Case Study: Launching and Marketing ReadThinkKnow.ca

by

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Abstract

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down in-person events, such as the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) Congress, an annual gathering of Canada's scholars in the humanities and social sciences and an important marketing event for university presses, a team of marketing directors from three of Canada's university presses came together to create ReadThinkKnow (RTK). Intended to provide presses with a platform for promotion, RTK is a website that compiles and displays all Canadian university press titles in one place. This report sheds light on the launch and marketing processes of the RTK project, its successful soft launch at Congress 2023, and the challenges faced in aggregating press titles into one digital space. In addition, this report offers recommendations for ensuring the longevity of the RTK website, as it could be a valuable resource for presses and users alike, supporting the spread and discovery of Canadian academic research.

Keywords: university presses; Canadian academic publishing; book marketing; academic book marketing

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Introduction

University presses have been supporting the publication of academic research since the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Jagodzinski 2008). The first university presses were at Cornell University, first established in 1869, and John Hopkins, founded in 1878 (Jagodzinski 2008). In Canada, the first university press, University of Toronto Press, was established in 1901 (University of Toronto Press, n.d.). Since that time, the industry has grown and there are now 17 university presses in operation in Canada, many of which publish in the humanities and social sciences (Association of Canadian University Presses/Association des presses universitaires canadiennes (ACUP/APUC), n.d.).

A university press is a publisher, and acts just like any large publisher, such as Penguin Random House or Douglas & McIntyre—they acquire, design, produce, market, and sell books. However, university presses differ from trade publishers in their connection to their academic institution and subsequent roots in the academic landscape. Thus, it may appear that a university press publication may not be something you pick up to read on vacation, but while many presses specialize in particular research subject areas, many presses also publish trade crossover titles that are of interest to a much wider readership than just academic audiences.

Scholarly publishing continues to be a strong and dynamic industry. Major developments in digital publishing, conversations about open access, and post-COVID publishing practices, have not hurt the industry, but instead have forced it to transition; a transition from primarily print to a hybrid model, marrying print and digital formats (Greco 2020, 7). This transition has seen an increased number of scholarly books and journals, which Albert N. Greco, a publishing expert at the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University, USA, postulates is an indication "…that there is a need, and a dramatic need, to publish and disseminate important research in the humanities, the social sciences, and the eclectic science, technology, and medical fields." (Greco 2020, 7). Thus, it appears that scholarly publishing, in the post pandemic era, has an opportunity to grow further.

The growth of scholarly publishing, and university press publishing in particular, is typically reliant on market support. To this end, all of Canada's university presses are

members of the Association of Canadian University Presses/Association des presses universitaires canadiennes (ACUP/APUC). The association provides support to publishers and engages with scholarly stakeholders to ensure the continued development of the academic book market in Canada. Its mission extends from promoting the broadest publication and distribution of Canadian research to refining funding models that ensure the continued viability of Canada's university presses (ACUP/APUC, n.d.). As a member of the Association of University Presses (AUP), ACUP/APUC is part of an international community of publishing houses and publishing professionals, which serves to connect member presses with a broader audience.

Another important player within the Canadian university press landscape is the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS), a nonprofit organization "…with a membership of over 160 Canadian universities, colleges, and scholarly associations representing 91,000 researchers and graduate students" (Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, n.d., "About the Federation"). The federation provides the humanities and social sciences community with resources, promotes priorities to policy makers and the federal government, and acts as the voice of the community overall, ensuring that more voices in academia can be heard and more research can be shared. One of the federation's most important initiatives is its annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, the largest academic gathering in Canada and one of the largest in the world (Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, n.d., "About Congress"). Congress takes place each year, typically at the end of May, at a host university. An agglomeration of Canadian scholarly associations, presses, scholars, and graduate students attend, participating in various panels, workshops, cultural events, and networking opportunities. For university presses, Congress is an excellent opportunity to share new releases and book lists, interact with authors and other scholars, and garner a large amount of sales. At each Congress, a designated space is created for presses and other exhibitors to interact, and set up booths and display their wares, in what is known as Congress "Expo" (formerly known as the "Book Fair") (Craven 2016). It is through events, such as Expo, that critical conversations can be held, key partnerships can be made, and presses can have the opportunity to showcase and sell their books.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress Expo was held virtually in 2020. The format of this virtual Congress Expo was similar to in-person events of the past, but removed any opportunity to interact due to its virtual nature. This lack of interactivity impacted the success of the event; ultimately, very few presses participated and the event had very low engagement from virtual attendees (Laraine Coates, in conversation with the author, July 26, 2023). Thus, a return to in-person Congress in 2023 was a welcome change for attendees, especially presses who struggled to showcase and sell books in a virtual environment.

Congress 2023 was held at York University's Keele and Glendon campuses in Toronto from May 27 to June 2. Over 10,000 scholars, graduate students, and the like participated in the event, and 12 of the 17 ACUP/APUC presses attended, setting up booths for Expo (Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, n.d., "Congress 2023 Archive"). It was at Congress 2023 that a new project was launched in response to the fruitless virtual Expo, but to also build upon the momentum of in-person events, such as Congress. This project was ReadThinkKnow (RTK), a resource intended to raise the profile of Canadian university presses by providing them with a platform to showcase their books digitally and expand their footprint to new audiences.

This paper will analyze the journey of RTK from ideation to official launch, including my work on the project as an intern at UBC Press. In doing so, it will articulate the intended value of the project. RTK aspires to be a valuable and important resource, providing a platform for Canadian university presses to make academic knowledge and research more accessible, while showcasing and promoting their books so they can be more easily discovered by readers. It is also hopes to offer value for readers who can more easily find Canadian research because it is all in one place—they do not have to consult multiple resources to find what they may be looking for. To achieve these goals, the RTK website needed to first be shared to build an audience, and then plans needed to be put in place to retain that audience going forward.

Section 1: The ReadThinkKnow (RTK) Initiative to Raise the Profile of Canadian University Presses

ReadThinkKnow.ca (RTK) is a collaborative project created under the direction of ACUP/APUC. The RTK website compiles all Canadian university press titles in one location, providing users with a directory of new titles in a variety of subject areas. The purpose of the site and its previously mentioned organization is to showcase university press publications, and make it easier for scholars, course instructors, academic librarians, and general readers to discover Canadian research and scholarship, and find materials in a certain subject area—they would be able to find academic titles and new releases in one place, instead of searching through a variety of individual press websites. However, RTK does not seek to divert traffic from university press websites, instead it points users back to individual websites to learn more about a press and make purchases.

RTK was "soft launched" at Congress in 2023, the first in-person Congress event since 2019, at which UBC Press and many RTK participating presses were in attendance; the purpose of this launch was to showcase RTK as a minimum viable product to the ACUP/APUC executive and garner support and enthusiasm for the project moving forward. With this support secured, not only from the ACUP/APUC executive, but also from the participating presses, RTK will be officially launched in November 2023 during University Press Week (Laraine Coates, in conversation with the author, July 26, 2023).

Prior to soft launch, the RTK website had been in development for over two years, under the direction of marketing managers from three ACUP/APUC presses— Laraine Coates (UBC Press), Clare Hitchens (Wilfrid Laurier University Press), and Erin Rolfs (McGill-Queens University Press); after Rolfs left her position at McGill-Queens University Press in 2021, Alison Cobra (University of Calgary Press) joined the RTK team. The idea for an online resource like RTK was built upon virtual Congress Expo events of 2021 and 2022, and marketing campaigns such as "Congress from your Couch," a digital outreach strategy created by UBC Press in 2020 to fill the gap left by the cancelation of that year's FHSS Congress due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Shaw

2020, 16–17). The cancellation of conferences during the COVID-19 pandemic had significant repercussions on university presses because conferences are one of the most impactful ways for presses to increase sales, launch new books, and introduce authors (Shaw 2020, 16–17). However, while both the virtual Congress Expo events and Congress from your Couch were innovative and creative ideas, Coates indicated that they were not nearly as effective as in-person Congress, and ultimately garnered low sales and limited title discovery. Notwithstanding these discouraging results, the idea for RTK was conceived. RTK aspires to be a collective ACUP/APUC resource that would expand upon the framework of conferences, providing presses with another platform to showcase their books and engage with the scholarly community all year round, instead of only during isolated in-person events.

At a basic level, RTK is a directory/hub for published Canadian academic research, specifically published in the form of books. In digital marketing, directories/content hubs are extremely valuable; not only are they an effective way to organize and display large amounts of content, but they are good for search engine optimization (SEO) (Hardwick 2020). In today's digital landscape, SEO is key for ensuring the visibility of web pages by increasing their rank on search engine results pages (SERPs)—the higher a page ranks on the SERP, the more visibility it has and subsequently, the more clicks it will have, leading to more conversions (Byers 2023). For the most part, successful SEO practices focus on link building, whether internally or externally. A strong foundation of links within a site and/or pointing back to a site indicate to a search engine that that page or website has authority, often resulting in the search engine ranking the page higher in the SERP for a relevant search query (Soulo 2023). Based on this relationship between links and page authority, content hubs are good for SEO because they will have more link authority by the nature of the fact that the website contains a large amount of content, all pointing back to one another (Hardwick 2020). Thus, this link authority increases the perceived value of a website, which can lead to more backlinks, which can increase the authority of the page further. In addition, hubs can also increase user engagement because users can find more information on one website, resulting in more clicks within the website and more time spent on the site overall, sending positive signals to search engines that the site is

useful and authoritative (Hardwick 2020). With this in mind, RTK has an opportunity to become the online "authority" for Canada's university presses as it is rich in title information from all the ACUP/APUC presses, but it also includes useful content in a variety of subject areas. As an information/content hub for Canada's university presses, there is a higher chance that RTK will appear in SERPs and garner higher engagement than each ACUP/APUC university press website would on its own. Thus, RTK may help university press titles be seen in a crowded digital space.

I stepped into my role three weeks before the initial soft launch of RTK at Congress 2023. At the time, the RTK team consisted of Laraine Coates (UBC Press), Clare Hitchens (Wilfrid Laurier University Press), Alison Cobra (University of Calgary Press), and Craig Riggs (ReaderBound). Upon joining the team, I was tasked with compiling content for the website, showcasing more of the titles and projects from the RTK participating presses. After Congress, Coates and I began creating a marketing plan intended to increase awareness of the website: this included compiling lists of contacts at Canadian university libraries and Canadian scholarly societies/associations to share the site with, creating social media content, etc. In addition, I identified grants that the project could apply for, particularly to secure funding for translation. RTK is currently an English-only resource, but the ACUP/APUC executive provided recurring feedback that supporting French titles and website navigation was important for promoting the French-Canadian university presses (Coates, 'Data for French presses', email, 2023).

Section 2: RTK Was Built by ReaderBound to Compile, Showcase, and Sell Participating Press Books

2.1   Similar Collaborative Websites

RTK is not the first collaborative website to display books from multiple publishers. An important inspiration and model for the RTK project was the existing Asociación de Editoriales Universitarias de América Latina y el Caribe (EULAC) website (Laraine Coates, in conversation with the author, July 26, 2023), a non-profit association that seeks to connect the various university publishers in Latin America and promote Latin American university press publications in one place online. EULAC was established in 1987 by Pedro Visconti Clava with the main objectives, among some others, to promote the dissemination of Latin American academic thought, research, and content to engage in and contribute to the global dialogue of scholarship (Asociación de Editoriales Universitarias de América Latina y el Caribe, n.d.). Currently bringing together more than 300 publishers belonging to a variety of national networks and associations, EULAC's mission is to "achieve a Latin America linked and in permanent dialogue with the world" (Asociación de Editoriales Universitarias de América Latina y el Caribe, n.d.). This mission is supported by the EULAC website that is primarily member-facing, providing tools and resources for member publishers, but that also provides the general public with access to EULAC publications in one place. In Canada, ACUP/APUC functions similarly to EULAC in its mission to connect publishers across the country and to provide them with programs and resources that enable the increase of scholarship. However, ACUP/APUC did not compile or showcase the work and publications of presses online until the creation of RTK.

Another similar collaborative website to RTK is 49th Shelf, a website that compiles Canadian books, making it easier for readers to discover Canadian books in all genres, from publishers large and small from across the country, and that is the website's main objective: "to make it easier for readers to discover Canadian books" (49th Shelf, n.d.). The 49th Shelf website allows users to search for a specific book or author, while also offering curated book lists and categories. Before the RTK soft launch

at Congress 2023 and as it stands before official launch during University Press Week in November 2023, the RTK website functions most similarly to 49th Shelf and looks to the EULAC website for inspiration for what resources RTK could offer in the future. In the brainstorming and wireframing stages of the RTK development process, existing resources such as the EULAC and 49th Shelf websites were important examples of what could be achieved in promoting Canadian scholarship online.

2.2　The ReaderBound Platform

The RTK website is hosted by ReaderBound, a Canadian web design platform specializing in creating rich websites for book publishers. ReaderBound was created specifically to meet the needs of book publishers that require both sophisticated content management and robust e-commerce platforms for their websites (ReaderBound, n.d.). In addition to providing publishers with a specific digital foundation, ReaderBound also provides publishers with a dedicated support team to assist in the creation, launch, and marketing of their websites. ReaderBound hosts a variety of Canada's university press websites including the University of Regina Press website and Memorial University Press website, and it has also built more comprehensive platforms, such as 49th Shelf and All Lit Up, a website for the discovery and purchase of emerging Canadian literature.

　　Choosing a web developer for RTK was an important point of discussion in early RTK conversations between Coates, Rolfs, and Hitchens. Funding amounting in $50,000 from the BC Arts Council had been secured and it was important to determine how best to allocate funds, particularly where web hosting was concerned (Laraine Coates, in conversation with the author, July 26, 2023). According to Coates, ReaderBound was on the RTK team's radar, in addition to Supadu, a web design, data solutions, and e-commerce provider for trade publishers and university presses based out of the United States. ReaderBound and Supadu are both leading web developer names in the publishing industry, and the importance of publisher-specific website builders cannot be overstated. Publisher websites need to digest and display large amounts of ONIX metadata, which is typically facilitated through a data aggregation platform, such as BiblioShare in Canada (BookNet Canada, n.d.). While any e-

commerce web developer could likely work with this data, the value of developers like ReaderBound and Supadu lies in their familiarity with the book industry and in book metadata practices. The RTK team ultimately decided to work with ReaderBound because it was a more cost-effective option at the time, and ReaderBound is a Canadian web developer and thus has experience and expertise in Canadian publishing (Laraine Coates, in conversation with the author, July 26, 2023). Especially in the case of RTK, where hundreds of titles from various Canadian university presses would be displayed, this expertise was a particular asset.

2.3   Process and Challenge of Displaying Titles from Multiple Presses

In 2020, upwards of 70 percent of book sales were made online, an increase of 20 percent from 2017 and an increase of 40 percent since 2011 (Curcic 2023). To support the prevalence of online book sales, the publishing industry relies on metadata to communicate information about books between publishers, distributors, retailers, and more in the online book selling landscape.

There are four types of metadata that describe different aspects of a book: bibliographic, product, content, audience, and commerce (Book Industry Study Group 2021, 2:03). On a basic level, basic bibliographic and product metadata elements should be provided for a book, including some of the following elements: a book's title, ISBN, format, retail price, sales rights, and cover image (Book Industry Study Group 2021, 5:32). These elements, including many more, are translated into what one would see on a book seller's website (Book Industry Study Group 2021, 12:20); thus, everything, for example, that is displayed for a book title on the UBC Press website is contained in the book's metadata. While not all types of metadata are required, the more data that can be provided contributes to higher sales—in some cases, 75 percent higher sales (Turner 2017).

Throughout the RTK planning and production process, it was clear that the website needed to support a lot of metadata, particularly because it would be displaying titles from multiple presses. While this was not necessarily an unfamiliar process for ReaderBound based on the company's past work on projects like 49th Shelf or Livres Canada Books, compiling metadata from multiple presses requires specific expertise.

To facilitate the aggregation of metadata from participating ACUP/APUC presses, ReaderBound relies upon BiblioShare (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023), a quality-controlled system that collects and disseminates bibliographic metadata using ONIX, the universal structure used to communicate book metadata. BiblioShare is a product from BookNet Canada that validates ONIX files to ensure quality and then collects them all in one place, through which publishers, retailers, libraries, and other interested parties can share, update, and pull data (BookNet Canada, n.d.). For the RTK project, ReaderBound was able to pull relevant BiblioShare metadata from multiple presses, but that did not, however, grant ReaderBound with access to individual press metadata to make any edits or updates. Instead, presses needed to be contacted individually regarding specific metadata updates or edits for their titles, and it was difficult to know when and if presses would make those edits or updates at all.

While presses may view RTK as a useful resource, they have existing demands to adjust their metadata to aid in the success of their seasonal book lists. At UBC Press, for example, the team must regularly account for tight publishing season schedules to meet metadata deadlines imposed by Indigo (Strobel 2016, 15–17). Thus, it is only natural that such immediate needs affecting the bottom line will be prioritized over metadata updates for RTK. This could affect the RTK project moving forward because incomplete or incorrect metadata, at least for the purposes of the RTK website, could diminish the user experience, especially if key details about titles are missing.

In the metadata collection process for RTK, there were frequent omissions in cover images from participating presses. In many cases, RTK did not receive cover images for many titles, posing a challenge when, in the discoverability and subsequent sales of books, covers are extremely important, especially in an online marketplace (See Fig 1).
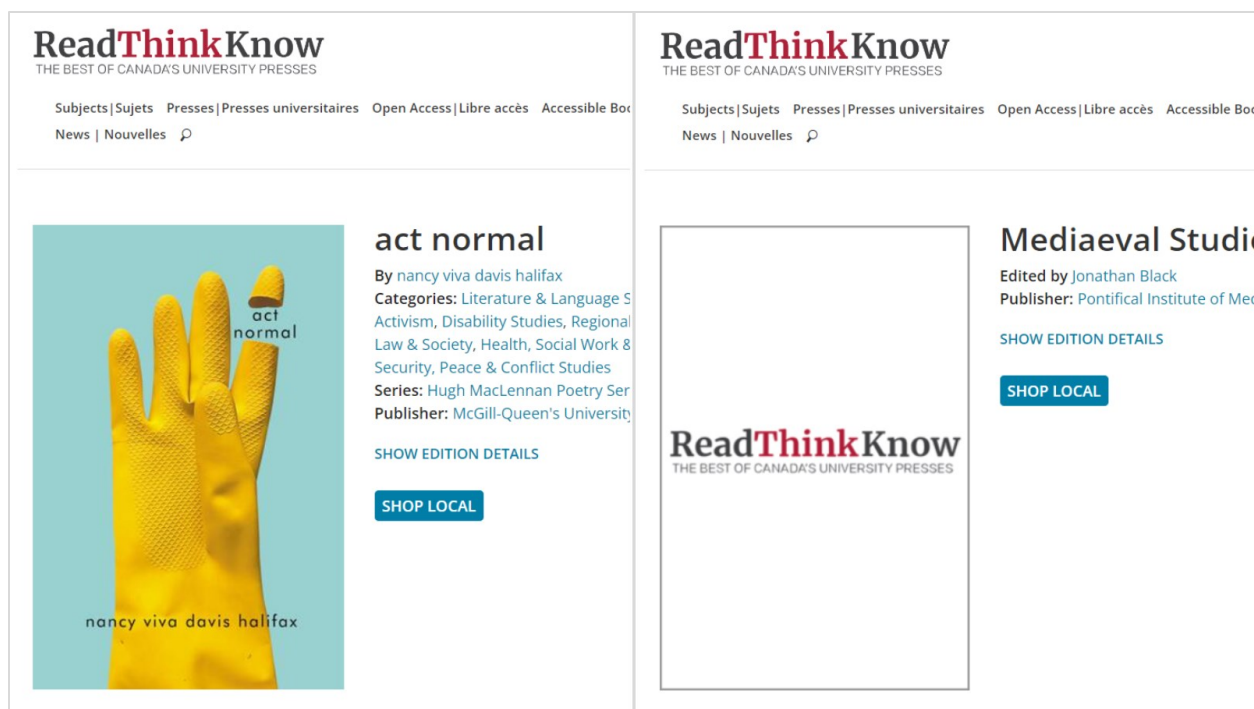
Figure 1. An example of a title with a book cover and a title without a book cover. Screenshots from the RTK website (ReadThinkKnow.ca). https://readthinkknow.ca/Books/A/act-normal; https://readthinkknow.ca/Books/M/Mediaeval-Studies-78-2016.

In fact, according to Nielsen research in 2021, books with a cover image sold almost twice as many copies as those that did not have a cover image (Nielsen, n.d.). Thus, presses had to be contacted directly and individually to upload covers via BiblioShare's FTP (File Transfer Protocol) server. With the assistance of Craig Riggs, I drafted an email that could be sent to specific presses when covers were missing. The email included easy-to-follow steps for preparing files for FTP transfer for BiblioShare. However, even with carefully crafted emails, it was beyond our control whether or not presses would make necessary updates.

While displaying titles and covers from multiple presses is vital to the mission and success of the RTK project, titles also needed to be organized on the RTK website, enabling users to more easily discover titles. Organizing titles posed its own set of challenges because RTK would need to combine multiple university press catalogues, with differing categorization standards for titles, into one place. In the trade publishing industry, most publishers use BISAC codes to classify books in specific subject

categories (Book Industry Study Group, n.d.). These BISAC codes are important indicators for book sellers because they communicate where a book should be categorized or shelved. While BISAC is commonly used in trade publishing, it is less common within academic publishing where many publishers create their own specific schema to categorize books online; although more and more academic publishers appear to be adopting the BISAC categorization standard (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023). To accommodate for a variety of press subject schemas, RTK had to create a standard of its own, resulting in a custom RTK subject schema (displayed as 20 different "Subject" categories on the website), into which press titles could be categorized. For Riggs and the ReaderBound team, taking all the press catalogs and relating them in the RTK subject schema was an organic process in which publisher data had to be manually mapped to the custom RTK schema, requiring a constant fine-tuning of the RTK schema itself. This process will likely need to be revisited periodically moving forward, as incoming titles will need to be categorized and new subject categories may need to be created to facilitate the expansion of academic disciplines.

Considering both the process of contacting presses to update metadata, specifically book covers, and the process of categorizing press catalogs within the RTK schema, there is an appreciable amount of manual work that could be difficult to maintain moving forward. While this likely would not threaten the livelihood of the RTK project overall, it could impact participating press enthusiasm, especially if metadata update or edit requests are frequent. Luckily, most press titles and covers appear to display correctly, but the RTK team would be wise to consider how much is being asked of participating presses, especially when the RTK project is meant to augment their efforts and serve them as a promotional tool.

Section 3: The RTK Content Strategy

To prepare RTK for soft launch at Congress 2023, populating the website with content was key, providing users with the opportunity to engage with the scholarly book community beyond the discovery of press titles. In my first weeks as an intern at UBC Press, I discussed the RTK content strategy with Coates, marketing manager at UBC Press, which included focusing on the homepage, press pages, and subject pages of the website, and putting as much helpful and relevant content as possible on these pages. Bolstering these pages with content was important for demonstrating to the ACUP/APUC board how engaging RTK could be, securing the future of the project while also contributing to an important aspect of RTK's mission: to make Canadian scholarship and research more accessible.

A successful example of creating/providing rich content includes 49th Shelf. Mugo Web, the web development studio behind ReaderBound and development team for 49th Shelf, outlines that the 49th Shelf website currently accommodates "… 100s of 1000s of supporting content pieces [and] the site is in constant development, rolling out new features and incrementally improving on a monthly basis" (Mugo Web, n.d.). While Mugo Web does not provide specific data points to illustrate the effects of the 49th Shelf content strategy, Riggs, a project lead on 49th Shelf, is quoted by Mugo Web, stating that after its first full year of operations, the 49th Shelf website "… has been widely praised by industry stakeholders and readers alike as an important new community hub and resource, and the development of the platform has resulted in some valuable new IP that has broader application in the promotion of books online and the enabling of reader communities in Canada and elsewhere" (Mugo Web, n.d.). While 49th Shelf was launched in 2011, its function has become similar to that of Goodreads over the years, creating a community of Canadian readers that post reviews and ratings on the books they're reading (Douglas 2017, under "Comparisons With …; KT"). In addition to creating space for readers to engage with book titles, 49th Shelf publishes a variety of blog articles, such as "Book of the Year" posts or articles on other topics of interest. These blog articles, as well as other content series, are important touchpoints for website visitors before buying a book, and Kiley Turner, 49th Shelf managing editor in conversation with Publishing Perspectives, states that tracking website visitor "… exits

via the buy links …" has indicated that "… visits to 49thShelf.com influence tens of thousands of direct and indirect buying decisions every year" (Douglas 2017, under "Site and Sales; KT"). Based on the success of 49th Shelf, a solid and specific content strategy could help RTK become a space for the academic community to gather, inviting the spread of ideas, while also supporting book sales for participating presses.

Creating a content strategy can be a complex and intimidating process, especially in a digital landscape that is continually changing and adapting. However, there are general content marketing practices that are tried and true, such as creating and sharing valuable content that is relevant and meets a consumer need (in the form of blog articles, videos, newsletters, etc.), as well as consistently creating and sharing content on a schedule to give your audience a reason to keep coming back for more (Harris 2022). Companies and organizations use content marketing to accomplish a variety of goals, but some of the most common goals include the following: building brand awareness and being discoverable by the right audience, building a subscribed audience (particularly through newsletter subscriptions) and driving audience loyalty (ensuring that your audience will keep coming back and will help build the overall audience) (Harris 2022). Considering these best practices, I sought to aggregate helpful and relevant content on various pages of the website, creating more opportunities for audience engagement and increased brand awareness.

3.1   RTK Homepage

One of the most important pages on the RTK website is the homepage because it is typically the first page that users will see and may dictate whether or not a user chooses to remain on the website and explore other pages. As the RTK team, we were provided access to the backend of the RTK website where we would be able to manage content and media for the site. Certain types of pages were already defined in the backend (landing page, documentation page, etc.) with specific types of media and widgets that could be added, depending on page type. For the purposes of the RTK homepage, defined as a landing page in the backend, I focused on creating banners and adding news and social widgets. Banner templates were available and we were able to easily add images and content, which could then be published immediately or scheduled for

publication at a later date—a useful tool which I took advantage of so that I could create multiple banners at one time and then schedule each one for publication, ensuring that the website was regularly featuring new content (See Fig 2). Similarly, content could be added to the news widget, which would then be scheduled so that new content would appear each day. Before Congress, I focused on curating the news widget with announcements and/or press releases about different awards that presses and their respective titles had recently received. In most cases I would feature the book title, the press, and the name of the received award (see Fig 3). The purpose of populating the news widget with award content was to demonstrate RTK's utility as a promotional platform for presses, while also alerting website users to award-winning titles. In addition to banners and the news widget, the RTK homepage features a social widget with a rolling Twitter feed, aggregating all the individual participating press Twitter feeds into one place.

No matter if content was featured in a banner or in a widget, it was important that content was kept fresh, indicating to users that the website is up-to-date and providing valuable and relevant content.
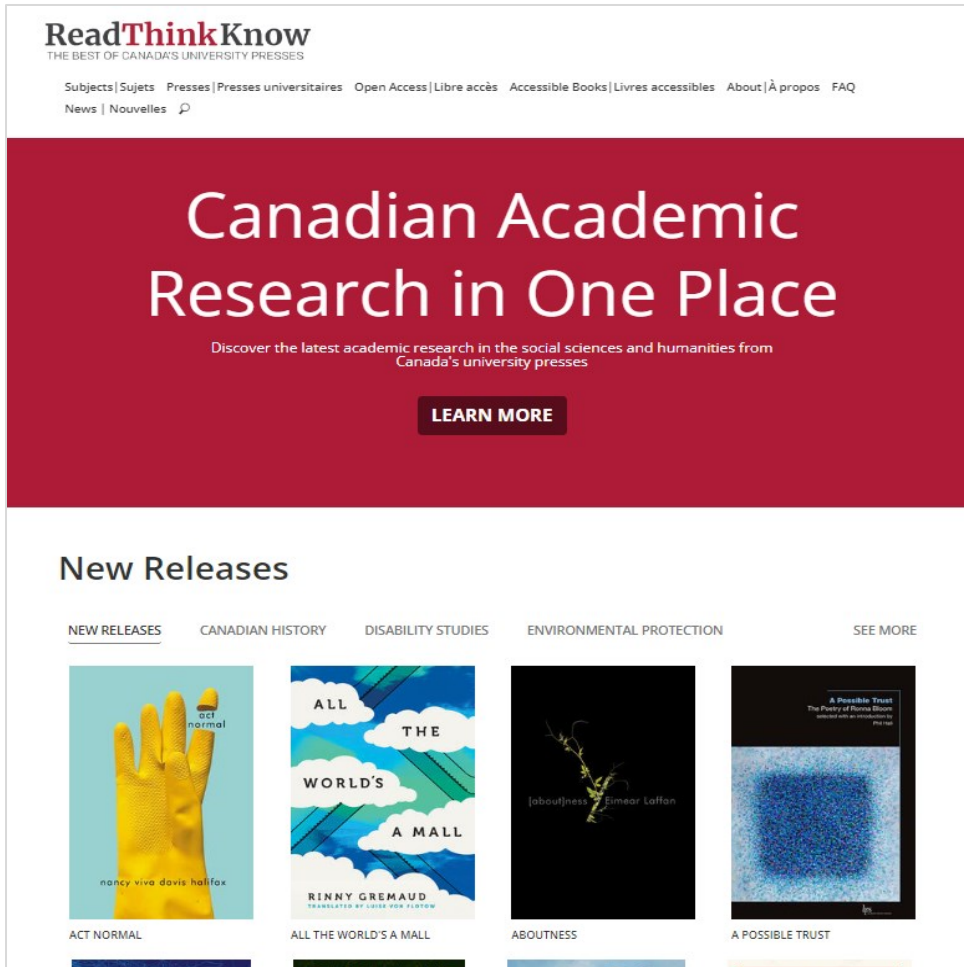
Figure 2. Screenshot of the RTK website homepage, featuring a banner made by the author from available templates. Page also features "New Releases" (ReadThinkKnow.ca). https://readthinkknow.ca/.
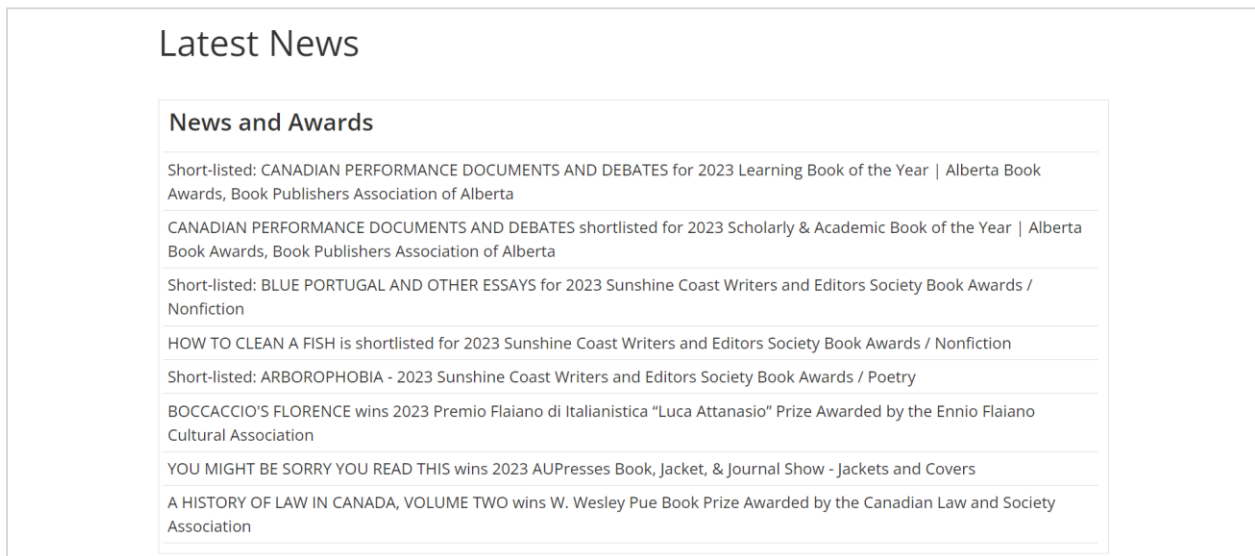
Figure 3. Screenshot of the "Latest News"/ "News and Awards" widget on the RTK homepage (ReadThinkKnow.ca). https://readthinkknow.ca/.

3.2 RTK Press Pages

Beyond the RTK homepage, the "Presses" pages—pages dedicated to each participating press—were a priority. When I joined the RTK project, individual press pages only featured the press name, press logo, and some press titles. As part of our content strategy, we recognized that it would be valuable to include a short description of each press on its corresponding press page. I wrote these short descriptions for each press, which were then sent to presses for feedback. In addition to the short press descriptions, the decision was made to include "exam copies" and "manuscript proposal submission" links for each press (see Fig 4). The decision to include these links was based largely on the assumption that these pages on individual press websites are likely the most trafficked.
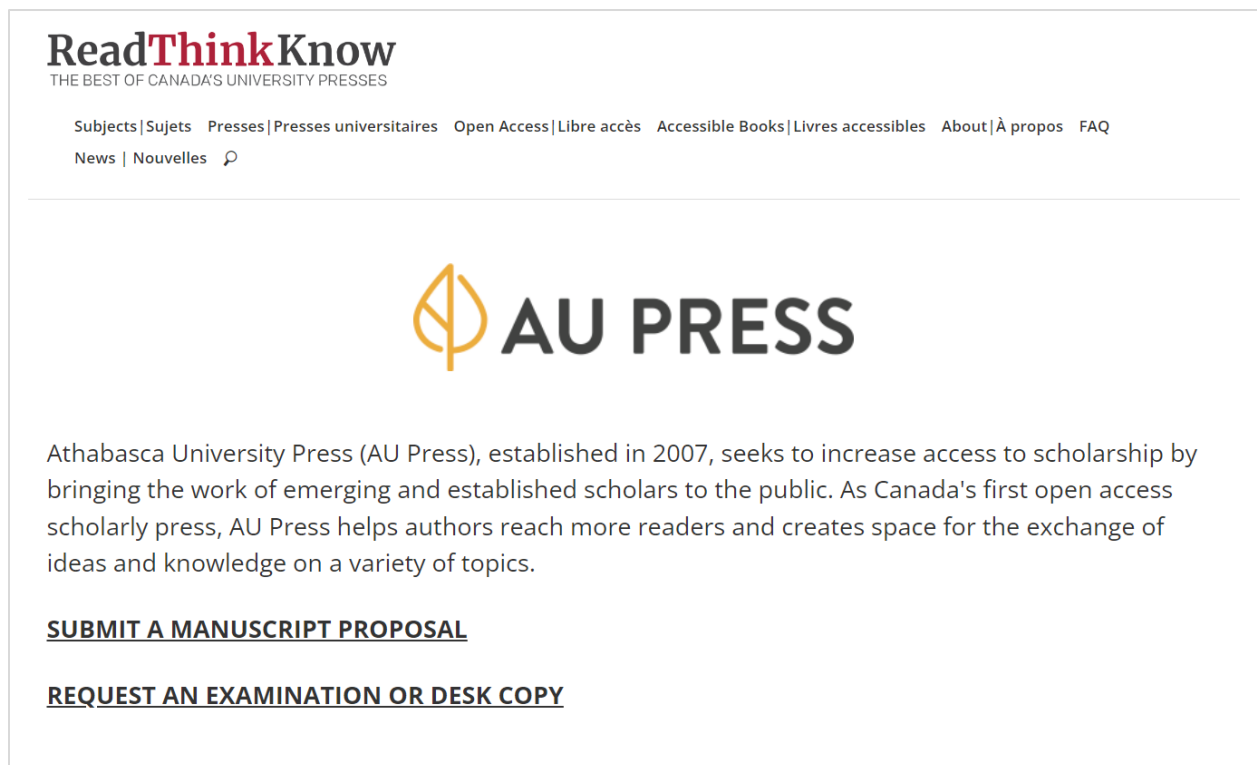
Figure 4. Screenshot of the Athabasca University Press (AU Press) page, featuring a short description of the press, a "Submit a Manuscript Proposal" link, and a "Request an Examination or Desk Copy" link (ReadThinkKnow.ca). https://readthinkknow.ca/Publishers/A/Athabasca-University-Press.

Examination copies (exam copies) are for course instructors who are considering adopting a book for their course. These examination copies are a key part of academic publishing, especially in the textbook industry, and account for 10 percent of any

textbook production run (Davis and Usry 2011). While the textbook industry certainly varies from university press publishing, the statistic above, however outdated, indicates that exam copies are an important part of academic publishing marketing practices. Thus, on the RTK site, where the target audience is scholars, including course instructors and professors, it seemed appropriate to include a link to the exam copy pages of each university press on their individual press pages. In addition to the exam copy link on each press page, I included a link to each participating press' manuscript submission page. Referring again to RTK's target audience of scholars, this audience would include prospective authors and researchers looking for a press to publish with. For authors, RTK could make it easier to find more information on how to submit a manuscript with any of Canada's university presses, increasing the value of the RTK website for its users, while also increasing traffic driven back to each individual press website.

3.3 RTK Subject Pages

The last priority in the soft launch content strategy was populating RTK's "Subjects" pages—pages dedicated to each of the RTK subject fields. On RTK there are 20 subject fields, ranging from Art & Performance Studies to Political Science. Each of the 20 subject fields has a designated landing page, featuring titles classified in that subject, as well as some related sub-categories. When I joined the RTK project, the only content on these pages were the aforementioned featured titles and sub-categories, which did not provide users with much content to peruse. Thus, I was tasked with generating content for each of these subject pages. Because of the narrow timeline before soft launch, it was decided that I would focus on finding relevant content from the participating presses that could be added to the subject pages. Time was spent searching for content from each university press in each subject field, resulting in subject pages that could serve as hubs for resources on specific academic research topics in the social sciences and humanities. Content included a link to a video, article, or podcast created by a participating press (see Fig 5). For each of these content pieces, I wrote a brief description of the resource, but the links point back to their original source, taking RTK users to the press websites where they could read full

articles or listen to podcasts. If I was not able to find much content in a certain subject area, I would provide a link and description to a title on RTK that fell under that subject category.

Figure 5. Screenshot of the RTK Indigenous Studies subject page, including subject-specific content curated by the author from various participating RTK presses (ReadThinkKnow.ca). https://readthinkknow.ca/Browse-by-Subject/Indigenous-Studies.

While each subject page was robust for soft launch, it is important that the content is updated going forward, increasing the value and relevance of the content, as well as the RTK website as a whole.

3.4   Viability of RTK Content Marketing Plan Moving Forward

For soft launch, populating content for the "Presses" and "Subjects" pages was the best place to start, and the robust nature of these pages contributed to RTK's successful reception at Congress 2023 (Coates, 'Data for French presses', email, 2023). After Congress, Coates and I discussed content ideas and strategies that could be implemented in the future, including the creation of book lists, a blog, and a newsletter. Each of these content marketing strategies could include original and shared content, but they would provide more meaningful opportunities to engage with RTK users and to broaden the project's audience. For example, a newsletter could provide a platform to build a RTK subscriber base which could then get RTK books and content sent directly to subscriber inboxes, creating greater opportunity for audience engagement. Furthermore, whether it is a newsletter or blog, the creation of more content avenues can create even more space to showcase the books of the RTK participating presses and facilitate greater access to research and knowledge.

However, the initial approach of aggregating content manually, especially on the subject pages, will likely not be a sustainable content strategy moving forward based solely on the time commitment of searching for and compiling subject-specific content before soft launch. While I was compiling content, I combed through all the participating press websites and made note of relevant content based on the RTK subject categories. Once I had two or three pieces of content to link out to, I would write a description for each that would live on the corresponding RTK subject page. While this approach took time, it was manageable for me during my internship because it was one of my top-priority tasks. However, for the RTK team, manually aggregating content may be challenging because the team members already have priorities and responsibilities within their job descriptions at their presses. Thus, the current content strategy will likely need to be updated and adapted going forward to ensure that the RTK website is consistently providing users with valuable content, while also not burdening the RTK team.

Section 4: Building RTK Brand Awareness

Academic scholarship and publishing are driven by community; a community made up of scholars, authors, editors, reviewers, publishers, etc. that are working together to increase the quality of scholarship overall. This commitment to "adding to and improving the body of scholarship" is the goal of the community (Stewart 2008). A goal that often ends in publication, whether in a journal or in the form of a book, but where, as Stewart emphasizes, publication is not the end itself.

As Coates and I discussed other aspects of a RTK marketing plan, including building brand awareness, we felt it was important to connect with key communities in the Canadian academic landscape. The three communities we decided to focus on first included the RTK participating presses since they already had a vested interest in the project, as well as scholars and academic libraries. The choice to focus on scholars and academic libraries was based on the value that RTK aspires to provide to these communities, as well as the opportunity to connect with established audiences. In an effort to connect with scholars, I compiled lists of Canadian scholarly associations that could be contacted to spread the word about RTK. We took the same approach with Canadian academic libraries, compiling lists of libraries and points-of-contact. With these lists compiled we would then send a brief message introducing RTK and emphasizing its anticipated value for each community, and then encouraging the word to be spread to association members and library patrons.

Overall, Coates and I felt that by communicating with these communities first, we would be able to showcase RTK's potential value, while also reaching more people and building more awareness about the project.

4.1   The Value of RTK for Participating Presses

University presses comprise an important community in Canadian scholarship and academia. For that reason, ACUP/APUC was created to support university presses through various publishing programs, distribution networks, and more, to strengthen Canadian scholarship (ACUP/APUC, n.d.). RTK aims to go further by connecting university presses to other communities beyond themselves—to scholars, libraries,

professors, students, and even general readers, expanding the body of Canadian scholarship, while also allowing presses to showcase their titles.

For participating ACUP/APUC presses, RTK may become a valuable promotional tool. The website showcases newly released titles and makes it easy for users to browse either by subject or press, encouraging the discovery of titles that might not be found otherwise. RTK removes the pressure of individual press promotion and instead amplifies it, allowing users to find titles from a specific press, discover similar titles, and interact more acutely with Canadian scholarship, and thus strengthen the Canadian scholarly community as a whole. RTK drives traffic to individual press websites through links on press pages for manuscript submissions to a certain press or examination copy requests. In addition, users cannot currently buy books through the RTK website and will most often be directed back to the publisher's website to make a purchase. Thus, RTK supports individual presses, but also supports the community of scholarship.

4.2 The Value of RTK for Scholars

Beyond the university presses themselves, scholars make up a large part of Canada's community of scholarship and are an important RTK audience. Thus, it was important to find a way to communicate with scholars across the nation, introducing the RTK website and demonstrating its potential value. To reach a wide number of scholars, Coates and I decided upon a strategy to communicate with scholarly associations that would have established memberships of scholars, authors, editors, reviewers, etc.

A scholarly association is a non-profit, often membership-based, organization that exists to promote a specific field of study or various related fields. In Canada alone, hundreds of scholarly associations exist, ranging from the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, which is the largest society of Canadian professors, students, and researchers in education (Canadian Society for the Study of Education, n.d.), to smaller associations, such as the Canadian Society for the Study of Comics. However, size and membership aside, most scholarly associations exist and operate within the academic publishing landscape.

Central to the mission of many scholarly associations or societies is the dissemination of knowledge and information, even and especially to the wider

community beyond its members. Academic information is mostly commonly shared through its publication in a journal, thesis, or book. Further, publishing can provide associations with revenues that can be put towards other pursuits and activities that can strengthen the scholarly community (Harington 2020). Many large scholarly associations have their own publications—books and journals—through which they can easily review and share knowledge and research. For example, The Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics publishes the Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics, a bilingual and open access journal. However, creating and maintaining "in-house" publications, such as a journal, is not realistic for all scholarly associations, especially those that are small, which could limit the publication opportunities for their member scholars. Thus, alternative publication options for scholars are important, including through university presses; but options may often appear limited, as academic publishing has become more competitive and commercialized over the years (Harington 2020), and so it can be difficult for scholars to make connections with presses that could publish their work. RTK strives to fill this gap by showcasing all of Canada's university presses in one place, allowing scholars to see what each press is publishing and determine if their work would pair well with a certain press. Furthermore, RTK provides links to manuscript submission guidelines for each press, making it easier for scholars to learn about how they could submit a manuscript with a certain press and what that process would look like.

Beyond publishing pursuits, scholars can engage with the scholarly community on RTK by keeping up with recently published research, which could then create opportunities for discussion and dialogue on a variety of topics. Robert M. Harington, Associate Executive Director and Head of Publishing Division at the American Mathematical Society, states: "Scholarly societies are essential to a thriving academic community. … After all, in these political times, community and academic life are important paths to preserving a culture of fact and the community that is so important to intellectual growth and scientific discovery." (Harington 2020). Thus, RTK can support both scholarly associations and scholars in their work and publications, contributing to the success and endurance of the academic community.

4.3   The Value of RTK for Academic Libraries

In the Canadian community of scholarship, another party that contributes to the success and endurance of the community is the academic library. Because scholars are RTK's target audience, connecting with and becoming a useful resource for academic libraries is an important way for RTK to build brand awareness.

The relationship between academic publishers and libraries is complex, just as it is for trade publishers and public libraries, because libraries are a massive market for publishers—a market that many publishers believe often cost them sales (Kenney 2022). To make sense of the commercial relationship between publishers and libraries, it is important to understand how libraries acquire books from publishers in the first place, particularly through the lens of academia for the purposes of RTK.

In most cases, academic libraries acquire books from university presses through one of two widely accepted acquisition methods: the "just-in-case" model or the "just-in-time" model (Veeder 2021). The just-in-case model is steeped in the tradition of building collections based on a perceived need or relevance, not necessarily a demand. Whereas the just-in-time model, more commonly known as the patron-driven or demand-driven acquisition model, which has become a standard acquisition method across academic libraries in the last decade, relies on patron-driven requests, typically originating from interlibrary loan requests and/or ebook subscription packages (Veeder 2021). The just-in-time model poses a challenge for presses because there is no longer a guarantee that libraries will buy their books, which may render library marketing efforts fruitless, contributing to a potential fissure between academic libraries and university presses (Veeder 2021). That being said, many presses do feel that it is important to get to know libraries, their processes, and their needs, while it is important for libraries to get to know presses, their processes, and their needs (Zhang and Eschenfelder 2023); thus, library and press relationships need to be maintained.

The needs of individual academic libraries may vary, but overall, libraries are looking for more open access resources and ebooks (Laraine Coates, in conversation with the author, July 26, 2023). Academic libraries are actively engaged in work involving open access (OA) and its subsequent promotion (Scott, Harrington, and Dubnjakovic 2021). However, curating and cataloging OA collections is time-consuming

for librarians, and adding OA content to a collection can often reduce librarian control because they cannot always control content stability, inclusion of unvetted sources, or quality of content (Scott, Harrington, and Dubnjakovic 2021).

RTK and its participating ACUP/APUC presses are proud to publish OA resources, research, and scholarship. Member presses publish a variety of OA content ranging from books and journals to podcasts and videos; all of which are made available for free in online digital formats. On the RTK website, the Open Access page includes links to various OA platforms and programs, such as RavenSpace, an Indigenous Studies publishing platform founded by UBC Press, or Amplify Podcast Network that encourages collaboration and experimentation in scholarly podcasting. In addition to specific programs and platforms, RTK provides links to the OA publishing programs at the following university presses: Athabasca University Press, UBC Press, University of Calgary Press, University of Ottawa Press, University of Toronto Press, and University of Regina Press. Providing these links, RTK makes it easy for librarians to access OA books and other useful resources that they can share in their libraries. The process of gathering OA content, as defined by Rhiannon Bruner, Electronic Resources Librarian at Wesleyan College, Macon, Georgia, and Danielle Bromelia, Senior Product Analyst for Delivery Services, OCLC, Dublin, Ohio, typically includes a librarian, "…first gathering data surrounding open content and OA materials, then analyzing the resources available to them, and finally applying their findings in order to enact change and persuading others to support their cause [the cause of helping patrons find and use OA materials]" (Bruner and Bromelia 2020). This process differs from the more common view that the role of a library in OA is to publish, fund, and promote content, initiatives, and resources (Bruner and Bromelia 2020). Thus, RTK can support libraries in helping patrons discover OA resources, and librarians can subsequently save more time in curating resources for specific collections because they are laid out in one place on the RTK website. While libraries are certainly tackling larger hurdles and questions regarding OA beyond what RTK provides, libraries at least have a resource they can turn to remain updated on OA content available from Canada's university presses.

In addition to OA content, libraries want ebooks, as previously noted. Ebooks are typically cheaper for libraries to acquire and many presses publish ebooks, which are then typically distributed via ebook vendors (Zhang and Eschenfelder 2023). On the RTK website, users can easily determine if a book is available in the ebook format (epub) by clicking "Show Edition Details" (see Fig 6).
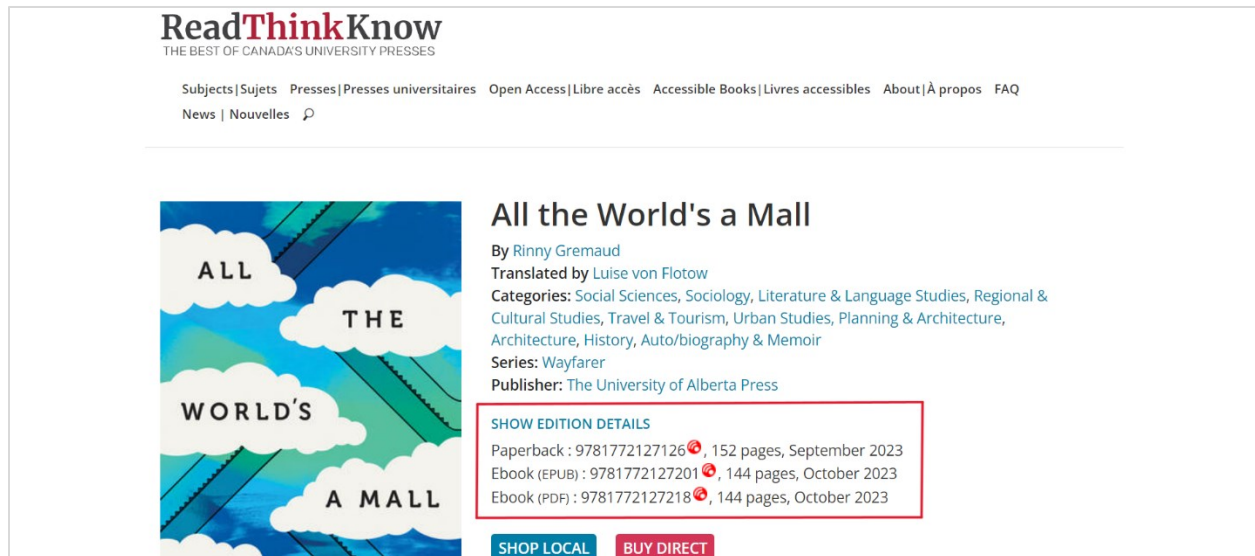
Figure 6. Screenshot of a RTK book/title page with the "Show Edition Details" dropdown highlighted (ReadThinkKnow.ca). https://readthinkknow.ca/Books/A/All-the-World-s-a-Mall

Beyond this dropdown button on book pages, there is currently no other way to discover ebooks on the RTK website. With this in mind, as well as academic libraries' specific need for ebooks, this gap in RTK's search capabilities provides an opportunity to better serve important audience members. Increasing ebook visibility on RTK could be managed in different ways, perhaps as a search filter, or a separate page could be created on the website that is dedicated to ebook titles.

Maintaining and fostering relationships with libraries is a key to market success for university presses. This could be accomplished directly or through a mediator (distributor). A direct customer relation between publisher and library allows publishers to learn more about libraries and their needs, but this can be time-consuming because a relationship would need to be maintained with each library. A mediated relationship, on the other hand, is less time-consuming but means that publishers and libraries would rarely interact (Zhang and Eschenfelder 2023). RTK provides an opportunity to close this gap because presses have one place where they can showcase their books, as well

as highlight other resources and projects, and libraries can use the website as a singular resource to see what is happening in Canadian academic publishing. In addition, RTK is a resource, particularly for library patrons, to find new titles which they can request at their libraries, leading to more acquisitions. Thus, RTK has the potential to benefit both university presses and libraries simultaneously.

4.4   Working with Presses, Associations, and Libraries to Spread the Word About RTK

The participating ACUP/APUC presses are central in increasing RTK's brand awareness. At Congress 2023, RTK was soft launched with the intention of showing presses the website and showcasing its value. This soft launch was important for receiving feedback on the website, but it was also important to garner the presses' support because they would be integral in promoting RTK.

At the conclusion of Congress 2023, I assisted in writing draft emails to the participating presses asking for specific feedback on press pages, and encouraging presses to begin sharing the website with their audiences through their social media platforms. To assist in promotion, I also created a variety of shareable social media assets which presses could share on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (see Fig 7, Fig 8, Fig 9).

Multiple designs were created, providing presses with various assets to choose from. Each design incorporates RTK's brand colors and typically includes the stand-in short phrase, "Canadian academic research in one place," a marketing phrase created by myself to concisely summarize RTK's overall mission to compile and showcase Canadian scholarship in one place. Images or graphics in the assets often include a laptop or phone displaying the RTK homepage, indicating that the website can be easily found and navigated either on a laptop or phone.

Figure 7. Example of a RTK Twitter social media asset created by the author.
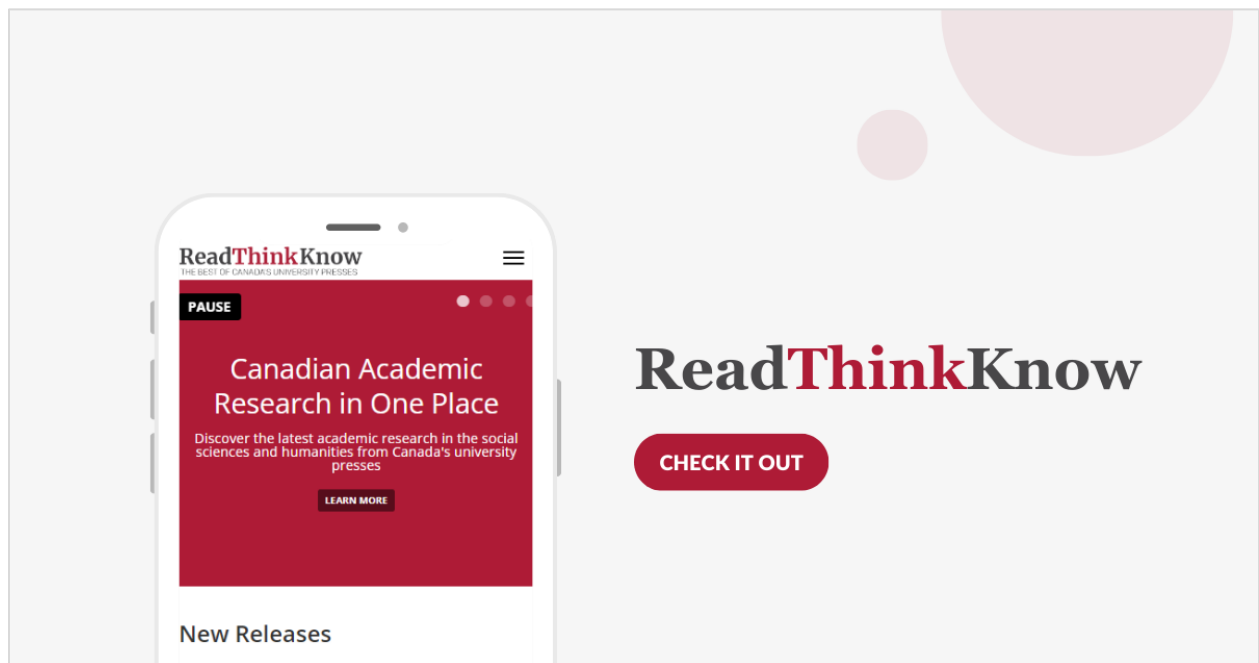
Figure 8. Example of a RTK Facebook social media asset created by the author.
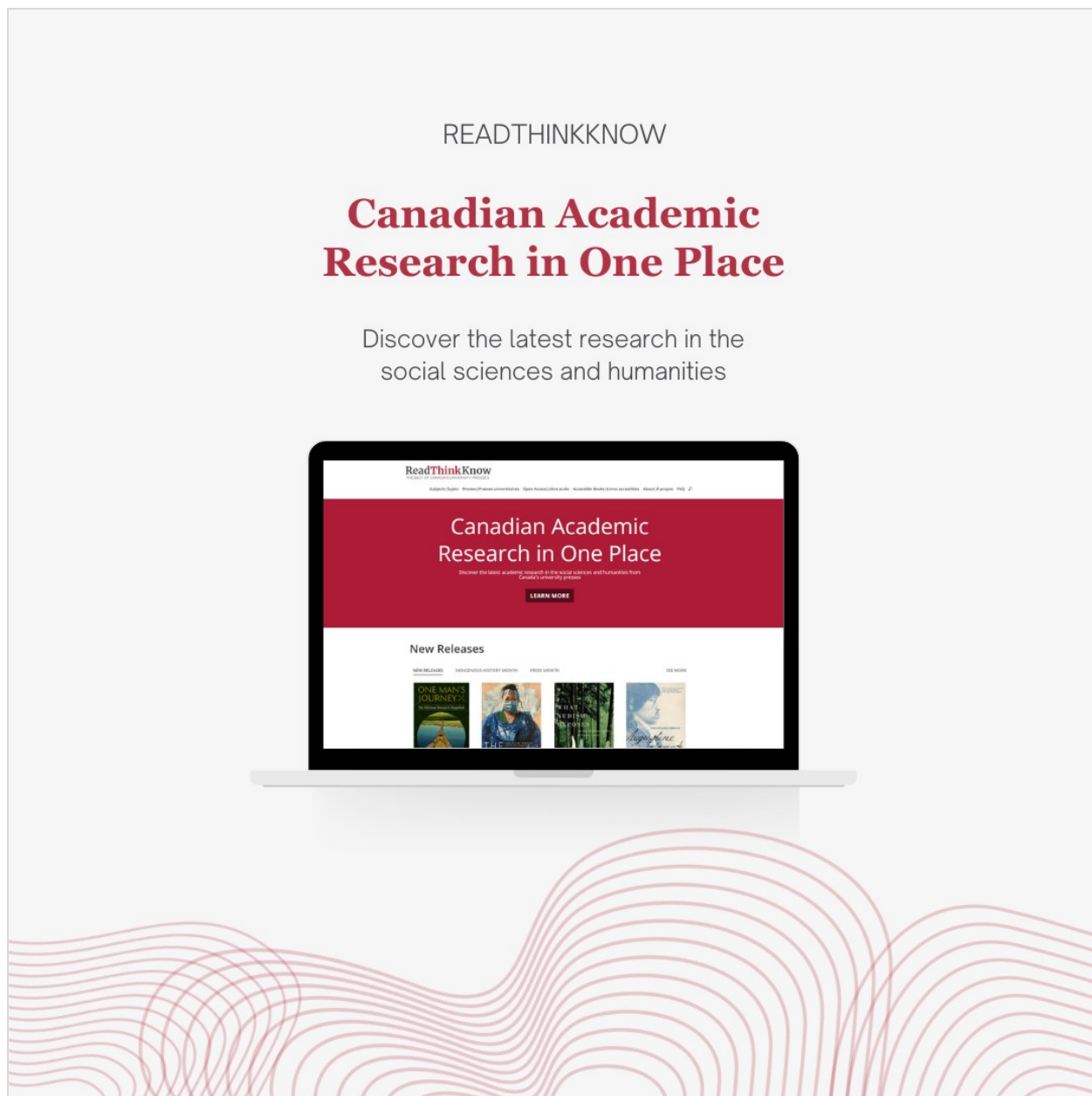
Figure 9. Example of a RTK Instagram social media asset created by the author.

All designed social media assets were intended to be shared with presses via email with the invitation to share any of the designs on social media.

In addition to social media assets, I wrote editable newsletter copy for the presses; copy which could easily be copied and pasted into a newsletter or other electronic form of communication. The idea behind writing shareable copy was to reach established university press audiences instead of trying to create a RTK audience from

scratch—and with pre-written copy, it makes it even easier for presses to spread the word about RTK with their audience members. The newsletter copy written for university presses to share can be altered to the needs of each press, but the copy conveys the purpose of RTK, its association with ACUP/APUC and how it can benefit a wide range of users—professors, course instructors, scholars, librarians, students, or curious readers. The copy helps the recipient understand the benefit of RTK as well as offer some guidance on how to use the site. After looking at all the individual participating press websites, I discovered that 10 of the 16 presses have newsletters that can be subscribed to on their respective press websites, providing a good place to start in spreading the word about RTK.

The tactics for connecting with scholars via scholarly associations, and academic libraries, were similar to those for university presses. I compiled extensive lists of Canadian scholarly associations and academic libraries, as well as points-of-contact at each, providing the RTK team with a good place to start in spreading the word about RTK further. Similar to the approach taken with university presses, draft email copy was written introducing RTK and explaining the value it could provide to the corresponding academic community. An invitation was included in the email copy to spread the word about RTK, and the aforementioned social media assets were included, increasing the ease of sharing the RTK brand. While this approach could be described as "grassroots," it provides the RTK team an opportunity to make valuable connections with key academic communities, while also supporting its aim to increase brand awareness.

Section 5: RTK is Intended to be a Bilingual Resource

5.1   RTK as the Collective Voice of Canada's English and French University Presses

RTK needs to be a bilingual resource, as it represents the collective voice of Canadian university presses, five of which are French or bilingual presses—McGill-Queen's University Press, Presses de l'Universite du Quebec, Les presses de l'Université de Montréal and the Musée d'art de Joliette, University of Ottawa Press, and Presses de l'Université Laval. When I joined the RTK team, discussions for the RTK project often surrounded the fact that the website needed to be a bilingual resource, representing the nation's scholarship in the nation's two official languages, French and English.

In 1969, The Official Languages Act (OLA) was first passed, and made both English and French the official languages of Canada. In 2005, an amendment was made to the act, requiring all federal institutions and granting agencies to take measures to support the development of official language minority communities (OLMCs), particularly in research and higher education (Gentil and Séror 2014). In response to this amendment, the main funder of social sciences research in Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), developed a three-year action plan that provides more funding opportunities for minority language groups through a combination of research and targeted awareness (Gentil and Séror 2014). While RTK or even ACUP/APUC, for that matter, are not government institutions nor funding agencies, the emphasis placed on supporting OLMC scholarship through the 2005 OLA amendment is an important framework for scholarly associations to be aware of, especially where French-language scholarship is concerned. Particularly in the case of RTK and its mission to showcase and promote university press publications, it can only accomplish this mission by ensuring French representation on its website; a cause which ACUP/APUC board members were committed to from the early stages of the RTK project (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023). Furthermore, ensuring the bilingualism of RTK would not only assist in securing support from French university presses, but it could ultimately widen the project's audience because it could meet the needs of more users.

5.2   The Process and Challenge of Loading French Title Data

An important first task for the RTK team was to display French titles on the RTK website. While this should have been a simple task, particularly because the majority, if not all, English title metadata was being pulled from BiblioShare by BookNet for no cost, this proved to be a challenge in early stages of project development.

The metadata for Presses de l'Universite du Quebec (PUQ), Les presses de l'Université de Montréal and the Musée d'art de Joliette (PUM), and Presses de l'Université Laval (Laval) were not available via BiblioShare—BiblioShare only facilitates English metadata distribution. Thus, an alternative method for pulling French title bibliographic data had to be secured. Options included acquiring French title information from Société De Gestion De La Banque De Titres De Langue Française (BTLF), an organization specializing in the implementation of Canadian French-language books, or De Marque, a global distribution platform for book publishers headquartered in Quebec. BTLF is an integral player in the Canadian French-speaking book chain and is the BookNet equivalent in Quebec (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023). Similarly to BookNet, BTLF has a data aggregation program for the French market called Memento. However, Memento's services are not free, as is the case with BiblioShare, and according to Riggs, the cost of its services were determined to be too high, especially considering the RTK project's budget restraints. Instead, Riggs explains that working with De Marque records would be the more cost-effective option, but ReaderBound would need to adjust ONIX import processes for the RTK website to accommodate the aggregation of both the English BiblioShare records and French De Marque records. Thus, while there was an initial challenge in determining the best way to get French title data in the first place, the greater challenge lay in taking title metadata from all presses—metadata that often had varying degrees of quality and different subject schema. In many cases, the French university presses do not use the BISAC classification system; it is more common for publishers in Quebec to use Thema (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023), a global subject classification system managed by EDItEUR, the brain behind ONIX, that was launched in 2012 at the Frankfurt Book Fair (EDItEUR, n.d.). Thema is available in over twenty languages, perhaps presenting a draw for Quebec publishers that are publishing in

French, but it creates dissonance with BISAC, which is the classification standard in North America (Book Industry Study Group 2023). While both Thema and BISAC were created to organize content in a rational and predictable way (Vlahos 2014), finding a way to reconcile their systems from the English and French university presses for the RTK project was a challenge for ReaderBound and required securing additional funding.

The cost for these extra record processing adjustments was an estimated $3,600, which would not be covered by RTK funding which had already been allocated for other project expenses (Coates, 'FW', email, 2023). Initially, and after much research and deliberation, it appeared that the only option for securing the funding for the De Marque records was to approach the presses—PUQ, PUM, and Laval—themselves for a contribution to the project. In May 2023, it was proposed that each press would make a monetary contribution to enable the use of the De Marque records and ensure that their titles would populate on the site going forward (Coates, 'FW', email, 2023). After this proposal, and in anticipation of Congress 2023, where the RTK team would be able to show the participating presses what an important resource the RTK website is and could be moving forward, it became a top priority to populate the website with content, showcasing the website's value and garnering enthusiasm and support from the French presses, as well as all other participating presses.

At Congress 2023, RTK was soft launched during an ACUP/APUC meeting and was well-received. The group was so impressed and enthusiastic about the project that the $3,600 expenditure was approved at the expense of ACUP/APUC—PUQ, PUM, and Laval would not need to contribute funds to the cost of using and processing De Marque records on the website (Coates, 'Data for French presses', email, 2023). Beyond the ACUP/APUC board, the RTK website was well-received by FHSS, creating greater interest in the website and its mission.

With funding secured, the RTK team could move forward with making RTK a bilingual resource. However, PUQ, PUM, and Laval would need to send their data to De Marque, a step which could only be completed by the presses themselves. As of June 2023, De Marque had data for all presses in their system and it was now in ReaderBound's hands to put the frameworks in place for the French title information to appear on the RTK website (Riggs, 'Data for French presses', email, 2023).

The ability to display French title information posed an unexpected challenge to the RTK team. However, the ability to display French titles could increase the website's overall value to its users, while also contributing to Canada's desire to support and encourage research and higher education in the French-speaking community, as well as in other minority language communities.

5.3   French Translation for RTK Content

Beyond displaying French title data, an important consideration for the RTK website is translation—displaying all website content in both French and English, which could increase the value of RTK as a resource for Canadian university press books and increase website accessibility for even more people, ultimately expanding the RTK audience. There are various ways to support both French and English on a website. An interesting example and comparative resource is Livres Canada Books, a non-profit organization that supports Canadian-owned book publishers through a range of services and activities, and provides "a unique forum for collaboration between English- and French-language publishers in Canada" (Livres Canada Books, n.d.). The Livres Canada Books website supports its mandate, particularly that of creating space for both French- and English-language publishers, by ensuring that all website content is available in both languages. In fact, based on the user's browser language settings, the Livres Canada Books website will automatically display in either English or French, and the user can easily toggle back and forth between the languages in the top right-hand corner of the website's navigation.

Currently, the RTK website only accommodates the French language in its main navigation—subject fields, press descriptions, and all other content is only available in English (see Fig 10).
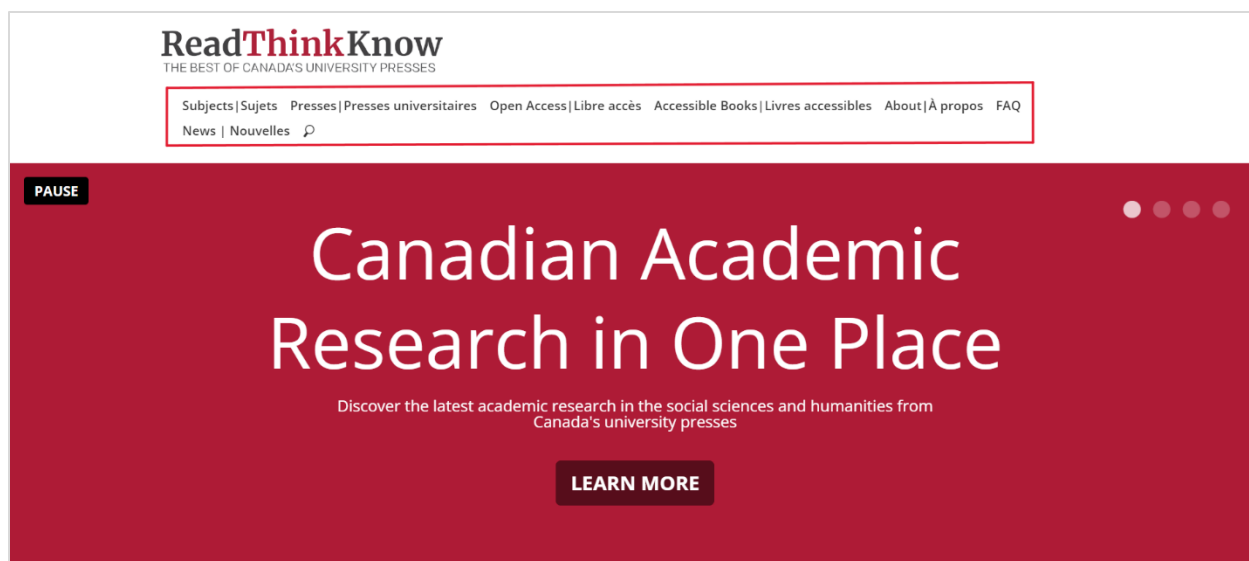
Figure 10. Screenshot of the RTK homepage with the English/French navigation highlighted (ReadThinkKnow.ca). https://readthinkknow.ca/.

While it is an important and worthwhile pursuit to ensure that all website elements are in English and French, pursuing translation for the RTK website, or any website for that matter, is an investment. Accommodating both languages would require a new build in the site, facilitated by ReaderBound, while also requiring initial and recurring funding to ensure that all future content will also be translated into French (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023). For this reason, while completing my internship at UBC Press, one of my tasks for the RTK project was researching grant opportunities for French translation. One such opportunity included a grant program from the Department of Canadian Heritage: The Support for Interpretation and Translation—Promotion of Linguistic Duality program, which provides funding specifically for French translation projects.

The Support for Interpretation and Translation—Promotion of Linguistic Duality program is intended to support organizations in providing services in both official languages at public events, as well as support the availability of documents in English and French, including digital content (Canadian Heritage, n.d.). Applications for this program are accepted throughout the year, creating a potential opportunity for RTK to secure translation funding as needed. While this specific funding option may not be sustainable in anticipation of the RTK team creating and publishing more content in the

future, it could provide the RTK team with a good place to start in the translation process.

If translation funding is secured for the RTK project, whether through the Department of Canadian Heritage or another grant agency, it would be important to create a plan, including who would be doing the translation work, which content to prioritize, and how to maintain translation going forward. For some basic translation, including the navigation seen on the RTK website, as it currently stands, the RTK team was able to refer to ACUP/APUC colleagues. For a full translation venture, working with French-speaking ACUP/APUC members could be an option. However, employees at all university presses already have many tasks, responsibilities, and priorities within their own presses, most likely rendering this option unsustainable. Hiring a freelance translator could be an advantageous approach, especially considering the commitment to ensure the translation of future content, but doing so could generate high overhead costs. Translators typically charge by word ($0.10 to $0.40 per word, on average) or by hour (hourly rates will vary by translator, language, and project), and their rates will vary based on how much needs to be translated and how closely the translation needs to match the original (word-for-word translation versus a 65 percent word match to the original) (Bagińska 2023). Prioritizing work for the translator could follow a similar pattern to the content strategy created before the RTK soft launch at Congress 2023: homepage content, press page content, and subject page content, respectively. However, ensuring the translation of all website content, offering similar functionality to that of the Livres Canada Books website, could increase RTK's reach, allowing both French- and English-speaking users to engage with the website and the overall RTK brand.

Conclusion: RTK Can Be a Valuable Resource Now and Into the Future

The success of RTK has been and will continue to be reliant on engagement with key stakeholders: the RTK team, the ACUP/APUC board, and the participating university presses. Without their engagement and enthusiasm, more fully garnered during the project's soft launch at Congress 2023, the current state of the RTK website would not be a reality and the future of the project would ultimately be tenuous.

With any project of this magnitude, it is important to be forward-thinking, looking for opportunities to grow and improve, ensuring that the RTK website can continue to be a valuable resource for university presses and users alike. Through my engagement with the project, as well as in research involved in writing this report, I would suggest three areas of focus for the RTK project moving forward that could contribute to ensuring the longevity of RTK—two of the three points below (open access and French translation efforts) were discussed, to a degree, previously, but deserve reiteration when considering the future of the project:

1. Showcasing participating press' open access titles and resources on the website
2. Focusing on French translation for all website content
3. Emphasizing the website as a promotional tool for participating presses

The relationship between university presses and libraries has always been important for the sale and distribution of new books, and university presses are becoming more and more integrated with university libraries (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023). For example, MIT Press announced a new press-library integration initiative after the American Library Association (ALA) meeting in 2020: Direct to Open (D2O)—a program shifting the press's monographs to an open access format (MIT Press 2021). D2O relies upon the involvement of libraries to shift the one-time, per-library purchase of MIT Press scholarly monographs and edited collections to "…funding them once for the world," supporting more equitable access to research (MIT Press, n.d.). While the MIT Press initiative is pursuing university press and library integration on a larger scale, university presses in Canada have also pursued such collaborations to mixed response, in both the press and library communities (Quinn and

Innerd 2018). One such Canadian university press is Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) Press, which already had an established relationship with the WLU Library, but decided to pursue a further partnership within the last few years (Quinn and Innerd 2018). It is important to note that university presses and university libraries pursue integration for a variety of reasons, whether it be in the pursuit of open access, in the case of MIT Press, or for financial support (Quinn and Innerd 2018). However university presses and academic libraries choose to collaborate and interact, it is important for both institutions to understand one another's needs (Zhang and Eschenfelder 2023), and libraries want more OA resources and ebooks (Laraine Coates, in conversation with the author, July 26, 2023). Thus, an emphasis on displaying the OA resources from each participating press on the RTK website could be a beneficial way to interact with libraries. The website currently has a page dedicated to OA, offering information on a variety of programs and resources offered by some of the university presses. Leaning in to showcasing this page and/or the displayed resources could increase RTK's value for academic libraries, providing a platform where they can remain updated on the OA efforts and initiatives of Canada's university presses. While RTK cannot and is not meant to facilitate university press and library integration specifically, it provides a platform where libraries can see the work that presses are doing, especially regarding OA, which could increase engagement between both parties at corresponding university campuses.

As previously noted, libraries also want ebooks, which could be an area of opportunity for RTK. Many, if not all, of Canada's university presses publish ebooks. On individual press websites, it is common for all formats to be listed for a title, frequently including ebooks. On the RTK website, formats are listed for each title, but it could be valuable to call out ebook editions of titles, specifically. Calling out or highlighting ebook editions could make it easier for users to discover ebook editions of any given title, but it could also be useful for libraries because they could have access to all university press ebook titles in place. To facilitate this, RTK would need to assess the current structure of the website, such as its pages. Creating an "ebook page," for example, could be one way to showcase ebook titles. Or perhaps creating search filters, by format, allowing users to discover ebooks based on their search.

While RTK could provide a valuable platform for interacting and collaborating with academic libraries, the website is currently missing out on a large audience due to the lack of French-language content on the website. According to a 2022 Statistics Canada/Statistique Canada report, approximately 20 percent of Canada's population are native French speakers (Statistics Canada 2022). This statistic paired with the fact that English and French are the two official languages of the country illustrate a need to pursue French translation for all RTK content. In addition, the Canadian academic community includes French speakers that would be underserved by a lack of translation on the website. The ACUP/APUC board secured funding to ensure that French university press titles would appear on the website, which was an important priority for the association (Craig Riggs, in conversation with the author, Sept 19, 2023), but this funding would not cover the cost of translating website content into French, making it accessible for more users. Shifting focus to French translation of the RTK website would be an investment of time and money, but prioritizing bilingual content would allow the website to reach more users and more fully demonstrate a commitment to both French and English scholarship in Canada.

Finally, to ensure longevity of RTK, it is important to work closely with the participating university presses. While it is paramount to retain their support, as RTK exists to serve the presses in the first place, they are an important part of how the website will be received and discovered moving forward. For that reason, emphasizing RTK's intended value as a promotional tool could be an important way to engage with presses—RTK was created with the intention to expand the footprint of Canada's university presses by showcasing their books and other resources and programs. Based on the work we, the RTK team, were doing after soft launch to contact processes and help them engage with the website—engaging in regular contact with the presses, asking for feedback, and offering shareable resources or digital assets—a framework for remaining relevant to the presses has been laid, and could be easily maintained moving forward. For this approach to prove successful, the website would need to be regularly updated with fresh content, while also adhering to a schedule of contact so that RTK does not fall to the wayside, especially considering all the work that the RTK team has at their own corresponding presses.

The RTK website is a unique resource, bringing all Canadian university press titles into one place, making it easier for presses to showcase and promote their books, and making it easier for readers, primarily scholars, to find books from Canada's university presses. RTK has the potential to become a valuable resource, and it has the potential to retain, and grow, its value going forward based upon the efforts from the RTK team, ReaderBound, and other important stakeholders, that have pursued the project with enthusiasm. With current support and a commitment to maintaining the website and making it as accessible as possible for all users, RTK can become an invaluable platform for presses, as they seek to promote their books and reach more people, while also becoming a staple in the Canadian scholarly community, championing Canada's community of scholarship one book at a time.

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