

**A Case Study of Print on Demand and Short-Run Digital Printing
at the University of British Columbia Press**

by

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Abstract

The advent of digital print technology has irreversibly affected the publishing industry, causing many, if not all, publishers to review and restructure their methods of production and distribution. Scholarly publishing, a niche sector, has been similarly impacted and, in response, the University of British Columbia Press, a world-renowned publisher in the field, has adopted two management strategies – print on demand (POD) and short-run digital printing – to optimize its workflow and output. This report documents UBC Press’s objectives regarding both POD and short-run digital printing models and reviews the advantages and challenges posed by each. Based on this review, the report then speculates upon the future of digital scholarly publishing for UBC Press.

Keywords: digital technology; print on demand; scholarly publishing; short-run digital printing; UBC Press; university presses

Dedication

To God, who called me out of darkness into eternal light.

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To my dearest parents, who always love me unconditionally, I thank you with all that I am.

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Thank you everyone for being a precious part of my journey. To God be the glory.

**Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you
will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**

~ Philippians 1:6 ~

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Chapter 1. An Introduction to UBC Press

The digital age has irreversibly revolutionized how books are published and marketed. The confluence of historical developments in print and digital technologies has challenged publishing houses to change their traditional print practices and diversify their products to include digital print. Consequently, many, if not all, publishers have had to review and re-strategize their methods of production and distribution. Scholarly publishing, a niche sector, has also been impacted and is undergoing similar changes and adaptation.

Scholarly publishing is defined as “the creation, dissemination, and application of new knowledge ... fundamental to the development of an informed citizenry and a healthy global economy. Institutions of higher education exist to fulfill these functions. From the lab to the classroom to industry to the public, the advancement of knowledge through research and teaching is an invaluable contribution made by higher education to the public good.”¹ Scholarly publishing is also “the process through which newly discovered knowledge is refined, certified, distributed to, and preserved for researchers, professors, students, and the public.”² Scholarly works are published by myriad organizations ranging from commercial publishers to university presses such as the University of British Columbia Press.

The University of British Columbia (UBC) Press is the third largest university press in Canada and advertises itself as an internationally renowned scholarly publisher and the leading social sciences publisher in Canada.³ UBC Press publishes around seventy new books each year and has a backlist inventory of over a thousand titles, offering consumers a

¹ *Hlwiki International*, s.v. “Scholarly Publishing and Communication,” last modified May 12, 2017, http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca/index.php/Scholarly_publishing_and_communication.

² “Scholarly Publishing and Communication.”

³ “About UBC Press,” UBC Press, <http://www.ubcpress.ca/about-us>.

substantial selection of books from which to choose.⁴ However, like the vast majority of scholarly publishers, UBC Press handles books that are, for the most part, very specialized. While small trade publishers can create books meant for wider audiences, this is usually not the case for scholarly presses,⁵ which mostly publish research monographs, scholarly collections, and some textbooks designed for smaller courses. The intended audiences for these books are scholars and students or an educated audience interested in specific genres. Given the narrow markets and specialized nature of UBC Press books, it is therefore essential that the Press maintain an effective and economical inventory that meets demand adequately without printing a surplus.

UBC Press publishes strategically in a select number of fields, including Asian studies, Canadian history, communication and cultural studies, environmental studies, health, Indigenous studies, law, political science, gender and sexuality, sociology, and urban studies.⁶ These are areas where there have been proven sales and interest and where the Press has the expertise to make itself “the publisher of choice” when attracting new manuscripts. This is most important for ensuring good sales and consolidating UBC Press’s reputation as an important source of academic books. UBC Press generally sells books to community colleges and universities for upper-level and graduate course adoptions. Most books are specially ordered and cannot be found in trade bookstores.

To support its publishing program, UBC Press receives funding and support from “several established grant programs and encourages authors to help identify other sources,

⁴ UBC Press also markets and distributes books for ten other publishers but is not involved in the production or printing of these books. In the past two years, from 2015 to 2016, UBC Press started two new imprints: On Point Press (a trade imprint for quality non-fiction books) and On Campus (a more specialized imprint for published materials in the university community). This past year, it also purchased the book (both print and digital) assets of Purich Publishing (which has a backlist of 45 books) and assumed distribution for Pacific Educational Press (PEP), which was recently discontinued by the university.

⁵ Peter Milroy (director emeritus, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, August 2012.

⁶ “About UBC Press.”

such as specialized foundations, programs within their home institutions, and government departments with special interest in the area of their research.”⁷ The Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP), administered by the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, also provides publishing grants to any of the Press’s submitted works that meet their criteria. Block grants, government grants, and the Canada Book Fund are other examples of funding sources the Press uses.⁸

Given the relatively large number of titles released every year, many of which are highly specialized and sold in niche and inelastic markets, UBC Press has to monitor the marketability of published titles as it is costly to hold inventory that does not sell. Inventory is “valued at the cost of production or estimated net realizable value, whichever is lower. It is recorded as production and manufacturing costs without subsidies such as grants.”⁹ In the mid-2000s, it was becoming clear that high inventories were becoming a problem for UBC Press. When the Press conducted an external review at the recommendation of UBC’s Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation in March 2007, one of the findings included the recommendation to examine its inventory value and write-down policy. The external auditors questioned the wisdom of having a five-year write-down policy in an era of book digitization and a rapidly changing market environment. Consequently, UBC Press stabilized its inventory valuation, moving from a five-year to three-year inventory write-down policy in accordance with industry standards whereby 77% of American university presses usually write down their inventory in three years. This was done also to appease external auditors who questioned a five-year write-down policy in terms of books still selling after

⁷ “Funding Considerations for Scholarly Books,” UBC Press, <http://www.ubcpres.ca/funding-considerations>.

⁸ This additional funding information was available through the former UBC Press website but still applies as of August 2017.

⁹ Devni De Silva (former finance manager, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, August 2012.

five years.¹⁰ Henceforth, this led to a careful revision and evaluation of how inventory was managed and a decrease in initial print runs to prevent excess inventory.

In 2008, in order to keep inventory levels down, UBC Press thus adopted the model of short-run digital printing and print on demand (POD) into its workflow. This major shift in strategy was facilitated around the same time by major improvements in digital printing technologies. The new digital printing presses offered good quality (and cheaper) printing options for publishers of short print run books, which would prove to be of particular benefit to the Press.

It was in this season of transition that I had the privilege of working as an editorial intern at UBC Press from April to August of 2012. I was supervised by Holly Keller, assistant director of production and editorial services, and Megan Brand, editor. During this time, I witnessed the changeover of short-run digital printing providers, and how the Press carefully handled digital printing. My tasks involved editorial assignments, proofreading, and helping in the preparation of digital print files. This report is thus an examination of UBC Press's special uses of print on demand and short-run digital printing, which will show how a scholarly press can maximize the benefits of these models to maintain cost-effective inventory levels.

1.1. Introduction to Digital Printing: Definition and Overview

Digital printing has offered significant advantages to publishers and individuals and an alternative option to traditional offset printing. Offset printing uses aluminum plates that

¹⁰ De Silva, discussion.

“transfer an image onto a ‘rubber’ blanket, [and roll] that image onto a sheet of paper.”¹¹ The ink is not directly transferred onto the paper, hence the name “offset.” This is a good choice for cost-effective printing when larger quantities are required. It also produces the highest quality of professional printing with precise colour reproduction and detail. Various paper types with custom finishes can be printed on, and special inks such as metallic and pantone colours are available for offset printing.

Digital printing does not use aluminium plates but instead uses toners or liquid ink to transfer ink to paper. Because the setup costs are lower and the process more automated, it is a more cost-effective form of printing for print runs of approximately 500 units or less (depending on the number of pages per unit). Many university presses do runs of less than 500 copies,¹² therefore digital printing is the best option for printing as needed. Further, the quality of digital printing has also improved significantly over the last two decades, and the difference between digital and offset printing, especially for black-and-white books, is often indiscernible to the untrained eye.¹³

With the rise of digital printing, or printing on digital presses, models such as *print on demand* (POD) and *short-run digital printing* have come into being. Digital presses allowed publishers to print on demand, i.e., to print books as needed at the time customers place orders. Unlike offset printing, whereby publishers had to print large quantities of books to access the economies of scale necessary to keep print costs down, digital printing meant publishers could use print-on-demand vendors, such as Lightning Source, to more cost effectively print as few as a single copy of each title or perhaps tens or dozens of copies as

¹¹ “Digital Printing vs Offset Printing,” Printing for Less, <http://www.printingforless.com/Digital-Printing-Explained.html>.

¹² John B. Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), e-book.

¹³ “Digital Printing vs Offset Printing.”

needed to fill the publisher's orders, which could then be shipped directly to customers (should the publisher choose). UBC Press has thus chosen the route of digital printing for the majority of its books and uses offset printing only for trade books with non-standard specifications such as colours or images. The cost differences between offset and digital printing will be further examined in Chapter 3.

What we mean by “print on demand” is the model whereby “the book, including the cover, is set up as a digital file. When an order comes through, the right file is selected by the computer, which then gives the instruction to the print on demand machine to produce it.”¹⁴ Thus, POD is generally defined as “a digital printing technology in which a book or other publication is printed” as and when it is needed.¹⁵ This POD model dates back to the 1990s, an era that marked the birth of a new set of printing and binding technologies – the digital press – which eased the difficulties of making certain publishing decisions concerning print runs. With this new alternative to offset printing and the presence of digital content files, publishers did not have to gamble on printing runs of several thousand copies in order to ensure that unit costs were kept low. The POD model is surely gaining popularity in recent times as an alternative to traditional print production strategies.¹⁶

However, printing single books to fulfill single orders remains an exception for most publishers.¹⁷ UBC Press is considering adopting this traditional POD model for its overseas market, and it uses the model of short-run digital printing for its Canadian market reprints.¹⁸

¹⁴ Chris Holifield, “Print on Demand,” *Writers Services*, <http://www.writersservices.com/resources/print-demand-inside-publishing>.

¹⁵ “Print on Demand (POD),” *Techopedia*, <http://www.techopedia.com/definition/26410/print-on-demand-pod>.

¹⁶ Edmund Chamberlain, “Investigating Faster Techniques for Digitization and Print-on-Demand,” *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 18, no. 1 (2012): 64, doi: 10.1080/13614533.2012.660769.

¹⁷ George Alexander, “Print On Demand and the Changing Face of Book Publishing,” *The Seybold Report* 8, no. 11 (2008): 11.

¹⁸ Megan Brand (editor, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, November 2016.

Short-run digital printing differs from the traditional POD model in that the printing companies do not print to fill small orders as they arise but only when publishers themselves initiate and place the orders for books, which could be for tens, dozens, or even hundreds of copies. The two models are therefore similar in the way publishers use them to print what is needed; the primary difference is in the number of copies printed. Please note that the term “POD” is often used in reference to both models – publishers often conveniently label short-run digital printing “POD” too.

Although UBC Press staff may refer to their short-run digital reprints as “POD” reprints, for the purposes of this report, I will distinguish between the two and will use the correct terminology as appropriate – either “POD” or “short-run digital printing” as necessary. Generally, UBC Press uses the short-run digital printing model to print anywhere from 25 or 50 copies to 100 copies. However, short-run digital printing may allow publishers to print up to several hundred copies of a title and keep a small inventory.¹⁹

Short runs using digital printing are fairly common among publishers.²⁰ Due to the emerging digital climate and changing markets for print books in the twenty-first century, traditional publishing and book retail models were not working as well. Publishers looked around for fixes, and short-run digital printing and POD seemed to be a solution that might avoid “some of the burdens associated with the traditional print model.” With both POD and short-run digital printing models, publishers could take advantage of their own “long tail” of out-of-print content as requested by readers.²¹ These operations could be outsourced

¹⁹ Ann Haugland, “Opening the Gates: Print On-Demand Publishing as Cultural Production,” *Publishing Research Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (2006): 3.

²⁰ Chamberlain, “Investigating Faster Techniques,” 64.

²¹ Ibid.

to companies specializing in POD, who would then be able to “achieve greater economies of scale through serving the needs of many publishers.”²²

As we witness the adoption of POD and short-run digital printing in more and more publishing circles, it is interesting to note that academic publishers were some of the earliest adopters of print-on-demand practices. Many academic journal vendors only offer print journals via POD. University presses have many hundreds of slow-selling titles on their backlists²³ and presses have long been accustomed to letting worthy titles go out of print due to high carrying costs or having to price them exorbitantly. Aside from editorial and production costs, printing and inventory costs are major factors contributing to such decisions. The advantages of digital technology are clear for such titles, and many audience groups from presses to authors to readers are benefitting from them. UBC Press is an exemplary model of a scholarly press utilizing digital print technology to its benefit, as it grapples with the new realities of publishing.

²² Ibid.

²³ “The Boom in Printing on Demand: Just Press Print,” *The Economist*, February 25, 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/15580856>.

Chapter 2. The Press and Digital Printing (2008-2016)

Between 2008 and 2016, UBC Press contracted different publishing software and international service suppliers for short-run digital printing services. The main suppliers included BookMobile, Friesens Corporation, Lightning Source, and University of Toronto Press Distribution. Reprint quality, speed of delivery, and ability to supply copies within a certain period and for reasonable costs were considered when choosing vendors.

Before deciding on the right suppliers, however, the Press had to consider its system for managing inventory, which continues to play a key role in determining print runs. The next section will examine the Press's inventory system, as it directly affects print quantities and, ultimately, helps determine which printer best fulfills its needs.

2.1. The Inventory System at UBC Press

Management of the Press's inventory entails setting a maximum number of book titles to be held in the general inventory. Before the Press changed its inventory write-down policy in the wake of the external review that took place in 2007, initial print runs would automatically include 400 hardcovers and 400 softcovers. In 2008, the Press decided to revise their strategy and print 200 to 300 hardcovers and 200 to 300 softcovers instead for each initial run. Subsequent reprint runs will often consist of 200 or more copies. In addition to maintaining lower inventory levels, the shorter print runs allowed for books to be initially printed on the digital press (instead of offset), which could save as much as 25 percent for print runs less than 600 or so units. There is a crossover point (depending on the number of units and length of the book) when offset becomes more economical, particularly when the

higher setup costs for offset printing are calculated into the mix.²⁴ The Press has since started printing even fewer units of new titles, depending on the title and subject demand.

While the Press has been printing both hardcovers and softcovers simultaneously for years, it does not release the softcover for sale until six months after the hardcover has been released. The focus is on the hardcover and selling it to the library market at a more expensive price point (an average of \$90 for a hardcover versus \$34.95 for a softcover). Libraries, which used to automatically buy four or five copies of a book until the early 2000s, have started to resist paying higher prices for books and now purchase an e-book edition instead or wait for the paperback to be released six months later. Some US libraries have also instituted a buying model called “patron-driven acquisition,” whereby they do not purchase a book until someone specifically orders it. All of this has had a negative impact on UBC Press sales, and the staff had to more carefully manage the cost and the number of books printed.

Short-run digital printing became a key strategy in response to the need to reduce book inventories and deal with declining library sales by giving the Press more control over the number of units printed. The Press could print lower quantities of books initially at lower costs than offset, and then wait to see if the initial print run sold through. It could then reprint minimal copies of the softcover (or, in rare instances, the hardcover) and wait to see what the sales were before deciding to print more.²⁵

A closer look at UBC Press’s book list reveals why short-run digital printing is essential for the Press. The list has three main categories: trade books, broad monographs and collections, and narrow research monographs and collections. Trade books consist of

²⁴ Holly Keller (assistant director of production and editorial services, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, March 2016.

²⁵ Keller, discussion.

10-15% of the Press's list. The Press is striving to do more of these kinds of books with their new trade imprint, On Point Press. This initiative includes books with the potential for a larger readership (trade, textbooks, or broader general interest)²⁶, and these would likely be printed in a first run of 750 to 1,500 hardcovers with more bells and whistles (such as nonstandard trim sizes [e.g., 8 x 10" instead of the standard 6 x 9"], interior colour, special paper, dust jackets instead of case or laminated covers, and coloured endpapers). Because of this, they would likely be printed on an offset press originally. The choice would be made later as to how these would be reprinted. While digital presses have been relatively limited to printing standard books, the advancement of digital technology allows these presses to accommodate a greater variety of print products and requests, such as oversized books and colour printing. If there is a huge demand for the title, softcover reprints will be done. Otherwise, they would likely be reprinted only in hardcover format.

The next category of books is broad monographs and collections, which make up 30-35% of the list and have a relatively broad appeal to scholars in a number of disciplines. These books are digitally printed in both hardcover and softcover format in first runs of 300 hardcovers and 400 softcovers. Unless a book is lengthy or uses nonstandard elements, the digital press is used. The Press usually reprints 200 or more units of recent first-run titles that sell well. If a book sells slowly, sometimes a small print run of 50 copies is done to keep the title going. The short-run digital printing model works well in this circumstance.

The last category is narrow research monographs and scholarly collections that make up 50% of UBC Press's list. These books have a comparatively lower market demand than

²⁶ Recent examples of these kinds of books are: *Trudeaumania* (<http://www.ubcpres.ca/trudeaumania>); *Native Art of the Northwest Coast: A History of Changing Ideas* (<http://www.ubcpres.ca/native-art-of-the-northwest-coast>); or *Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscapes in Transition* (<http://www.ubcpres.ca/geography-of-british-columbia-third-edition>).

other titles on its list. As a part of its mission as a university press, it is required to publish peer-reviewed manuscripts that are the staples in research libraries, but that also allow the dissemination of ideas of researchers or young scholars seeking tenure within the system to be published.²⁷ The Press prints hardcover and softcover editions of these titles on digital presses in quantities of 200 or 300 copies respectively. If a minimal top-up of books is required, a short-run digital reprint run of 50 copies is done. The short-run digital printing model works well for these kinds of books, where the production and printing costs are kept low. Reprints of 200 copies or more are done if sales are good.

The Press also has quite a large backlist of older titles that in past years might have gone out of print. Such books include classics on the history of British Columbia, in particular a series on the early pioneers of the province. The Press also has a number of older titles in areas such as Aboriginal (now Indigenous) studies. Although these may not sell in large quantities when they are first released, they tend to be steady sellers over time, and short-run digital printing helps keep them in print. In fact, books covering topics related to Indigenous studies sell very well at the Press and are most often reprinted. It was an area that the Press decided to focus on early on, and they have developed the largest lists for scholarly Indigenous books in Canada, as well as a strong ability to promote and sell these books successfully, especially to libraries. They are often used in courses as well.²⁸ Initial printings of Indigenous books are higher than the usual numbers printed. Oftentimes, 200 hardcovers and 400 or 500 softcovers will be printed, and reprints can range from 200 to

²⁷ Recent examples of these kinds of books are: *Conflicting Visions: Canada and India in the Cold War World, 1946-76* (<http://www.ubcpres.ca/conflicting-visions>); *The Intellectual Property-Regulatory Complex: Overcoming Barriers to Innovation in Agricultural Genomics* (<http://www.ubcpres.ca/the-intellectual-property-regulatory-complex>); or *A Town Called Asbestos: Environmental Contamination, Health, and Resilience in a Resource Community* (<http://www.ubcpres.ca/a-town-called-asbestos>).

²⁸ Shari Martin (former distribution and inventory manager, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, August 2012.

2000 copies. Generally, books with Indigenous content sell through faster, and softcover reprints will be done within a year, depending on the title. In 2017, the Press printed fifteen Indigenous titles in the first half of the year. Overall, bestselling titles for UBC Press have been in the following areas: environmental studies, Indigenous studies, law and society, military history, and political science. The Press's gross sales are boosted from non-traditional markets such as museums, First Nations' Houses, tribal associations, the Museum of Anthropology, Royal BC Museum, gift shops, and any place with a focus on Indigenous art and studies.²⁹

When stocks run low, reprint orders must be done efficiently and wisely. Laraine Coates, marketing manager of UBC Press, is in charge of determining reprint numbers, often estimating sufficient amounts to sustain an individual title's demand. Her method is organized and simple. The Press receives a weekly report from University of Toronto Press (UTP) Distribution, a division of University of Toronto Press that warehouses and distributes UBC Press books. Each report details stock levels, backorders, and sales over the past three years. The report shows how many copies the Press has of each title in the UTP Distribution warehouse. Other factors taken into consideration are how many years' worth of stock the Press still has. If there is less than one quarter of a year's worth of stock left, reprinting is deemed necessary. Generally, Coates studies what has been sold in the past twelve months and makes reprint decisions based on these figures, multiplying these amounts by two to three years' worth of stock to make sure there are sufficient books to cover orders. Each title is examined on an individual basis.

As reprints take anywhere from three to six weeks, depending on how busy the printer is, how they are printed (digital usually takes three to four weeks, while offset takes

²⁹ Martin, discussion.

five to six weeks) is important for the Press, from a customer service perspective, to not fall into situations where customers have to wait months for an order (which would likely discourage them from purchasing the book). To discourage back orders, Coates monitors each title diligently so that when a low-stock situation arises, she can immediately order reprints. Naturally, there can be some surprises that require quick action, such as sudden course orders, which can range anywhere from 20 to 100 copies. Reprints of these titles are given priority and done immediately. Overall sales are looked at to determine how many units to reprint, and the bookstore or customer is given updates throughout the process as to where the book is in the printer queue and the estimated delivery date. Short-run digital printing (100 units or less) is done in the United States, as domestic standards to cost-effectively print such a small quantity have not quite met the mark yet (see Section 2.3). However, while those titles take only a week to print, they can take weeks to cross the border. It can therefore take up to four weeks for the books to arrive in the UTP Distribution warehouse in Toronto that UBC Press uses.³⁰

Thus, it is evident that UBC Press has presently established a viable strategy for the management of its inventory and print runs, which has also reduced its printing costs and enabled it to take advantage of the “long tail” of many previously out-of-print books in its backlist. In the process, the Press has enlisted the services of various POD and short-run digital printing suppliers as it seeks to balance inventory with demand, with the view to economize on costs but not compromise on quality.

³⁰ Laraine Coates (marketing manager, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, April 2016.

2.2. Friesens: The Press's Core Print Provider

UBC Press's core print provider is Friesens Corporation, a North American book and packaging manufacturer that was founded in 1907.³¹ Friesens serves publishers, manufacturers, and schools (mostly for their yearbooks) worldwide. According to their official site, they “maintain the most efficient cost structure through ongoing staff education, lean work practices, fast turn-around, state-of-the-art equipment and world-class, innovative production facilities.”³² The Press has been using Friesens since the 1990s.

Up until 2007, a first-run print run was an average of 800 copies (400 hardcovers and 400 softcovers). The print runs were higher then to take advantage of lower unit costs due to economies of scale and out of concern that it would be too expensive to go back and reprint later if not enough books were printed initially. The Press subsequently decided to reduce first-run hardcover print runs to 200-300 copies and softcover print runs to 200-300 copies because of the suggested change in inventory write-down (a result of the Press-wide review held in 2007).³³ The Press had used Friesens's offset presses for all its printing of first-run titles and reprints until that time.

However, in 2008, the university requested Holly Keller to conduct a Request for Proposal (RFP) whereby she solicited bids from different printer vendors, including Friesens and Marquis, a large printer in Quebec. The Press entered an experimental phase with Friesens, whereby it printed its more important trade or course books (especially those with images) on the offset press and its more specialized monographs and collections on the web-fed press, a cheaper option for books without images. The term “web-fed” refers “to the use

³¹ “About Friesens,” Friesens Corporation, <http://www.friesens.com/about>.

³² “About Friesens.”

³³ Brand, discussion.

of rolls of papers supplied to the printing press.”³⁴ These web presses were good for long-run printing jobs because of their speed, but they were not ideal for printing books with many images, which did not reproduce on the web press as well as they did on the sheet-fed offset press.

The Press also decided to experiment with Marquis, which was of particular interest because it printed many of their books on first-generation digital presses. However, this relationship was short-lived as Marquis’s shipping costs were higher, and there were sometimes quality-control issues. By the end of 2008, the Press was again printing its first-run books solely at Friesens.

Between 2008 and 2012, the Press also relied on University of Toronto Press Distribution for short-run digital reprinting. By utilizing UTP Distribution’s digital printing services, the Press was able to order smaller reprint runs of 100 copies or less as often as they wished, thus reducing its reliance on having to print huge initial print runs.³⁵ However, the printing output was disappointing, and the books printed in their facility were of low quality.³⁶ Despite its overall dissatisfaction with the quality of the reprints at UTP Distribution, the Press continued to use them for its short-run reprints, partially due to a lack of alternative companies in Canada at the time that could provide similar services.

The Press had used Friesens for all of its reprints before, most of which were orders for at least 300 copies or more. For example, the Press’s reprints at Friesens in 2008 ranged between 200 and 1,000 copies. However, because the Press chose to use UTP Distribution’s

³⁴ *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Web-fed Offset,” last modified August 12, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offset_printing#Web-fed_offset.

³⁵ Milroy, discussion.

³⁶ Brand, discussion.

services for short-run reprints in 2009, at least half of the Press's reprints that year were only around 50 copies or less.³⁷ But the quality issues would not go away.

Between 2008 and 2009, Friesens had begun to invest in digital print technology in order to lower costs for publishers who wanted shorter print runs for their books. The company experimented with various digital printing presses and initially settled on the Digital Book Factory (DBF) printer, which was basically a Xerox machine with a bindery attached. At the time, the DBF was best for short-run black-and-white book work,³⁸ although the production quality was still not up to the standards of books printed on an offset press.³⁹ The Press decided then to print most of its first-run books (excluding trade books that require specialized kinds of printing, such as nonstandard trim sizes, coated paper, and colour printing) and most of its reprints over 200 copies on Friesens's digital presses, while still holding onto UTP Distribution's services in the interim.⁴⁰

The Press's quest for high-quality print runs under 200 units continued. At Friesens, the unit cost increased for digital printing orders below 200 units, which was considered the optimal break-even point in terms of economies of scale. UBC Press used UTP Distribution for digital reprints under 200 (and Friesens for reprints over 200), despite the quality issues, which helped it continue its policy of reducing inventories by printing shorter runs of books. However, the quality of reprints at UTP Distribution continued to vary per book – from binding to colour issues. In addition, in order to keep costs low at UTP Distribution, the Press usually opted for cheaper white paper and glossy covers, as opposed to the usual 55-percent recycled, cream paper and matte covers. That was because UTP Distribution only

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Jorge Rocha, e-mail message to author, December 2, 2016.

³⁹ Friesens has since perfected their digital printing technology, and black-and-white books printed on their current digital presses now closely resemble those printed on their offset presses.

⁴⁰ Keller, discussion.

did gloss covers, which was the defining appearance of traditional POD books. The Press continued using their services despite the substandard quality and complaints from authors and Press staff members alike.⁴¹

At the beginning of 2012, UBC Press was relying more on Friesens to do its printing in terms of both first-time printing and reprints. As the Press was printing in smaller numbers, the books were selling through at a faster rate. The Press decided that any books released in the past eighteen months that sold through would be sent to Friesens for digital reprinting of 200 softcover copies or higher. Notably, reprinting at Friesens promises copies that are essentially identical to the first-run softcover copies of new books they print for the Press, especially since Friesens has acquired a high-quality and efficient digital press and has also lowered its prices compared to what they were for doing reprints on a higher-end offset press.⁴²

While the quality of the reprints done by UTP Distribution was increasingly viewed as unsatisfactory, the reprints done by Friesens were of good quality, although their pricing was still high for reprinting books under 100 units. Thus, the guarantee of quality and cheaper price points for reprint orders of over 200 units contributed to the Press's long-standing decision to remain with Friesens, a loyal and steady partner in its core printing process.⁴³

2.3. BookMobile: The Press's Short-Run Digital Printing Provider

Contracting the services of an appropriate print service provider might be difficult but retaining its services can prove to be equally difficult. In April 2012, UTP Distribution

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ For an abbreviated chronology of the printers and their respective timelines, please refer to Appendix A.

discontinued its short-run digital printing service. Due to the reduction of initial print runs, the Press was having to do more reprints in general during this time. A new short-run digital printing provider was needed to replace UTP Distribution for short-run digital reprints – hopefully one that would provide better quality reprints of books for print runs of a hundred copies or less.

In the summer of 2012, Megan Brand, editor at UBC Press, thus contacted four printing companies that provided short-run digital printing services: Lightning Source, BookMobile, Webcom, and Ball Media. She asked them each for a quote to print copies of the same title: *Cannibal Tours and Glass Houses: The Anthropology of Museums* by Michael M. Ames (UBC Press, 1992). The quotes she received from the companies for different print quantities were varied. Further, most of the companies did not share the same service expectations as UBC Press, with the exception of BookMobile.⁴⁴

BookMobile promptly responded with the requested quote information and was able to provide a sample copy of *Cannibal Tours and Glass Houses* that looked good – the quality rivalling that of the Press’s first-run printing copies. Therefore, the Press decided to go with BookMobile. Their history in the publishing industry was also impressive and promising.

BookMobile began in 1982 as a typesetting house for publishers but gradually expanded to offer a range of services. In December 1996, the company launched its POD and short-run digital printing services, a pioneer in book production to this day. BookMobile proudly states on their official website that each print run “includes exceptional quality control standards ensuring that each book meets over 60 criteria during the production

⁴⁴ While Lightning Source did not work out in the end on a local publishing level, they were much better placed in UBC Press’s UK orders sector, a relationship we will discover in the next section.

process.”⁴⁵ They also offer countless production options from various paper stocks to trim sizes. What sets BookMobile apart from other POD and short-run printers is that they can provide features that allow books to have greater aesthetic appeal, such as French flaps, colour inserts, embossing, and so forth. They can also reprint books with hardcovers, which is a service that the Press occasionally needs. Lastly, their customer service is also exceptional with sales representatives responding within twenty-four hours and drawing on thirty-two years of experience.⁴⁶

Since 2012, the Press has had a quality working relationship with BookMobile, which indeed provides relatively excellent customer service and efficient delivery. It has become the Press’s main short-run digital printing provider for reprint orders of 100 units or less. BookMobile has higher unit costs although lower shipping rates, which makes it more expensive overall compared to Lightning Source, for instance, which has lower unit costs but higher shipping rates. The customer service at BookMobile, however, has been more favourable, and it is very responsive to the Press’s schedule and requests.⁴⁷ This is one of the main factors contributing to the Press’s decision to print with BookMobile.

With BookMobile, the transactions thus far have been very smooth. The orders are transacted instantly, and the copies are almost identical to those printed at Friesens. When the Press prints a title for the first time with BookMobile, it can upload the print-ready files to BookMobile’s FTP site. To reprint the same title in the future, the Press simply places an order for it through BookMobile’s eFirst Portal, an online ordering system with shipping

⁴⁵ “About BookMobile Printing Services,” BookMobile, www.bookmobile.com/about-bookmobile.

⁴⁶ “About BookMobile Printing Services.”

⁴⁷ Brand, discussion.

information; BookMobile already possesses the files and hence only needs information on how many units to reprint.⁴⁸

At BookMobile, reprints take approximately a month to reach UTP Distribution in Toronto (UBC Press's distributor). As BookMobile is based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, it ships books to the UTP Distribution centre in Tonawanda, New York, which subsequently ships them to Toronto. The Press is hoping to reduce this overall time to three weeks. Friesens, by comparison, generally takes four to six weeks to print and ship books, but can reduce this to four weeks, on request, for rush orders.

Another advantage of printing with BookMobile is that they offer a wide range of printing papers with economical price points. With BookMobile, UBC Press has the option of printing with cream paper, closely resembling that originally used for the first-run printing at Friesens, at a reasonable cost. As this is a slightly different type of paper from that used in an original print run, BookMobile may have to make adjustments to the spine in the design file to account for any difference, which the Press has given them approval to do when necessary.

Overall, the quality of digitally printed books has increasingly improved over the past few years, and BookMobile produces books of almost indistinguishable quality from Friesens. The Press rarely runs into any problems with their products. This, for the Press, is a good working system that complements its other relationship with Friesens. Although BookMobile is more expensive than UTP Distribution was and Lightning Source is, its production quality meets UBC Press's standards and the needs for the Canadian market. Lately, however, the unfavourable exchange rate between the US dollar and Canadian dollar

⁴⁸ Ibid.

is prompting the Press to reconsider printing with BookMobile. If the Canadian dollar remains low, the Press may consider exploring other short-run digital printers in Canada.⁴⁹

These varied experiences with suppliers for short-run digital printing services indicate that finding the most appropriate print service provider for UBC Press has been challenging and basically the outcome of a process of experimentation, as it was with determining the optimal number of copies to print per title. Thus, what seems to be working fine now is probably the best (possibly transitional) strategy in a niche market until a better solution is found.

2.4. Lightning Strikes Twice: Relationships with Overseas Markets

While UBC Press has developed a digital print model that utilizes the exemplary services of Friesens and BookMobile (mostly for its North American markets), the Press also has a budding relationship with Lightning Source that began locally and is now international. Lightning Source, founded in 1997, is the leading traditional POD printer in the world. It has been able to turn printing on demand into a remarkable business, with over 15 million titles in its inventory.⁵⁰ Part of Lightning Source's success lies in using special software to keep track of millions of orders, ensuring that the appropriate covers wind up on the correct books, and that books get sent to the right customers.⁵¹ Another part of Lightning Source's success is its connection with its parent company Ingram Book Company, one of the largest distributors of books and other content in the world. Ingram's distribution strength is such that a client's "book always appears in stock and is available to

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ "Books and Related Products," Ingram Content Group, <http://www.ingramcontent.com/retailers/products>.

⁵¹ "The Boom in Printing on Demand."

all Ingram customers. With over thirty thousand wholesalers, retailers, and booksellers in over 100 countries ... titles will gain the maximum exposure in the market today.”⁵²

The process of printing on demand is stated simply for publishers on Ingram’s official website. In general, all one has to do is upload titles to Lightning Source’s digital asset management system, and they will be available to Ingram’s global distribution network, depending on the type of agreement signed. Customers order the titles online or in-store. Lightning Source only prints these orders in traditional POD fashion. The publisher then chooses how they are shipped, either direct to themselves or straight to the customer.⁵³ In the Press’s case, they have signed a print-to-publisher agreement, for when they eventually use traditional POD for overseas titles. This means Lightning Source only prints an order when it is placed, and the book is then shipped directly to the specified warehouse for distribution.⁵⁴

One of the Press’s main international markets lies in Europe. The United Kingdom appeared to be a natural place for an English-language publisher such as UBC Press to have European sales and headquarters. The Press’s previous distributor, Eurospan Group, was based in London. As of 2016, the Press began working with a new European distributor, Combined Academic Publishers (CAP) Ltd, whose warehouse is in Oxfordshire. CAP deals in European, Middle Eastern, and North African markets. CAP has greatly increased the marketing of the Press’s books in Europe. They deliver well-defined sales and inventory reports informing the Press if they are running low on a certain title, as well as the sales potential of specific titles, aggregate titles, or genres. With Eurospan, the Press’s previous

⁵² “Lightning Source,” Ingram Content Group, <http://www.ingramcontent.com/publishers/lp/lsi/globalDistChannels>.

⁵³ “Print-On-Demand,” Ingram Content Group, <http://www.ingramcontent.com/publishers/print/print-on-demand>.

⁵⁴ Coates, discussion.

European distributor, they did not have such tailored reporting feedback. However, these monthly sales reports from CAP provide more information than the Press needs as few trends are discerned. A better estimation can be found in quarterly reports.⁵⁵

In practice, at the time of this writing, the Press was not using Lightning Source for traditional POD printing. That is because shipping books from Canada to the UK has thus far proven to be the more economical option. Stock for the new books sent to CAP in the UK ranges between ten and thirty copies maximum (a mixture of hardcovers and paperbacks), and these do not usually sell through, which would necessitate the Press ordering POD copies of these titles. Oftentimes, no more than twenty-five copies of a single title are sold.

However, in the future, the Press hopes to print with Lightning Source in the UK in order to replenish stock at the CAP warehouse. According to this system, the Press would continue to print their initial frontlist titles in Canada and have them shipped from Canada to CAP's warehouse in the UK, but select backlist titles would be set up for POD with Lightning Source.

Lightning Source is affiliated with CoreSource (CS), a digital asset management system the Press uses for archiving digital book files. Before books are published, the Press staff upload all of their respective POD files (i.e., POD jacket files, POD PDF text file, etc.) to CoreSource. Lightning Source is set up as a distribution channel, so for the purposes of POD printing in the future, Press staff would log in to CoreSource when a title is ready for reprinting, find the required title, and request distribution to Lightning Source, which uploads the files to Lightning Source's FTP. Along with the print-ready PDFs of the book

⁵⁵ Murray Tong (former digital projects manager, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, March 2016.

cover and text, they would also receive a copy of the metadata previously uploaded to CoreSource. Once the book's proofs have been verified by the Press, Lightning Source would then print and deliver the books as ordered. Thus, if CAP runs out of copies sent by the Press, they send reports informing the Press that they have run out or are low in stock, and the Press would either have a new shipment of copies sent from Canada, as is done at present, or upload POD files to Lightning Source's FTP in future.

Currently, the Press ships all copies of newly released books by boat to the UK at the lowest freight rate available, and they arrive fairly slowly. Planning ahead is required, with an estimated publication date aligned with the arrival date of the books. A monthly freight shipment is done in order to replenish titles low in stock, before they go into a back order position at CAP. In this case, CAP would receive the books on time, which is cheaper than having the books printed via traditional POD in the UK. In terms of shipping, sea rates for large orders to the UK are fairly reasonable. However, as stated, the Press is considering POD printing in the UK on an ongoing basis as opposed to continuing to send twenty-five copies of titles via sea. There are several benefits to printing overseas, such as making a smaller environmental footprint by not shipping books back and forth; convenience; and economizing on staff time so they need not worry about coordinating shipments, tracking, and so forth. Once a book is set up with Lightning Source, ordering reprint copies would be very fast. The Press staff would place the order through CoreSource and thus, the staff would have minimal work to do in replenishing stock for titles that have already been set up.⁵⁶

The Press is also considering doing traditional POD printing in Australia. At the time of this writing, it did not have affiliations with a warehouse and distributor in Australia, and

⁵⁶ Coates, discussion.

thus is considering using Lightning Source for single POD reprints there in the future, as the cost of shipping directly to Australia is prohibitive. It also takes a very long time to ship books there. If such a system can be negotiated in the future, traditional POD (as applied to overseas inventory) could double or triple book sales in Australia, which are currently very low.

In conclusion, the Press has certainly developed a good working system and plan with Lightning Source, allowing for decent coverage of its UK market and one that may accommodate its potential needs to do POD printing in the future. Overseas POD runs are notably smaller than domestic short-run print runs. Being able to utilize Lightning Source as the Press's POD provider in the UK, in the future, therefore would meet needs in this market without having to worry about storage, shipping, or excess inventory.

Chapter 3. Benefits and Drawbacks

The benefits of print on demand and short-run digital printing are clear. They require less effort and resources for setting up a job on press, with accompanying minimal costs. Earlier methods of printing books, such as offset printing, produced books in stages and only worked efficiently when many copies were produced at one time. POD and short-run digital printing take advantage of digital printing and make it possible to print small quantities economically.⁵⁷

To exemplify the cost differences between offset and digital printing, take, for example, the UBC Press book *Parole in Canada: Gender and Diversity in the Federal System* by Sarah Turnbull and its cost breakdown with Friesens. A first-run digital print run with Friesens costs \$12.78 per unit for a print order of 200 hardcovers of this particular title. Printing on a digital press is thus cheaper than offset printing, which costs \$16.82 per unit for the same print order of 200 hardcovers. Likewise, for a first-run digital print order of 200 softcovers, it costs \$4.70 per unit. An offset print order of 200 softcovers would cost \$6.71 per unit.⁵⁸

Table 1.1. Friesens's first-run costs (200 units)

Friesens	Hardcover (per unit)	Softcover (per unit)
Offset printing	\$16.82	\$6.71
Digital printing	\$12.78	\$4.70

⁵⁷ "Self-Publisher's 5-Minute Guide to Book Printing Processes," *The Book Designer*, <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2009/11/guide-to-printing-processes>.

⁵⁸ Keller, discussion.

Reprinting this same title, on the other hand, costs only \$5.10 per unit for a digital print order of 200 softcovers. However, offset reprinting costs skyrocket to \$12.55 per unit for an order of 200 softcovers.⁵⁹ The existence of short-run digital printing has been very economical, resulting in savings for the Press and other publishers of more specialized books requiring short print runs. Great improvements in the quality of digital printing in recent years have also made digital printing a better publishing option. It is therefore understandable why the Press used digital printing once they were able, as opposed to remaining with traditional offset printing.

Table 1.2. Friesens’s reprint softcover costs (200 units)

	Softcover (per unit)
Offset printing	\$12.55
Digital printing	\$5.10

One must keep in mind that digital printing is usually suitable for print runs of under 500 units, although print runs of up to 1,000 can be cost-efficient if a book is short in terms of number of pages. But there are other factors that have to be taken into consideration, such as printers, print order specifics, printer storage costs and so forth, which cannot be calculated exactly. Inventory costs, and the risk of not being able to sell remaining books, should also be considered seriously. In practice and theory, typically only unit costs are examined. However, it is expected the economic advantages for short-run digital printing will only grow in the future.⁶⁰

In practice, UBC Press only does softcover reprints for the most part. There is no need to pay for preparation and initial set-up costs at Friesens for the reprinting of 200 or

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Tzouvaras and Hess, “Keyword,” 40.

more copies, as this has already been done the first time, and the printer retains the files. The Press only needs to pay a \$100 file-retrieval fee for all reprints Friesens does. An initial short-run reprint order at BookMobile, however, has a preparation cost of \$80 per title to set up book files for the first time.

With BookMobile, a cost breakdown of the title *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* by Michael M. Ames will demonstrate why the Press only uses BookMobile for softcover quantities of under 100 copies. A comparison between BookMobile and Friesens was conducted for a print run of 200 softcovers for this title in January 2015. The unit cost for a softcover was \$5.03 USD (\$6.34 CAD) at BookMobile. Friesens, on the other hand, was lower at \$6.23 CAD per unit. The total costs for a print run as such was \$1,006 USD (\$1,268 CAD) for BookMobile and \$1,246 CAD for Friesens.⁶¹ Naturally, Friesens was the obvious choice in this circumstance.

Table 1.3. BookMobile and Friesens’s softcover costs (200 units)

	Unit cost	Total cost
BookMobile	\$6.34 CAD / \$5.03 USD	\$1,268.00 CAD / \$1,006 USD
Friesens	\$6.23 CAD	\$1,246.00 CAD

However, when it comes to reprints of 100 softcovers for this particular title, BookMobile appears more favourable for the Press as it costs only \$3.78 USD (\$4.97 CAD) per unit for an order of 100-249 copies. Friesens, alternatively, costs \$5.63 CAD per unit for an order of 100-249 copies. However, the price difference changes at the 250-unit mark; it costs less at Friesens for a print run of 250 copies at \$4.14 CAD per unit, resulting in a total of \$1,035 CAD. At BookMobile, it costs \$3.35 USD (\$4.47 CAD) per unit to print 250

⁶¹ Brand, discussion.

copies, thus resulting in a total of \$1,117.50 CAD.⁶² Thus, 200 copies appear to be the break-even point for the Press.

Table 1.4. BookMobile and Friesens’s softcover costs (100-250 units)

	Unit cost (100-249)	Unit cost (250)	Total cost (250)
BookMobile	\$4.97 CAD / \$3.78 USD	\$4.47 CAD / \$3.35 USD	\$1,117.50 CAD
Friesens	\$5.63 CAD	\$4.14 CAD	\$1,035 CAD

Another benefit of using BookMobile is that it generally takes less time for them to deliver books compared to Friesens – for printing and shipping, BookMobile takes three to four weeks. Sometimes, they may take longer than expected as the books are printed in Minnesota and must cross the border to reach the UTP Distribution warehouse based in Toronto. Friesens prints and delivers first-run books within six weeks, but they print and deliver reprints within four or five weeks, depending on how busy they are. A fast delivery is recommended for good customer relations, meeting expectations, and setting excellent standards.

The drawbacks to using BookMobile are minimal, one of which includes their US pricing. If the US dollar remains high, this will be a problem for the Press. Press staff will then consider using a Canadian short-run/POD provider instead. Another general issue is expensive shipping costs dependent upon weight, quantity, and BookMobile’s location in the United States. This cannot be helped, and the costs remain manageable for the present considering the good the Press derives from using BookMobile.

Between January 2016 and January 2017, the Press reprinted 71 times with BookMobile and 46 times with Friesens. Appendix B features a comprehensive table of

⁶² Ibid.

reprint numbers with BookMobile and Friesens from 2012 to 2017.⁶³ The Press is very careful and selective with the titles it chooses to reprint and their respective quantities. There isn't a great risk involved with reprinting conservatively. Moreover, all factors are already in the Press's favour, such as good quality and effective communication with the printers. The Press rightly anticipates good results as its reprint methods have been tried and tested.

While the Press is currently doing well in its management of short-run digital printing, there is always room for improvement. The fine balance it creates between reducing inventory whilst meeting market demand makes it both economical and efficient. One slight difficulty, however, is in making sure that quantities done through short-run digital printing are sufficient. If demand suddenly increases, hastily ordered reprint copies may not arrive in time, hence resulting in a loss of sales and a poor reputation.

To anticipate sudden sales, UBC Press observes past trends in sales of similar subject books, and this method has proven effective so far. To reinforce the reliability of this method, making extra reprints (of up to thirty, for instance) of a title projected to sell well, or that is selling well, would not hurt. It is worthy to consider that with improved technology and communication in the years to come, the wait time for short-run digital printing of books may be reduced, thus making the whole process even more efficient.

For the future, there seems to be no doubt that UBC Press can adequately tackle challenges with its careful and strategic methods.

⁶³ Ibid.

3.1. Digital Printing and the Future of Scholarly Publishing

While the future of scholarly publishing is unpredictable, it is evident that in the next decade “scholarly communication will be conducted using a variety of media, on an array of platforms, funded from a range of sources, employing a variety of business models.”⁶⁴ The introduction of e-books, for instance, has basically changed the reality of how content is consumed. No reader is now restricted to just the printed form but can seamlessly alternate between devices that range from laptops to mobiles to tablets. As these digital platforms improve, dynamic forms of content presentation are certain to make an appearance in the near future.⁶⁵ With these realities in mind, a “multiple-venue, multiple-format approach to publishing is required.”⁶⁶ While physical distribution and dissemination can combine forces with digital marketing and promotion, publishers must implement other ways to take full advantage of both print and digital models.⁶⁷ Although the future of publishing is digital, it must coexist with print because arguably, “no single business model for e-books will replace the traditional methods of publishing and selling print [books].”⁶⁸

As Jeff Abraham, president of Penguin Random House Publisher Services, asserts: “We believe physical books will remain a vital, dependable part of our business well into the future, as digital publishing continues to increase accessibility and revenue.”⁶⁹ Print books, albeit diminishing in demand, will remain a necessity. For at least the next decade, there will still be the huge number of readers who prefer the tactile, bound book of childhood

⁶⁴ Lynne Withey et al., *Sustaining Scholarly Publishing: New Economic Models for University Presses* (New York: Association of American University Presses, March 2011), 10.

⁶⁵ Eric Loehfelm, “5 Digital Publishing App Trends to Watch in 2012,” *Mashable*, January 13, 2012, <http://mashable.com/2012/01/13/digital-publishing-apps-predictions>.

⁶⁶ Lynne Withey et al., *Sustaining Scholarly Publishing*, 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁹ Judith Rosen, “Distribution in a Digital Age,” *Publishers Weekly*, April 13, 2012, <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/manufacturing/article/51512-distribution-in-a-digital-age.html>.

memories, attachment, and habit. The bound book is, in an environment such as academia, arguably more effective and practical for teaching and learning. It is believed that markets for bound books bundled with their digital versions will keep expanding.⁷⁰ Authors, too, generally want their books in all possible venues and formats. As readers enjoy more and more variety in formats, more authors will also enjoy the opportunity of getting published but face the consequences of greater competition.⁷¹

However, traditional POD and short-run digital printing remain relevant and current beyond traditional book printing and distribution, serving a variety of “print needs that better lend themselves to an on demand model such as galleys, catalogs and review copies.”⁷² The university press market uses short-run digital printing of catalogues for a clever alternative to traditional catalog publishing, which allows presses “to print niche catalogs with limited print quantities, or, to print catalogs overseas, eliminating the need for costly and untimely shipping.”⁷³ The short-run digital print model fulfills sudden demand for out-of-stock titles, thus always keeping titles in print.

The University of Texas Press, for example, announced that an extensive range of its out-of-print books was now available in traditional POD editions through Lightning Source, with additional titles to be added over time.⁷⁴ Cambridge University Press has also successfully embraced this trend, generating three times as many sales through traditional POD in 2010 as compared to 2005.⁷⁵ The University of Chicago Press adopted “digital printing to maximize the availability of books sold and delivered to customers after the title,

⁷⁰ Lynne Withey et al., *Sustaining Scholarly Publishing*, 8.

⁷¹ “The Boom in Printing on Demand.”

⁷² Kelly Gallagher, “Print-on-Demand: New Models and Value Creation,” *Publishing Research Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2014): 245, doi: 10.1007/s12109-014-9367-2.

⁷³ Gallagher, “Print-on-Demand,” 245.

⁷⁴ Adrian Versteegh, “Digital Digest: Print on Demand Answers E-books,” *Poets & Writers*, March/April 2010, https://www.pw.org/content/digital_digest_print_on_demand_answers_ebooks.

⁷⁵ “The Boom in Printing on Demand.”

Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents – The Definitive Edition, was mentioned by talk show host Glenn Beck.⁷⁶ The University of Nebraska Press also turned to traditional POD when two library titles experienced a strong demand when the authors were named Nobel Prize winners.⁷⁷

On another front, publishers who may have solely begun with e-book strategies are also adopting traditional POD to meet consumer demand for printed books. Open Road Integrated Media, a digital publisher, adopts POD for select titles that lend themselves to print books. With a single file, POD meets demand on a local level and allows books to be available globally. Additional revenue is generated and there is arguably no risk. Today, thousands of publishers use Ingram Content Group’s POD service to print and distribute all kinds of book types in singular, economic orders.⁷⁸

Henceforth, it is evident that scholarly publishing in the future will be very different from how it has been in the past. Consumption patterns have changed substantially and are always evolving. Together with changes in creation and publication, alternate distribution models have emerged with aims to “broaden access, reduce costs, and enable open sharing of content.”⁷⁹

Ultimately, it is likely that the scholarly publishing world will probably retain its dynamic versatility and remain a diverse marketplace for a wide spectrum of content, from fee-based to open-access to peer-reviewed to self-published, from single author to collaboratively created, and from simple text to rich media.⁸⁰ Thus, the digital revolution –

⁷⁶ Gallagher, “Print-on-Demand,” 245.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 245-246.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁷⁹ Laura Brown, Rebecca Griffiths, and Matthew Rascoff, “University Publishing in a Digital Age,” *The Journal of Electronic Publishing* 10, no. 3 (2007): 4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0010.301>.

⁸⁰ Brown, Griffiths, and Rascoff, “University Publishing in a Digital Age,” 4.

from offset traditional printing to print on demand and short-run digital printing – has been momentous for how knowledge is now packaged and disseminated. The ideal business model, when found, will deal effectively with how content is produced, managed, and marketed since these are intrinsically linked to the quality, speed of availability, and cost effectiveness of the product.

Chapter 4. Conclusion

This report examined how UBC Press is meeting the challenges of a shifting publishing landscape in the digital age. The Press has responded to the changed sales climate by adjusting its inventory to a cost-effective level. It has initiated the model of short-run digital printing for softcover reprints under 100 copies using BookMobile and is considering adopting traditional POD for overseas titles with Lightning Source. The Press continues to use Friesens's digital presses for all first runs and reprints above 200 copies. Through careful experimentation with these three printing companies, UBC Press has struck a fine productive balance, which allows it to keep costs down, control its inventories without missing out on sales opportunities, and continue producing books with high production standards.

While many may view short-run digital printing and print on demand as only filling a “transitional gap” between the print and digital realities of today, it is certainly not a temporary fixture at UBC Press. It is, in fact, the most effective way of managing the Press's stock. Print books are still a staple for the scholarly market unlike trade publishing, where readers are increasingly adopting e-books to a certain extent.⁸¹ Notably, the basic revenue of UBC Press comes from print books, which generate a staggering 93-95% in gross sales, as opposed to 5-7% worth of sales in e-books (which has plateaued at this level in recent years).⁸²

Furthermore, traditional POD may help the Press make books available in international markets, and at lower costs, in the future. It would also allow for the Press's

⁸¹ Coates, discussion.

⁸² Melissa Pitts (director, UBC Press), in discussion with the author, August 2012.

books to remain in print and ever available, allowing for new life (and revenues) for books long out of print. Ultimately, the short-run digital printing and potential print-on-demand models have proven to be one of the most beneficial strategies for UBC Press as it navigates the ever-changing waters of the publishing world.

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Appendix A.

Chronology of Printers

2007

- The Press undergoes an internal review. One of the recommendations is for the Press to reduce its inventory levels to cut costs.

2008

- As a result of the review, the Press lowers its first-run print quantities from 400 HC and 400 SC to 200/300 HC and 200/300 SC.
- Due to these new lowered print runs, the Press starts using University of Toronto Press (UTP) Distribution for short-run digital reprints for the first time. All reprints before this time were large quantities of 200 or more printed on Friesens's offset presses.
- Holly Keller conducts a Request for Proposal (RFP) and starts using Marquis for first-run print jobs instead of Friesens. The Press also experiments printing some first-run books on Friesens's web press, but it does not work well for books with lots of images.
- By the end of the year, the Press decides to return fully to Friesens for all first-run print jobs, while still using UTP Distribution for short-run digital reprints.

2008-2009

- Friesens experiments with digital printing presses, and the Press begins printing some first-run books on their new digital press called the Digital Book Factory (DBF). As with those books printed on their web press, the books printed on early digital presses were not up to the same quality as those printed on Friesens's offset presses. However, Friesens continues to perfect its digital printing technology, and their digital presses are soon able to accommodate books of various sizes, page extents, and with any number of illustrations.
- By the end of 2009, the Press is printing almost all first-run books and large-run reprints (over 200 copies) on Friesens's digital presses.

2012

- UTP Distribution's short-run digital reprint service closes its doors, and the Press moves to BookMobile to print all of its short-run reprints.

Appendix B.

Books Printed at BookMobile and Friesens, 2012-2017

	BookMobile	Friesens	Total units
2012	55	59	114
2013	103	54	157
2014	85	60	145
2015	103	46	149
2016	71	46	117
2017 (until May)	17	7	24