

Exploring the Role of Editors in Digital Textbook Publishing: Post-Print Edition

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Abstract

As the publishing industry transitions from print to digital publishing, the publishing environment is becoming increasingly digital and networked. Textbook publishing is no exception, with many textbook publishers exploring and practicing digital publishing of textbook resources. As the publishing industry's understanding of digital publishing becomes increasingly clear, a consensus has emerged that print textbooks and digital textbooks differ only in publishing medium, while the content itself remains unchanged. This means that in the digital publishing environment, editorial work remains central to publishing. However, editors must also transform their perspectives under this new publishing paradigm, actively explore, reposition and adapt to their roles, and employ new editorial methods and approaches in this role exploration process to promote the transformation and development of the publishing industry.

Full Text

Abstract

As the publishing industry transitions from print to digital publishing, the publishing environment is becoming increasingly digital and networked. Textbook publishing is no exception, with many textbook publishers exploring and practicing digital publishing of textbook resources. As the publishing industry's understanding of digital publishing becomes clearer, there is widespread consensus that print textbooks and digital textbooks differ only in publishing medium, while the content itself remains unchanged. This means that editorial work remains central to publishing in the digital environment. However, editors must also transform their mindset under the new publishing landscape, actively explore, reposition and adapt to their roles, and employ new editorial methods and approaches in this role exploration to drive the transformation and development of the publishing industry.

Keywords: editors; textbook publishing

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The author believes that in the digital publishing environment, competition among publishing enterprises involves not only resources and technology, but also talented editorial professionals. The new generation of editorial talent must understand readers' needs, master book content, and be proficient in presentation technologies. How an ordinary editor can transition from traditional to digital editing, and what role editors should play in digital textbook publishing, are questions that editors must confront and consider during the publishing industry's transformation.

3. Promoter of Resource Integration

Through the optimal combination of author resources, product resources, channel resources, reader resources, and other assets, editors fully leverage their editorial advantages, mobilize various resource strengths, and achieve the most effective allocation of resources. Media creative Jeff Norton once said: "The role of an editor lies not only in assembling a manuscript from printed pages into a finished book (or digital document), but also in working together with the author to excavate the core creative advantages of a work and fix its best aspects on the page."

In the digital publishing era, traditional flat, single-mode content presentation is shifting toward interactive, three-dimensional, cross-media formats. This requires editors to fully mobilize various resources to complete textbook design work. In communicating with authors, editors apply digital publishing knowledge and experience to coordinate with authors in selecting presentation methods more suitable for the digital reading era; utilize the publisher's own resources to analyze market prospects and determine chapter structures, content, and organization better suited for student learning; and in the editing process, combine the characteristics of digital textbooks to complete multi-media fusion design, thereby assuming the task of textbook design in digital textbook publishing.

Taking the all-media digital learning package of Central Radio and TV University Press as an example, against the backdrop of "Internet + Education," online education has become a new trend in the education industry—this represents the right timing. The Open University of China is one of the earliest practitioners of distance education and online education in China. In recent years, it has focused its teaching reform on online curriculum development, launching online core courses and micro-courses. As a publisher providing teaching resource support services for the Open University of China, Central Radio and TV University Press has also been continuously exploring and innovating digital textbooks, and possesses its own learning resources service platform and APP client—this represents the right place. The press also has mature author teams,

market-savvy decision-makers, experienced and excellent editorial and technical staff, and a large readership—this represents the right people. With the right timing, place, and people, the all-media learning resource package is the result of editors organically integrating various types of content, representing an excellent practice in resource integration.

2. Organizer of Digital Textbook Publishing

Editors must understand and adapt to digital publishing workflows, transferring the advantages of traditional work models and processes to the new digital publishing environment, and aligning editorial work with the new digital publishing landscape. The digital textbook publishing process shares similarities with traditional print textbook publishing, yet also has differences. The responsible editor for a digital textbook is not only responsible for the book itself, but also serves as the project leader for a digital publishing project. From project initiation, digital textbook design, and editorial processing to project completion, editors must follow comprehensive and rational digital publishing workflows. Based on its business characteristics, the publisher summarizes experiences in all-media digital textbook publishing, establishes workflow systems suited to its operations, and the responsible editor assumes the role of project team leader, completing process follow-up for assigned textbooks and coordinating departments and personnel. Simultaneously, editors should focus on the integration of print, electronic, and online media, combining the advantages of various media to fulfill organizational and coordination functions.

4. Practitioner of New Technology

The editorial team at the Editing Center of Central Radio and TV University Press is a learning-oriented team. The Editing Center regularly organizes professional training and work experience sharing, and encourages editors to engage in research and technological studies. Since Central Radio and TV University Press has fully implemented digital editing and processing, editors can adapt to continuously evolving technological developments, while also summarizing experiences in their work and even proposing additional technical requirements or exploring more tool functions as needed. Digital textbook publishing relies on technology, and it is precisely the continuous renewal and development of science and technology that has accelerated the digital transformation of the publishing industry. Facing new challenges of digital competition in the news publishing industry, particularly in educational publishing, the publisher has scientifically structured its organization and reasonably assembled a highly capable, well-educated, and professionally proficient team to serve digital publishing operations. The publication of a textbook requires not only technical support, but also, more importantly, editorial involvement in content development, requiring editors to possess sufficient technical capabilities to participate and complete the work. Therefore, editors are implementers of digital publishing technology, specifically manifested in the following two aspects:

4.1 Cognition and Acceptance of Various Digital Forms of Books Due to its technological and formal flexibility, digital publishing manifests as three-dimensional, diversified, and even personalized. The same applies to textbook publishing: textbooks must not only meet the requirements of content digitalization, but also satisfy students' learning needs in the digital reading era for timeliness, convenience, and other aspects. Therefore, editors must innovate their concepts, understand and become familiar with various emerging new forms, in order to better provide digital learning resources for talent cultivation at The Open University of China, social education services, and lifelong learning for all members of society.

4.2 New Platforms and Media Will Continuously Emerge in the Future Book Publishing Market Textbooks are not merely books, but rather a form of learning service. Editors must learn new technologies related to digital publishing, while also understanding digital publishing policies, industry trends, and technological developments to adapt to emerging new publishing activities. With the vigorous development of digital publishing, the forms and channels of textbook publishing are undergoing changes. Digital textbooks enable richer audio, video, and graphic content to be presented, continuously optimized technology to be applied, and greater emphasis to be placed on building digital platforms, making readers' learning methods and reading experiences more diverse. Editors should leverage their own advantages, through the reengineering of editorial processes in the digital environment, develop into new media fields such as mobile terminals and networks, and explore the integration of traditional publishing and new media. In the process of constructing and publishing all-media learning resource packages at Central Radio and TV University Press, editors adapt within the workflow, learn from details, and understand and participate in digital publishing from different perspectives using different identities.

The development of digital textbooks has gone through the stages of resource digitalization and multimedia presentation of learning content, and has now entered the stage of educational resource platformization. Leveraging the Internet and increasingly popular mobile terminal devices, with digital textbooks and teaching applications as carriers, digital learning spaces are built for teachers and students. "Mobile terminals + educational content + service platforms" constitute its three core elements.

In August 2016, Central Radio and TV University Press published 10 types of all-media learning resource packages. The all-media learning resource package represents an attempt to integrate publishing content with technological applications, as well as an exploratory practice for editors participating in all-media textbook publishing. Developed by Central Radio and TV University Press in response to the teaching reform and development needs of The Open University of China, and in alignment with trends in distance education and digital publishing, the all-media learning resource package combines the press's distinctive advantages to create a new type of teaching resource. The learning package

integrates multiple forms including graphics, text, audio, video, and animation, combining digital and print media to provide remote learners with entirely new learning experiences that meet the needs of different learners.

In the planning and publishing of all-media learning resource packages, more than a dozen editors from the Editing Center participated, completing different tasks according to their respective divisions of labor and the characteristics of different textbooks. Here, we illustrate only the work undertaken by editors during the digital textbook production process. Editors must proceed from student needs, selecting topics suitable for all-media textbook development through market research and data analysis, and engage in creative conceptualization from the perspectives of structure, content, and presentation methods. From contract signing to communication and negotiation with authors, editors ensure that digital textbooks have rich content, complete materials, and align with print textbooks. They also undertake overall design and monitoring of other related aspects of the digital product production workflow, such as requirements analysis, design implementation, and trial reading testing. Additionally, they play organizational and coordination roles in subsequent distribution. After determining topics, editors must decompose mature decisions into actions for relevant departments, promote and organize authors in their creative work, coordinate various aspects of the work, and ensure that all stages of all-media learning resource package publishing proceed in an orderly fashion.

The learning resource packages at Central Radio and TV University Press encountered various problems during the publishing process. While solving these problems, the press not only summarized experiences but also enhanced editors' professional capabilities in digital publishing. Meanwhile, the learning package production team collected and analyzed sales data of all-media digital learning packages, student usage effectiveness, and other market feedback. In 2017, Central Radio and TV University Press planned to launch approximately one hundred all-media digital textbooks, with all editors from the Editing Center scheduled to participate in the publishing work, thereby facilitating the role transformation of editors at Central Radio and TV University Press in digital publishing.

In May 2016, more than half of the editors at the Editing Center of Central Radio and TV University Press participated in the Beijing Digital Publishing Editor Qualification Examination, comprehensively preparing for involvement in digital publishing. In the digital publishing era, mastering new digital publishing technologies is an essential basic skill for editors.

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