

## KU Select 2016 FAQs for Librarians

### Introduction

#### Knowledge Unlatched – What is it and how does it work?

Knowledge Unlatched (KU) is an award-winning organisation\* that offers an opportunity for libraries and publishers from around the world to work together to create a sustainable route to Open Access for scholarly books.

KU offers a crowd-funding model that enables libraries globally to share the costs of making monographs Open Access. English-language front and backlist monographs in the Humanities and Social Sciences are made available to the whole world on Creative Commons licences. These titles are hosted on OAPEN and HathiTrust and are available as fully downloadable PDFs.

Together libraries finance the Title Fee which represents all or part of the fixed costs of creating the first digital file for new titles. For each backlist monograph, the reduced Title Fee partially compensates the publisher for loss of income from future sales. Publishers may sell these titles in other formats such as print, however KU encourages them to include a reference to the KU Open Access version, in order to avoid duplicate library payments for the titles included in KU collections.

KU's operational costs are covered by a management fee that is shared equally between publishers and libraries and is already included in the package prices.

Since 2014, KU has 'unlatched' two collections of over 100 front list HSS titles that were supported by 380 libraries and consortia around the world. To date, the first collection has an average of 2,400 downloads per title in 180 countries, which is 10 times the normal volume of copies sold for similar monographs that remain closed. The list of titles that have already been unlatched can be viewed here:

<http://www.knowledgeunlatched.org/the-books/>

KU is now moving out of its Pilot phase as it scales up with this third collection, KU Select 2016, expanding the number of titles and offering more flexibility to libraries.

\*KU is an award-winning model and has won the *IFLA/Brill Award for Open Access 2014* and the *Curtin University Award for Best Innovation in Education 2015*. KU was shortlisted for the *ALPSP Awards for Innovation in Publishing 2016*.

The jury of the IFLA/Brill award said that they were 'deeply impressed with the simplicity and elegance of the original concept, with the daring scope of the project, bringing together libraries, publishers and other organisations from around the world, and with the highly successful outcome of the Pilot phase that tested the concept.'

#### Knowledge Unlatched – A sustainable route to Open Access for libraries

The KU model concentrates on making monographs Open Access at lower prices than libraries would pay through traditional acquisition processes. Since libraries can often use existing acquisition funds for the many titles they would normally buy this approach offers a way to transition expenditures in support of Open Access. And

they gain the added benefit that their readers have unrestrained access to these titles from wherever they are without having to even sign in.

Publishers and authors use Creative Commons licences, which means that these monographs are not just 'free to read' but are truly Open Access and available to download, hosted on OAPEN and HathiTrust's platforms.

All books offered to libraries via KU have undergone a peer review and the normal editorial selection processes, and would be published for sale. These titles were then reviewed by the KU Title Selection Committee, made up of librarians around the world, who shortlisted around 50% of the most important works that they expected to be of greatest interest to the largest number of libraries.

Libraries who participate in KU achieve a global active role in creating a modern, efficient and cost-saving sustainable route to OA for hundreds of Humanities and Social Sciences monographs.

'Knowledge Unlatched represents an important effort to relieve the pressure on library budgets while at the same time benefitting publishers and promoting open access. An impossible task? Not at all. Knowledge Unlatched has a sound business plan and a pragmatic strategy for success. If, as I hope, it succeeds, it will change the world of learning.'

— *Professor Robert Darnton, Harvard University Library*

'From the point of view of a participating university, Knowledge Unlatched offers the prospect of arresting the downward spiral in monograph publishing in the Humanities and Social Sciences, providing Open Access to Humanities monograph titles, and a new model in collaboration between research institutions and publishers. It acknowledges the special problems in these disciplines, which have seen a real and challenging decline in the opportunities for scholars to be recognised through the publishing of their research, through no fault or deficiency of their own, but rather a market tension which the existing business model shows no prospect of resolving. A new business model is needed. KU offers this and it will be an exciting development in which to participate.'

— *Professor Tom Cochrane, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Technology, Information and Learning Support) at the Queensland University of Technology*

## FAQ

### 1. Why should libraries participate in KU Select 2016?

Your participation supports an ever-growing number of institutions that are using acquisitions funds to make Humanities and Social Sciences monographs Open Access in a way that is less expensive than the purchase of single print copies and/or e-books – and you are bringing benefit to the whole world of scholarly communications.

- Opportunity for libraries to support the shift for monographs to Open Access
- Enables libraries to contribute to fulfilling OA mandates in certain territories
- The best way to get high quality books at affordable prices
- Librarians have curated KU Select 2016 to give it a global appeal (40 acquisitions/collections librarians from 12 countries)
- Flexible offering – pick and choose option now available, following requests

- Early invoicing possible upon request
- Libraries will receive access to their own usage statistics (from 2017)
- No embargo and Digital Rights Management (DRM)-free
- Libraries will receive high quality MARC records
- 35% discount on purchases of other formats from publishers in recognition of KU participation
- Involvement with the creation of future collections and steering KU by nominating and voting of the Library Steering Committee and Title Selection Committee.

You can view a list of all participating institutions on our website:

<http://collections.knowledgeunlatched.org/charter-members/>

<http://collections.knowledgeunlatched.org/r2-library-list/>

## 2. What is the timeline for KU Select 2016?

The pledging period will run from **1 September 2016 to 10 February 2017**. If enough pledges are secured to unlatch titles, then invoicing will follow in February 2017 and unlatching will commence. Early invoicing is possible upon request.

## 3. How were titles selected for inclusion?

KU invited publishers to submit both front list and backlist titles that were then subjected to a selection process by the Title Selection Committee, a group of 40 librarians from 12 countries around the world. The shortlist is made up of the most suitable books for the programme – which are defined as those with the widest global appeal and relevance. Around 50% of the titles were accepted for KU Select 2016. Members of the Title Selection Committee were nominated by KU participating libraries. Some notes from the Title Selection Committee on voting for KU Select 2016 titles can be found on our news page:

<http://www.knowledgeunlatched.org/2016/08/votes/>

## 4. Which publishers are participating in KU Select 2016?

54 respected scholarly publishers; university presses, commercial publishers and OA publishers from 5 continents are participating in KU Select 2016:

Amsterdam University Press  
Anthem Press  
AOSIS  
Berghahn Books  
Bloomsbury Academic  
Brandeis University Press  
Brill  
Cambridge University Press  
Cornell University Press  
Dartmouth College Press  
De Gruyter  
De Gruyter Mouton  
De Gruyter Oldenbourg  
De Gruyter Saur

Duke University Press  
Edinburgh University Press  
Fordham University Press  
Hawaii Press  
Intellect  
John Benjamins Publishing Company  
Leiden University Press  
Liverpool University Press  
Manchester University Press  
The MIT Press  
Monash University Publishing  
North Texas Press  
North Western University Press  
NUS Press

Ohio State University Press  
Penn State University Press  
Peter Lang  
Pluto Press  
Policy Press  
Purdue University Press  
Routledge  
Royal College of General Practitioners  
Rutgers University Press  
Sydney University Press  
Temple University Press  
Transcript  
Ubiquity Press  
UCL Press

University of Cape Town Press / Juta  
University of Calgary Press  
University of Michigan Press  
University of Ottawa Press  
University of Toronto Press  
University Press of Colorado  
University of Westminster Press  
Utah State University Press  
V&R unipress  
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht  
Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der  
Wissenschaften  
Wits University Press

## 5. How many titles are on offer in KU Select 2016?

There are 343 books in total: 147 front list titles (to be published between November 2016 – April 2017) and 196 backlist titles (published between 2005 – 2015).

The collection has been curated into 14 subject-based packages and by popular request, libraries are also being offered a pick and choose option.

## 6. Why is KU offering backlist titles?

One popular request was that KU increase the number of titles it offers to libraries. If the world is to have access to the foundational building blocks of disciplines then we have to open up backlist titles. Some publishers are already making deep backlist titles open and these books are no longer selling in any material manner. While there are now ways of funding Open Access publishing going forward there is a middle body of content that languishes as closed titles that are often difficult to find as they reside in only a few hundred wealthy libraries. KU, after consultation with libraries, would like to make these titles available on an Open Access basis. Our Title Selection Committee guides us through the publisher offerings. The far lower Title Fee is meant to compensate the publisher for loss of income from the long tail.

Although it is not possible to make all mid-backlist titles available, we are looking for books that complement the front list titles and will be used by the researcher and student wherever they might be around the world.

In order to avoid overburdening library budgets, we are offering a curated backlist collection in addition to a collection of new books with 2016/2017 publication dates. The submissions criteria for publishers were strict: Backlist titles must have been published between 2005 and 2015 and should be offered at a greatly reduced price of \$13.75 (€12.50 / £10) per title per library, in comparison to \$55 (€50 / £40) for front list titles.

## 7. Why should we support making backlist titles OA?

- Backlist titles have been requested by many librarians so KU asked publishers to provide titles that would complement the interest in the front list subjects
- KU is building a corpus of specialist books, with the aim to have a core collection within 5 years
- The backlist titles are specialist books and supplementary reading in upper level and graduate courses
- The titles are from the past ten years as monograph usage peaks years after publication which shows how relevant such texts remain
- KU provides both front list and backlist titles to offer a middle route between Demand Driven Acquisitions (DDA) and collecting with a long-term focus
- Backlist titles are offered through KU at a greatly reduced price of \$13.75 (€12.50 / £10) per title per library.

## 8. What subjects are covered in KU Select 2016?

The 14 Humanities and Social Sciences subject-based packages are:

Anthropology, Archaeology, Classics, Economics & Management, History, Information Science, Languages & Linguistics, Literature, Media & Communications, Music, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology and Theology & Religion.

## 9. What languages are on offer?

For now KU is continuing to offer English-language books only.

## 10. How much will it cost to participate?

For front list titles, the unlatching fee is \$55 (€50 / £40) per title per library and KU is capping the backlist fee at of \$13.75 (€12.50 / £10) per title per library. The weighted average price per title is \$31.43 (€28.57 / £22.86).

Compared to the average price of closed monographs, the cost of KU titles is very low.

In order to participate in KU Select 2016, libraries need to pledge for either:

- The complete KU Select 2016 collection of 343 titles (both front list and backlist) which costs \$10,780 (€9,800 / £7,840) - with a minimum pledge of 90%, or \$9,702 (€8,820 / £7,056)
- Or for the KU Select 2016 front list collection only of 147 titles which costs \$8,085 (€7,350 / £5,880) - with a minimum pledge of 90%, or \$7,277 (€6,616 / £5,292).

VAT and sales taxes will be added onto the invoices as applicable.

## 11. How has the offering for KU Select 2016 improved, compared to Round 2?

KU is offering four-and-a-half times as many books in KU Select 2016 and the subject areas have expanded to a total of 16, grouped into 14 packages.

In addition, KU now has better systems in place so it is easier, more flexible and less time-consuming to participate (e.g. there is no title-by-title drop down for claiming other formats, libraries have more control over their profile with the ability to invite colleagues, and libraries are able to pledge using a pick and choose option).

## 12. What is included in the Title Fee?

There has been little transparency across the publishing system about how much it costs to publish a monograph. That's because there is no such thing as a 'standard monograph' and hence no standard benchmark for what it might cost to publish one. Recently, in 2016, Ithaka S&R (the research arm of the Mellon Foundation) published a report:

[http://www.sr.ithaka.org/publications/the-costs-of-publishing-monographs/?cid=eml\\_monographreportFeb2016](http://www.sr.ithaka.org/publications/the-costs-of-publishing-monographs/?cid=eml_monographreportFeb2016)

In their research covering 20 North American university presses they found that the actual full cost of publishing a monograph was somewhere between a low of \$15,000 and the highest hitting \$129,000. The Ithaka Report suggests that factoring in all staff time, marketing and other overheads associated with producing the digital files brings the true costs to a much higher figure than had been thought previously.

In the first two rounds of the KU project we asked publishers to give us a cost price that included all direct costs such as copyediting, design, typesetting, proofing, clearing permissions of third party material, and a reasonable charge for associated overheads. In other words – all known costs to get to first digital file. The range came in at between \$8,000 and \$18,000 with the average at around \$12,500 (lower than the full cost as specified by the Ithaka Report).

In the Pilot we did not charge for KU management or sales representation as those costs were covered by start-up grants. As we move beyond start-up grants, libraries and publishers share the costs of running the KU consortium and marketing KU collections. Publishers will contribute 7.5% of the Title Fee for each book, and the remaining 7.5% will be paid by libraries. The total of 15% covers KU costs and makes our services sustainable.

## 13. How was the Title Fee set for KU Select 2016?

In order to simplify processes and to keep administrative costs low, we decided to move away from individual title pricing to a single price for books, with only one for the front list and another much lower price for the backlist. Although we are unlikely at this point to attract the very high cost books, publishers are still clearly keen to participate, even if the Title Fee we offer is less than the lowest cost in the Ithaka Report. That is because publishers are able to sell the books in other formats. This is mostly in print as even today most scholarly publishers only make 20%-25% of their sales in e-books which includes retail sales that are bought directly by consumers.

Where libraries decide to buy a print format of a KU title, publishers offer a 35% discount to reflect the library's support. Aggregators and vendors have woken up to the need to provide transparency as to where and when books can be found as Open Access - whether through KU or through other means. We expect solutions to this issue within the next year.

For each title that is unlatched in KU Select 2016, the unlatching fee is \$14,025 (€12,750 / £10,200) for each front list title and \$3,190 (€2,900 / £2,320) per backlist title. This is divided amongst participating libraries and publishers receive this amount minus the 15% management fee.

We are aiming for at least 300 libraries to place pledges to unlatch these titles – a target which KU reached in both previous collections.

## **14. How is KU financed?**

KU has a fully transparent model and its costs are financed by a management fee of 15% which is split between publishers and libraries, with each paying 7.5%. In addition to personnel and material costs, operational and outreach costs arise from arranging cost-effective arrangements with library consortia. All of these costs are already included in the unlatching fees. There are no other additional costs apart from VAT and sales taxes which will be added as applicable.

## **15. How will 'double dipping' be avoided?**

Publishers have agreed to offer a discount to libraries purchasing additional formats of KU titles to avoid paying twice. Libraries can claim a 35% discount directly from publishers when placing their order for additional formats. KU encourages publishers to include a reference to the KU Open Access version to enable libraries to make informed decisions about additional format purchases.

## **16. Cost sharing – how KU is doing it?**

KU introduced what became known as a 'cost-sharing' model. Cost sharing in the first two rounds meant that the tentative initial price attached to each book could be reduced if more than a minimum number of libraries signed up. However, finding ways to ensure that this tentative pricing approach didn't create unnecessary administrative work for libraries proved to be difficult. Feedback from libraries has suggested that stability in pricing, efficient workflows, and a model that helps to sustainably manage the costs of OA books across the system is important.

In order to achieve this, KU is moving away from the tentative pricing approach adopted during the first two rounds. Rather than applying cost reductions to individual titles, surpluses that arise from more libraries pledging will be invested in the following way:

- 50% of any surplus will be used to support the KU Research programme (see FAQ 26);
- 50% will be invested on behalf of the library community in KU infrastructure.

KU will inform the community when a pledging surplus is generated. It will work with the Library Steering Group to ensure transparency in decisions about how money is invested on behalf of the library community.

## **17. Which format will the OA books be available in?**

Publishers provide us with PDF versions of their books that we make available as fully downloadable files.

## **18. What do authors think of KU?**

You can read interviews with KU authors here:

<http://www.knowledgeunlatched.org/featured-authors-section/>

## **19. Which partners work with KU?**

A list of current partners can be found here:

<http://www.knowledgeunlatched.org/partners/>

## **20. How are publishers handling accessibility?**

KU encourages publishers to make their own content, which is available as Open Access via KU, freely available through all channels including on their own websites and through aggregators.

## **21. Does KU provide MARC Records?**

Yes, KU supplies high quality MARC records that can be downloaded free of charge from the KU website.

## **22. Is there a preservation policy in place?**

Yes, KU books are preserved by Portico and CLOCKSS (as well as HathiTrust and OAPEN).

## **23. Does KU offer webinars to libraries?**

Yes, KU will be holding regular webinars for libraries to explain how KU Select 2016 works and answer any questions. Dates of these webinars are published on the KU website.

## **24. Are usage statistics available for KU books?**

Yes. Aggregated reports are prepared on a quarterly basis and published on the KU website. Participating libraries will also receive their own individual usage statistics

reports through their account on the KU Library Portal, from 2017. These reports are COUNTER-compliant based on figures that are provided to us by OAPEN who hosts these titles. We also present statistics from HathiTrust who follow a different technical standard.

## 25. What is KU Research?

The KU Research programme is being coordinated by Associate Professor Lucy Montgomery and involves internationally recognised leaders in research on open business models, digital technology, scholarly communication and copyright.

KU Research is developing a dashboard that will allow authors, publishers and libraries to view blended usage data for each of the books made Open Access through KU. KU Research is also exploring the role that KU usage data may play in the emerging field of altmetrics.

More information can be found on the KU website:  
<http://www.knowledgeunlatched.org/about/research/>

### **Contact**

For any questions or comments, please get in touch with Christina Emery, Partnership Manager ([christina@knowledgeunlatched.org](mailto:christina@knowledgeunlatched.org)).

KU website: <http://www.knowledgeunlatched.org>  
Library Portal: <http://app.knowledgeunlatched.org>