THE CHALLENGES WE FACE, THE OPPORTUNITIES WE EMBRACE

PUBLISHING FUTURES

By the Book12

Conference Dates: 16–17 June 2027
Location: Oxford Brookes University, Oxford UK
Submission Deadline: 22 January 2027

As the publishing industry becomes increasingly concentrated globally—driven by economies of scale, risk aversion, and technological advancement—understanding how to navigate the challenges of the new AI era on a small scale seems particularly urgent. Whether in academia or in the book business, we face a daily struggle to ensure data reliability and comparability, to establish robust tools and controlled methods for analysis, and to interpret results within their proper contextual background—so that we can offer meaningful commentary rather than merely report figures in red or black. In this context, simply the question of how to define a book becomes important not only from an academic perspective, but also for tax authorities and for organizations measuring sales statistics.

At the same time, both as individuals and as institutions, we permit ourselves, day by day, to become locked into platform ecosystems and 'all-you-can-eat' deals. We consume content rather than genuinely reading, watching, or listening. These walled gardens then obscure our data behind black-box algorithms, directly threatening data transparency and comparability. The situation becomes even more complicated when we consider how these changing digital habits interact with the increasing legal and technological complexity faced by the state institutions meant to protect our rights.

As if that were not enough, the academic climate for studying these transformations is itself under strain, as Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences departments face severe financial challenges – driven in part by declining international enrolment in the wake of global health crises and local political instability. The resulting lack of predictable funding is being felt across the entire sector of higher education.

Yet we may observe how the academic and trade communities around publishing are resisting absorption into this global paradigm: exploring alternative forms of publishing partnerships, distributing agency more widely, streamlining publishing workflows, organizing symposiums and conferences in the field, encouraging research, promoting initiatives for cultural data-sharing and preservation, and

forming consortia to secure greater leverage in negotiations with major publishing corporations.

How can we tackle the rest of the challenges? We invite discussion on this issue by exploring the following key topics:

Market structures

- Definition of a book and a book market
- Rationales for regulating the book market
- Platformization
- The author entrepreneur
- Divergent growth factors in regional book markets
- Market concentration and oligopoly
- Mitigation of risks from vendor lock-ins
- Fostering of public-private infrastructure
- Media politics: truth, populism and public policy
- Building inclusivity and countering geographic and institutional bias

Publishing processes

- Content overload
- Innovation
- Fragmented editorial workflows
- Financial and operational costs of AI adoption
- Copyright and licensing issues in AI model training
- Sustainability

Research processes

- Reliable industry and research data
- Tracking and measurement of reader habits
- The role of libraries
- Research potential of publishing studies
- Interdisciplinary partnerships
- Advocating for non-STEM research funding
- New research methodologies
- Archiving and preserving publishing heritage
- Inequalities in the Open Access model

Contribution Formats:

We invite contributions in the following formats:

1. *Research Paper* (20-minute presentation) – Academic or pedagogical research relevant to the conference themes.

2. *Poster Presentation* (Digital or A3 print poster with a 5-minute introduction) – Visual representation of research or an industry case study.

3. *Roundtable Discussion* (1-hour sessions) – Group-led discussion on key industry or research challenges. Please note that applications are to be submitted by groups, rather than by individual participants.

4. *Best Practice in Teaching* (15-minute case study presentations) – Examples of innovative approaches to teaching publishing studies. Submission of Proposals:

Proposals (as a separate file in Word or as a PDF) should consist of a 250-word abstract together with a 100-word biography for each participant. Submissions are subject to peer review, with selected papers published in a special issue of *Logos*. Keep in mind that no paper has to be submitted ahead of the conference.

Important Dates:

Submission deadline for abstracts: 22 January 2027

Conference dates: **16–17 June 2027**

Abstracts should be submitted to Miha Kovač: Mihael.Kovac@ff.uni-lj.si

For further information, please contact Angus Phillips or Sarah Franklin:

angus.phillips@brookes.ac.uk

s.franklin@brookes.ac.uk

Further information will be posted with suggestions for accommodation. Delegates are responsible for their own travel and accommodation.

Conference Fee:

The conference fee, payable in pounds, **is £235.00**, with a reduced rate of £**110.00** for PhD students.

Committee members:

Angus Phillips, Oxford Brookes University

Miha Kovač, University of Ljubljana

Sarah Franklin, Oxford Brookes University

Suzanne Norman, Simon Fraser University

Christina Banou, Ionian University

Christoph Bläsi, University of Mainz



Jaka Gerčar, University of Ljubljana

Kamila Augustyn, University of Wrocław

