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Newfound Press: The digital imprint of the University of Tennessee Libraries

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[Home](#) > [Volume 12 Number 10 - 1 October 2007](#) > **Phillips**



PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ON THE INTERNET

**Newfound Press: The digital imprint of the
University of Tennessee Libraries**

by Linda L. Phillips

Abstract

The University of Tennessee Libraries launched its digital imprint, Newfound Press, in 2005 to develop a framework for making peer reviewed scholarly and specialized works available worldwide. Building on local digitization investments, Newfound Press has published two monographs, hosts a born-digital journal, and is experimenting with publishing conference proceedings as digital multimedia. Through Newfound Press, the University of Tennessee is promoting open access publishing while resolving issues such as finding sustainable funding, creating a process for peer review "on the fly," and establishing credibility as a viable scholarly publications venue. If every research library were to provide similar services, access to scholarship could become more transparent than ever before.

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Why start a university library digital press?](#)

[Newfound Press accomplishments](#)

[The future](#)

[Conclusion](#)

Introduction

Academic libraries connect their clientele to relevant information resources in many publication types and formats. Librarians purchase materials, identify documents freely available on the Web, and provide access to online resources that support and advance scholarship. To insure that the results of scholarly work are broadly available for others to discover and build upon the content, librarians are proactively exploring new publication options. A library digital press presents scholars with a means to disseminate scholarship, regardless of its specialized nature, to a wide audience. Digital formats offer researchers new ways to synthesize, interpret, and analyze publications. This paper outlines the reasons that the University of Tennessee Libraries decided to start a digital press [1], describes a few progress benchmarks, and considers several issues being resolved as the press matures.



Why start a university library digital press?

An overarching reason for starting a digital press is to increase access to scholarly information. When the costs of publications spiral to unsustainable proportions, access to scholarship is effectively reduced. As the research community becomes more aware of the economics of scholarly publishing and its impact on access to their scholarly work, faculty and librarians are collaborating on alternatives to traditional publishing that ensure wide dissemination of research results at a reasonable cost. Fortunately, the Internet and digital scholarship have the potential to change the publishing environment dramatically. A recent report issued by Ithaka confirms that expanding technologies and new forms of informal publication are creating new interest in university publishing; the report urges administrators, librarians, and university presses to work together towards building a shared electronic publishing infrastructure [2].

Scholars welcome the benefits of electronic access to information and are beginning to recognize the potential for presenting the outcomes of their research online. When publication costs can be covered on the front end, one barrier to the free flow of information is eliminated. Universities seeking new publication models are exploring open access publishing that relies on technology to make the costs of acquiring information more reasonable, and to increase the likelihood that research results will be discovered.

Cornell University Libraries in collaboration with Penn State University Libraries developed the DPubS [3] open source software to support the dissemination of scholarly information. Virginia Tech University has hosted more than a dozen scholarly journals for several years [4]. Dartmouth College Library hosts digital works that are ready for publication [5]. University library and press collaborations are beginning to emerge, such as digitalculturebooks at The University of Michigan [6]. The University of Tennessee Libraries created its Newfound Press digital imprint to explore the potential for using an open access environment to advance peer-reviewed scholarship.

UT's vision for Newfound Press is to increase the availability of scholarly and specialized resources. Drawing on investments in our digital library program, we are collaborating with faculty to bring new forms of communication to an expanding scholarly universe. The purpose of Newfound Press is to help the authors of specialized content disseminate their work. Where university presses and other scholarly publishers select what they will publish, in part, on the basis of its potential market, a library digital press can leverage librarian expertise, server space, and open source software to provide access to peer-reviewed content at a reasonable cost. Newfound Press offers the scholarly community a test bed for publishing research that may appeal to a limited audience.

Newfound Press is also experimenting with new forms of publication. Content that might have been published as a monograph in the past can now incorporate a database for readers to explore research results in a multi-dimensional format. A journal article on music theory may include sound bytes along with figures and illustrations. Published conference proceedings that contain audio and video recordings of the presentations along with conference brochures, publicity, and news coverage offer a more comprehensive context for the event that surpasses the conference paper text alone. New forms of publishing add value to textual content.



Newfound Press accomplishments

Newfound Press began its digital publishing demonstration with familiar genres in the expectation of progressing to more innovative forms of scholarly communication. In 2005 the Press published a monograph, *Goodness Gracious, Miss Agnes: Patchwork of Country Living*, by Lera Knox [7]. A city girl from Columbia, Tennessee born in 1896, Knox became a farmer's wife in 1918. Her recollections of life in rural Tennessee during the Great Depression and her career as a columnist for the *Nashville Banner*, the *Columbia Daily Herald* and other newspapers from 1933 through 1965 provide primary source material for historians, novelists, and others interested in the region and the period. A companion volume containing Ms. Knox's newspaper columns, *Travels of a Country Woman*, was completed and posted to the Newfound Press Web site in June 2007 [8]. Publishing these monographs has given the library experience in collaborating with authors, editing manuscripts, creating attractive graphics and copy layout, generating discoverable digital files, and seeking permissions.

Another monograph in production is an award-winning translation of the German picaresque novel, *Simplicissimus the German Adventurer* (some translations call him the simpleton or the vagabond) by Hans Jakob Christoph von Grimmelshausen (1625–1676). This project presented different challenges, including finding appropriate peer reviewers, converting a typed manuscript and floppy disks to digital form, and seeking an author for a critical introduction since the translator is deceased. Although other translations have been published, the style of this version is unique and will soon complement the existing canon.

Newfound Press monographs appear in searchable pdf files divided into front matter and chapters. By designing a “book jacket” for each title, editing the content, and creating digital files, library staff add value to the original work. Such activities are comparable to those performed by traditional publishers and the digital versions of the monographs have the look of traditional books. In addition, the library creates catalog records as well as metadata that conform to OAI standards to enhance discovery. Unlike traditional commercial publications, the full text of Newfound Press works is accessible to anyone using the Internet.

The University of Tennessee Libraries began exploring digital journals in 2002. Librarians and staff digitized three volumes (2001–2003) of the *Journal of Economic Issues* by scanning and using electronic files provided by the owner, the Association for Evolutionary Economics [9]. A library programmer created a display with search, browse, and page turning features, along with the ability to count use. In summer 2006 Newfound Press agreed to host a new born-digital journal, *Gamut*, owned by the Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic (MTSMA) [10]. Editor Phil Ewell was a member of UT’s music faculty, and with this author received a small grant from the University Office of Research to pay for Web page design, the *Sibelius* software that presents musical notation, and student labor. Ewell and Phillips gave a presentation about the journal at the Spring 2007 meeting of the MTSMA in Washington, D.C.; nine manuscripts are now in peer review. Newfound Press received an ISSN number and will launch the inaugural issue of *Gamut* in late 2007. The editor and Newfound Press expect to add audio and video files to article text in the near future using the PKP Open Journal Systems (OJS) software [11]. The UT Digital Library Center adopted the OJS software for Newfound Press journals in Summer 2007 because it is more functional than the homegrown demonstration, and offers the potential for ongoing collaboration with others in the information community whose goals parallel those of Newfound Press.

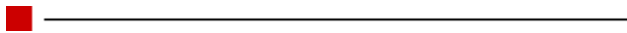
Multimedia publishing is the future for new forms of scholarship, though it presents a steep learning curve that includes grappling with the integration of text with audio and video formats, simulations, and interactive features. The Newfound Press Editorial Board has expressed high interest in a proposal from a UT English professor who compiled a bibliography of Southern sermon manuscripts written or delivered before 1800. Currently in a database, the content has the potential to become a multimedia publication. While such a work would traditionally have been published as a monograph, the Editorial Board and the author recognize the considerable value offered by interactive search and comparison features enabling geographic, topical, and author access.

Documentation and preservation of conference proceedings offers an opportunity to combine media formats and add value to the collection of papers that traditionally comprise a conference proceedings publication. In Spring 2007 Newfound Press digitized VHS recordings of presentations

at a conference, *Democracy & Tradition*, sponsored by the Religious Studies Department in 2004 [12]. Scanned and included with the Newfound Press presentation of the recordings are the printed conference program flier and several examples of newspaper coverage before and after the conference. Links to each of the conference presenters provide biographical information. The conference organizer does not currently have printed text of the presentations, although it is his intention to obtain and compile the papers.

In April 2007 the Press commissioned recordings of a UT conference about the author Cormac McCarthy, happily held the week after McCarthy won the Pulitzer Prize for his novel, *The Road* and just prior to his appearance on the Oprah Winfrey television program. Conference organizer, Chris Walsh, a lecturer in UT's English department presented a book talk about several McCarthy novels at the library the week before the conference [13]. The McCarthy conference publication will include recordings and text of the Walsh book talk, peer-reviewed text and the video recordings of the conference speaker presentations, the conference posters and program, and examples of media coverage along with links to presenters' Web sites.

The Editorial Board has reservations about focusing too much attention on the conference literature, given that the content has higher credibility once published in more established book and periodical media. However, the McCarthy conference publication enables Newfound Press to demonstrate a multimedia context that may inspire future scholars. Fortunately, the Editorial Board agrees that digital multimedia is a promising path towards new forms of scholarship.



The future

A university library digital press has its roots in a publishing-friendly culture. Librarians have a venerable commitment to making information discoverable by cataloging resources and adhering to international standards for creating metadata that promotes access. Newfound Press purchased a package of ten ISBN numbers for its monographs and has received an ISSN for *Gamut*. Google searches for the demonstration articles currently available in *Gamut* and *JEI* yield successful results. UT's demonstration of journal digitization incorporated use counts early on, and programmers are now refining the process to handle multiple publications. Projects like COUNTER, which standardizes the collection and reporting of electronic resource use data, illustrate the commitment of the information community to provide use measures that can be used to quantify access to the content. Library preservation values support sustainability. In talking with faculty about the benefits of digital publishing with a university library, librarians highlight both longstanding traditions and new applications of technology to demonstrate support and preparedness for scholarly publishing.

However the digital press evolves, it will be in collaboration with campus faculty. Newfound Press created an Advisory Board in 2005 to articulate an initial vision and scope. The Advisory Board sponsored a survey of the UT community about digital multimedia that elicited more than 80 responses from faculty, many of whom expressed support for a digital press. All of the Advisory

Board members agreed to join the Editorial Board created in late 2006 [14]. The Board has discussed criteria for evaluating proposals, recognizing that high priority should be given to significant scholarly work too specialized for a traditional publisher. Local and regional content falls into this specialized category and is especially appropriate for dissemination by a public university. Formats that offer value beyond the printed word are desirable. Editorial Board members are willing to help solicit peer reviewers and resolute in their commitment to publish work of high quality.

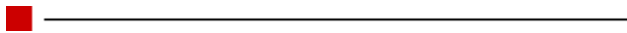
Among myriad issues for Newfound Press to resolve are identifying a sustainable labor pool, determining appropriate funding, creating documentation, and marketing. The library's head of collection development serves as Newfound Press director and the dean of libraries has been instrumental in presenting the vision of the Press to campus administrators and faculty. Many library colleagues have contributed to advancing the press. Two reference librarians, one in English and the other in art have helped with editorial, design, and promotional services. Several support staff are responsible for producing the publications, including the programmers already noted, the library's desktop publisher, and collection development staff who update and maintain Web pages and edit content. The collection development office manager is learning to use the OJS software to manage incoming journal articles. The library's metadata librarian and the Digital Library Center coordinator are providing the information architecture to assure preservation and access. University of Tennessee Press publishing expertise will be valuable; the director (who holds an MLS degree) serves on the Newfound Press Editorial Board.

How many publications and of what type can the library afford to produce? Whatever the correct answer to this pointed question asked by a member of the Editorial Board, it will not be straightforward. Internal collaboration within the Libraries has already demonstrated that it is possible to leverage existing human and technology resources to start a digital press. The small grant received from the university to launch *Gamut* suggests that other projects will attract external funding. The English professor who compiled the sermons bibliography has applied for funding to support student labor to support his database. Library endowment funds may be used for Newfound Press projects, and a development campaign in progress may result in new contributions specifically designated for technology that increases access to new forms of scholarship. As digital publishing becomes an established library function, funding will follow. University administrators cannot help but appreciate library leadership towards creating sustainable funding models for scholarly communication.


Documentation will enable Newfound Press to communicate with authors about policies and procedures. Initial Web site documentation was written with the assumption that guidelines for submission, information about the Press, and intellectual property statements would evolve as the Press matures. Virginia Tech University Libraries generously granted permission to adapt several of their guidelines for authors. Librarians will incorporate into existing documentation the criteria that the Editorial Board devises for considering proposals and manuscripts. To be written are scripts to communicate with authors during the proposal selection and acceptance processes. Because Newfound Press publishes works in any discipline, a process for the Editorial Board to identify peer reviewers "on the fly" must be created and documented.

Newfound Press seeks nonexclusive rights from authors whose works are published in its collection. Appropriate permissions statements must be written for both authors and those seeking permissions to use Newfound Press publications, including references to Creative Commons options [15]. Newfound Press recognizes the value of tools like those being developed by the Public Knowledge Project, and provides links to OJS along with other publication resources for journal editors and scholars who are exploring open access publishing. Although the University of Tennessee has not yet invested in the learning curve required to test the OJS manuscript services, the software may be helpful for tracking any type of submission, not only journals.

Marketing Newfound Press comes naturally to librarians who have vast experience promoting information resources. Among the audiences targeted are scholarly information creators, the publishing community, and librarians. Potential authors need to know about the existence and services of the Press, and librarians hope to make a convincing case, particularly to tenured full professors, that publishing with Newfound Press benefits them and the entire community of scholars. Faculty who long for a means to publish multimedia productions must be assured that Newfound Press has sufficient technical expertise and storage capacity to sustain their creations. The publishing community is an important partner, particularly publishers of databases that provide access to scholarly work, such as indexing/abstracting producers, citation index services, and reviewing sources. Inclusion of Newfound Press titles in these resources will affirm the quality of the publication and increase citation counts, two important factors for faculty advancement in academic disciplines. Librarians are an audience whose knowledge of Newfound Press will advance the international mission to facilitate scholarly communications. One of the first marketing tasks accomplished when the Newfound Press Web site went live was to notify the ARL Office of Scholarly Communications [16].



Conclusion

This is an opportune time to launch a digital press. If every research library worldwide were to provide similar services, access to scholarship could become more transparent than ever before. The name Newfound Press was suggested by UT English Literature Librarian, Steven Harris (now at Utah State University) who was inspired by the landscape of the Great Smoky Mountains at the southern edge of Knoxville, Tennessee. Newfound Gap lies at the crest of the mountains on the Tennessee–North Carolina boundary. Like the geographic explorations of the region’s early settlers, Newfound Press is venturing into a territory filled with possibilities beyond the scope of our imaginations. The University of Tennessee hopes that other libraries will share the vision of Newfound Press and join in expanding open access online publishing throughout the world. 

About the author

Linda L. Phillips is Alumni Distinguished Service Professor and Head, Collection Development & Management at the University of Tennessee Libraries. She is an adjunct professor in UT's School of Information Sciences, co-chairs the University's Scholarly Communications Committee, and has served as a reviewer for the ARL/ACRL Scholarly Communications Institute. Phillips is co-author of a monograph on collaborative collection development.

Notes

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Contents Index



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Newfound Press: The digital imprint of the University of Tennessee Libraries by Linda L. Phillips
First Monday, Volume 12 Number 10 - 1 October 2007
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