



early
literacy
resource
network

Open Licensing Business Models for Publishers

Evidence from Research

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| 27 June 2019

Open licensing and copyright

- An open licence specifies what can and cannot be done with a work. It permits reproduction, adaptation, and distribution without requesting permission from the author or publisher.
- Open licences substitute ‘all rights reserved’ with ‘some rights reserved’ – they do not replace copyright.
- All open licences require attribution of author, illustrator, publisher.
- Digitization and open licensing disrupt traditional publishing practices, including business models.

Costs depend on many factors

- Commercial publishers may have higher costs, including author and illustrator fees and royalties.
- Many local NGOs encounter high costs because of community capacity-building efforts.
- International NGO costs can be high because of international salaries and the need for long-distance travel.
- Writing fees can vary.
- Some NGOs depend primarily on volunteer authors.
- Commercial and non-commercial publishers may differ on what is considered an overhead cost and how overhead is calculated.



Types of storybook models

Basic storybooks

- Can cover a variety of topics
- Read for enjoyment
- Follow no specific teaching or learning methodology

Levelled storybooks (graded readers)

- Written using a specific methodology
- Aimed at teaching children to read

STEM storybooks (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)

- Require research and input from subject specialists
- Teach children mathematical or scientific concepts through storytelling



Cost drivers

- Project management
- Writing fees
- Illustration
- Quality control (editing and proofreading)
- Design and layout
- EPUB creation/digital upload/curation
- Translation



Content creation methods

Traditional publishing

- Traditional publishing processes

Book Dash method

- Teams of volunteer authors, illustrators, designers, and editors create storybooks in one-day book-making events.

Stories generated by communities

- Communities can write stories, which may draw on local folktales, fables, traditions, and contexts.
- To develop local talent, some organizations arrange workshops or training for writers with little or no experience in content creation.

Software-facilitated method

- Software platforms, including African Storybook, StoryWeaver, and Bloom, allow writers and illustrators to mount content under an open licence.



Content creation methods and key cost drivers

	Project management	Workshop and travel	Writing fee	Illustration	Quality control	Design and layout	EPUB conversion	Platform creation and maintenance
Traditional publishing	X		X	X	X	X		
Book Dash method	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Community created	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Software facilitated		X		X	X			X

The shift from closed to open

‘Traditional business models start with exclusivity, denying access to a good until money is paid. There is no impact without first a financial transaction.’

‘Open business models start with inclusivity, participation, and universal access. Impact is enabled up front and revenue generation follows.’

Paul Stacey, *What is an open business model and how can you generate revenue?*



Towards business models that incorporate open licensing

- Long-term sustainability requires publishers to understand how paradigms are shifting and to innovate accordingly.
- Almost all models depend on donor funding, while some also rely to a lesser extent on some degree of voluntarism.
- Some models show promise, including those that combine ‘content-as-a-service’ with other income streams, such as sale of printed, openly licensed books, teacher training services, research, and evaluation services.
- Diversification of funding may enable specialized teams of publishing experts to remain sustainable.
- All business models based on open licensing are in their infancy, so it is too soon to determine what will work most successfully.

Business models using open licensing

- **Online free, print for a fee:** E-books available online but print books are still sold.
- **Voluntarism:** Content creators sometimes rely on volunteers to write and illustrate stories, particularly when they are mounted online.
- **Content as a service:** Contractor pays a once-off fee for content development, production, translation, and other services.
- **Value-added services:** Some organizations generate revenue by linking free content to sale of services.
- **Advertising:** Mounting content on YouTube can earn revenue from advertising.

StoryWeaver

Non-profit publisher

Licence: CC BY

Online free, print for a fee

Celebrating 2,000,000 reads!

Keep reading on StoryWeaver.

[CLICK HERE](#)



13396
STORIES

2144415
READS

155
LANGUAGES

Hello! Here are some stories we think you'll enjoy



ENGLISH - LEVEL 1
Fat King Thin Dog



ENGLISH - LEVEL 2
It's All the Cat's Fault!



ENGLISH - LEVEL 1
Smile Please!



ENGLISH - LEVEL 1
The Red Raincoat



ENGLISH - LEVEL 2
Annual Haircut Day



ENGLISH - LEVEL 3
Miss Laya's Fantastic Motorbike Does Not Like Fruits!

Room to Read

NGO

Licence: CC BY

Content as a service and
voluntarism



- RtR received GBA *Reach for Reading* grant to produce 20 stories in 5 SA languages.
- Each story translated to every language (20 x 5 – 100).
- Five SA publishers collaborated.
- Mix of paid and volunteer content creators (publishers, authors, illustrators, designers, etc.)
- Books created in English in 12 hours using Book Dash method.

<http://onedayonebook.org/#books>

Book Dash

Non-profit publisher

Licence: CC BY

Voluntarism model

Books

All our books are made by a team of three creative professionals: a writer, an illustrator and a designer, working together with an editor and a team of facilitators. Everyone volunteers their expertise during a 12-hour book-making event (called a *Book Dash*) to create beautiful, African storybooks for all to read and enjoy.

[Get involved](#)

Anyone can freely read, download, translate, print and distribute these books under a [Creative Commons Attribution licence](#). You should clearly credit the creators and Book Dash as the original source of the content by including our logo, as well as a link to this website.

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VULA BULA: READING IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES MADE EASY!

Vula Bula is the first graded reading programme in African languages where progression from level to level is based on the phonics of each language.

[ABOUT VULA BULA](#)



Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy

NGO

Licence: CC BY-NC-ND

Online free, print for a fee and value-added services

Siyavula
For-profit
educational tech
company
Licence: CC BY and
CC NC-ND
Value-added services



SIYAVULA PRACTICE

We combined our adaptive practice technology and our complete set of South African curriculum-aligned open textbooks for School Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. You can browse our online textbooks for free and sign up to practise what you learn.

THE LEARNER EXPERIENCE: Personalised, mastery-based learning enabled through goal-directed practice at the appropriate level, immediate, detailed feedback and long term progress tracking.

THE TEACHER EXPERIENCE: Enhanced teaching practice with efficient and effective, technology-assisted formative assessment for individuals and classes, enabled through accessible data analytics summarising effort, mastery, speed and problem areas.

Subscriptions to Siyavula Practice are sold directly to schools, online to individuals (such as parents) over credit card and mobile phone vouchers. For more information about pricing or to try out the practice service yourself on a trial, visit our product website.

VISIT SIYAVULA.COM

DOWNLOAD OPEN TEXTBOOKS

CREATING A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

ENABLING DEEPER LEARNING THROUGH ADAPTIVE PRACTICE FOR MASTERY



ADAPTIVE LEARNING

We want learners to practice smarter, and not necessarily harder. Adaptive practice technology can add huge value. Behind Siyavula Practice is an adaptive learning engine. This algorithm adapts each practice session to the learner's current level of mastery.

Despite technological advances, content development requires proper investment to build sustainable solutions to literacy acquisition.

- Costs vary – very little is standardized.
- Open licences can suit different purposes: CC BY → CC BY-NC-ND.
- Dearth of local storybooks will continue if funds from current initiatives do not reach local stakeholders to create a legacy of high-quality local content creators and support growth of a vibrant cultural industry.

Further reading

Visit the Early Literacy Resource Network

<http://www.earlyliteracynetwork.org>

Open Licensing Made Plain: Primer on open licensing for publishers

<http://www.earlyliteracynetwork.org/content/open-licensing-made-plain-primer-concepts-challenges-and-opportunities-publishers>

Good Stories Don't Grow on Trees: A Guide to Effective Costing of Storybooks in the Global South

<http://www.earlyliteracynetwork.org/content/good-stories-dont-grow-trees-guide-effective-costing-storybooks-global-south>