the annotatable version (e.g., see this example).

Manifold does not include tools for managing the publication workflow; notably, peer review is not supported.

Academic identifiers such as DOI, ISBN and ORCID are managed as metadata, but the platform lacks dedicated tools for registration or integration (e.g., no DOI registration features or ORCID synchronization are mentioned in the documentation).

Rich content beyond annotations and multimedia is not documented. Interactive features like H5P (see above) are not supported but could potentially be incorporated with integration work or by engaging the development community.

Conclusion

Manifold offers an intriguing solution for easily creating a web-based collection of digital texts enriched with some multimedia content. Its reading features, particularly annotation tools, are robust. However, it lacks other functionalities useful for textbooks, such as interactive exercises or collaborative tools for teachers and students.

Pros

- open source
- annotation tools
- online text publication

Cons

- no tools for creating exercises
- no peer review functionality

Which one?

None of the applications discussed is entirely satisfactory on its own.

Applications that focus on creating rich online textbooks, such as Pressbooks and Manifold, lack robust workflow management (e.g., peer review, collaboration with students), direct integration with academic identifiers (e.g., DOI registration, ORCID integration) and, in the case of Pressbooks, are not open-source.

On the other hand, OMP excels in workflow management and supports academic identifier plugins. However, it is not specifically tailored to textbooks and requires additional effort to manage online publications (e.g., XML, HTML).

Institutions often combine these tools to meet their needs. For instance, the University of Groningen Press (UGP) uses OMP for books and series and Pressbook for textbooks, while the City University of New York uses Manifold for student editions. Some projects combine multiple tools for a single textbook (as exemplified above).

Given the diversity of needs, these guidelines cannot recommend a single tool. Each institution or university press must choose based on the type of textbook they aim to publish (e.g., textbooks, student editions, interactive books) and the IT skills of their staff.

However, and ideal tool should:

- be open-source software
- support academic identifiers, at least as metadata
- enable open access publishing with open licenses
- facilitate peer review or collaborative production and feedback
- manage rich content, such as metadata and exercises

3.4 Marketing and dissemination

Open Textbooks in the editorial plan of the university press

Normally, open textbooks are submitted to university presses by researchers from the institution. However, a dedicated editorial line can be established to enhance their production.

Such a line can increase the visibility of textbooks and improve their promotion. With dedicated staff and editors, tailored promotional strategies can be developed for the editorial line itself, ultimately boosting the visibility of individual textbooks.

Promoting a single textbook

Marketing efforts aim to raise awareness and generate interest in the book among potential readers.

Some strategies for open textbooks published by Diamond University Presses overlap with those used for other types of books, while others may require minor or significant adjustments. This is why a Diamond University Press adopts marketing strategies aligned with its mission of openness: it does not rely on paid advertising but focuses on author engagement, communication, events, and reviews.

As with other books, marketing begins with pre-publication announcements and the buzz that authors can generate. After publication, the university press promotes the book through its communication channels, such as email marketing, newsletters, and social media. These channels should align with the principles of openness and the academic environment: open-source software should be used, where available from the institution, and social media platforms should be selected based on their popularity within the research community and their compatibility with open practices. While the social media platform more compatible with open practices is Mastodon, Linkedin is the one less controversial; The institution's social media policies will need to be followed.

The university press should inform authors about its communication channels and provide all the necessary information on how to promote their textbook, both independently and in coordination with the university press's campaign.

Marketing strategies may include:

Author Events: Organising presentations and conferences, readings, and speaking engagements to allow authors to engage directly with students and colleagues.

Mailing lists: Building and engaging with a subscriber list interested in the book or related topics.

Authors' website: Encouraging authors to use their website, blog, and social media presence to promote the book and interact with their audience.

Metadata Optimization: Ensuring accurate and compelling metadata (e.g., book title, author name, description, keywords) to enhance discoverability across online retailers and databases.

Post-launch Support: Continuing marketing efforts after the book's release to sustain momentum. This may include book presentations and active engagement with readers through social media and other channels.

Dissemination of an open textbook

Open textbooks should be disseminated through infrastructures dedicated to open access books and Open Educational Resources.

The primary infrastructure for open access books is **DOAB** (Directory of Open Access Books, https://doabooks.org), a platform that provides a repository where registered publishers can deposit their open access books. Although DOAB is not specifically focused on textbooks, it serves as a crucial dissemination point for open access publishers. Notably, it now allows publishers to link books to the peer review processes they have undergone, thanks to the **PRISM** project (learn more here).

Books are deposited in DOAB by publishers, who must first register with the platform (guidelines here). Through **PRISM**, publishers can record the type of peer review conducted (e.g., single-blind, double-blind) and associate each review with the corresponding book (details available here).

Updates, maintenance and preservation

Open Educational Resources (OER), whether web-based or printed, require ongoing editorial attention to maintain their value as resources. If your resource is hosted online, part of the maintenance process should include ensuring its continued accessibility in its web format, as well as in other offline and editable formats. Additionally, to maximise distribution, you should check whether any new OER repositories have been created since the book's initial release and ensure that it is submitted for inclusion in those repositories.

A resource that is not improved, updated, and maintained can quickly be perceived as outdated and irrelevant, and as such, may not be seriously considered by educators seeking course materials.

» Regular Updates and Maintenance

It is essential to plan for regular updates to ensure the content remains relevant and up-to-date. Additionally, ensure that any technology used remains compatible with current devices and operating systems.

To help with this, here are some suggestions for where you can search for publisher catalogs, repositories, and search engines for OER: OER Resources - University of Mary Washington

Maintaining and updating a digital book is essential to ensure that it remains accurate, relevant, and functional over time. Here's an overview of the process:

Regular Review: The author or publisher should establish a schedule to review the content of the digital book regularly. This helps identify outdated information and ensure it is updated promptly.

Content Updates: As new information becomes available or existing content becomes obsolete, the digital book should be updated. This may involve revising text, adding new sections or chapters, or removing outdated content.

Technical Updates: Digital books may require updates to ensure compatibility with evolving technologies and platforms. This includes updating file formats, optimizing for different screen sizes and resolutions, and addressing compatibility issues with new devices or software updates.

Feedback and Corrections: Authors and publishers should encourage students and colleagues to provide feedback on the digital book, particularly any errors or issues they encounter. Corrections and improvements can then be made based on this feedback.

Version Control: It is important to maintain version control to track changes and ensure that readers have access to the most current version of the digital book. Version numbers or revision dates should indicate when the book was last updated.

Metadata Updates: The metadata associated with the digital book, such as title, description, keywords, and categories, should be updated periodically to improve its discoverability and relevance in online search results.

Quality Assurance: After updates are made, it is important to conduct thorough quality assurance testing to ensure that the changes have been implemented correctly and that the book functions as intended across different devices and platforms.

Communication with Readers: Authors and publishers should inform students about updates to the digital book, detailing the changes made and the benefits or improvements introduced.

By implementing a systematic approach to maintenance and updating, authors and publishers can keep their digital books current, reliable, and valuable to readers over time.

Preservation

Textbooks, like all digital content, should be preserved over time and protected against potential incidents.

If the Diamond University Press uses the IT infrastructure of the research institution, it should be adequately secured against incidents. If the platform is hosted outside the university, attention must be given to the security offered by the outsourcing agency.

In addition to ensuring the security of the ongoing platform, long-term preservation of the content should be guaranteed. Long-term preservation services keep redundant copies of content on different servers for many years, or indefinitely, ensuring access and disaster recovery.

A long-term preservation service can be provided by the research institution itself. However, if an external solution is required, the primary services available are CLOCKSS, LOCKSS, and Portico. CLOCKSS and Portico require membership and fees for any book acquired, whereas LOCKSS is a community-maintained service, which does not require payments but does require participation in the preservation infrastructure.

An emerging service devoted to books and offering preservation services is Thoth, a non-profit, open metadata management and dissemination platform. Between the services it offers there are archiving solutions: books can be archived on Internet Archive, being part of the Thoth Archiving Network.

An increasing number of quality standards now require university presses to have a long-term preservation strategy and an active service in place.

Appendixes

Appendix 1 - Examples of editorial workflow

The workflow for processing textbooks from a University Press perspective begins with the submission of a proposal and ends with the dissemination of the final product. Here is an example of such a workflow.

Workflow

Submission: The submission form for collecting information about the book includes the following key elements:

- **Author's affiliation:** Whether the author is from within or outside the institution:
    - **Internal authors:** No financial contribution is required.
    - **External authors:** A flat-rate or calculated financial contribution is required based on the book's characteristics to partially cover production costs.
- **Project Type and Characteristics:**
    - **Simple printed or digital (PDF) textbook**
    - **Printed or digital) textbook with included teaching materials**
    - **Printed or digital textbook with links to online tools/materials**: Additional materials can be original or pre-existing and free to use. The author must commit to keeping the content updated.
    - **Digital textbook for a course on a dedicated educational platform**: This includes exercises, multimedia materials, and student interaction. The author must commit to keeping the content updated.
- **Author's computer skills**
- **Educational objectives:**
    - University students
    - Professionals
    - Students from other educational levels
    - General audience
- **Possible sponsoring/funding entities**
- **Format choices proposed by the publisher:**
    - PDF
    - ePub
    - Print on demand

Evaluation and acceptance/rejection of the proposal: Once the proposal is submitted, it undergoes an evaluation process. If the proposal is approved, it moves to the **peer review** phase (if applicable).

Peer review: For textbooks, a simplified peer review process is recommended. This could involve the use of a single reviewer to assess the content, ensuring academic quality and relevance.

Detailed editorial project setup: The development of the project involves close collaboration between the author and the editorial team to define the best settings and solutions. This includes selecting specific IT platforms and educational software, with a preference for Open Access tools, based on the following criteria:

- The book's characteristics
- Author's availability
- Author's competence with advanced teaching IT tools

Sending the contract to the author: For external authors who are required to contribute financially, the contract must be signed before any work begins.

Editorial workflow: Once the text is finalized and approved, it moves to the editorial phase, which includes the following steps:

- **Editorial reading** with rounds of proofing in Word (grammar, syntax correction, typos)
- **Assignment of metadata** (ISBN, ISSN, DOI)
- **Choosing the physical dimensions of the book**
- **Image control** (technical and license requirements)
- **Cover design**, with possible alternatives:
  - The author provides the cover image
  - The publisher provides a characteristic template
  - Covers can be designed specifically for the book
- **Collection of data** related to the book:
  - Abstract (for the website and back cover)
  - Short bio + ORCID + affiliation + author's contact
  - Keywords
- **Sending the final file for layout**, which may be outsourced to an external service
- **Further rounds of proofing**, along with author overview, until final approval to print
- **Production of the agreed publication formats and upload** to the platform for release

Post-publication

After the publication of the book, several important post-publication activities are carried out to ensure visibility and engagement:

- Activation of identifiers (ISBN, DOI)
- Indexing in directories (DOAB, PubMed, etc.)
- Editorial marketing:
  - Posts on social channels
  - Newsletter
  - Targeted mailing list
  - Podcast
  - Organizing or participating in book presentation events

Appendix 2 - Success stories

In addition to its primary functions of scientific research and education, the university has the mandate to disseminate culture and knowledge beyond the academic context, thereby contributing to the social and cultural development of its surrounding area. In this way, scientific research is not only expressed through academic teaching but also in the production and dissemination of educational texts aimed at a wider audience, which includes professionals, students, and teachers from various educational levels, and ideally, all interested citizens.

Here, we present several excellent examples of texts that fulfil this mandate in different ways. Additionally, we provide a detailed analysis of a significant text as a case study and share testimonials from lecturers who have chosen to publish their textbooks and teaching materials in open access mode.

From the catalogue of Milano University Press, we have selected the following volumes:

Title and author	Target	Volume features	Subjects
Matematica in giardino / Giovanna Angelucci	Teachers and students (11-14 years old)	Fillable worksheets with exercises Rentable kit with teaching materials	Maths
Catene di Markov e applicazioni algoritmiche / Massimiliano Goldwurm	Professors, university students and scholars in the field	textbook	Maths
Appunti di termodinamica / Stefano Olivares	University students	textbook	Physics
PROTOCOLLO Q2 Integrare quantità e qualità nella valutazione neuro e psicomotoria / Valeria Flori	Professionals	Fillable sheets for the neuro and psychomotor evaluation of patients	Health Sciences
Elementi e materiali di diritto doganale / Luca Moriconi	University students	First customs law textbook on the topic at national level Updatable online webography	Customs Law
Matematica per il corso di Economia e Management / Giovanni Puccetti	University students	Textbook Link to related Moodle page Exercises created in collaboration with students Made with R Dataset Github exercises available for educational reuse An accessible version for visually impaired individuals is in preparation Affordable print price Step by step learning verification tool	Maths, Economy

Play your part. Climate Change Theatre / Margaret Rose	Teachers and students (14-19 years old)	Theatre script collection Multimedia contents constantly updated Bilingual volume	English language, Ecology
Stai fermo un girone. Un gioco per scoprire Dante e il suo mondo /Guglielmo Barucci, Rossana Guglielmetti, Paolo Borsa, Luca Sacchi, Roberto Tagliani	Teachers and students (14-19 years old)	Didactic game: board game that measures competence on the Inferno of Divina Commedia	Human sciences, Literature and Linguistics
MIDI. Una guida al protocollo, alle estensioni e alla programmazione / Luca Andrea Ludovico	University students musicians, computer scientists	Textbook Coding examples	Music, Computer Science
Meccanica / Marcello Fanti	University students	Textbook Used in other universities Exercises	Physics
Introduzione all'approccio critico alla decisione clinica / Giovanni Casazza, Giorgio Costantino	Professionals	Methodology and operating instructions for clinical decision Operational approach	Medicine
Smart Cities, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation Law: a Handbook for Students and Professionals / Giovanni Ziccardi	University students	Textbook	Law, Computer Science

Case study

GIOVANNI PUCCETTI, MATEMATICA PER IL CORSO DI ECONOMIA E MANAGEMENT

In March 2023, Professor Giovanni Puccetti's book for the Economics and Management course at the University of Milan was published by Milano University Press. The book comprises 80 hours of teaching content, structured into 4 weekly lessons over a 10-week period. This work is part of a broader Open Access Education (OER) project and reflects the professor's commitment to extending the Open Access model beyond research publications to include teaching materials. This initiative aims to provide open access to educational resources, a practice that, while prevalent in research, is still relatively new in the context of teaching tools.

Structure, characteristics and advantages of the book:

- The book is available in three formats: PDF, EPUB (open access), and print-on-demand, with a symbolic purchase price of 10 € set by the author.
- The book covers the contents of the course syllabus and is practically oriented, focusing on guided exercise solving.
- Each chapter corresponds to one week of the course (4 lessons of 2 hours each), and through linked exercises, it allows the instructor to monitor the step-by-step learning progress of the class, adapting the content delivery to students' needs.
- The text contains original illustrations and exercises that were developed over many years of teaching, including those used in lectures and examinations.
- The book is programmed in R, a statistical software created and maintained by the academic community through an open-source library. The source codes of the book, which generate LaTeX, PDF, HTML, and EPUB formats, are freely distributed under Creative Commons licenses, allowing other instructors to download and modify them for their own courses. Additionally, the graphs and tables are self-generating and can be easily modified by changing a few lines of code.
- Exercises are offered randomly through the Moodle platform (ten weekly tests: learning by doing), encouraging students to engage in continuous, independent study that aligns with the course topics. A bonus is awarded for solving exercises, and these contribute to the final assessment, providing effective feedback on individual and class-level learning gaps.
- This structure has led to a doubling of the percentage of students passing the final examination in the first two examinations following the end of the course.
- The exercises were collaboratively developed with students, who helped define guidelines based on their needs, observations, criticisms, and suggestions. Many exercises were also produced by undergraduates during an internal internship, supervised by the lecturer, for future students.
- A new method for writing randomised questions on Moodle was created, which, while in a closed-response environment, simulates symbolic mathematical writing when entering answers. This method successfully transcribes a mathematics assignment while maintaining the effectiveness of skills assessment without relying on a commercial platform.
- The use of the Moodle platform, which is free, aligns with the objective of ensuring maximum open access. Initially, the exercises were made accessible to students of the University of Milan, with plans to eventually open them to all.

- Additional materials, including video lectures, notes written in class by the author, and extra examination topics, have also been uploaded to the Moodle platform.
- Given the course's level is comparable to the final year of an Italian scientific high school, it could also serve as a textbook for upper secondary school students. Additionally, it can be used for general mathematics courses in business schools.
- The text and set of exercises in R are available on GitHub: MatematicaOpen. The project is designed to share teaching materials for General Mathematics courses taught at Italian universities.
- On GitHub, there are also presentation materials by the author, such as interviews and videos.
- An accessible version for visually impaired individuals is currently being prepared.

ČERMÁKOVÁ, IVETA A KOL. LÉČÍME ČESKY. ЛІКУЄМО ЧЕСЬКОЮ / CZECH FOR NURSES AND OTHER MEDICAL STAFF

The idea to create this electronic textbook was sparked by the effort to help Ukrainian refugees – so that nurses, orderlies, and physical therapists coming from Ukraine could integrate into the workforce of the Czech Republic and become valid members of the professional medical staff.

An incredibly short time passed from the idea to the implementation. The first idea (end of February 2022) is separated from the first tangible result – the publication of the first five chapters – by only three months. The book was published gradually.

The textbook was compiled by experts on teaching Czech as a foreign language, nursing specialists, and native Ukrainian speakers. Two faculties of Charles University and Karolinum Press collaborated on its creation.

Although the printed version of the textbook was published in November 2022, the book is still available for free on the Publi platform. As of April 2025, the site has been visited 110,000 times.

The textbook is also available on Publi.

Čermáková, Iveta a kol.

Léčíme česky. Лікуємо чеською

Čeština pro sestry a jiné zdravotníky. Чеська мова для медсестер та інших медичних працівників

This textbook is for medical staff other than doctors coming from Ukraine and interested in learning Czech. It aims to help students learn fundamental vocabulary and phraseology for communication with patients and medical staff in hospitals. As it is based on Ukrainian, it is suitable for self-study as well as for use in courses of medical Czech. All dialogues and useful phrases were recorded to facilitate listening comprehension and to help acquire correct pronunciation. You may work with the textbook from start to finish as written, but it is also possible to select individual chapters based on students' interests and needs. The textbook was compiled by experts on teaching Czech as a foreign language, nursing specialists and native Ukrainian speakers.

167 x 235 mm
184 pp.
1. edition
price 250 CZK

ISBN 978-80-246-5440-9

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Ovocný trh 560/5
116 36 Prague 1

www.karolinum.cz

Worldwide Distribution
The University of Chicago Press
www.press.uchicago.edu

Events:
Jana.Dusek.Prazakova@ruk.cuni.cz
Review copies:
eliska.kaplanova@ruk.cuni.cz

Why publish in OA, in the authors' own words?

Below, some textbook authors explain in their own words why they chose to publish in open access and how it adds value to the textbook.

Luca Moriconi, *Elementi e Materiali di Diritto doganale*, https://doi.org/10.54103/milanoup.113

"The publication of the work in open access mode was considered the ideal solution to ensure the widest dissemination of the text, both among the students of the 'European Customs Operator' didactic laboratory and among external users (professors, students, professionals), who can thus have access to a basic text, enriched with materials, for the study and practice of customs law.

Publishing in Open Access has thus made it possible to achieve the objective of maximum dissemination of the work, visibility for the author as an expert on the subject, and adoption of the text in other teaching activities, even at the university level.

The students of the teaching lab appreciated the possibility of having an organic study text available for free consultation and download."

Giovanni Casazza, Giorgio Costantino, *Introduzione all'approccio critico alla decisione clinica*, https://doi.org/10.54103/milanoup.164

"We decided to publish in open access with Milano University Press, first and foremost because it is the publishing house of our University, but also because we were interested in a publication method that could reach the greatest number of users possible, which in the case of our text are mainly students. Indeed, we believe that ideas and knowledge should be disseminated and circulated as widely as possible. Unfortunately, the economic barrier related to commercial offers often leads to limitations in their dissemination. Furthermore, we believe that our role as university teachers also includes the production of such material for our students.

In summary, to conduct a cost-benefit analysis, we believe that the benefits of publishing in open access are primarily maximum dissemination, convenience, and ease of access for those interested. On the other hand, among the negative aspects, the publisher's promotional activities may presumably be less aggressive than those of a commercial publisher, and readers may perceive a volume obtained for free as being of lower quality. However, from our point of view, the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks."

Giovanni Puccetti, *Matematica per il corso di Economia & Management*, https://doi.org/10.54103/milanoup.112

"In my years of teaching, I have always been somewhat dissatisfied with the adopted textbooks. No textbook written by another teacher perfectly fits one's own syllabus, the planned teaching load, the level of knowledge assessment, and one's own teaching style. In recent years, I chose a volume that offered a platform with randomizable online exercises, which allowed me to easily create weekly tests. This was intended to motivate the class to maintain constant learning, ensuring that most students could successfully tackle all the course topics and then take the exam during the first available sessions. The book and online platform were paid resources, and although the price was relatively low, one student once asked me why they had to pay extra (in addition to university fees) to access them. This remark led me to reflect and realise that what we were purchasing could be independently created and made available to everyone—not just to my students, but also to all students and teachers of similar courses.

Instead of charging for books written by other university professors, it makes more sense, in my opinion, for universities to encourage the self-production of teaching materials through their own University Press, perhaps offering some incentives (such as teaching hours or sabbatical periods) to teachers who commit to writing a textbook for their course. Ideally, a university course should provide all teaching materials for free and tailor these materials to the specific course, as public universities are perfectly capable of doing so, without any need to assign commercial rights to private publishers. In a ministerial context where there are (almost) no incentives for innovative or high-quality teaching, I believe that encouraging the self-production of educational materials is not only easy and cost-effective (simply offering a reduction in teaching hours or a sabbatical) but also has significant reputational benefits (e.g., 'At the University of Milan, we produce educational texts that are open to everyone, including other universities')."

Appendix 3 - Examples of contracts and proposals

Contracts

The following is an example of a publishing agreements between the University Press and an author.

Milan, _____

PUBLISHING AGREEMENT

for Open Access Books

between

Milano University Press (MilanoUP)

(hereinafter referred to as the 'Publisher')

and

Mr/Mrs_____born_____,
on _____, Id number _____
address:_____ _____,

(hereinafter referred to as 'the Author')

SINCE

the University of Milan is committed to the values and actively supports the principles of Open Science, including Open Access. This commitment is demonstrated through its adherence to the principles of free access to scientific literature and the promotion, circulation, and broad dissemination of research findings at various levels. These principles are formally outlined in the University's Open Access Policy, with which the Author hereby declares their agreement.

In particular, through the establishment of Milano University Press, the University of Milan seeks to further the Open Access Principles by actively pursuing the 'gold road' – the publication of scholarly contributions in open access formats.

The Author intends to publish their work through Milano University Press and, consequently, agrees to abide by its Open Access principles.

Accordingly, the parties hereby agree and stipulate as follows:

1. Background.

The preamble shall be deemed an integral and essential part of this agreement.

2. Assignment of Rights of Economic Use

The Author, acting on their own behalf and on behalf of their heirs and assigns, hereby grants to the Publisher, which hereby accepts, the non-exclusive right to publish the work entitled "_____ _____" in printed and digital formats (ePub, PDF files), to communicate the work to the public, and to offer for sale and distribute the work, whether directly or indirectly.

The Author retains sole and exclusive ownership of the moral rights in the Work, as well as the economic rights not explicitly granted under this agreement and/or not encompassed within the chosen Creative Commons licence.

The Author grants permission for the Work to be published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence, as selected below.

Option	Abbreviation	Description
☐	**CC BY**	This license enables reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, so long as attribution is given to the creator. The license allows for commercial use.
☐	**CC BY-SA**	This license enables reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, so long as attribution is given to the creator. The license allows for commercial use. If you remix, adapt, or build upon the material, you must license the modified material under identical terms.

The free access rights and, depending on the licence chosen, the rights to share, reproduce and/or modify the Work, as well as the possible authorisation to produce and distribute derivative works, are irrevocable by the licensor as long as the terms of the licence are complied with and as long as the authorship of the original Work is acknowledged to the Author.

3. Author's Guarantees

The Author hereby declares:

that they are the sole creator and exclusive owner of all rights pertaining to the Work, and possess all requisite authority to enter into this agreement;

that the Work does not contravene any prevailing copyright regulations, nor any obligations concerning the protection of the moral or economic rights of other authors or right holders, with respect to texts, images, drawings, photographs, tables, or other content or materials. The Author undertakes to verify and cite the source, permissions, licences, and releases for publication of such elements, and to acquire reproduction rights where necessary;

that the publication of the Work does not infringe, either wholly or in part, the rights of any third parties, nor does it constitute a violation of any civil or criminal law;

that the rights to the Work are not encumbered by any pre-existing licences granted to other publishers;

that the Work has not been created in the execution of or within the framework of projects financed by public or private entities that have previously imposed specific restrictions on the disclosure of results due to reasons of confidentiality, secrecy, or patentability.

The Author warrants, for the entire duration of this agreement, the peaceful possession and enjoyment of the rights herein assigned, including those pertaining to the title of the Work; assuring that the publication of the Work does not violate, either wholly or in part, any third-party rights, nor constitute a violation of any civil or criminal law. The Author undertakes to indemnify and hold the Publisher harmless from any and all damages and expenses that may arise therefrom; further undertakes to provide, at the Publisher's request, their full cooperation and assistance should the peaceful enjoyment of the assigned rights be challenged by third parties, and in any event to indemnify and hold harmless the Publisher from any claims or actions initiated by such third parties.

The Author further declares that any portraits of individuals that may be reproduced in the Work are legitimately reproducible and do not violate any of the provisions set forth in Articles 96, 97, and 98 of Law no. 633/41 and the Italian Civil Code.

All of the aforementioned guarantees and assurances shall remain in full force and effect subsequent to the termination of this agreement

4. Duration

The assignment of the rights under para. 2 is for a period of 20 years from the signature for acceptance of this agreement.

5. Delivery of the Work

Upon receipt of the manuscript in the version verified and approved following the peer-review process, and in the format stipulated within the Guidelines, the Publisher undertakes to proofread and publish it in the formats specified in the publishing proposal submission form provided by the Author to MilanoUP.

It is hereby noted that the Publisher's obligation to publish the Work is contingent upon the successful completion of the peer-review process.

6. Form and Term of Publication

The Publisher shall publish the Work in digital format (ePub, pdf files), under a Creative Commons 4.0 licence, within 6 (six) months after the complete and peer-reviewed version of the manuscript is delivered. Failure to publish within the aforementioned deadline shall result in termination of the agreement.

The Publisher may publish the Work in paperback, print-on-demand and offset editions (when requested through the proposal form signed by the author during the submission phase of the publishing project to MilanoUP).

The choice of the publishing format, its characteristics (paper, typeface, binding, etc.) and graphic design are determined by the publisher and remain in all cases its exclusive property.

The Publisher, on its own or through agreements, will take charge of any promotional actions connected with the diffusion of the Work. The author declares himself available, at the Publisher's request, to lend his action in the promotion of the Work. The work shall be reproduced in conformity with the original and offered for sale (in the case of a paper edition) with the author's name with due prominence. The title of the Work, even if it is provisional, may only be changed with the agreement of the parties.

7. Choice of distribution mode

In accordance with the Open Access character of the volume, which provides for the digital version to be free of charge, even for the print-on-demand version, which is managed through an external publishing service, MilanoUP is oriented towards promoting low-cost pricing, especially for those volumes intended for a predominantly student readership.

The author is asked to opt for the distribution mode of the volume:

Option	Description
☐	Only on the publishing service site at a price not burdened by distribution costs on online bookshops
☐	On the website of the publishing service and on online bookshops, with a price including distribution costs that can lead to a mark-up of up to 50%.

The sale price to the public of the printed edition only is established by the publisher, who may vary it from time to time according to commercial needs without having to give prior notice to the author: the author therefore waives his rights under Art. 131 of Law 633/1941 (Italian law).

The Publisher agrees to maintain the Work in its Catalogue of Open Access Works for the duration of this agreement.

8. Gratuity

There is no remuneration for the Author.

Upon publication, the author will receive 1 free copy in *print-on-demand* format from the publisher.

9. Work realised by several Authors

In the event that the work is realised by several authors, the provisions of this agreement reading "the Author" shall be understood in the plural ("the Authors").

In the event that the authors agree that one (or more) of them represents them to the publisher, they give their consent for the delegate to sign this licence on their behalf.

10. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools

The author remains responsible for the accuracy and correctness of any content published and guarantees compliance with the code of ethics and antiplagiarism.

Authors who have used AI, or AI-assisted tools, are asked to include a paragraph at the end of the manuscript containing a 'Statement on Artificial Intelligence and AI-Assisted Technologies', containing the following information:

"During the preparation of this work the author(s) used [TOOL/SERVICE NAME] on [DD/MM/YYYYY] using the search terms: [SEARCH TERMS] for the purpose of [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) have reviewed and modified the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication."

11. Forms of Modification

Any amendment of the contents of this agreement shall only be valid if made in writing.

12. Fiduciary nature of the Agreement

The content of this agreement is of a fiduciary nature. The Parties hereby agree to maintain strict confidentiality with regard to any data, news, or information they may acquire during the course of this relationship, as well as concerning the content of this agreement.

13. Competent judicial authority

The Court of Milan shall have exclusive jurisdiction for any dispute arising from this agreement, to the exclusion of any other, alternative or counter-court.

Milan, _____

..... Author's signature for acceptance	..... Publisher's signature

.....

Author's signature for acceptance

If, as we believe, the content of this agreement faithfully reflects what was discussed in our previous interviews, please return to us a copy of this agreement signed by you as a sign of acceptance and approval, and further signed for express approval of all clauses pursuant to Article 1341 of the Italian Civil Code.

..... Author's signature for acceptance	..... Publisher's signature

Proposals

Below is the proposal form for Milano University Press intended for internal authors. Additional forms can be accessed starting from this link: https://milanoup.unimi.it/eng/publish-with-us.html.

MilanoUP Publication Proposal Form
for UNIMI professors and research fellows

PROPOSER'S PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name and surname	
Academic title	
E-mail	
Academic studies (max. 1,000 characters)	

INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSAL

Type of work:

☐ Scientific monograph ☐ Educational monograph ☐ Textbook ☐ Other

Requested publishing format: ☐ Digital ☐ Digital + Print

The text proposed is unpublished

☐ Yes ☐ No

Provisional title	
Synopsis and table of contents (in Italian and English – max. 2,000 characters)	
Topic/s	

Subject area

☐ **Human sciences**

- ☐ Cultural heritage
- ☐ Philosophy
- ☐ History
- ☐ Literature and linguistic studies

☐ **Sciences**

- ☐ Agricultural, food, environmental and animal sciences
- ☐ Exercise and sports sciences
- ☐ Natural sciences
- ☐ Health sciences

☐ **Legal, economic and international studies**

☐ **Social sciences, political sciences, environmental humanities**

Current status of the text*

☐ Introduction ☐ Table of contents ☐ One or more chapters ☐ Complete draft

***** *The text must comply with the above declared status and include at least two chapters, otherwise the Editorial Board will disregard the proposal.*

Delivery date of the complete draft of the volume

☐ Immediate delivery ☐ within a week ☐ within a month ☐ within 3 months

Educational goals or intended audience (max. 1,000 characters)	

Language in which the text was written	

Sponsoring entity, if any	
Number of illustrations (if applicable)	
Any issues relating to completing or editing the work	

SUBMISSION OF THE DOCUMENT

This form and the draft of the text compliant with the above declared status must be sent in Word, RTF or ODT format to redazione.milanoup@unimi.it. Please name your file as follows: *text title_name_surname*.

The editorial staff will send the text to the relevant Editorial Board, which will check if it is consistent with MilanoUP editorial policies and give the green light for publication, or reject the submission.

The proposer will then receive an e-mail stating the outcome of the evaluation by the Editorial Board.

DECLARATION

For the purposes of publication, the proposer hereby declares that the text complies with MilanoUP Editorial Guidelines and confirms that:

☐The text does not infringe upon anyone's copyright, nor does it infringe upon any inalienable or economic right of any other author or entitled person, whether in terms of text, images, photographs, tables, or other content;

☐The text is not the result of any activities falling within the scope of industrial property rights, nor is it the subject of any patent registration or related filing;

☐The text was not produced within the scope of any public or private grant, the terms of which restrict disseminating the findings thereof for reasons of confidentiality or privacy;

☐He / she is willing to opt for one of the Creative Commons licenses, to be later agreed with MilanoUP when negotiating the terms of the publishing contract.

Date	
Signature	

Appendix 4 - Experiences worldwide

Milne Open Textbooks (USA) – The State University of New York (SUNY) publishes numerous open access textbooks, either developed internally or written/edited by SUNY faculty members. However, innovative interactive models do not seem to be among them.

OpenStax – Rice University (USA) – This platform offers a wide range of textbooks published by the university, organised by subject and education level (high school or university).

Digital Commons – University of South Florida (USA) – This portal offers both self-published and external open access publications. There is a section dedicated to books/monographs; however, the criteria distinguishing between the two sections are not very clear.

Open Book Publishers (UK) – This is not a university press, but rather a social enterprise based in the UK. They publish monographs and textbooks in open access, primarily aimed at higher or secondary education. The catalogue includes a specific 'textbooks' section, though it also features texts that, at first glance, appear more like monographs than textbooks.

Florence University Press (Italy) – This publisher releases a wide range of books, including some textbooks. However, the volumes are not separately indexed on the website, and there seems to be a lack of innovative and/or interactive teaching textbooks.

UCL Press – University College London (UK) – This publisher has announced its commitment to publishing textbooks in Open Access. Although still in its early stages, the press has already published a small but growing collection of open access textbooks, spanning various disciplines. These textbooks are designed not only for UCL students but also for a global audience, supporting the idea that publicly funded research and teaching materials should be openly shared.

Johns Hopkins University Press (USA) – This section of the university's press website focuses on gradually republishing parts of their catalog in Open Access. At present, it mainly features monographs, but there are plans to include some of their successful textbooks in the future.

Livros Abertos – Universidad de Sao Paulo (Brasil) – The platform hosts a variety of works, including academic monographs, research books, and a selection of textbooks. Although the number of textbooks is still limited, they cover different disciplines and aim to support both university students and the broader educational community.

Innovative publishing

Muni Space – Masaryk University (Czech Republic) – This platform publishes a variety of books and textbooks in Open Access, supporting the university's mission to make educational resources freely available. The published works cover a wide range of disciplines, from humanities to sciences, and are accessible through the Muni Space portal.

A key initiative tied to this platform is the MUNI4.0 project, which aims to enhance the student learning experience by offering online resources that complement traditional textbooks. These materials include interactive content, exercises, and supplementary educational tools, fostering a more dynamic and flexible approach to learning.

OpenEd – British Columbia University Campus (Canada) – It publishes Open Access books and textbooks and offers a section with customisable course materials. Educators can adapt textbooks to fit their courses, supporting flexibility in teaching. The initiative promotes Open Educational Resources (OER), encouraging collaboration and broad access to academic content.

Writing Commons (USA) – A collaborative, Wikipedia-style project supported by academics from various US universities. It serves as a continuously updated reference guide for writing, featuring articles, multi-media content, and instructional resources rather than traditional textbooks.

ANU Press (Australia) – The publisher of the Australian National University, which publishes textbooks, including those with online interactive tasks. More information on their publishing process can be found in the *For authors* section: ANU Press Authors..

Portals

Open Textbook Library is the portal of the University of Minnesota (USA) that serves as a universal database of Open Access publications, primarily focusing on textbooks, as indicated by its name.

OER Commons is the gateway to an online database of all Open Access publications. It offers a fairly effective filter for textbooks.

OpenStax**:** Provides free, peer-reviewed, openly licensed textbooks covering various subjects for higher education.

Khan Academy**:** Offers a vast collection of video lessons, practice exercises, and materials covering a wide range of subjects from K-12 to higher education.

MERLOT**:** A curated collection of free and open online teaching, learning, and faculty development services contributed and used by an international education community.

MIT OpenCourseWare **(OCW):** Provides virtually all MIT course content freely and openly available to self-learners or educators worldwide.

TED-Ed**:** Offers a platform for educational videos and lessons created by educators around the world.

CommonLit**:** Provides a collection of free reading passages and literacy resources for grades 3-12.

Curriki**:** A community-driven platform offering a variety of OER materials, including lesson plans, activities, and courses across different subjects and grade levels.

CK-12 Foundation**:** Offers customizable digital textbooks and resources for K-12 education in various subjects.

Appendix 5 – Declaration on AI

Following the University Press policy on fair AI usage (here for example the University of Milan Decalogue), a brief declaration on the use of AI tools in the textbook should be included. An example can be a paragraph at the end of the book or on the final lines of the colophon, entitled like *Declaration on Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process*, with the following information:

"During the preparation of this paper the author(s) used [TOOL/SERVICE NAME] on [DD/MM/YYYY] using the search terms: [SEARCH TERMS] in order to [REASON]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) have reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication."

Provisional Conclusions on these Guidelines

The development of textbooks is a dynamic process influenced by evolving educational methodologies, technological advancements, and pedagogical research. Given the rapid changes in these areas, the following conclusions should be considered provisional and subject to future review and adaptation:

- Textbooks should be designed to allow for updates and modifications. The integration of digital platforms can facilitate real-time revisions, ensuring that content remains relevant and aligned with the latest curriculum standards.
- Modern textbooks should prioritize inclusivity by considering diverse learning needs, including accessibility features for students with disabilities. This includes the use of digital formats with text-to-speech capabilities and alternative content presentations.
- The increasing use of digital tools in education necessitates that textbooks incorporate interactive and multimedia elements, such as QR codes linking to supplementary resources, interactive exercises and materials.
- Textbooks should facilitate connections between subjects, promoting critical thinking and real-world applications of knowledge.
- The production of textbooks should consider sustainable materials and digital alternatives to reduce environmental impact and costs, making educational resources more widely accessible.
- Textbook development should involve educators and learners to ensure that content is practical, engaging, and aligned with classroom experiences and expectations.

Milan, 24th March 2025

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Open Science Declarations and Resources

European Commission: Joint Research Centre, Inamorato dos Santos, A., Punie, Y., & Castaño Muñoz, J. (2016). *EUR 27938 - Opening up Education: support framework for higher education institutions*, Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2791/293408

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Project MUSE, *Subscribe to Open for Project MUSE*, Project MUSE. https://about.muse.jhu.edu/subscribe-to-open/S2O

CoARA (2022, 20th July), *Agreement*, CoARA. https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/

Open Science Tools

DOI, https://www.doi.org/

ORCID, https://orcid.org/

ROR, https://ror.org/

Datacite, https://datacite.org/

Crossref, https://www.crossref.org/

iThenticate, https://www.ithenticate.com/

Creative Commons, https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/cclicenses/

GitHub, https://github.com/

OER Resources: https://provost.umw.edu/oer/how-does-one-find-oa-oer-course-materials/

Zenodo, https://zenodo.org/

Preservation Tools

CLOCKSS, https://clockss.org/

LOCKSS, https://www.lockss.org/

Portico, https://www.portico.org/

Thoth, https://thoth.pub/solutions/archiving

Publishing Tools

OMP (Open Monograph Press), https://pkp.sfu.ca/software/omp/

PKP (Public Knowledge Project), https://pkp.sfu.ca/about/

PKP forum, https://forum.pkp.sfu.ca/

PKP plugin guide, https://docs.pkp.sfu.ca/dev/plugin-guide/en/

PKP APIs, https://docs.pkp.sfu.ca/dev/api/

Pressbook, https://pressbooks.com/ (not Open Source)

LaTeX, https://www.latex-project.org/

H5P, https://h5p.org/, https://h5p.com/, https://h5p.group/

Manifold, https://manifoldapp.org/

PRISM, https://www.doabooks.org/en/publishers/prism