‘Now’s Not the Moment for a Press’:

Relaunching (maybe) a University Press amidst financial tensions

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9th September 2026

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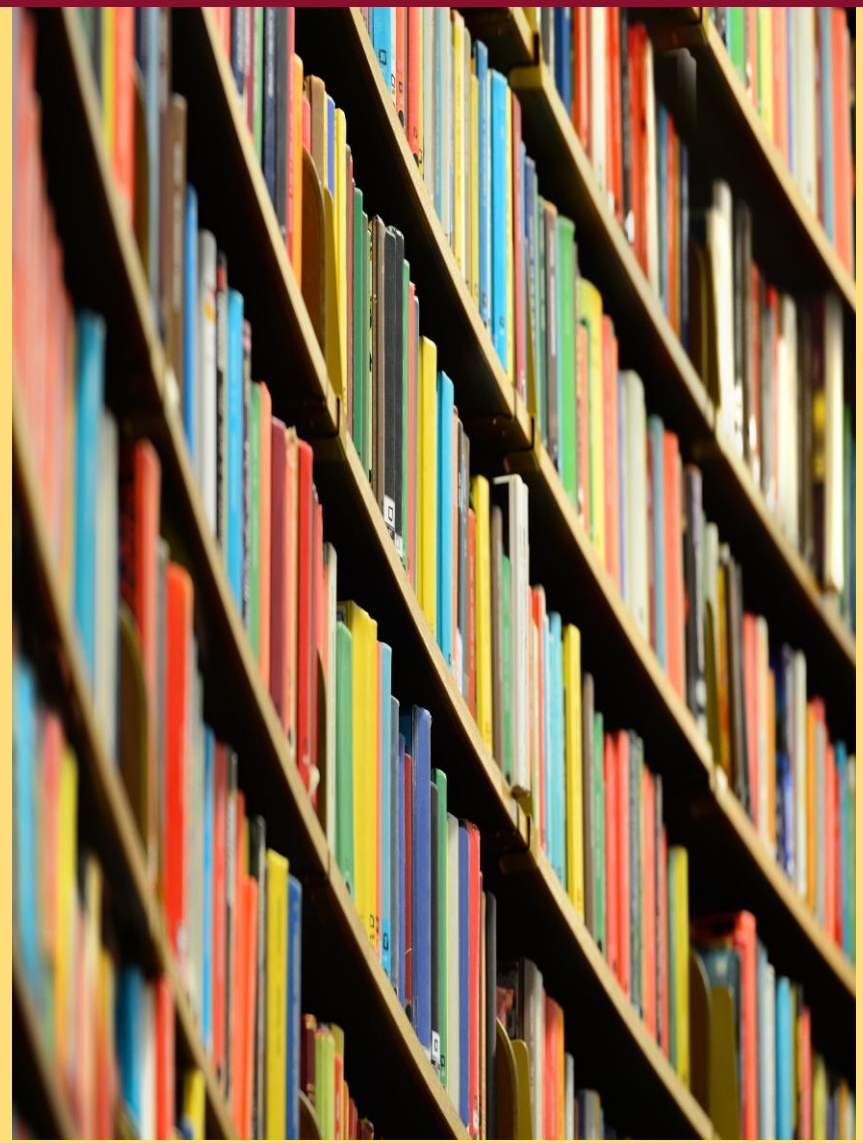
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

University of Warwick Press



The Presses ~~that~~ Who Were

Hartnell

The foundational incarnation…

Established mid-60s, for profit physical press

Not a core priority, success & awareness limited

Went on indefinite hiatus for…reasons

The new direction incarnation

The same name, but a very different proposition

(Re)established 2013 as OA, not-for-profit, digital press

Under-resourced but achieved some notable successes

Troughton

Pertwee

The call-to-action incarnation

Research report, workshop, community survey to highlight issues

Reconsidering what we were, contrasting with press landscape

A foundation for evolution & recommendations for wholesale review

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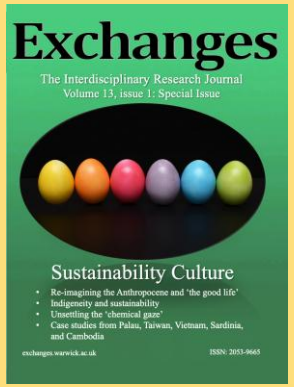
The Press As Is

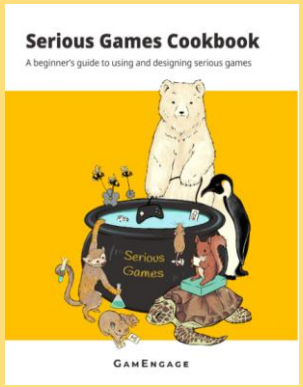
- Library-led diamond open-access (no fees) publishing project supporting digital only publishing
- Hosts 10 active research journals run by depts or groups of scholars (mostly Warwick based)
- Plus 23 ‘books’ & short-form publications including reports, practitioner guides, proceedings etc.,
- Tens of Thousands of downloads annually & contributors from around the globe

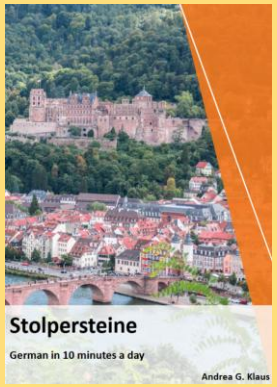
Dedicated to Supporting OA Principles & Practices

Aims to Ensure Quality

Seeks to Support Innovation in Publishing







publishing.warwick.ac.uk

journals.warwick.ac.uk

Open Institutional Publishing Association

A community of practice for open institutional publishers in the UK, driving change in academic publishing

WHO WE ARE:

- 'New' university presses, library publishers, open journal services
- Not-for-profit open access publishing, mission-driven
- Affiliated with institutions

WHAT WE DO:

- Share information, 'best practice', training on open access publishing
- Build partnerships with others in the wider OA and scholarly comms communities
- Advocate for the expertise and value of institutional open access publishing

Find out more:
www.oipauk.org / @oipassoc.bsky.social

Change, and Not a Moment Too Soon – Our Current Incarantion

Year long strategic review project (Sept ‘25 – Sept ‘26)

Business Case on why, what & how to evolve

Ethnographic methods to gather perceptions & practices

Proposing models, methods & approaches for future operations

Tom Baker

Conversations with new university presses

No ‘secret sauce for success’ but shared ideological underpinnings

Alignment with institutional mission strongly represented

Direction of travel & appetite tested through committee strata

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New University Press-i-verse: Common Challenges

Achieving & Reflecting Institutional Alignment

Reaching Local & External Visibility

Countering Subaltern Esteem Perceptions

Encountering Disengagement & Limited Buy In

Maintaining Sustainability & Sufficient Resource

Ensuring Originality & Quality

Managing Inflated Expectations

Maintaining Content & Publications Pipeline

Demonstrating Institutional Value

Knowing Me, Knowing Who

Exploring perceptions, values & imperatives

Invisibility or misunderstanding common place

Positive response & understanding of potential value

Growing evidence base of community ‘desire’ for Press

Significant range of potential publishing projects

Managing expectations likely to be a larger challenge

Awareness of Press growing as unanticipated bonus

Promotional effort needed still when(if) relaunched

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Community Conversations: Perceptions

- Press Awareness Uniformly Low
  - Considerable interest uncovered with a surprising range of opportunities & even some outline pitches
  - Keenness for greater academic engagement & involvement
- Plethora of Potential Formats
  - Research monographs limited local contributor appeal but short-forms more desirable
  - Moderate interest in print, & support/collaboration desires for more experimental publishing endeavours too

- Disciplinary Differences Apparent
  - Press possibilities & 'buy-in' greater for some fields than others
  - Appetites for developmental opportunities (writing, editing, publishing, rights management etc.,) strongly represented
- Publishing Excellence Imperative
  - Scholars Q1/Q2 routes driver for 'REFable' content is a key tension
  - Questions around facilitating what we 'can' over what we 'could or should' publish
  - Costs & poor-experiences with commercial publishing routes a concern...& Press opportunity

Friends & ‘Foes’

Funding & resource major concerns

‘Is this the financial moment for a press?’

Legacy items & perceptions of ‘prestige’

Cancellation…still looms large

Champions identified across the institution

Strategic support & evidence base underling arguments

Editorial Board desired to capitalise on these figures

Recognition of value & potential for a ‘regenerated’ Press

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Looking Towards the Future

The future remains uncertain…for now

Support for two years of renewal seems possible

Increased staff base to support expansion of activities

Time & space to really build on the possibilities & potential

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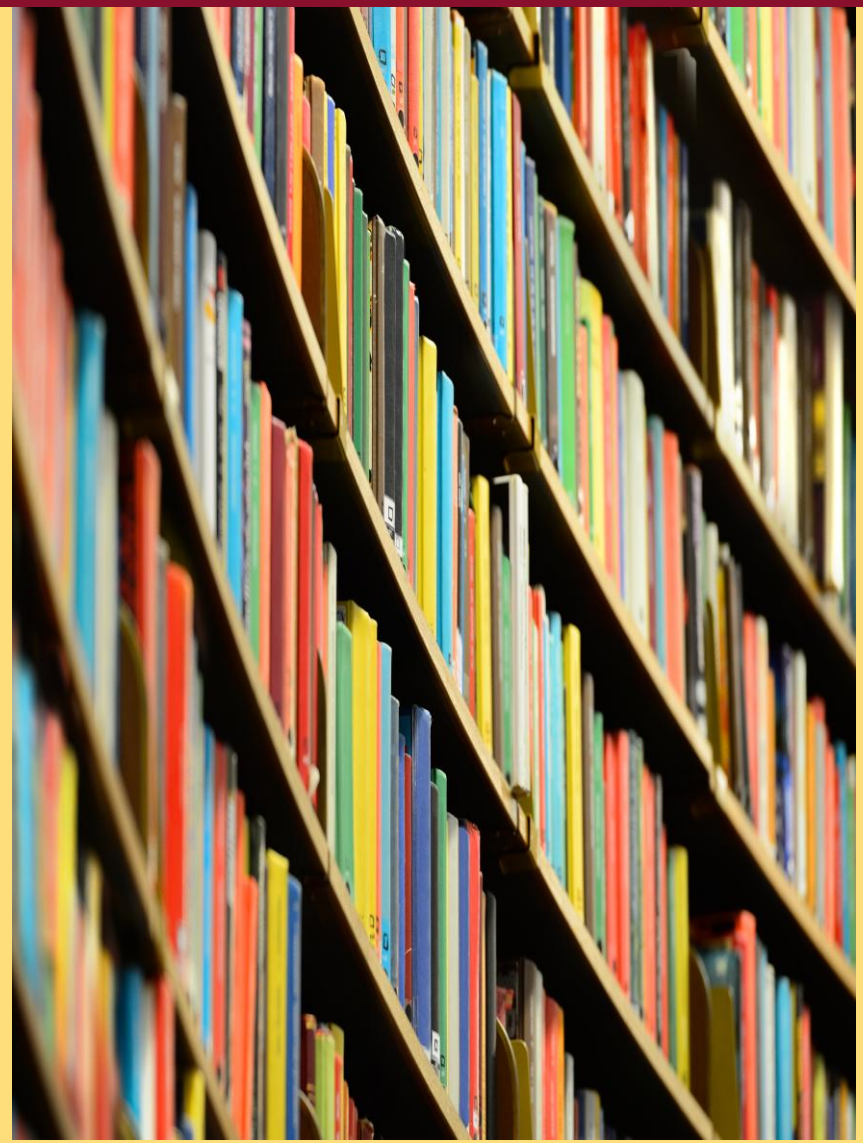
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