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## PLR: Keeping the Wheels of Publishing Turning

# Public Lending Right Is a Further Income Stream For Authors

**Sihle Khumalo\***

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) – one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations – “The public lending right (PLR) is the legal right that allows authors and other right holders to receive payment from government to compensate for the free loan of their books by public and other libraries.”

When a person borrows a book from the public library a small amount of money accumulates to the author. The money that eventually pays the authors does not come from the library but from the central/ national/federal government. This money is collected and distributed – as is the case when musicians are paid their royalties when their songs have been played on radio – by the collection agency.

To date, there are 34 countries globally that have successfully implemented the PLR system. The first country to implement PLR was Denmark way back in 1946. It was swiftly followed by Norway the following year and Sweden followed suit in the 1950s. There are 29 countries that are at different phases of trying to implement PLR. These countries include – closer to home – Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya and Sierra Leone.

The Academic and Non-Fiction Authors Association of South Africa (ANFASA) is spearheading the introduction of the PLR system in South Africa. ANFASA is “dedicated to empowering authors”. It does so in various

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\* Sihle Khumalo is a South African award-winning and bestselling author. He is the Team Leader for PLR South Africa.



*Keeping all the struggling authors going with PLR funding*

***“The PLR system ensures that for as long as the books are in libraries and are being borrowed by members of the public there is an ongoing reward for the author”***

## PLR: Keeping the Wheels of Publishing Turning

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ways including author grants and online seminars. For more information, visit the ANFASA website: ([www.anfasa.org.za](http://www.anfasa.org.za))

In South Africa, it must be noted, we are still in the very early stages of the PLR journey. Our campaign has to be based on a thorough understanding of how PLR can be made to benefit authors, libraries and the reading public.

Most of the countries that have successfully implemented the system started with an enabling legal framework, incorporating PLR in their Copyright Acts. Other countries, later on, ended up with a standalone PLR Act. In South Africa, the current Copyright Amendment Bill (CAB) does not even mention PLR. There are, however, a very small number of countries that have managed to implement PLR without the legislative framework. Those include Canada and Israel. There is nothing in the South African Copyright Act that supports PLR but on the other hand there is nothing that prevents it, and ANFASA is exploring the practical means of implementing a workable system.

Besides the legislative framework, there is another factor which critically determines the successful implementation of the PLR system: the public libraries' procurement system. For an author to benefit, the book must be in the library. Therefore, the public libraries' procurement is the cornerstone of the PLR system and librarians are an integral part of the PLR system.

Out of 11 official languages, most books in South Africa are published in either English or Afrikaans. It is ANFASA's aim to promote the writing and publishing of more books in the other nine (9) official languages, and PLR will be effective in this.

No international authors will benefit from the system.

One of the key reasons for attempting to implement the PLR system in South Africa is to encourage knowledge production, especially in the other nine

languages. Without authors there will be no books; and without books, there will be no need for libraries. Therefore one of the key objectives of the system is to entice and encourage authors – like all other professionals – to make a living out of their profession/vocation.

It is only fair, and it is the right thing to do, to reward and or compensate authors not only for expressing their ideas, philosophies, research and knowledge in general but also for entertaining and educating the society and the nation at large.

There are, admittedly, some challenges that cannot be ignored. Those include the fact that South Africa has a low reading culture. The book market, especially the general (non-academic) sector, is – relatively speaking – very small. To put things into perspective, the non-fiction book only has to sell 5000 copies for it to be classified as a “bestseller”.

For fiction, which sells less than non-fiction in South Africa, the bar is even lower. This definition of a bestseller (more than 5000 copies sold) must be understood within the context of a population of more than 60 million. It is impossible for authors to make a living if the only financial reward is – as is currently the case – through book sales. The PLR system ensures that for as long as the books are in libraries and are being borrowed by members of the public there is an ongoing reward for the author.

One of the questions which is often asked is ‘why do we need PLR in a developing country?’. It is, indeed, a valid question because – as a country – we are still faced by a number of challenges and problems.

South Africa's strategic plan – the National Development Plan – states it clear that one of the key goals for the country – come Year 2030 – is:

“We love reading. All our citizens read, write, converse, and value ideas and thought.”

The PLR system must be understood in that context: a country that aims to instil a culture of reading has to encourage authors to produce the work.



*It is impossible for authors to make a living if the only financial reward is – as is currently the case – through book sales.*

***“We love reading. All our citizens read, write, converse, and value ideas and thought. The PLR system must be understood in that context: a country that aims to instil a culture of reading has to encourage authors to produce the work.”***

\* [https://internationalauthors.org/news/public-lending-right/why-plr-matters-lets-spread-the-word/?utm\\_source=Authors%27%20Licensing%20and%20Collecting%20Society&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=13163385\\_IAF%20News%20April&dm\\_i=76,7U4XL,KSDTJM,VZIF7,1](https://internationalauthors.org/news/public-lending-right/why-plr-matters-lets-spread-the-word/?utm_source=Authors%27%20Licensing%20and%20Collecting%20Society&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=13163385_IAF%20News%20April&dm_i=76,7U4XL,KSDTJM,VZIF7,1)



## Publishing, It's A Journey

# Your PhD is Your Gateway to Publishing!

**Fred Kakooza\***

**A**t the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa lies an excellent academic and research unit known as the Centre for Communication, Media and Society – CCMS. I was fortunate to be part of the doctoral cohort graduating from this Centre in 2018. Graduating from the Centre does not come easily, you must have successfully defended your research proposal, carried out field work and synthesized your findings into a meaningful dissertation ready for examination. When I joined CCMS in 2015, I was assigned to Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli to walk with me along the research journey I had embarked upon. At this Centre it became known to me that doctoral studies were a launch pad into robust research and academic writing. For three years, I worked with Prof. Ruth to actualize my study – “The potential and contribution of Facebook in HIV/AIDS prevention among young people in Uganda.” The study sought to interrogate how social media has been used in health communication campaigns on HIV/AIDS targeting young people in Uganda.

The study established that Facebook is a popular, affordable and accessible communication platform for young people in Uganda that caters for their individual agency. However, its benefits could not be fully achieved due to a low appreciation of social media in health communication, poor social media content management skills and a lack of social media communication plans for health interventions among programme implementers (Kakooza, 2018). Advancing this study required data mining and reading many journal texts to build logical literature and theoretical arguments, this matched with consistence of citation to achieve academic rigour. The study required ethical clearance and selection of information-rich participants relevant to the research question. Meeting these requirements consumed almost all the time needed to realise the writing of the final dissertation.

Indeed, equipped with these research skills, I was confident to lead a research team for a study on the safety of women journalists in Uganda. The objective of the study was to carry out a situational analysis focusing on attacks specifically directed at

**continues on page 4:**



Dr Fred Kakooza: it became known to me that doctoral studies were a launch pad into robust research and academic writing

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***“Along the way, I have learnt that to fit well in the publishing community, you have to appreciate criticism and diversity of thought from your peers and mentors in shaping your writing”***

## Publishing, It's A Journey

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women journalists given that many of these occur because of the gender issues involved. The study highlighted the abuses, violations and safety risks encountered by female journalists in Uganda as they go about their work. The process of having an article published from this study was as challenging as the PhD journey itself but a little more hectic since all the research activities that I did in three years were now collapsed to a couple of months – you need to have data that adequately speaks to your research question within a short time (but we had been told at CCMS that yes, the PhD is the gateway to publishing). The first draft was returned with many comments! This was quite frightening, it was akin to receiving examiners' comments. I asked myself, do reviewers act as examiners? Do I have to go through this for just a publication? If you are faint-hearted, this can be off-putting and your journey may end there.

The final draft was a result of a back and forth activity between the reviewers and the editor. I appreciated that research contributes to a body of knowledge and that within this space, there is need to accommodate divergent viewpoints and suggestions that are aimed at refining your publication. I also realised that journals have publishing standards that need to be adhered to. This is what gives them credibility and a unique identity. It is from this study that my first journal article titled: 'Female journalists: Negotiating safety and security risks in the Ugandan media environment' was published (Kakooza et.al., 2020). And it was gratifying to see it in print. This gave me courage to continue with the publishing journey.

The second article on Social Media and Health organisations focused on understanding opportunities and constraints using social media platforms in communicating health issues that can potentially improve health outcomes through augmenting not just access to health information but care as well. The findings

showed that among others, Facebook provides opportunity for multimedia communication and specific targeting for health messages. Its potential for health communication is however, constrained by financial, structural and technological limitations prevailing in particular areas. For this article, I received the reviewers comments with ease. It seemed easier to work on this second article that was co-authored with a colleague. The article was published by the journal of Health and New Media Research (Nakiwala & Kakooza, 2020). Along the way, I have learned that to fit well in the publishing community, you have to appreciate criticism and diversity of thought from your peers and mentors in shaping your writing. I am now gaining ground in publishing,

I have worked on a book chapter on 'Social media and HIV/AIDS prevention in Uganda' which has been published by the Makerere University Press in a book entitled *HIV/AIDS in Uganda: Achievements and Challenges* edited by James James Kiwanuka-Tondo. I have also co-authored another book chapter titled: 'Commercial radio news coverage of COVID-19 in Uganda: A case study of Central Broadcasting Service (CBS) radio' that will be published by Emerald later in the year.

I must say that articles can be rejected as well. It is not a given that every time you submit an article it is going to be accepted. I have so far received two rejections!

However, this does not mean that your article is unworthy, but rather that the content might not have been appropriate for that edition. This presents an opportunity to rework your article based on the reviewer's comments and make a submission to another relevant journal or publication. The big lesson here is that publishing requires a considerable time investment for quality texts. It is also good to establish contact with colleagues with whom you can co-author to avoid getting burned out. Importantly, publishing is a thought process that requires patience and appreciation of reviewers' comments and suggestions if one is to successfully walk the publishing journey. You should not stop, just keep moving and publish.

***"I must say that articles can be rejected as well. It is not a given that every time you submit an article it is going to be accepted."***

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## My Research and Training Experience

# Co- vs Self-Ownership Mentors and the Effect of Subconscious Self Motivation

**Ayobami Popoola\***

**T**he story of my research experience and journey is characterized by numerous characters and defining moments. Right from my first publication adventure in the year 2013 and my first one year and six months prolonged and rejected journal to date, numerous events have shaped my research thinking.

### The First Publication

On a lecture day during my master's programme at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, a close colleague of mine was evidently absent from the lecture room. Inquiry revealed that she had traveled to Rotterdam, Netherlands for the ISOCARP conference 2015. This infused in me for the first time a question about my career and how 'unserious' I seem. An indirect motivation, I term it. If a female colleague of mine is in the Netherlands for a conference, what publication have I produced, I asked myself? This motivated me into my first publication adventure<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Popoola, A. A., Adeleye, B. M., Onyemenam, P. I. and Amuda, A. A. (2018). Residents' Perception of Housing Unit Landscaping in Ibadan. In Sanusi Y.A., Junaid, A.M., Morenikeji, O.O., Zubairu, S.N. Jimoh, R.A., & Adedayo, F.O. (eds): 100 years of urbanization in Nigeria (pp. 395- 417). Nigeria: School of Environmental Technology, Federal University of Technology Minna. ISBN: 978-978-54580-2-2

A publication that took three years to be published from the submission date in 2015. I guess, that marked and launched me into 'publication anxiety' as I awaited my manuscript to be accepted or published. This 'cooking' owing to the early delay shock and anxiety fuelled my research resilience towards my first conference presentation in the year 2015. An experience that made me conscious of the ideology that a paper presenter holds the 'destiny and acceptability' of their manuscript. This was quite a good experience considering partnership with – and encouragement from – co-authors, which enhanced and was reflected in the publication of numerous manuscripts as both book chapters and journal articles from my master's thesis, and motivation for a PhD adventure.

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Dr Ayobami Popoola: "This push prepared me for the PhD style of supervision that aligns to 'self-ownership' away from the initial 'co-ownership' of a research process.

***"While the MSc research seemed like a collective partnership with the mentor and supervisor, the PhD training style of the mentor was an unspoken journey."***

\* Ayobami Popoola is a trained Geographer and now an Urban and Regional Planner with a lifelong interest in how planning shape wellbeing and livelihood. His interest is to understand wellbeing from the tripod of governance, infrastructure, and planning. Dr. Popoola is currently a part of the team in the SARChI Chair for Inclusive Cities project, School of Built Environment and Development Studies, UKZN.

## My Research and Training Experience

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### The Supervisors and Supervision in the Research Journey

The style of supervision and its impact on student independence and excellence (see Hadi and Muhammad, 2017) captured in my research experience. The transition from master's education to PhD is summarised in two phases: (1) The eagle that directly pushes his student; and (2) The silent but close-monitoring supervisor that motivates. From my master's thesis at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria under the mentor<sup>2</sup>, I saw the role of 'push' by supervisors towards academic excellence. This push prepared me for the PhD style of supervision that aligns to 'self-ownership' away from the initial 'co-ownership' of a research process. While the MSc research seemed like a collective partnership with the mentor and supervisor, the PhD training style of the mentor<sup>3</sup> was an unspoken journey. This PhD style is focused on democratization of the research and training process (as based on the social constructivist teaching and learning approach) which allows towards the professional and academic independence of all students. This experience is further captured in Detel (2001) and Vygotsky (1978); who averred that social constructivist approach allows for collaborative learning which promotes teamwork skills and see individual learning as essentially related to the success of group learning. Such that the self-motivation and internal drive allows

for the making of the actor-network and improving individuals capacity. A season that was characterised by a test of character and likewise a making of a new research identity within the knowledge community. One lesson that this taught me was that your research identity will only be known when you are yourself in the research. It made me appreciate that there are settings that allow for co-ownership and there are environments where 'self' is the only virtue and instrument that you can utilise.

### The Postdoc Era

I am presently at the tail end of my second year post-doctoral fellowship. The silent but audible voice sounding in me is saying: 'the key to becoming a global scholar and expert is in your hands'. With a host and supervisor that consistently maintains academic excellence (see examples<sup>4</sup>), with no stop sign in sight, the young scholar cannot but be motivated to catch her drift. This era has opened to me a platform where I can display my identity. The sense of working towards creating my own niche without ignoring the eagles' guidance now calls for continued partnerships and networking. Ultimately, the hope of continued adaptation and collaboration with mentors assures me of a 'sure and bright' academic future. I say to you out there, you too can do it. Let that manuscript(s) decision delay fuel your resilience, and let your 'seem to be unavailable' mentor fuel your 'research identity'.

2 Professor Bolanle Wahab, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

3 Professor Hangwelani Magidimisha-Chipungu, Department of Town and Regional Planning, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

4 <https://sobeds.ukzn.ac.za/news-category/planning/>

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***"The silent but audible voice sounding in me is 'the key to becoming a global scholar and expert is in your hands'."***



## Keeping an Eye on Standards, with Encouragement for Authors

# Book Reviewing: Some Random Thoughts

Christopher Merrett\*

**C**OMMERCIAL publication of a manuscript is bookended by reviews. First, a publisher usually involves reviewers on the advisability, from various angles, of publication. Then, once the book is available other types of reviewer voice their opinions. The first process is generally formulaic, so not considered here. The second comes in many shapes and sizes.

There is no single way in which to review a book, although certain limitations are imposed by the destination: a newspaper as opposed, for example, to an academic journal. As an overall guideline it is worth remembering that books are hard to write and even harder to get published in the conventional sense. Commercial publication usually requires appeal to a pre-identified readership, with well-organised content and an attractive writing style, plus sales potential. In this sense almost every published book is a triumph.

The accomplishment of authorship is something to be borne in mind by book reviewers. In the academic world various agendas are at play and the reviewing process is often an exercise in ideological contestation or personal vendetta. Outside the increasingly diminished and trivial world of academia, a different dynamic is called for.

Many of the faults of published books are ultimately the responsibility of publishing houses. These days editors seem reluctant to address problems of length and repetition. Most contemporary publications are far too long and many assume that their readers are so inattentive that content has to be recycled. Proofreaders appear to be asleep, although there is always the likelihood of subsequent tinkering. The same mistakes are replicated, endlessly (for instance, Sharpville, the Native Land Act of 1913) especially in books about South Africa published overseas.

So, the most appropriate angle for general non-fiction reviewing seems to be one of qualified generosity. What, for example, does this book add to the sum of human knowledge? What are its most memorable findings and how does it relate to



\* Christopher Merrett hosts *From the Thornveld* website, in which he publishes book reviews and comment. These reviews are republished in the ANFASA web page. He is also book reviewer for *The Witness*. He is a professional editor and indexer, and previously wrote on this topic in the magazine (There's more to indexing than key words, 6[2]). Readers are also referred to an earlier article on why academics should take book reviewing seriously as a measurable output: <https://www.anfasa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ANFASA-Volume-5-1-2021-final.pdf>

other, similar books? How well, through content, organisation and use of language, does it engage the reader? Does it provide an articulate and helpful conclusion? Is it likely to encourage readers to explore this, or related, topics, further? What potential does it suggest for further research and writing?

Some or all of these questions can be asked in most reviews. Most books that have been through the formal publication process have something to commend them. But high standards obviously have to be encouraged, so poor language, factual error and wildly inappropriate interpretation and analysis cannot be ignored.

Above all, reviews should be written in a readable fashion that encourages a sense of anticipation in potential readers, but avoids platitudes. Books should be approached in a spirit of encouragement to promote research, writing, reading and literacy in general. That must surely be the ultimate aim.

## Book Review

# Articulating Academic and Administrative Battle Lines

William Mabin\*

Keyan Tomaselli introduces us to a range of interesting terminology from the title of his book, *Contemporary Campus Life: Transformation, Manic Managerialism and Academentia*, to the final chapter on Gotchacology. Where the former introduces us to terms used throughout his critique of contemporary academics and related politics, the latter refers to the overcoming of these ills of the academy and by association, societal problems at large (as in “Gotcha!”).

In the early chapters of the book a reader can expect to become a scholar of the field of E-cow-nomics. A term that simultaneously references an Internet meme that uses cow trading as an analogy for political regimes, as well as Zuptanomics. Using such terms, Tomaselli creates a fusion of a humorous and academic tone. This masterfully creates an intelligible narrative, featuring underrepresented cows, as an allegory for failed transformation, while simultaneously emphasising the serious implications of failing managerialism, academic burnout and pseudoscience that threaten higher education.

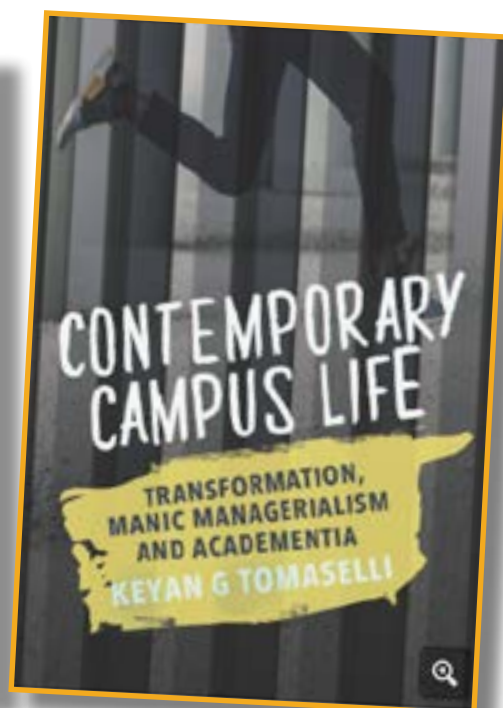
It also makes the book more accessible to a broader audience, including South African humour that would likely appeal to a lot of people. This may be ironic considering his later critique of ‘culture’, as static and a hinderance to progressive discourses.

As someone who is just emerging from the Covid-19 era of academia ranging

Keyan Tomaselli,  
*Contemporary Campus  
Life. Transformation,  
Manic Managerialism  
and Academentia.*

Cape Town: BestRed, an  
imprint of HSRC Press.  
2021. 244pp. ISBN 978-  
1-928246-8.

Available through  
Blueweaver.



Keyan Tomaselli: ‘Creates a fusion of humorous and academic tone’.

from 2020-2021, I appreciated the fact that he makes a conscious shift towards an optimistic list of solutions to problems proposed in the bulk of the book. While Tomaselli is able to keep up the somewhat humorous and tactful performance, I will admit that my own battlefield trauma from increased workload and constantly shifting online and physical modes of teaching delivery has contributed to some degree of burnout.

Although the book resonated with me, I remain cautiously optimistic myself. I believe the list of solutions Tomaselli proposes at the end holds some promise yet. Hopefully, as an expert in Academentia, the writer would tell me that there is still hope for me, as well as all of our collective colleagues. All jokes aside, I highly recommend *Contemporary Campus Life* as light reading for those involved in the academy, or outside of it, as it spreads awareness of a vast array of issues, not only facing students, lecturers and support staff, but society at large.

\* William Mabin is the Game  
Design Lecturer and Researcher  
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## Open Letter to the Minister for Trade, Industry and Competition

# What is an author worth?

Monica Seeber

**D**ear Honourable Minister,  
I address you from the Academic and Non-Fiction Authors' Association of South Africa (ANFASA) on behalf of authors of books who stand to lose income and the incentive to continue writing if the Copyright Amendment Bill is approved by Parliament. We urge you to intervene by asking the Portfolio Committee for Trade, Industry and Competition to reject the Bill.

It is poorly framed and drafted, and not backed by policy. It has pitted authors and publishers of educational and academic books against educational institutions – as if copyright law must favour one at the expense of the other. What good copyright law should do, and what the Bill should have done, is weigh the rights of copyright owners against the interests of society and create a balance between them whereby authors grant educators and educational institutions some special exemptions from copyright but still retain enough control over their works to earn an income from them.

### Hollow Claims

Two parliamentary portfolio committees have grappled with the Bill's failings. It was passed by Parliament in 2018, accompanied by heartfelt speeches from MPs about saving creators from dying in poverty and opening wide the doors of education, but in reality it does neither, despite such hollow claims.

The long history of the Bill began in 1998, when a group of musicians petitioned the president to look into unfair copyright practices in the music industry, as a result of which an investigative commission, the Copyright Review Commission (CRC), was set up. The recommendations of the CRC formed the backbone of an amendment bill to make sweeping changes to copyright law, to 'ensure that artists do not die as paupers due to ineffective protection' in the words of the Bill itself. The Department of Trade and Industry declared that it was making law to boost the income of all creatives.

The problem is that the operation of copyright (resulting in the protection of and reimbursement for creative works) is quite different in the literary and musical sectors – something of which the drafters of the Bill seem to have been unaware. The result is a parliamentary bill that incongruously merges the existing rules of copyright for literary authors with those for composers of music, producers of films and writers of computer software. As one example, it introduces statutory claims for royalties,

continues on page 10:



***"The problem is that the operation of copyright (resulting in the protection of and reimbursement for creative works) is quite different in the literary and musical sectors – something of which the drafters of the Bill seem to have been unaware."***

\* Monica Seeber is the chair of the ANFASA Copyright Committee and treasurer

## Open Letter to the Minister for Trade, Industry and Competition

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appropriate for musical compositions, as evidence of a benefit to authors of literary works whereas such a provision for authors is not only unnecessary but also detrimental.

The Bill takes away from all authors' existing economic rights by new, extensive exceptions to copyright to satisfy another ambition of the drafters: to 'allow reasonable access to education' because under the current Copyright Act, as the Bill put it, 'educators [are] hampered in carrying out their duties'.

You may well ask what that is supposed to mean, but through an acrimonious discourse that has developed it has come to mean that unless the law is changed to allow schools and universities to photocopy textbooks, learners and students will be denied an education. If that seems vastly illogical and grossly unfair that's because it is indeed illogical and unfair, as well as untrue.

### Authors penalised for State failings

Free photocopies for education will be possible under the Copyright Amendment Bill. Authors of school and academic textbooks and scholarly works don't always earn salaries as do teachers and university lecturers, and many of them depend for an income on royalties derived from the sale of their works. The provision of schoolbooks is the obligation of the state, not the private sector; if the state does not buy books in sufficient quantities – or does not buy them at all – and schools are forced to make photocopies for learners, one has to ask the question: why should authors have to forego their earnings to let their books be copied for free because the state has defaulted on its obligation?

Proponents of such provisions in the Bill claim that students at higher education institutions are discriminated against because they can't afford textbooks. Some (though certainly not all) textbooks and scholarly works are costly, especially those that are imported, and in countries around the world, including South Africa, universities subscribe to licensing, whereby extracts from books students can't afford to (or don't need to) buy are collated under licence into 'course packs'. These, too, will be 'free' under the new law.

So far I have focused narrowly on one negative consequence for authors but the ripple effects of excessively broad exceptions to copyright go much further and the local book publishing industry will face an eventual decline when the book is devalued to such an extent. There will be many job losses. Knowledge production and the writing and publishing of scholarly works



will take a step backwards. South Africa will become more reliant on imported knowledge – from the North and even from African countries which, unlike ours, are taking steps to protect the intellectual property they produce and to nurture and respect those who produce it. It is ironic that supporters of such exceptions are simultaneously decrying the importation of so much learning material from the North, and closing the doors to the growth of knowledge production locally, binding us ever more tightly to books from abroad.

***"It looks like final decisions are about to be made, and from the authors' perspective it seems as if we are teetering on the edge of a precipice, and we have to ask: What are we worth? Are we, as we thought, one of the drivers of an increasingly literate and creative society or are we merely providers of free content for students?"***

### The Copyright Amendment Bill lacks a legitimate legislative background

The Copyright Amendment Bill lacks a legitimate legislative background: no economic or social impact assessment to forecast its consequences in the future; no copyright policy to guide its ethos; a stop-and-start drawn-out process through Parliament in which stakeholders were consulted but one side of the skirmish was always favoured when decisions were made. Shadows of doubt have hung over the Bill from the start. Even the president

has expressed doubts about the constitutionality of certain aspects of it.

It looks like final decisions are about to be made, and from the authors' perspective it seems as if we are teetering on the edge of a precipice, and we have to ask: What are we worth? Are we, as we thought, one of the drivers of an increasingly literate and creative society or are we merely providers of free content for students? We believe that authors, the producers of knowledge, have a major role to play in cultural and educational development, and we call on you, and on Parliament, to acknowledge us and to reject the Copyright Amendment Bill.

With kind regards

*Monica Seeber*



## Collaboration, Not Competition, Is The Key To Open Access

# Open Access Book Publishing in South Africa - Some Unsung Heroes Discovered

Hetta Pieterse\*

This is a quick tour of the findings of my MA thesis *'Towards A Generic Business Model For Open Access Scholarly Book Publishing In South Africa'* (Unisa, 2022, 222 pp). I selected seven scholarly book publishers within South Africa which are actively involved in open access (OA) publishing, with widely varying involvement levels and different ways of working – in fact, even the three 'dedicated' publishers I chose, all have different OA publishing models.

I was tasked to propose from the results, some ideal solutions for local publishers.

Perhaps ironically within the open access arena, the five thematic areas shaping the study were linked to classic business model elements of customers and partnerships, key activities, resources and channels, value propositions (how publishers distinguish themselves by their products and services), revenue streams, and cost structures (or how they create and deliver value to generate income). The reason for this framework is since the true challenge for open access book publishing is to establish a sustainable business model for the publisher. The ideal OA business model should benefit the whole publishing chain and not just libraries and their customers. From the publisher's side, costs are involved to get authors' work published, yet any model also needs to consider that authors have a right (protected by one of the oldest copyright bills, the Berne Convention) to earn income from their content.

Given that the local OA book publishing environment is relatively new (compared to the founding of OA in Europe and North America, and based on the decades-

old tradition of scholarly publishing) my early reading traced global roots, tracking the evolving of business models and the stabilising of funding sources among funders, research institutions and governments around the world. The OA scholarly journals environment has largely sorted out its open access business models, since the subscription base secures a constant income flow, apart from the fact that the economic article units are smaller and easier to fund.

Indicative of the local focus on a competitive (instead of a collaborative) spirit was that out of the seven publishers in a relatively small local scholarly book publishing sector, two publishers declined to answer any questions – one openly expressing fears of competition. I duly checked my legal position with the Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA) and their prescribed code of conduct to abide by the South African Competition Act, but it was confirmed there is no conflict of interest at play. Based on this market reaction I decided to anonymise all the results, to protect those participating publishers (possibly under pressure by the expectations of their respective institutions) engaged in hybrid OA scholarly book publishing.

At first, the study was directed to look at all OA scholarly book publishing on the African continent, where a study by Van Schalkwyk & Luescher (2017: 17) offered a point of departure in terms of mapping scholarly publishing within Africa. Yet those single OA publishers situated in the rest of Africa (based in Burkina Faso, Gabon and Ethiopia) seemed dormant (based on their lack of any publishing activity over the past years) so the study moved to only cover seven select South African scholarly book



Hetta Pieterse: I was tasked to propose ... some ideal solutions for local publishers

***"Indicative of the local focus on a competitive (instead of a collaborative) spirit was that out of the seven publishers in a relatively small local scholarly book publishing sector, two publishers declined to answer any questions"***

\* Hetta Pieterse is Commissioning Editor & Manager for Unisa Press

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publishers (with basic to full activity in OA scholarly book publishing).

From the local publishers selected, there were three (each slightly different) types of OA scholarly book publishing models, based on their business activities and their services:

1/ **There are two non-profit South African OA publishers which both do excellent work on a highly cost-efficient scale.** Both are small-scale dedicated *OA-only* publishers with streamlined work operations which follow different approaches; they both offer high annual OA books output in relation to their available resources and staffing – while the one publisher directs its business activities primarily to local markets. Its more independent non-profit counterpart fully engages with all commercial link-up potential aspects to ensure a wide global reach, with strong global ties, ensuring wide distribution and the ability to even independently earn income on its OA books via the hosting of its books with an international library consortium as well as via independent funding drives.

2/ **There is one strong South African private business** which operates in a league of its own in terms of its publishing service delivery and professionalism aligned with international standards – but the catch is that authors have to pay to get content published. This company subsidises its OA business stream (which remains a minor but highly professionalised part of its overall business activities) with two divergent business streams: the company creates, hosts and sells a set of online education courses for two separate training sectors in South Africa – one of which is run as a subscription-driven model and therefore this offers a steady income source on the basis of which it effectively professionalised the format and OA publishing services it offers. You pay to publish, but you get value for money – aligned with international Open Access publishing standards.

3/ **Lastly, there are four hybrid scholarly presses all housed inside research institutions, and** none are dedicated to OA publishing only – so that their book publishing activity in OA varies from peripheral to minimal. Only one of these publishers openly calls itself an OA publisher, but on close inspection this publisher's current focus is to offer limited and restricted access to its OA book content, allowing only single book downloads to registered (thus regulated) users. This press is in reality primarily commercially driven and focused on their print-based sales to cover the costs of its OA books. Their online OA 'free content' is limited to single downloads per user/it's less open and OA publishing is no longer the business focus.

Four of the seven OA (hybrid model) publishers in South Africa still focus strongly on promoting the sales of its print copies; both in local and overseas markets – one of these with a strong OA component, limits access to online copies and displays a strong focus on furthering its print copy sales.

One of the dedicated, non-profit OA publishers focuses only on furnishing local audiences with print on demand copies on a needs basis – apart from also annually offering a portion of its print run up as donations to an African university. The two other dedicated OA publishers both focus on online customers in local and global markets, with print copy sales as a peripheral aim.

In terms of ideal features for an OA scholarly book publishing model, the diamond model of OA which entails that no authors' fees are charged, remains most attractive for authors.

Following the current study's findings, two scenarios have emerged as possible ideal models for OA publishers in South Africa, for authors and especially publishers to be aware of:

**O**ne potentially ideal scenario describes a non-profit OA publisher linked to an institution, which does not charge its author any APCs (but which has funding and overall operational support). It primarily publishes online and in OA, continues on page 13:

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***“In terms of ideal features for an OA scholarly book publishing model, the diamond model of OA which entails that no authors' fees are charged, remains most attractive for authors.”***

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and, depending on financial support, does community donations and sells its print books (as secondary and of lesser importance – and only to cover production costs – expressly not for profit). Crucial is for the ideal OA Publisher to link up and align with international standards, and to be optimally visible via its global linkages and diverse listings.

**Scenario 2 outlines a hybrid OA Scholarly publisher/publishing business** with at least one additional business stream from which it can comfortably afford its OA publishing stream, and which offers high standards of OA publishing services, but which also charges APCs to authors.

***Do OA book publishers still print books even if the e-version is available for free?*** The answer is yes; the market seems to still ask for it. Around the world, print on demand books are often still made available in parallel with an OA e-edition; the print copy is sold even though an online version might be freely available (which trend was confirmed by a February 2022 OASPA e-seminar on OA book publishing models).

It is a myth that OA books need not be marketed; on the contrary. ***The new income to an author is impact***; or the potential ability of the OA content to reach wider and attract more downloads and citations than a book which is behind a pay wall. The study found that local OA publishers who were able to stand out, are those who ensure not only strong local and global reach and visibility by OA listings, library listings and metadata use.

Given this online arena is now also global per se, South African OA publishers need to align with international partners focused on specific aspects of content hosting, publishing, standards setting and quality assurance. External IT support and strong content software partners are vital, supporting the secure hosting of all content. The top local OA publisher also has added COPE as an ethics standards partner (much though of course membership comes at a price). Making use of international OA licensing

standards by the Creative Commons, ONIX metadata standards and the use of DOIs via CrossRef ensure online items are uniquely discoverable along global standards and can readily also be taken on board international hosting platforms.

There is evidence of one strong, independent local OA publisher with a wizard hybrid business plan to astutely cross-subsidise its publishing business with a totally different primary publishing stream – while the strength of its other online business system also offers a strong and stable online environment for the (less lucrative) OA publishing stream. This specific local publisher impresses with the wealth of online information available to incoming authors, the automated submission and tracking system of work submitted, the fine attention to detail on legal aspects and general due care to all parts of the publishing process. The catch is if you want to publish with this company, you need to pay an Author Processing Charge upfront, which cost is directly based on the page extent of the work you wish to submit. In return, you get five-star service and an increasingly widening distribution network for your OA book. Just recently, the same company ensured wider online hosting of content also within overseas databases, increasing an authors' chances of getting hits, downloads and higher online visibility for their content.

**C**ollaborations among publishers active in open access publishing have proven to be viable, provided that there is due focus on a non-profit business model of making content accessible to the widest possible audience of readers, and to the wider benefit of society. Successful collaboration stories are beginning to emerge for some who made a slow start. For instance, US libraries in collaboration with university presses had been shaping large library-publisher consortiums bodies (covering 50 institutions shaped by the Oberlin library group) with shared resources and customer networks, which took a while before coming off the ground (Lever Press 2022).

Within Europe, OA collaborative publishing and hosting had been shaping

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***“Collaborations among publishers active in open access publishing have proven to be viable, provided that there is due focus on a non-profit business model of making content accessible to the widest possible audience of readers, and to the wider benefit of society”***

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across language barriers (érudit) and country borders for some years now. The HIRMEOS (High Integration of Research Monographs in the European Open Science Infrastructure) project had in 2019 been able to link French, Dutch, Greek, German, Italian and UK open access publishing platforms and initiatives – thanks to generous funding (Horizon 2020). Within countries, collaboration has been the norm – Sweden’s 17 academic presses have since 2013 collaborated within a national OA consortium for both books and journals (Lawrence 2013:1).

Since research on the topic began, some changes are already emerging in the local environment:

Increasingly, universities and research institutions set aside dedicated research funds to assist authors with the payment of publication charges – for meritorious applications, and along annual budgets. If there is a consideration to involve the private sector in funding, there will need to be larger incentives than just tax benefits (the Department of Science and Innovation’s February 2022 Draft Open Science Policy suggests, though in very broad strokes, a drive for a non-profit basis for OA publishing but does not refer to OA books, only journals).

University presses depend on top management for support on a number of levels. In practice, having a parent institution does not guarantee OA publishing success at all. Since completion of the study, one of the smaller university



presses who participated in the study was fully absorbed into its library publishing section. That of itself could turn out to be positive, depending on how collaborative the mindset of the specific library is.

Not included in my study (as not existing at the onset) is a newly emerging one-year old dedicated OA publisher linked to a university and based in Johannesburg which has a focus on non-profit OA publishing and may well offer new OA business model solutions. The potential for increased collaboration among local institutional presses ready to adopt a more dedicated approach to OA publishing, remains to be explored.

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***“If there is a consideration to involve the private sector in funding, there will need to be larger incentives than just tax benefits”***



**Tell Your Story Well**

# Between Mediocre and Marvellous: Writing Tips from an Expert

**Sandile Gumede\***

**H**ave you ever paused to think about what it takes to be a writer? Or a good one at that? The truth of the matter is that writing is a daunting task and demands that one be passionate about it – but most important of all – is to have a story to tell and to do so well.

One of the mistakes from novice writers is the tendency to overthink their ideas. They come up with spectacular ideas, but start doubting their ability to execute them. You must decide what the end goal is of what you are trying to say. For example, when I was cutting my teeth at Independent Newspapers many years ago, the pressure to produce quality copy was immense. I worked under the Isolezwe title, which published thousands of copies throughout Kwa Zulu Natal (KZN) daily. Each time I began writing an article, I was conscious of the fact that our competitors were covering the same news stories. At first I was wary of possibly recycling these stories in a lackluster manner. Gradually, I understood our niche readership and how to frame the news in a manner that was guaranteed to resonate with them. This newfound ability to tailor my ideas to suit our audience enhanced my journalistic confidence. Thereafter, it became second nature to me.

Starting your essay, article or story is never easy. But if you know how you want to end your story, it becomes easier to begin it. For example, if you are at Wits Museum in Braamfontein and want to get to Bree Taxi Rank, you could either go via the Mandela Bridge or the Queen Elizabeth Bridge. But if you are not sure where you want to go, you would spend time overthinking your intro.

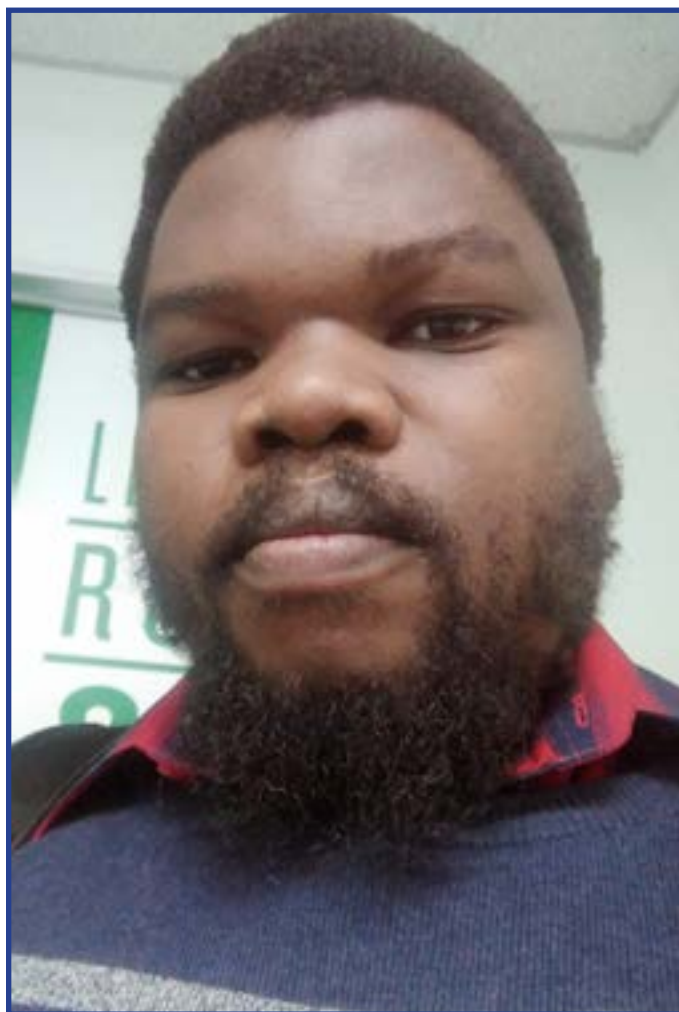
The trick is knowing what you want to say and saying it. Do not worry about mistakes and grammar when working on your draft. Remember, you have an idea on your mind – put it down before you forget it. You can come back later to correct and proofread your work.

## Choosing a topic

If you have the luxury of choosing a topic of your choice, ensure that you select the one you are passionate about. This reduces the time you spend on researching that topic because it would be

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Sandile Gumede: One of the mistakes from novice writers is the tendency to overthink their ideas

***“Starting your essay, article or story is never easy. But if you know how you want to end your story, it becomes easier to begin it.”***

## Tell Your Story Well

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something you are familiar with.

But in instances where a topic is assigned to you, bouncing off your ideas with colleagues, friends and family may not be a bad ploy. In this era of social media you can also pick the minds of your followers to hear their thoughts on that topic. Remember that these are potential readers of your essay, thesis, or article.

### Simplicity

One of the key things in writing is keeping your story (writing) as simple as possible. We often – especially as people who are not native speakers of the Queen’s English – tend to complicate things. We like to use big words – to impress the readers of our articles. Should you decide to use bombastic words, you better make sure that they don’t undermine the message you are trying to convey. Preferably write to express a point not to impress. Of course, this is dependent on who is your target audience. You don’t want to write above your readers. Equally, you don’t want to dumb it down, simplifying even obvious things. This could annoy them.

### Do not clutter

There is nothing more annoying for a reader than having to labour through a paragraph of twelve lines or more! This is undermining the writer’s message. I often tell my students that you must cluster your thoughts through different paragraphs.

Just like eating a sandwich, no matter how delicious it is, it is one bite at a time otherwise you risk choking on it. The same goes for the readers, give them one idea per sentence and that should translate into a one paragraph, one thought.

Cluttering paragraphs often invites the mistakes of writing longer sentences. The longer the sentence, the more commas you are going to have in your paragraphs. And these are like speed humps. In essence, many unnecessary commas kill the smooth flow of your story or essay. This is not to say longer sentences are a no-go zone but use them sparingly. Use a longer sentence to elaborate through an example or to be descriptive so that your paragraph makes more sense.

### Proofreading

There are many things you can do here, depending on your resources and your budget. One of the possibilities is to enlist the services of a proofreader or copyeditor. Alternatively, you can start the proofreading processes yourself.

If time permits, put your article away for a few days so that it is “erased” from your mind. Come back after a few days to read it as a reader not a writer. Often when we try to correct mistakes on our article while it is still fresh, we make the mistake of reading the one that is on our minds – and not the one we’ve written. Or you could record yourself reading the article and play it back to yourself – you could then pick up any audible mistakes in your writing.

Make sure that your essay or story is logical, coherent and not confusing to the reader. This is particularly critical with your introduction which must entice the reader in. The rest of the paragraphs should be engaging enough to sustain the reader’s interest. Gain the trust of the reader, do not confuse them!

***“Make sure that your essay or story is logical, coherent and not confusing to the reader. This is particularly critical with your introduction which must entice the reader in. The rest of the paragraphs should be engaging enough to sustain the reader’s interest. Gain the trust of the reader, do not confuse them!”***

