

2013-

# The Future of Publishing

## Strategic Directions for the ALA Publishing Department

The Publishing Department ALA Editions, NealSchuman, ALA TechSource, ALA Graphics, RDA, Guide to Reference, Booklist, American Libraries

Preface The Chair of the Publishing Committee, Ernie DiMattia, introduced the goal of renewing the strategic plan for the Publishing Department at the Publishing Committee meeting at the Annual Conference 2013. Ernie convened a meeting in November 2013 to discuss the issues facing the publishing industry, the library profession, and the

Following the meeting, Publishing Department management convened two retreats to address the elements of a strategic plan, including an environmental scan, SWOT analysis, convergence on definitions (mission statements, vision statements, values statements, objectives, strategies, tactics) and the selection of a planning model. Management then submitted a draft of a strategic plan to the publishing committee for review and discussion at Midwinter 2014.

## **The Future of Publishing Strategic Directions for the ALA Publishing Department**

Envisioned Future Traditionally, publishing has meant the selection, preparation and distribution

Since the advent of the Kindle and the subsequent proliferation of other electronic reading devices, publishing has undergone transformations that are both evolving and disruptive

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Given the continuing changes in formats and information delivery options, the overall size of the consumer base will expand because of the newly established ease of access. The number of consumers of content will grow because of the electronic options. The challenge for publishing is to capture the attention of those “new” readers and so grow the potential financial base.

Due to advancements in the functionalities available ~~books~~ – such as those potentially provided by Epub3 ~~book~~ options both for professional development titles and for textbooks will expand the potential for increasing the customer base.

Potential for growth in MLS programs also ~~is~~ resides in the enrichment capabilities provided by online options linking out to related content, cultivating and leveraging the relationships between ~~textbooks~~ ~~books~~ and online access, and incorporating ~~course~~ management and workflow enhancements

The future of ALA’s online magazine alternatives rests on such things as the potential to transfer a linear intermittent experience (turning pages) into a

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### SWOT Analysis

#### Strengths

- The value of ALA's authority and reputation
- Potential for collaboration with divisions and offices
- Ready access to ALA information – member lists, rosters
- Stature and authority of experienced staff in collection development
- Ability to attract celebrities because of mission and role
- Ability to mobilize national programs (than can be monetized)
- ALA's "community" of high profile influence leaders
- Discount advantages because of ~~Not~~ Profit status and presence in the "market"
- Heightened position in higher education by way of ~~Not~~ human acquisition
- ALA's ability and willingness to fund new ventures
- The "READ" posters ~~and~~

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- Financial expectations (General Overhead & Net Revenue) deter investment, research (infrastructure, systems, etc)
- Staffing for online/digital expertise
- Online store is no longer adequate, competitive
- Order Processing/Fulfillment vendor is failing
- ALA Tech support understandably aligned with association's ~~not~~ nonprofit priorities (i.e., not commercial priorities)
- Length of editing and production cycle for books

### Opportunities

- Print on Demand
- Digitize NealSchuman content
- Partnerships with divisions that benefit both the Division Fund and General Fund
- More 3<sup>d</sup> party relationships – as in Booklist's Corner Shelf partnership with Baker & Taylor's Title Source 3
- Monetize investments e.g., Readers Advisory
- Growing potential for digital formats and digital access in MLS education and online learning
- ALA's international focus- adds critical mass to development of emerging markets
- Emerging digital formats enable the delivery of publishing content to markets and customers that have migrated away from print for access to information
- Improved metrics-

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### Threats

- Fewer advertising dollars and greater competition among fewer players
- Publishers Weekly muscling into library advertising markets as book publishers seek other marketing avenues
- Reduced budgets for “nonessential” purchases (such as posters and other promotional products)
- Overall decline in ALA programs – Teen Read Week, National Library Week, etc.
- Reduced budgets for professional development
- Open Access
- Growing preference for online materials in higher education
- An embryonic digital/online market that is prone to disruptive technologies
- The pace or rate of transition from print to electronic across all publishing venues magazines, advertising, books
- Identifying sustainable products in a changing environment
- The place of professional reviews

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### Strategic Direction

#### Goals

1. The Department is prioritized around the web as the access and transaction medium of choice
2. A mobile strategy is integrated into content development plans
3. Staff resources are focused on product line initiatives that leverage the ALA brand
4. Time to Market standards meet market demands
5. ALA Publishing sets the standard for analog and digital education experiences
6. ALA Publishing becomes a leading source of English language content for international venues
7. Financial Stability