How to publish your first book

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Introducing Dr Alan Bilton

- Senior lecturer
- English Literature and Creative Writing
- Research interest: contemporary American fiction, silent cinema, and modernism and postmodernism.
- Has written numerous books, such as:
  - *Silent Film Comedy and American Culture*
  - *Anywhere out of the world*
Scholarly book publishing: trends and economics

- Fewer scholarly monographs being published due to declining sales
- Library budgets have been squeezed for 15+ years by rising costs of journals and e-journal collections (so fewer books purchased)
- Publishers prefer to publish popular textbooks with a global audience
- Scholarly monographs can be published if they have a target audience, for example a textbook for Masters courses
- The REF (Research Excellence Framework) is more orientated towards journal publications than book publications.
Why write a book?

• Your research is not complete until you’ve disseminated your findings
• For your own enjoyment and satisfaction.  
• Your research is important (useful to have good comments from examiner to pass on to the publisher).
• For professional advancement as a scholar.
• To satisfy the demands of the funding body.
Journal article(s) or book?

• Quicker and easier to write and publish a journal article
• Having a few journal articles published can be impressive
• You might be asked to publish a journal article
• Some theses are not suitable for publishing as a book
How to publish

• Traditional commercial publishers
• University publishers
• Learned Societies, e.g. Royal Historical Society
• Look out for competitions, prizes, awards for “early career researchers” eg Leverhulme Trust
• Open Access publishing
  
  Directory of Open Access Books
  OAPEN Library
Which publisher?

Whether you want to publish a textbook or more specialist scholarly book..

• Who publishes the books you read most regularly?
• Check out their websites – what advice do they offer potential authors?
• Check out their catalogues to see if they cover your discipline.
• Scholarly publishers – Wiley, Sage, Taylor & Francis (including Routledge), Psychology Press, Policy Press, University presses e.g. University of Wales Press
Avoid vanity publishers!

- Avoid “vanity publishers” who will charge a lot and you will lose your Intellectual Property rights.
Peer review

• Check that the publisher you choose has a rigorous peer review process.
• Peer review can give useful feedback on the proposed book.
Turning a PhD thesis into a book

- Consider your audience – no longer just one or two examiners
- Emphasize the main argument.
- Change the tone and style? More accessible language?
Further reading

‘Publishing your thesis’ (in the Institute of Germanic Studies’ research training pages)

‘10 point guide to dodging publishing pitfalls’, *Times Higher Education*, 6 March 2014 (available on the Web)

‘How to get ahead in publishing’, Guardian blogpost giving publishers’ advice

‘Publishing your doctoral thesis’ by Nicola Parkin, Commissioning Editor (International Relations), Routledge

Springer’s Author and reviewer tutorials (mainly for science writers)
Can we make more book chapters open access? (Research News from Swansea University Library blogpost)

Self-publish and be damned: a call for radical publishing alternatives (a blogpost by Dr Lesley Hulonce)
Books


Nicola F. Johnson, *Publishing from your PhD: Negotiating a crowded jungle* (Farnham: Gower, 2011) – available online via iFind