

## Publishing with UCL Press – an author's perspective

<https://etextbook.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2017/11/13/publishing-with-ucl-press-an-authors-perspective/>

This blog post was written by Gabriel Moshenska, Senior Lecturer in Public Archeology at UCL.

The book is [out](#). It has gone where academic books are supposed to go: a copy in the library, a copy to my parents, one to my former PhD supervisor, and one placed casually on the coffee-table in my office as if to say 'Oh this? Just my latest with UCL Press'. In these moments of pride, it's easy to forget the blood, the sweat and the tears, so let's take a few minutes to look back.

The colourful cover image of Stonehenge is a visual cliché in archaeology, and *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology* is a textbook example. Public archaeology is a mixture of science communication and science studies focused on archaeology and the ancient world, and UCL has been a leader in research, practice and teaching in this field for decades. The textbook draws on [UCL Institute of Archaeology's](#) undergraduate module and the [MA degree in public archaeology](#), and most of the authors of the chapters are regular guest lecturers on these courses.

Collections of papers by multiple authors are challenging to edit: one or two recalcitrant authors can delay publication and strain professional relationships, while the need to maintain a consistent standard and 'voice' requires a considerable effort, particularly for a textbook that needs to be more straightforwardly readable than other academic texts. The finished product, beautiful though it is, is considerably later and marginally slimmer than originally intended, but the Press remained supportive and encouraging throughout.

Public archaeology is grounded in a philosophy of openness and sharing scholarship, so the opportunity to publish an Open Access textbook with a [Creative Commons](#) license was extremely welcome. To combine this with the high editorial and production standards and the prestige of a University Press was a unique and brilliant opportunity. As chapter authors dragged their feet the Press decided to take advantage of the open, digital publishing format to launch the volume as a 'living book' to which additional chapters could be added until the final version appeared in print, pdf and a variety of other digital formats. This willingness to innovate was a significant part of the pleasure of working with UCL Press.

The print-runs for many academic books have dipped from the hundreds into the tens, while their prices have gone in precisely the opposite direction, and production values have apparently fallen out of somebody's window. In contrast to this, UCL Press have produced a high-quality textbook that is improbably, gloriously free to download in pdf (as more than a thousand people have discovered), and very reasonably priced in print. From an author/editor perspective the process has been exemplary, and I very much hope to work with UCL Press again in the future.