Jisc Institution as E-Textbook Publisher project

Sustainability

1. Sustainability and Viability
UCL Annual Report 2016, page 7

The UCL Press business model is based on institutional subsidy in order to create impact and to ensure the wide distribution of UCL research, and the provision of e-textbooks to help students. In that sense, it is sustainable since UCL has made a firm commitment to support and develop UCL Press's activities for the foreseeable future. It remains to be seen whether or not e-textbooks could be financially sustainable via the revenue generated from print sales.

When the two textbooks publish we will track download stats from the PDFs on UCL Discovery and usage stats on our enhanced browser-based platform and via the app. So far, UCL Press's download statistics for published books are very encouraging having passed 37,500 downloads of the first 14 books in 168 countries, and point to a real support of open access. We will also provide the sales figures for the commercial versions and data on citations and occurrences in social media such as blogs and tweets. We will produce an e-survey to enable e-users to comment on the usability or otherwise of the e- textbooks.

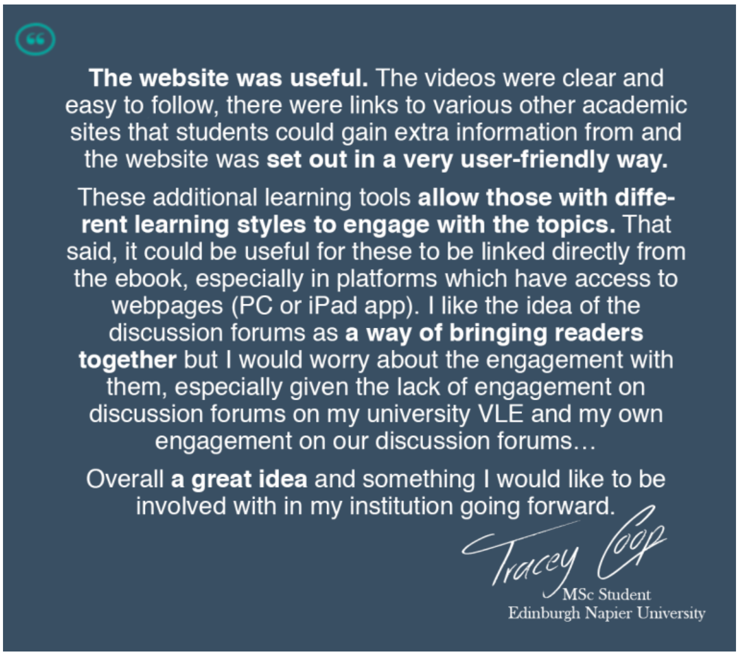
Our authors are not receiving monetary compensation. They are incentivised by the opportunity to publish with their home institution and for many of our authors being able to publish Open Access is a driving force.

The books are created using a platform that means they can be updated, revised and added to on a regular basis, which gives considerable extra flexibility over the printed book. For the *Plastic Surgery* textbook, revision and development will likely include the addition of completely new chapters as the MSc course develops, or even an entirely new spin-off textbook on one of the chapters (Military Plastic Surgery), which has never been the subject of a specialist textbook.

2. Sustainability
UHI/ENU Annual Report 2016, pages 42-43 and 45-46

Is the business model sustainable? Provide data to support this alongside qualitative feedback.

The business model observes that the value to the academic institution lies not in the commercial returns, but in the convenience to the student and the reputational enhancement for the authors and the University. eTIPS continues with a hybrid approach – promoting a non-commercial business model through a commercial distribution route, whilst providing an open access one in its accompanying online materials.



The total royalty paid by Amazon KDP on the first eTIPS book is £367.02, with the greatest amount coming from access through KENP, before and after the free distribution period, in November 2015. eTIPS may choose to move in one of two directions. This report argues that a business model is partly sustainable as a *commercial* venture (distribution is already carried out through a commercial channel, after all), out with many of the constraints of its partner institutions – a model broadly followed by countless University Presses. Royalties have returned to the project for reinvestment. If scaled up through further eTextbook releases and additional distribution routes, as well as a focused investment on promotion, the model is likely to return a workable profit.

As a non-commercial model, which contributes to the enhancement of *free* open educational provision, it is too early to give a view on sustainability. eTIPS has created strong branding, produced written and multimodal content which is dynamic and peer-reviewed, and assembled and trained and engaged a team of individuals. Across the report we argue that provision of content to Kindle is, indeed, convenient for many students. The key to its success depends on support from senior colleagues and from academic and technical members of staff, and on embedding innovative content creation more broadly across a range of academic programmes.

Is it bringing value to your institution/partnership?

There is potential. Because the concept is new, it is difficult to observe any real value. At a low-level of engagement, it may further strengthen the support for multimodal learning across UHI and Edinburgh Napier University in partnership, for innovative content creation, and learning at a distance, for example. When incorporated further across partner institutions, the learning, teaching and assessment approaches to the delivery of modules and programmes are improved. At that stage, when 'home-grown' texts are created, supported by mediated collaborative learning environments, content is iteratively amendable, collaborative opportunities are greater. At its highest level, it may motivate institutions to consider their acquisition policy, reducing ties to consortia purchase of 'bundled' electronic materials.

What would need to happen to make it viable, sustainable and scalable?

Partnership is needed. Edinburgh Napier University and UHI are exploring the idea of a partnered approach to institutional publishing which, it is hoped, will continue when the eTIPS project has ended. The strength in working together, it is believed, will assist in sharing knowledge about the publishing process itself, as well as to draw together authoring and discipline understanding. Such a direction of travel will be central to ensuring that institutional publication becomes an integrated practice and not a one-off project.

Direction is needed. Coupled with this, conversations with senior management in both institutions have indicated interest in exploring and sustaining a model of institutional publishing after the close of the project.

Commitment is needed. Academic content is best produced by academics and instructional designers. The defined allocation of academic time can best be introduced by managers and senior leaders.

Access is needed. A distribution model which is supported by the structures of the partner universities – to access from library systems and virtual learning systems – as well as made available to the outside world.

Resource is needed. The beating heart of the eTIPS model is the companion website. For this to become an active and engaging community, a realistic allocation of support is required.

3. Sustainability and viability
University of Liverpool / Liverpool University Press Annual Report 2016, pages 8-9

There has been considerable interest in the two e-textbooks being published by University of Liverpool Library and Liverpool University Press. This interest comes from within the University of Liverpool itself and across the scholarly communications community, both UK and internationally. As the textbooks are not yet published, it is not possible to fully establish the ongoing viability of the business model. The partnership between Liverpool University Press, University of Liverpool Library and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the positive comments we have had from senior managers' leaves us confident that the project is sustainable. However, we have not yet received any commitment from the University of Liverpool to the funding of the e-textbooks beyond this initial project.

In terms of author reward, Jason Laws, author of *Essentials of Financial Management*, is paid on the public launch of the e-textbook in September 2017; the general editor, Jon Hogg, received a semester's leave to work on *Using Primary Sources*, and, along with the sub-editor and contributors, will be paid on the public launch of the e-textbook in January 2017. Everyone contributing their research and writing to the two e-textbooks will therefore be financially compensated.
The contractual agreements that have been signed by the author, general editor, sub-editor and contributors with Liverpool University Press and the business model that is in place will enable us to make updates to the titles in the future. With regard to scalability, at this stage *Essentials of Financial Management* is not considered scalable. It is a self-contained e-textbook that follows a semester's teaching plan for a specific module, however, we will be analysing the success of the e-textbook after launch to see if the e-textbook model can be replicated for other modules, which would require further financial investment. Updates to the e-textbook *Essentials of Financial Management* and Xerte will be possible however.

In contrast, *Using Primary Sources* is scalable and is expected to grow further as other academics in the School of Histories, Languages and Cultures at the University of Liverpool have already expressed interest in adding chapters to the e-textbook to support a module for their undergraduates. It is therefore anticipated at this stage that the *Using Primary Sources* e-textbook will grow from the current 26 chapters by 31 academics over the next few years as the scope of the project widens to encompass other disciplines. In the short-term, additional chapters can be funded from savings made from the projected overall payment to contributors, however additional funding will be required once this fund has been exhausted. Updates to the existing chapters in *Using Primary Sources* and BiblioBoard will be possible.

Both e-textbooks will be published under an Open Access Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC-BY-NC-ND) licence and at this stage of the project we are confident the licensing models will work as expected and are sustainable. The only issue we have encountered with this license is with the *Essentials of Financial Management* e-textbook, where the author has had to do extensive work to change the original *Financial Times* and *Datastream* material in his lecture notes to examples available for reproduction in an open access e-textbook.

At this stage we are confident the distribution models of BiblioBoard and Xerte will work as expected and no changes are expected. We are confident both e-textbooks are sustainable in terms of distribution as there are no ongoing costs with either the BiblioBoard platform where the *Using Primary Sources* e-textbook is situated and Xerte, used on the *Essentials of Financial Management* e-textbook. The University of Liverpool Library also has a very good relationship with the creators of BiblioBoard in the United States and the Xerte creators at the University of Nottingham, which ensures the distribution model of both e-textbooks is sustainable. As the publication rights for the text published in both e-textbooks has been assigned to Liverpool University Press and all other material has been granted for use within an open source e-book, should anything happen to BiblioBoard or Xerte in the future that prevents the e-textbook from being distributed on the current models, then the material would not be lost but instead new distribution models would be sourced and utilised.

At this stage of the project, it is difficult to provide concrete data to show whether the e-textbooks are bringing value to the University of Liverpool. Certainly the feedback from senior managers at the University has been very supportive and encouraging, and the feedback from the students who have used the ‘Memory’ chapter in the *Using Primary Sources* e-textbook has been positive (see Section 6: Benchmarking and Evaluation below and appendix 1). It is anticipated at this stage that the two e-textbooks, purposefully designed for popular modules taught at the University of Liverpool and available to students free of charge on campus and remotely, will bring considerable value to the University of Liverpool and the degrees on offer.

4. Sustainability, revision and development
University of Nottingham case study 2014, page 8

Applied ethics
Sustainability, revisions and development of the philosophy OER e-textbook will be supported by the Open Nottingham team. This aligns the work with a core university programme, which will ensure sustainability of the openly licenced works.

Corporate responsibility and sustainability in practice
All income generated from the sale of the e-textbook for the period of this evaluation will be ring fenced for the further development of these materials. If the trial is considered a success at the end of the evaluation period then the license with ICCRS will be reviewed and renewed to ensure that the e-textbook can be continue to be supported.