

# What comes first? Publishing business or publishing studies?

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# What comes first? Publishing business or publishing studies?

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Research paper

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze and compare publishing studies, their programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels and scholars involved in the teaching of publishing courses at the top universities around the world and in Croatia.

Since traditional publishing business is rapidly changing, new skills and new jobs are involved in it. The main research question is: Can modern publishing studies produce a modern publisher? Or, is it the other way around? The hypothesis of the paper is that scholars involved in the teaching of publishing courses at the top universities around the world have a background in publishing business. So, can they prepare their students for the future and can their students gain competencies they need to compete in a confusing world of digital authors and electronic books?

The research methods used were content analysis and comparison. Research sample included 36 university publishing programmes at the undergraduate and graduate level worldwide (24 MA, 12 BA). The research sample was limited mainly to the English-speaking countries. In most non-English-speaking countries, it was difficult to analyse the programme curriculum in the native language because the programme and course description did not exist.

In the data gathering phase, a customized web application was used for content analysis. The application has three main sections: a list of websites to evaluate, a visual representation of the uploaded website and a list of characteristics grouped by categories for quantifying data.

About twenty years ago, publishing was not considered a separate scientific branch in Croatia. Publishing studies are therefore a new phenomenon to both scholars and publishers in Croatia. To create a new, ideal publishing course, can we simply copy global trends or is it better to create something of our own?

**KEYWORDS:** publishing studies, publishing course, publishing business.

## 1. Introduction

Traditional publishing business is rapidly changing since new skills and new jobs are involved in it. Publishing professionals require higher levels of both general ICT and business skills as:

- a) digitization has affected all areas of the business including sales, marketing and support
- b) publishers have to adapt their business models more rapidly to the changing market and technology conditions.

Publishers require a wider skill base to produce the products and support the customers, in the same way as the business and STM information database providers (European Commission 2003).

In the changing world of digital content and authors, e-publishing and self-publishing, it is hard to determine the core publishing competencies of the future. Although, traditional skills and competencies in publishing business can still be treated as core competencies, regardless of the medium, neglecting the need for change can have a critical impact on the publishing business of today and of tomorrow.

The required core competencies for publishing from now on can be expressed in two words: databases and networks. Before computers, databases were “lists” and networks were “webs of contacts”; competent command of databases and networks is a topic of concern for all top managers – the next important change in some publishing houses (Shatzkin 1999).

Before trying to determine the competencies of the publishers of the future, one must define competence itself. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development:

A competence is more than just knowledge or skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competence that may draw on an individual's knowledge of language, practical IT skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating (OECD 2005).

The European Commission's Cedefop glossary (Cedefop 2008) defines a skill as follows:

...the ability to perform tasks and solve problems, while a competence is the ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development. A competence is not limited to cognitive elements (involving the use of theory, concepts or tacit knowledge); it also encompasses functional aspects

(involving technical skills) as well as interpersonal attributes (e.g. social or organizational skills) and ethical values.

Publishing competencies should be learning outcomes of the curricula of the undergraduate or graduate publishing studies programmes. Research reports on this issue are rare, regardless of the publishing programmes and curricula at the undergraduate and graduate level at the universities around the world. A Swedish study by Arvidsson identified and discussed the strategies of five different publishing studies programmes aimed at adapting to the digitization of the industry. The author emphasizes

...the need of the second degree specialization in publishing, because it is an industry relying on traditions and old values threatened by new superpowers driven by other values. The students studying publishing should know and appreciate the old industry but also help it find its place in the modern world. Therefore the wide humanities knowledge must integrate with the skills and knowledge of technology and science (Arvidsson 2014).

### 1.1. Publishing studies in Croatia

Most scholars involved in teaching at the publishing studies have a background in publishing business. Some twenty years ago, publishing was not considered a separate scientific branch in Croatia. Therefore, publishing studies are a new phenomenon to both scholars and publishers in Croatia. Currently, there is no undergraduate or graduate publishing studies programme in Croatia.

There are seven universities in Croatia. One of them, the University of Rijeka, has a Centre for Electronic Publishing which offers a lifelong learning programme entitled Electronic Publishing for an Educational and Research System.

In the academic year 2015/16, a publishing programme will be launched by the Department of Information Science of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Osijek.

At the University of Pula, there is an initiative to launch a publishing studies programme (Creative Writing and Publishing).

At the University of Zagreb and the University of Zadar, publishing courses are part of the curricula of the Information Science programmes, but they offer specialisation in Information Science, not in publishing.

## 2. Research

### 2.1. The aim and purpose of research

The aim of this paper is to analyze and compare publishing studies, their programmes at the undergraduate and graduate level and scholars involved in teaching at those publishing courses, at the top universities around the world.

The research focuses on two main aspects:

- Publishing program curriculum
- Teaching staff at publishing programmes

Research questions:

1. Can modern publishing studies produce modern publishers?
2. Can these studies prepare students for a future in publishing?
3. Can students at the undergraduate and graduate levels of the publishing studies gain competencies they need to compete in a confusing world of digital authors and electronic books?
4. To create a new, ideal publishing course in Croatia, can we simply copy global trends or is it better to create something of our own?

The hypothesis of the paper is that scholars involved in teaching at the publishing courses at the top universities around the world have a background in publishing business. So, can they prepare their students for the future; can their students gain competencies they need to compete in a confusing world of digital authors and electronic books?

### 2.2. Methods

The research methods used were content analysis and comparison. Research sample (see Appendix 1) included 36 university publishing programmes at the undergraduate and graduate level worldwide (24 MA, 12 BA). The research sample was limited mainly to the English-speaking countries. In most non-English-speaking countries, it was difficult to analyse the programme curriculum in the native language because the programme and course description did not exist.

In the data gathering phase, a customized web application was used for content analysis. The application has three main sections: a list of websites to evaluate, a visual representation of the uploaded website and a list of characteristics grouped by categories for quantifying data. The proposed customized IT tool allows the data to be exported to a widely-supported MS Excel format for further analysis. The web application was built using agile software development method on a LAMP stack and it is available online (URL: <http://oziz.ffos.hr/epub/JosipaDoktorat/index.php>).

The following categories for validation were entered in the application:

- Course Curriculum - BA Studies
- Course Curriculum - MA Studies
- Staff - Academic position
- Staff - Academic Title
- Staff - Professional Background
- Study - Course
- Study - Name
- Study - Title

## 2.3. Research results and discussion

### 2.3.1. Publishing Studies

Publishing programmes from the research sample are generally referred to as “publishing studies” (20). Some of them are named “Publishing and Editing”, “Publishing and Writing”, “Publishing, Editing and Writing”, “Book Editing”, “Book Publishing”, etc. (Table 1)

Table 1. Names of the publishing programmes from the research sample

Studie Names	No. of Programmes
Publishing Studies	20
Publishing and editing	2
Writing and Publishing	2
Writing, Editing and Publishing	2
Mass Comm. Publishing	1
Mediapublishing	1
Book and Digital Media Studies	1
Book Editing	1
Publishing and English	1
Literature and Publishing	1
Book Publishing	2
Publishing: Digital and Print Media	1
Editing	1

Table 2. BA and MA titles after completing publishing programmes from the research sample

Studie Title
<b>Undergraduate</b>
Bachelor Publishing
Bach. of Mass Comm. (Hons) Publishing
SPO Mediapublishing Bachelor
Bachelor of Publishing Studies
Bachelor of Writing and Publishing
<b>Graduate</b>
Master of Professional Studies in Publishing
Master's in Publishing
The Master's degree in Writing with a specialization in Book Publishing
Master of Publishing
Graduate Degree in Publishing
Master of Philosophy in Information Science (Publishing Studies)
The Master of Publishing and Editing
Master in Literature and Publishing
Master Writing, Editing and Publishing
Graduate Diploma of Editing and Publishing
Certificate in Writing and Publishing
Master Of Publishing Studies (MPS)

Most of the publishing programmes from the research sample are part of the Social Studies Departments or Faculties. Table 2 contains a list of BA and MA titles that students gain after completing their publishing studies at the undergraduate or graduate level.

### 2.3.2. Research Results – Publishing Studies; BA Programme Curriculum

Table 3. Curriculum of the undergraduate publishing programmes from the research sample

BA Studies - Programme Curriculum		No of Courses
Electronic Publishing		18
Typography & Graphic Communication		17
Production Process		15
Marketing in Publishing		13
Editorial Management		12
Legal Issues in Publishing and the Arts		11
Business of Publishing		9
Writing & Text Editing		9
Publishing Practicum		9
Introductions to Publishing		8
Publishing Project		7
Management in Publishing		7
Project Design and Colour Imaging Process		6
Copyediting and Proofreading		6
Introductions to Printing		5
Book Trade Resource Management		5
Sales & Distribution		4
Publishing Law		4
Issues in Media Design & Publishing		4
Advertising and Promotion in Publishing		4
Approaches to Media Design & Publishing		4
Book Design & Layout		3
Library Studies		3
Print Finishing		3
History and Culture of Publishing		3
Desktop Publishing		3
Fiction and non-fiction writing		3
Product Design and Development		3
Bookwork and Imposition		2
Key Concepts in Contemporary Publishing		2
Literary Agent		2
Making Magazines		2
Web Design		2
Children's Writing and Publishing		2
Writing for Illustrated Text		2
Material Technologies		1
Censorships		1
E-books from a Library Perspective		1
Critical analysis of texts		1

At the undergraduate level of the publishing studies from the research sample, Electronic Publishing (18), Typography & Graphic Communication (17), Production Process (15), Marketing in Publishing (13), Editorial Management (12) and Legal Issues in Publishing (11) are the most represented courses in the programme curricula. Less represented courses were Material Technologies, Censorships, Critical Analysis of Texts, E-book from the Library Perspective (1) (Table 3). Consequently, the research results indicate that publishing competencies (editorial, graphic, marketing) are incorporated in publishing studies from the sample on undergraduate level.

### 2.3.3. Research Results – Publishing Studies; MA programme curriculum

At the graduate level of the publishing studies from the research sample, Editing/Editorial Management (31), Internship (24), Marketing for Publishing (17), Publishing Project (15), Design and production for publishing (15), Publishing Management (13), Digital Publishing (12), Research Methodology (12), Writing for Editors (12), Electronic Publishing (11), Legal and Ethical Issues in Publishing (11), Production Process (10), Issues in Contemporary Publishing (10)

and Book Publishing Technology (10) are the most represented courses in the programme curriculum (Table 4). So, the research results indicate that publishing competencies (editorial, ICT, business, graphic, marketing, organizational, cultural) are incorporated in publishing studies from the sample on graduate level.

Table 4. Curriculum of the graduate publishing studies programme from the research sample

MA Studies - Course Curriculum	No of Courses
Editing/Editorial Management	31
Internship	24
Marketing Management for Publishing	17
Publishing Project	15
Design and production for publishing	15
Publishing Management	13
Digital Publishing	12
Research Methodology	12
Writing for Editors	12
Electronic Publishing	11
Legal and Ethical Issues in Publishing	11
Production Process	10
Issues in Contemporary Publishing	10
Book Publishing Technology	10
Magazine Publishing	7
Content Design, Production and Delivery	6
Children's Publishing	6
Graphic design and visual communication	6
Principles of Publishing	6
Publishing Skills	6
Content Creation and Development	5
Digital Media Publishing	5
Financial Aspects of Publishing	5
Future Applications for Digital Content	5
Publishing Practicum	5
Book Commissioning	4
Publishing Law	4
Book Writing and Editing	4

Introductions to Publishing	3
Journals Publishing	3
Print Management	3
Professional Communication	3
Digital Publishing Strategy	3
Bookshop Management	2
History and Culture of Publishing	2
History of Publishing	2
Network Society	2
Publishing Contexts	2
Publishing Culture in the Digital Context	2
Publishing for Young Adults	2
Academic & Corporate Editing	2
Publishing and Language Issues	1
Internet Cultures and Governance	1
Information and Communication Theory	1
Educational Publishing and Book Provision	1
Book History	1

### 2.3.4. Research Results – Publishing Studies; MA programme curriculum of the Department of Information Science, University of Osijek

Table 5 presents the curriculum of the publishing programme of the Department of Information Sciences in Croatia. The programme will be launched in the academic year 2015/16. As can be seen from the comparison of the courses that will be offered to Croatian students and the courses from the research sample (Table 6), most of the courses offered to Croatian students are similar to the top rated courses from the research. The courses from the research sample not listed among MA publishing courses in Croatia, which are similar to the ones from the research sample in terms of their structure and description, have been incorporated into one of the offered courses.



Table 5. Curriculum of the graduate publishing studies programme of the Department of Information Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek, Croatia

MA in Publishing	
at the Department of Information science, University of Osijek, Croatia	
Introduction to publishing	
History of book, publishing and bookselling	
Structure of publishing fields	
Context of modern publishing	
Content aquisition and editorial practices	
Publishing processes	
Digital publishing and bookselling	
Publishing management	
Publishing marketing	
Publishing field project: industry practice	
Publishing project	
Trends in publishing	
Culture of communication	
Visual communications	
Publishing list	
Project management	
Digitization and digitized content editing	
Web arhitecture in digital publishing	

Table 6. Comparison of the publishing programme curricula (MA studies from the research sample and in Croatia)

	MA Studies - Research Sample	No of Courses	MA in Publishing - Croatia	
1	Editing/Editorial Management	31	Content aquisition and editorial practices	1, 21
2	Internship	24	Digitization and digitized content editing	1
3	Marketing Management for Publishing	17	Publishing field project: industry practice	2
4	Publishing Project	15	Publishing marketing	3
5	Design and production for publishing	15	Publishing project	4
6	Publishing Management	13	Publishing management	6
7	Digital Publishing	12	Digital publishing and bookselling	7
8	Research Methodology	12	Web arhitecture in digital publishing	7
9	Writing for Editors	12	Trends in publishing	13
10	Electronic Publishing	11	Visual communications	18
11	Legal and Ethical Issues in Publishing	11	Publishing processes	19
12	Production Process	10	Introduction to publishing	29
13	Issues in Contemporary Publishing	10	Culture of communication	32
14	Book Publishing Technology	10	History of book, publishing and bookselling	35, 36, 46
15	Magazine Publishing	7	Context of modern publishing	38, 39
16	Content Design, Production and Delivery	6	Structure of publishing fields	
17	Children's Publishing	6	Publishing list	
18	Graphic design and visual communication	6	Project management	
19	Principles of Publishing	6		
20	Publishing Skills	6		
21	Content Creation and Development	5		
22	Digital Media Publishing	5		
23	Financial Aspects of Publishing	5		
24	Future Applications for Digital Content	5		
25	Publishing Practicum	5		
26	Book Commissioning	4		
27	Publishing Law	4		
28	Book Writing and Editing	4		
29	Introductions to Publishing	3		
30	Journals Publishing	3		
31	Print Management	3		
32	Professional Communication	3		
33	Digital Publishing Strategy	3		
34	Bookshop Management	2		
35	History and Culture of Publishing	2		
36	History of Publishing	2		
37	Network Society	2		
38	Publishing Contexts	2		
39	Publishing Culture in the Digital Context	2		
40	Publishing for Young Adults	2		
41	Academic & Corporate Editing	2		
42	Publishing and Language Issues	1		
43	Internet Cultures and Governance	1		
44	Information and Communication Theory	1		
45	Educational Publishing and Book Provision	1		
46	Book History	1		

### 2.3.5. Research Results – Teaching Staff

The most common academic title held by the teaching staff in publishing programmes from the research sample is BA (82), followed by PhD (75), and MA (63), as shown in Table 7. The most common academic positions at the publishing departments (Table 8) are Lecturer (88) and Adjunct Faculty (72). Most of the analyzed study programmes in publishing are organized in a way that allows the publishing industry to participate in the curricular activities; this explains the academic titles and the positions of the teaching staff.

Table 7. Academic titles and positions of the teaching staff at the publishing studies programmes from the research sample

Staff - Academic Title	No. of Staff
BA	82
PhD	75
MA	63
MS	11
BS	6

Staff - Academic position	No. of Staff
Lecturer	88
Adjunct Faculty	72
Senior Lecturer	25
Professor	15
Tutorial fellow	9
Associate Professor	9
Assistant Professor	6
Programme Director	5
Course Co-ordinator	5
Associate Lecturer	3
Emeritus Professor	3
Assistant Course Director	3
Dean	2
Technical Instructor	2
Principal Lecturer	2
Graduate Assistant	1
Consulting	2

### 2.3.6. Research Results – Teaching Staff

Information about the teaching staff professional background was gathered from the teachers biographies published on the websites of the research sample. Majority of the teaching staff at the publishing studies have a professional background in Editorial (41) and Publishing Management (31), as shown in Table 8. All publishing studies from the research sample cooperate with the industry and most of the teaching staff is involved in the publishing business.

Table 8. Professional background of the teaching staff at the publishing studies programmes from the research sample

Staff - Professional Background	No. of Staff
Publishing Industry - Editorial	41
Publisher Management	31
Publishing Industry - Marketing	17
Designer/Art Director	13
Publishing Industry - Graphic Design	10
Publishing Industry - Printing Technology	10
Writer	8
Owner/President of the Publishing Company	4
Publishing Industry - Sales and Distribution	3
Historian	3
Bookseller	3
Public Relations	3
Consultant	1
Journalist	1
Freelancer	1
Media Expert	1

### 3. Conclusion

At the undergraduate level of the publishing studies from the research sample, Electronic Publishing, Typography & Graphic Communication, Production Process, Marketing in Publishing, Editorial Management and Legal Issues in Publishing are the most represented courses in the programme curricula. Thus, the research results indicate that publishing competencies (editorial, graphic, marketing) are incorporated in publishing studies from the sample on undergraduate level.

At the graduate level of the publishing studies from the research sample, Editing/Editorial Management, Internship, Marketing for Publishing, Publishing Project, Design and production for publishing, Publishing Management, Digital Publishing, Research Methodology, Writing for Editors, Electronic Publishing, Legal and Ethical Issues in Publishing, Production Process, Issues in Contemporary Publishing and Book Publishing Technology are the most represented courses in the programme curricula. The research results indicate that publishing competencies (editorial, ICT, business, graphic, marketing, organizational, cultural) are incorporated in publishing studies from the sample on graduate level. Majority of the teaching staff at the publishing studies have a professional background in Editorial and Publishing Management. All publishing studies from the research sample cooperate with the industry and most of the teaching staff are involved in the publishing business. Answer to the research question regarding students' competencies for competing in a confusing world of digital authors and electronic books can be positively answered. As it is obvious from the research results, all publishing competencies are product of the most publishing curricula from the sample.

The answers to the research questions can be found in publishing curricula created based on the insights drawn from the publishing theory and practice, as well as field research.

The digital era puts an emphasis on New Media Competencies, the New Media Literacies, Researcher Development Framework, and Key Leadership Competencies. Creating digital works is a craft that requires the appropriate use of different media, technical skills, artistic and rhetorical competencies, and an awareness of the intended audiences and uses. Each of these can be developed through a combination of teaching, apprenticeship and autonomous project work (Sinclair and Gouglas 2002, 167–83).

The research hypothesis of the paper is that scholars involved in teaching at the publishing courses at the top universities around the world have a background in publishing business. That hypothesis is positively answered. Answer to the question: can they prepare their students for the future; can their students gain competencies they need to compete in a confusing world of digital authors and electronic books? – lies in involvement of publishing industry into publishing courses (practical work and internship). Internship and project work were the most common courses on the graduate level from the research sample.

Although differences between publishing studies largely depend on the publishing industry and the market in a particular country, region, or part of the world, the fact is that global trends in publishing affect everyone. Croatia is a small country with a small market and a small language. As the answer to the fourth research question, only by following the examples of good practice from all over the globe, through cooperation of all participants in the publishing world, regardless of whether they are involved in theoretical research, practical application or education in the country, can modern publishers be successfully created.

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### Appendix 1. List of universities offering publishing programmes included in the research sample broken down by continent

Continent	University
Africa	KNUST
	MOI
Australia and New Zealand	Monash University
	nmit
	University of Queensland
	University of Southern Queensland
	Whitireia NZ
Asia	UiTM
	University of Malaya
Europe	City University London
	Hochschule der medien
	Kingston University London
	Leiden
	London School for Publishing
	Loughborough University
	NUI Galway
	Oxford Brookes University
	Stirling Centre for International Publishing and Communication
	UCL Centre for Publishing research, scholarship and teaching on publishing in all forms and media
	University of Central Lancashire
	Universite Paris Ouest
	University of London
	University of Plymouth
	University of the Arts London/London College of Communication
	USI
	Wilniaus Universitetas
	City College of New York
North America	Columbia College
	Drexel University
	Emerson College
	George Washington University
	Hofstra University
	Humber
	Langara
	NYU
	Pace University
	Portland State University
	Rosemont College
	Simon Fraser University
	University of Chicago
	University of Denver

## Sažetak

### Što je prvo? Nakladničko poslovanje ili studij nakladništva?

Cilj je rada analizirati i usporediti nakladničke studije, njihove programe na preddiplomskoj i diplomskoj razini i nastavno osoblje uključeno u izvođenje nastave na nakladničkim studijima u Hrvatskoj i u svijetu. Tradicionalno nakladništvo se brzo mijenja, pa su sve potrebnije nove vještine za obavljanje novih poslova u nakladništvu.

Glavna istraživačka pitanja u radu su: mogu li moderni nakladnički studiji ishoditi moderne nakladnike ili moderno nakladništvo oblikuje nove nakladničke studije? Pretpostavka istraživanja je da većina nastavnog osoblja, uključenog u izvođenje nastave na nakladničkim studijima, dolazi s prethodnim radnim iskustvom u nakladništvu. Pitanja koja se nameću su: mogu li nastavnici ovakvog profila obrazovati studente za budućnost i dobivaju li njihovi studenti po završetku studija kompetencije potrebne za natjecanje u zbunjujućem svijetu digitalnih autora i elektroničkih knjiga?

Istraživačke metode korištene u istraživanju su sadržajna analiza i usporedba. Uzorak istraživanja (v. Prilog 1) činilo je 36 sveučilišnih nakladničkih programa na preddiplomskoj (12) i diplomskoj razini (24). Uzorak istraživanja bio je ograničen uglavnom na zemlje engleskog govornog područja. U većini zemalja ne-engleskog govornog područja bilo je teško analizirati sadržaje studija i nastavne programe na materinjem jeziku, jer opisi studija i potrebne informacije uglavnom nisu postojale.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** studij nakladništva, nakladništvo, nakladnički kolegiji.