



Multi-product platforms: the 21st-Century solution to changing demands upon academic publishers

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When academic publishers first began making their content available electronically, most treated the different types of content as separate products. Publishers developed separate electronic platforms for e-books and e-journals. The reasoning for this was sound at the time; when electronic versions were first developed there were no obvious reasons for treating them differently from print. Print books and journals were handled by different departments and had different routes to market. At every stage of book and journal production and marketing a different set of players and processes were involved. All this is changing, driven by: developments in electronic publishing, expectations of end users and librarians for all content to be available online in an easy-to-find and integrated way, and the cost saving benefits to publishers of moving away from silo developments. Multi-product platforms, like Atypon's Literatum platform, meet the changing needs of the information industry, delivering a single integrated front and back end for all products and services, whether it be journals, books, databases or reference works.

Finding the right multi-product platform: the challenges ahead

Many issues must be addressed if publishers want to take a multi-product platform approach. Trying to marry content from one department with that of another can lead to tortuous in-house political complications. What might appear to be the easiest solution to these new demands often heralds a false dawn. **Simply moving e-books to the e-journals platform is not the answer.**

Firstly, the platform is unlikely to accommodate the diversity of content formats that are now required. Secondly, it will not allow the rapid and versatile cross-searching demanded by users. Most importantly, it is unlikely that you will have the administration tools that let you manage all the content types to realize the benefits of having all your content on a single platform.

To provide a 'true' solution to this challenge, what is needed is an integrated front end supported by a single, comprehensive, content agnostic set of admin tools for the back end, to manage all content types.

Over recent years Atypon has evolved its successful journal e-publishing platform, Literatum, to truly handle multiple content types in an integrated way. The first client site from Atypon that utilises the capabilities of the multi product platform is Reference-Global (<http://www.reference-global.com>) from Walter de Gruyter, which went live in 2008. Reference Global hosts Journals, Books and Bibliographies on a single platform, providing cross searching, unified access control, and a common set of admin tools to manage the content.

Since then Atypon has developed a number of multi product sites for its clients, including:

- The award winning American Chemical Society site (<http://pubs.acs.org>), hosting Journals and Books

- The Mary Ann Liebert site which also has Journals and Books (<http://www.liebertonline.com>)
- The Aluka digital library of scholarly resources (www.aluka.org), providing access to content types ranging from archival documents, periodicals, books, reports, manuscripts, and reference works, to three-dimensional models, maps, oral histories, plant specimens, photographs, and slides.

Conclusions

Multi-product platforms represent the future of academic publishing. They meet the publishing challenges posed by academia in the twenty-first century, and fulfill the needs of modern academic publishers. They deliver what is demanded by the publishers' end-users, whether they are primarily researchers, teachers or students; and they allow publishers themselves to harvest the fruits of the intellectual capital they control. If multi-product platforms are planned carefully and developed with both end-user and in-house needs in mind, they offer the foundation and tools for providing real added-value benefits. Atypon's multi product platform provides a solution to all these challenges for all publishers.

Read more about Atypon's multi-product platform at www.atypon.com, for further information see <http://www.atypon.com/news/wp.php>, a white paper detailing the significance of Multiple Product Platforms in scholarly publishing.