


Article

Open Academic Book Publishing during COVID-19 Pandemic: A View on Romanian University Presses

Mariana Cernicova-Buca ^{1,*}  and Katalin Luzan ^{2,*}

¹ Department of Communication and Foreign Languages, Politehnica University Timisoara, 300006 Timisoara, Romania

² Victor Babes University Publishing House, Victor Babes University of Medicine and Pharmacy, 300041 Timisoara, Romania

* Correspondence: mariana.cernicova@upt.ro (M.C.-B.); luzan.katalin@umft.ro (K.L.)

Received: 30 September 2020; Accepted: 9 November 2020; Published: 10 November 2020



Abstract: In the context of the 2020 public health crisis that discourages exchanges of physical objects in society, university-led publishing needed to rethink its operations. Worldwide the opening of quality scholarly content proved to be a solution. University presses reacted rapidly and offered books according to the open access model. The present research aimed to map the editorial landscape of Romanian university presses, to identify the main features displayed online by the university presses parented by public universities and to highlight the readiness of these players to further open access academic books, especially in the time of the COVID-19 crisis. The quantitative approach investigated the availability of e-books in the university presses' portfolios, including the alignment to the open access scholarship movement, the use of social media accounts to promote the presses and the response of the presses to the challenges of the health crisis. Out of the 46 active university presses, only six had open book titles in their portfolios and only one genuinely responded actively to the challenges posed by the need for electronic formats in 2020. Unless Romanian university presses modernize and restructure their modus operandi, they can prove irrelevant in the post-crisis period.

Keywords: open access book; e-book; university press; publishing; editorial services; website; information accessibility; COVID-19 pandemic

1. Introduction

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic (also known as the COVID-19 pandemic) early in 2020 created a huge global disruption in all aspects of social life. Acknowledged by the World Health Organization as a matter of public health emergency of global concern [1], the pandemic caused worldwide restrictions to public gatherings, lockdowns, stay-at-home orders, etc. Educational institutions were temporarily closed to contain the pandemic, affecting millions of learners, as UNESCO showed in its report "Global monitoring of school closures caused by COVID-19" [2]. Later these institutions were asked to rethink their operations in new formats, such as homeschooling or online schooling. According to UNESCO, approximately 72.9 percent of the world's learner population, enrolled in schools, universities and colleges, was affected by the lockdown [2] and had to adjust to the restrictions to physical spaces of educational purposes, such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries and/or bookstores. In this context, educational publishers from all continents recognized the right moment to step forward and support homeschooling, learning and research in a variety of ways. Some opened, at least temporarily, educational and research content to be consulted and/or downloaded free of charge, others developed special platforms to disseminate scholarly content or encouraged the acceleration of "open access" (OA) initiatives [3]. Book sales dropped dramatically, exchanges of physical book formats were discouraged and difficult to manage, especially during lockdowns, but the

need for quality content rose exponentially, as so adequately highlighted by the International Publishers Association [3], educational media [4,5], thinktanks and research centers [6], authoritative bloggers on the topic, independent or affiliated with presses or educational platforms [7,8], etc. Critical voices emphasized that many major publishers opened only selected educational resources, “engaging in last-minute, haphazard PR, hoping that the realization that publicly funded knowledge is inaccessible to most of us will not dawn too soon on the anxious tax payer” [9]. The debate over free versus paid access to scholarly-led quality content intensified and the pandemic crisis made it obvious that decisions over open science cannot be postponed, especially in the case of university presses parented by public universities.

1.1. The Academic Open Books Debate as Part of Open Science Movement

Practically, the COVID-19 crisis accelerated the crisis in scholarly ecosystems, induced by the technological revolution and the digitization of the economy. While open access books in the pre-COVID-19 crisis were rather options embraced by small university presses or tackled in an experiential manner [10], the lockdown created a huge demand for online quality material. According to the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), only in Italy, during the first one and a half months of school closure in 2020, 4.4 million digital materials were downloaded from the platforms of educational publishers. The FEP is cautious in drawing attention that “the provision of digital materials for free, which many publishers felt was the right thing to do given the situation, is nonetheless not sustainable as a strategy for the production and distribution of quality learning content” [11]. The FEP also anticipates that “there is a risk that an attitude of expecting not to pay for digital content become even more entrenched—as exemplified also by increases in illegal copying of books in schools (as was the case in Malta, for instance). This is all the more of concern as public budgets may feel the effects of the crisis in the coming months, leading to a reduction in funds for educational institutions and libraries. It will be therefore essential that governments foresee suitable budget allocations to acquire educational resources in schools” [11].

Researchers, publishers and/or activists who champion open science share the belief summed up by Hugh McGuire, Boris Anthony, Zoe Wake Hyde, Apurva Ashok, Baldur Bjarnason and Elizabeth Mays that “the history of human knowledge is written in, on, and with open, available, and accessible technologies: language, writing, paper, pens, typewriters, printing presses. No proprietary or closed technology has survived the tests of time to preserve and propagate the continuous progress of scholarly investigation. In the digital world, the movements of Open Web, Open Content Licenses, and Open Source Software tools continue with this imperative today” [12] (p. 45). In her turn, Professor Christine Borgman analyzed the impact of digital technologies on academic life, pointing out that scholarship is at crossroads, with scholarly objects available online in multiple formats and places [13] (p. 9). The technological availability posed serious questions concerning the quality of content, the prestige of publishing online, instead of resuming to the prestige of renowned publishers, copyright, production and circulation of knowledge. To sum up the features of open access research literature, it refers to free, online copies of peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, technical reports, theses, working papers, scholarly monographs and book places [13] (p. 100). Definitions carefully rule out of the open access research objectives vanity publishing and the by-passing of reviewing processes, underlining the fact that open access is a means to encourage the scientific dialogue and progress and not a target in itself [14]. In most cases, there are no licensing restrictions on the use of open resources by readers, the developed copyright arrangement for such content allowing for free access for research, teaching and other purposes [15].

International organizations such as UNESCO, OECD and the World Bank actively promote open access to scientific literature, in all its forms, insisting upon the fact that in such a way the engagement between research and society can be increased, leading to a higher social and economic impact of public research. So far, the efforts have led to the elaboration of the European Open Access Policy (EOAP). However, as OECD unfolds in its report on open science, the EOAP is not binding in the EU countries,

“which are free to adopt the policy that best suits the needs of their own scientific community”, leading to a “mosaic of open access policies across Europe” [14]. The practices range from the mandatory golden road for publications and data put in place by the Research Councils of the United Kingdom (RCUK) to the preference for gold open access in the Netherlands to the green road for publications in Germany. Recently, OECD identified as a landmark in the road toward enlarging the open science area the practice of the national research councils of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands that condition research grants to be awarded only to applicants who are committed to publishing their results, both publications and data, under open access conditions [14].

The open science ecosystem consists of key actors and processes, such as researchers themselves, government ministries, research funding agencies, universities and public research institutes, libraries, repositories and data centers, private non-profit organizations and foundations, private scientific publishers, businesses, supra-national entities, scientific research production and dissemination, etc. [14]. The literature on each of these actors is growing, especially with case studies and experiences shared by editors, librarians and professors, since many of the authors writing about open access research are also engaged in promoting open science [10,16,17]. Those who are engaged in editing the open access scientific content and disseminating it to the public find themselves in the situation of “laying tracks while the train was already barreling toward” the editors [10]. The implementation of open access strategies, especially for books, reveals that new procedures, conventions, workflows and business models need to be put in place, even if some of the most difficult barriers, those of identifying quality content and authors ready to share it, are overcome [10].

1.2. Romanian Experience with University-Led Publishing and Open Access in Science

Academic books have a long tradition in Europe, with Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press established in 1534 and 1586, respectively [16]. Romania’s academic tradition is much younger. Romanian universities as entities emerged only in 1860, and academic book publishing did not fall in the responsibility of higher education institutions. To supply students with textbooks, monographs or other educational materials, alternative routes were found. For instance in Timisoara, when the Polytechnic school was founded (1920), a publishing house opened a section to edit the *Mathematical Gazette* for the use of professors and students, while professors hand-wrote their courses to provide educational support [18]. Universities used reprographics to provide the educational resources, and the process went through strict editorial processes in terms of reviewing, accepting for multiplication and dissemination of the intellectual output, even if an ISBN was not provided for such books. For the academic career, such a multiplied manuscript counted as a book for tenure tracks and projected prestige to the author(s).

In 1990, the democratization of the Romanian society, the abolition of censorship for printed material and the necessity to rapidly supply new information to the diversified needs of the academic community (among other phenomena—with the proliferation of new academic degree programs and new higher education institutions) [19], many universities decided to establish their own presses. The academic-led publishing was shared with many private, newly founded presses [20] that supplied a large portion of the educational material, textbooks and monographs used in higher education. The scope of this research, though, was to focus only on university presses.

The emergence of e-books and e-commerce with books dramatically impacted the publishing houses, putting an end to the long-established economic models and supply chains. For secondary education, for instance, a large debate on the need for e-textbooks led to experimental projects for the production and dissemination of educational resources. In universities, however, practices are varied, with asymmetrical outcomes [21].

Romania is engaged in promoting open science and open access to knowledge, both at the political-governmental level and through the initiative of dedicated organizations. The National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2014–2020 [22] includes as a priority, in the subchapter Access to Knowledge, the obligation to ensure and support open access by facilitating the

access to information for the academic institutions and by stimulating Gold OA publishing for research financed through public funds. This adherence to open access policies is reinforced in a subsequent document, Partnership for Open Government: The National Action Plan 2018–2020, which has a chapter dedicated to open data [23]. In the tier of civil society, initiatives such as “Understanding Open Access” promoted by the Kosson foundation in 2012, created a breakthrough and mobilized the scientific community [24]. In the same year, the Romanian Academy signed the document “Open Science for the 21st Century”, promoting the principles of open access and enhanced scientific dialogue [25]. Yet, studies regarding Romanian open access scholarly writings are sparse and, to the best of our knowledge, there is no country-wide study that analyzes the policies of OA journals, although there are studies regarding OA policies. The various alternatives regarding open access are rarely present in the Romanian academic public debate and are missing from the domestic publishing practice. References to gold, green and/or hybrid access appear only in documents connected to research articles published in journals with a calculated impact factor, in evaluating the prestige of Romanian scholarship [26], or during information seminars, guiding researchers. In the area of open book publishing, the focus of our study, the research is even less prominent, following a trend observed in other countries with much older publishing traditions [16,17]. As reports show, “unlike for journal articles, discussions around how to best achieve Open Access to books are still in a nascent stage, complicated by the large upfront costs associated with each published book” [27]. Challenges for university presses are numerous, and accumulated experience is a valuable source of inspiration for the academic and publishing community [28,29].

We focused on university presses parented by public universities because they are the unequivocal signals that higher education institutions fulfill their research mission and are places of producing, transferring and disseminating (new) knowledge. In a World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, signatory universities re-assessed that their core missions and values resided in contributing to “the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole” through education, training, research and public service [30]. Higher education institutions recognize their responsibility to “ensure that all members of the academic community engaged in research are provided with appropriate training, resources and support” (article 5.b) and to enhance their research capacities (article 5.c). University presses are not named as such, but they represent the element of infrastructure that underpins the research and education activities by providing the much-needed support to publish educational and research materials for the benefit of the academic community and for society as a whole. In the Romanian accreditation processes, higher education institutions must prove “that the discipline tenured university teachers have elaborated courses and other works necessary to the educational process, which completely cover the respective discipline issues, stipulated in the analytical syllabus” and that they “periodically organise with the teaching staff, researchers and graduates, scientific sessions, symposiums, conferences, round tables, and the reports are published in ISBN, ISSN scientific reports or in magazines dedicated to the organised activity” [31]. Most publicly funded universities identified as part of the required support for producing and disseminating educational and research results the tier of a university press, connected to the interests and needs of the academic community, making available to their members the editorial services. Since they are part of a publicly-funded institution, Romanian university presses should respond to the same type of scrutiny regarding transparency, public service and availability as their parent institutions. The predominant model of operation concerning higher education institutions in Romania is that of public goods, present in the public, not-for-profit sector [32] (p. 70).

Drawing lessons from the scientific literature on scholarly open book publishing and from the Romanian realities, the present study aimed to fill in the missing piece on the existence and practices of university presses to meet the needs of the academic community, especially during the disruption produced by the COVID-19 lockdown, which collapsed access to physical books and resources for teaching, learning and carrying out new research. This study analyzed the response of the Romanian university presses to the COVID-19 crisis in terms of opening access to previously published books or

by increasing the publishing of open access books in online formats. The objectives set forth by the research team were:

1. To map the world of Romanian university presses, parented by public universities;
2. To identify the interest toward open book publishing of these presses, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as an instance of serving the academic community.

2. Materials and Methods

Our approach was an exploratory study, using quantitative methods. Romanian authorities (governmental bodies, accrediting institutions, funding organizations, etc.) did not collect, until 2020 at least, data concerning our topic of interest, thus we had to extract the primary data. A primary source is a source from which we collect first-hand information, or raw data, on a topic. We aimed to identify information concerning the existence of university presses and their output in terms of open books only. Currently, there is no official list of university presses in Romania, therefore the first step toward identifying the existence and features of these institutions was to mine the existing databases. To create the corpus for investigation, we manually searched the homepages of the accredited public universities, extracted the information and crosschecked the information with the presence of the university presses parented by public universities in the digital world. We designed a data collection form to systematically identify the features pertaining to university presses in the 21st century, such as accessibility, provided editorial services, timeliness (last update) and adoption of social media tools to promote the press and/or the books (Appendix A). Finally, we analyzed the open book availability, with a focus on the year 2020, corresponding to the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis. The last consultation of the university presses' websites was carried out from 1 to 7 September 2020. The research design is presented in Figure 1.

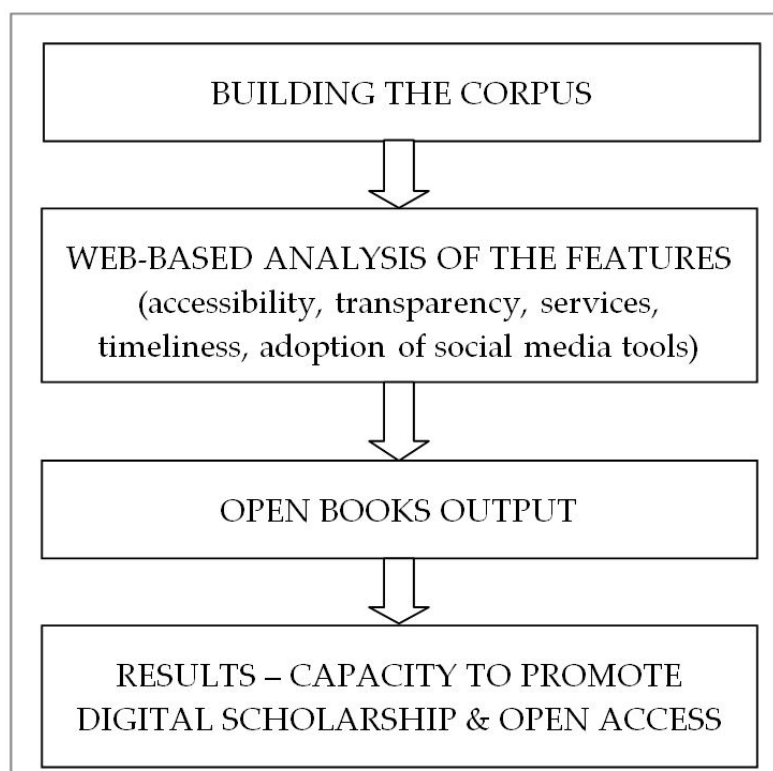


Figure 1. Quantitative research design.

3. Results and Discussion

In Romania, there are currently 54 accredited public universities [33]. To date, 50 have decided to create a university press, primarily to serve the interests of the academic community. Forty-six university presses have an online presence (one of the universities has two presses) (Appendix B). Four universities do not have their own press, and 5 universities declare that they have a press, but it is not visible through a website. The information is not available either through a webpage with their name or through search engines on the university homepage.

The major operational activity of university presses revolves around journal and book publication. The information on journals (print, electronic or hybrid) is handled by each press according to the rules and requirements of major databases. The logic and editorial process differ to a significant degree from one discipline to another, depending on many variables that we did not target in this study. We focused only on book publishing, in the large sense of the term, because books can be research reports, monographs, educational resources for seminars, etc., presented in physical form, through a print-on-demand model, electronic or other innovative formats.

3.1. Map of Romanian University Presses Parented by Public Universities

University-led presses are new to the Romanian reality, therefore the first step toward mapping the field was establishing the moment when the parent universities had decided to create them. The results are presented in Figure 2.

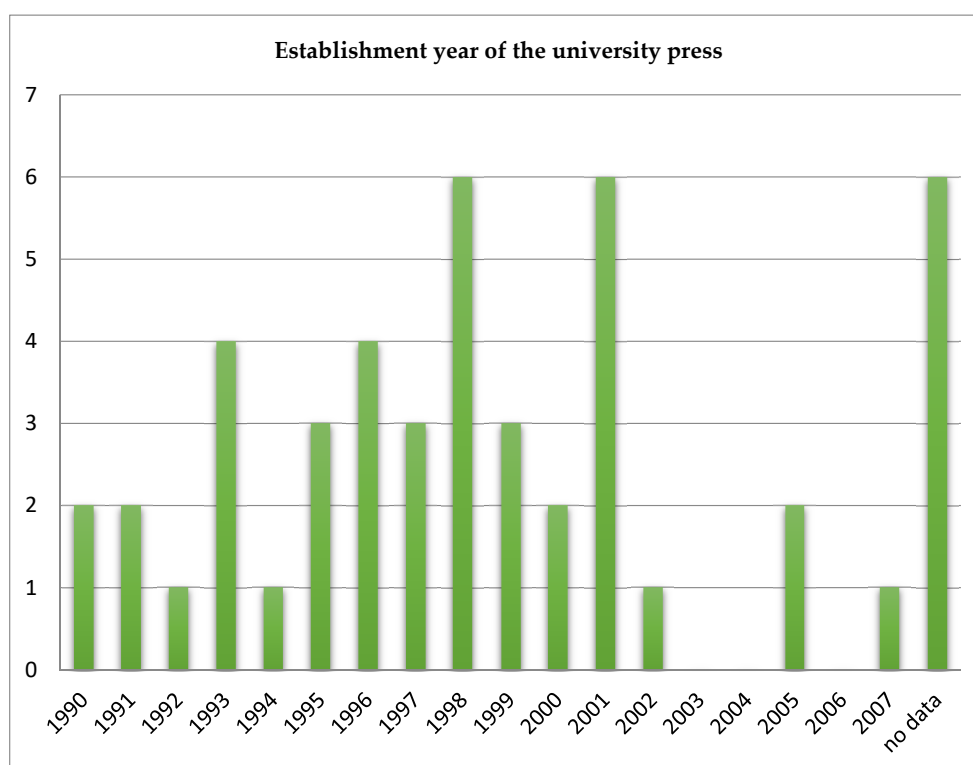


Figure 2. Dynamics of establishing university presses in Romania.

The pace of creating a university press is uneven: in 1990, Romanian universities started to adapt to a new social and political environment, after the fall of the Communist regime [19]. Two universities decided at the time they needed a press as part of their institutional structure. In the following years, the number of presses increased, though no correlations to other processes in the higher education system could be established. 2003–2004 seemed to have put the preoccupation regarding the university presses on hold, but in 2005 new presses were founded. The last year identified as a birth year for a

university press is 2007. For 6 of the currently existing university presses, there are no data regarding their establishment moment, though it clearly can be identified as a post-1990 occurrence.

We started to collect and scrutinize the available information concerning the presses beginning with the parent university's webpage. The search showed that only in 18 cases the information was available on the main page. Two, three or more clicks were necessary to find information regarding the university press, and in three cases external search engines to the university were required to locate the information we sought (Table 1).

Table 1. Accessibility of information concerning the existence/functioning of an in-house press.

1 Step	2 Steps	3 Steps	4 Steps	5 Steps	Search on the University Homepage	Other Search Engines
18	9	11	3	1	1	3

Out of the 46 university presses, only 69.56% declare that they have access or collaborate with a printing press owned by the university, as shown in Figure 3.

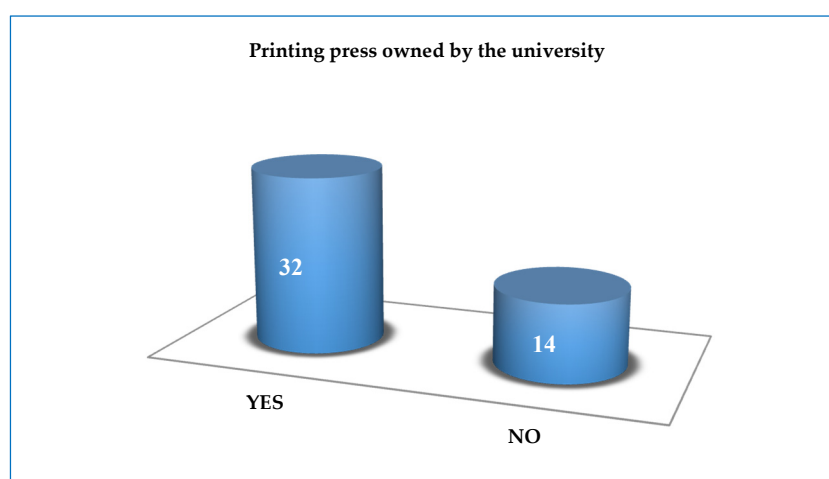


Figure 3. Access to in-house printing facilities.

Some of the university presses' webpages are richer in information than others. For instance, 26 out of 46 presses do not provide information concerning editorial services available to authors, while 12 declare that they obtain the ISBN/ISSN codes and the official bibliographic record created by the Romanian National Library for a book prior to its publication (CIP data block). Table 2 below presents a comprehensive view of the services announced by the presses.

Table 2. Editorial services provided by the press.

Editorial Services	Universities Providing the Service
ISBN/ISSN/CIP	12 (26.08%)
editing	14 (30.43%)
book cover design	3 (6.52%)
printing	16 (34.78)
distribution	4 (8.69%)
sales	1 (2.17%)
marketing	3 (6.52%)
no information	26 (56.52%)

The sections on the webpage dedicated to informing authors about the services available to them in the relationship with the press are in short supply and occasionally have not been updated in years (Table 3).

Table 3. Instructions for authors, published on the press website.

Information for Authors	Presses Providing the Service
scientific referents	20 (43.47%)
collections	23 (50%)
published books	23 (50%)
forthcoming publications	7 (15.21%)
catalogue	34 (73.91%)

Branding and promotion are intrinsic and valuable elements of any service, institution or individual in the digital age era [5,29]. It can be expected, therefore, that the university presses have at least some sort of social media presence, besides the web 1.0 homepage. While most universities made the shift toward interactive communication via social media [34], Facebook being the preferred account, the presses did not follow the lead. Only a small number of presses have a visible social media presence, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Presence in social media.

Social Media Accounts	University Presses Having an Account
Facebook	4 (8.69%)
LinkedIn	1 (2.17%)
Twitter	1 (2.17%)
no account	42 (91.30%)

A Facebook account could prove useful to create scientific communities around the press, help the marketing effort, promote the editorial services, increase the impact of the scientific output and engage followers to help consolidate the brand of the press [35] (pp. 62–64).

Regarding the timeliness of information provided by the webpage, the impression we got is not encouraging, namely only 21 presses (46%) updated information in the current year (2020), while the rest seem to have forgotten the need to bring fresh information online. Table 5 below presents the data.

Table 5. Year of the last update on the press website.

2011	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	Never
1	1	1	1	8	10	21	3

The presses seem to be an underdeveloped component in the academic ecosystem of knowledge and educational/training material production and supply. More than half of them are difficult to identify, do not provide sufficient and transparent information regarding their operations and seem to ignore that in the digital age timeliness of response, engagement and active social media presence are elements automatically taken for granted.

3.2. Books, the Visiting Card of Presses and Authors

Due to the possibilities opened to publishers by digital technologies, book formats are freed from their dependence on print. Thus, publishers may choose between print, digital, and hybrid formats. In academic publishing, the area of knowledge in which the publication is created influences the

decision concerning the format and circulation of the book. Such researchers as Georgina Torres-Vargas and Valentino Morales López, who analyzed in-depth the landscape of academic book publishing, state that digital publications in hard and applied sciences have had an early surge and rapidly displaced printed formats, to the extent that nowadays most of these publications became digital. Despite the less-than-favorable scenario for the academic book, currently, 90% of the university press production is still represented by printed monographs. Their argument is that the e-book market is not viable yet, thus only 10% of production results in e-books [36]. However, in a recent report on the open access monograph landscape, Sara Grimme, Mike Taylor, Michael A. Elliott, Cathy Holland, Peter Potter and Charles Watkinson anticipated that university presses are ready to increase their involvement in producing and making available to the public e-books (including monographs) under the Open Access model, after solving such challenges as innovating the publishing process, cooperating with stakeholders in the supply chain and creating a more rational system of funding [37]. In the United Kingdom, often quoted as a forerunner, funding bodies announced their intention to move toward open access requirements for monographs in the national research assessment process that will consider research outputs published from January 2021 onward [37,38]. Such trends, acknowledged in the debate on the future of e-books and open access scientific publications in Romania [21], have feeble support in the practice, since e-books of any kind represent only 1% of the total book market, as highlighted by the executive director of the Romanian Association of Publishers, Mihai Mitrica [39].

Drawn from the literature on the editorial process and on our experience with book publishing, the birth of a book (academic or otherwise) can be summarized as presented in Figure 4.

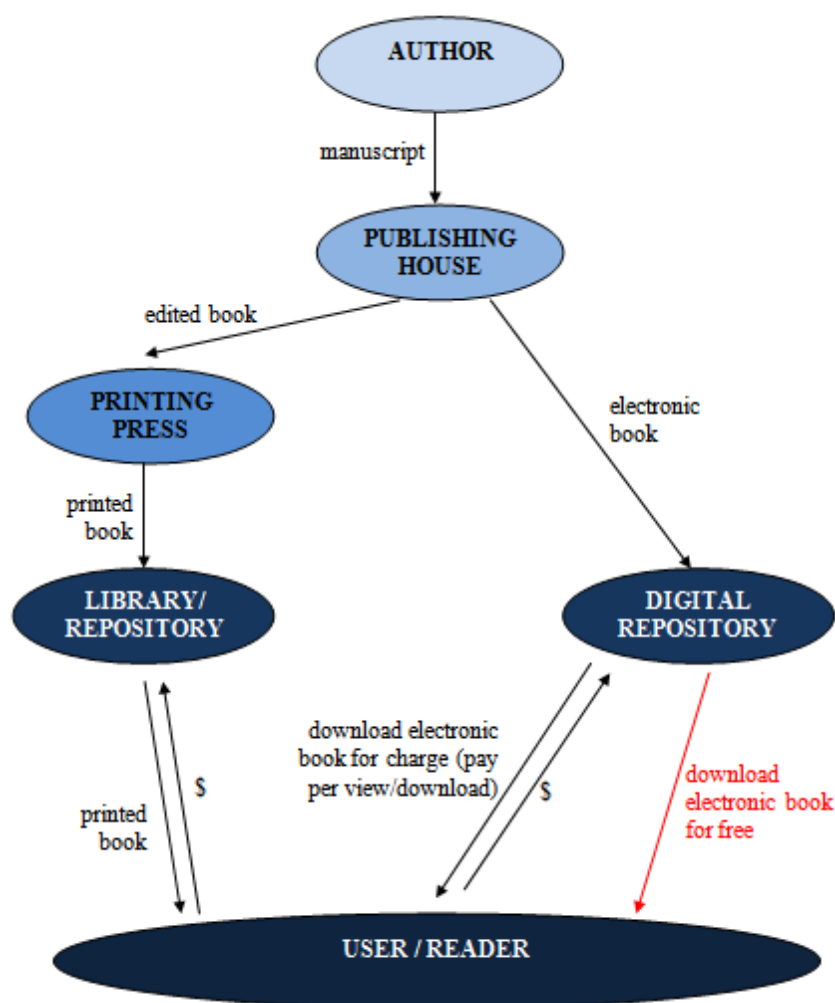


Figure 4. From author to reader.

In Romania, governmental communication does not make any reference to the necessity of increasing the production of e-books. During the COVID-19 lockdown, some publishing houses in the business sector announced the opening of free downloadable books, as a gesture of corporate/social responsibility. The university presses seem to lose pace, as shown by our research. Before discussing an economic model concerning the way in which e-books are available to the public (for a fee or in some sort of open access) it was important to build a corpus of books in electronic format. The production of e-books is discouraging. Out of 46 presses, only 6 announce having e-books in their portfolio. It means that only 13.04% of the presses that have a website use the platform to make books in electronic formats available to the public. At a closer look, the data are even less promising, one of the presses announcing the existence of e-books published only one title in such a format.

The exact number of titles by presses is presented in Appendix C. To refine the data, we looked into the dynamics of publication during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Dynamics of e-books (open access) in 2020.

University Press	Number of Offered e-Books (Open Access)	Year Last Title Uploaded
Editura UTPRESS	110	2020
Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană	590	2020
Galați University Press	7	2018
Editura Universității “Ștefan cel Mare” Suceava	1	2016
Editura Politehnica Timișoara	6	2020
Editura “Victor Babeș” Timișoara	80	2020

One of the presses definitely stands out, with an impressive number of open books, across 23 disciplines, namely Babes-Bolyai University Press in Cluj-Napoca, with 590 titles in 2020. It did not comment on the topic of COVID-19, open science or social responsibility on its website but succeeded in bringing educational and research books freely accessible and downloadable to the public when most presses barely made their presence felt in the academic ecosystem. One press within our analysis clearly indicated that book sales moved to the e-commerce model (but for physical books). Another press announced that it closed its face-to-face operations, also invoking the health threats due to COVID-19. These were the only signs that the editorial world of universities acknowledged the problem and the opportunity to shift to new professional practices and outputs. No information regarding the financial support for the e-books is posted on the website, thus leaving the topic in a blank spot.

4. Conclusions and Implications for Research and Practice

Romanian university presses, though numerous and relatively young, depend to a large extent on the policies, guidance and interests of the parenting higher education institutions. Not being financially independent or tied to cover their operational expenses, having as the audience a clearly defined public belonging to the same academic community, they seem to neglect the activities of branding, promotion, sales and/or innovation. With the notable exception of one university press, they update information with delay and do not react to societal stimuli quickly enough, at least not in the book publishing area. The COVID-19 crisis impacted tremendously society and academic life, research, teaching and learning practices. The audience for quality content in the form of textbooks, monographs and educational material has grown exponentially in recent years. Most Romanian university presses missed the opportunity to revolutionize their modus operandi and to find new resources for joining the Open Access trend, unlike many of the university presses worldwide [3–6]. A first step in the direction of modernizing and consolidating these presses would be, in our opinion, the adoption of a strategy to ensure the presence of the university presses in the digital world, especially because their

target audience is digitally competent. They need to update and make more attractive their webpage and social media accounts. A strong social media presence is recorded as growing in importance in the publishing industry [40]. The presses can use these tools to engage with the authors and the public in a lively manner and to fuel the desire to access information on the existing and forthcoming publications. In addition, in the context of the public health crisis of 2020 which has discouraged exchanges of physical objects in society, university presses could lobby funding agencies and governmental bodies to speed up the financial support for open access books and other scientific objectives. To survive the crisis and prove their usefulness in the scholarly ecosystem, these presses need to secure the means, procedures and policies to offer interesting formats to their audience. Unless they adapt to the need for increased volumes of scientific production, the audience will re-orient themselves toward more agile players, in the business sector, which reacted quicker to the challenges, along with strongly communicating their readiness to meet the needs of learners and researchers for published literature.

Having created a corpus of data, this research opens perspectives toward qualitative interpretations regarding the prestige, adaptiveness and viability of university presses in Romania. University leadership can use these data to align their managerial practices in the sphere of academic book publishing to the level of their operations in other areas of academic life, such as student services, libraries, organization of sport and leisure activities, etc. The editors of the presses can pinpoint the missing links in their activity and more energetically make visible their activity in the digital environment. University presses can play a role as brand ambassadors for their parent institutions and can represent the signals of the social responsibility of universities, but only if they receive more attention and prominence in the research and educational system developed by universities.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, M.C.-B. and K.L.; methodology, M.C.-B.; formal analysis, K.L.; writing—original draft preparation, M.C.-B.; writing—review and editing, M.C.-B. and K.L. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Data collection form for university presses.

Accessibility	(Number of Steps Until Identification)
Establishment year	
Published books (titles)	
Own printing press	
Editorial services	
Scientific referents	
Collections	
Published books	
Forthcoming publications	
Catalogue	
Distribution	
E-books	
Social network accounts	
Last update	
Other languages (than Romanian)	
Observation	

Appendix B

Corpus: Webpages of Romanian University Presses

<http://arsdocendi.ro/>
<http://artesiiasi.ro/>
<http://biblio.usab-tm.ro/agroprint/>
<http://conspress.utcb.ro/>
<http://editura.anmb.ro/>
<http://editura.ulbsibiu.ro/>
<http://editura.umfcd.ro/>
<http://editura.univ-ovidius.ro/>
<http://editura.upg-ploiesti.ro/>
<http://editura.usamv.ro/>
http://editura.usv.ro/index.php?id_cms=6&controller=cms
<http://edituracomunicare.ro/>
<http://editurauniversitaria.ucv.ro/>
<http://uab.ro/aeternitas/index.php>
<http://unarte.org/editura/>
<http://www.afahc.ro/ro/editura/editura.html>
<http://www.discobolul.ro/>
<http://www.editura.uaic.ro/>
<http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/www/ro/>
<http://www.editura.uem.ro/>
<http://www.editurapolitehnica.upt.ro/ro/>
<http://www.edituraunmb.ro/>
http://www.uaiasi.ro/index.php?lang=ro&pagina=pagini/10_editura.html
<http://www.ub.ro/cercetare/editura>
<http://www.umfcluj.ro/educatie-ro/reurseedu-ro/editura-ro>
<http://www.umfcv.ro/editura>
<http://www.umft.ro/editura>
<http://www.unitbv.ro/editura-universitatii>
<https://biblioteca.utcluj.ro/prezentare-editura.html>
<https://editura.ase.ro/>
<https://editura.uauim.ro/>
<https://editura.unap.ro/>
<https://editura.utgjiu.ro/>
<https://editura.uvt.ro/>
<https://editura.valahia.ro/>
<http://edituramediamusica.ro/index.php?route=common/home>
<https://editura-unibuc.ro>
<https://universitypress.umfst.ro/editura-universitypress/>
<https://www.armyacademy.ro/editura.php>
<https://www.gup.ugal.ro/index.php/ro/>
<https://www.tuiasi.ro/cercetare/editura-politehnum/>
<https://www.uav.ro/universitate/organizare/departamente-1/editura-universit%C4%83%C8%9Bii-au-rel-vlaicu-din-arad>
<https://www.uoradea.ro/Despre+Editura+Universit%C4%83%C8%9Bii+din+Oradea>

<https://www.upet.ro/universitas/>

<https://www.upit.ro/ro/relatii-cu-mediul-socio-economic/centre-suport/editura>

<https://www.usamvcluj.ro/universitatea/organizare/academicpres/>

Appendix C

List of university presses and number of e-books available to the public

1. UNIVERSITATEA TEHNICĂ DIN CLUJ—NAPOCA www.utcluj.ro Editura UTPRESS <https://biblioteca.utcluj.ro/prezentare-editura.html>, 110 titles until 2020
2. UNIVERSITATEA „BABEȘ-BOLYAI” DIN CLUJ-NAPOCA www.ubbcluj.ro Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană www.editura.ubbcluj.ro, 590 titles until 2020
3. UNIVERSITATEA „DUNĂREA DE JOS” DIN GALAȚI www.ugal.ro Galați University Press <https://www.gup.ugal.ro/index.php/ro/>, 7 titles until 2018 (no updates since)
4. UNIVERSITATEA “ȘTEFAN CEL MARE” DIN SUCEAVA www.usv.ro Editura Universității “Ștefan cel Mare” Suceava http://editura.usv.ro/index.php?id_cms=6&controller=cms, one title, published in 2016
5. UNIVERSITATEA “POLITEHNICA” TIMIȘOARA www.upt.ro Editura Politehnica <http://www.editurapolitehnica.upt.ro/ro/>, 6 titles until 2020
6. UNIVERSITATEA DE MEDICINĂ ȘI FARMACIE “VICTOR BABEȘ” DIN TIMIȘOARA www.umft.ro Editura “Victor Babeș” <http://www.umft.ro/editura>, 80 titles until 2020

References

1. World Health Organization. Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Situation. Report—10. 2020. Available online: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200130-sitrep-10-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=d0b2e480_2.2020 (accessed on 20 April 2020).
2. UNESCO. Education: From Disruption to Recovery. Available online: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse> (accessed on 25 May 2020).
3. International Publishers Association. Publishers Amid COVID-19 Pandemic. Available online: <https://www.internationalpublishers.org/covid-reaction/168-covid-19/966-publishers-act-amid-covid19-pandemic> (accessed on 1 September 2020).
4. Grove, J. Open-Access Publishing and the Coronavirus. *Times Higher Education*. 15 May 2020. Available online: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/05/15/coronavirus-may-be-encouraging-publishers-pursue-open-access> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
5. Toor, R. Should you keep working on that book manuscript? *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 20 April 2020. Available online: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/should-you-keep-working-on-that-book-manuscript/> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
6. Copyright clearance center. *Publishing & The Pandemic*. 3 April 2020. Available online: <https://www.copyright.com/blog/publishing-the-pandemic/> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
7. Gumb, L. What’s “Open” During COVID-19? In *Global Pandemic, OER and Open Access Matter More than Ever*; 14 April 2020. Available online: <https://eric.ed.gov/?redir=https%3a%2f%2fnebhe.org%2fjournal%2fwats-open-during-covid-19-in-global-pandemic-oer-and-open-access-matter-more-than-ever%2f> (accessed on 5 September 2020).
8. Brown, L. University Presses in the Age of COVID-19. Available online: <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/university-presses-in-the-age-of-covid-19-part-2/> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
9. Van Gerven Oei, V.W.J. Viral Open Access in Times of Global Pandemic. *Punctum Books*. 19 March 2020. Available online: <https://punctumbooks.pubpub.org/pub/viral-open-access-global-pandemic-covid-19-corona/release/3> (accessed on 21 July 2020).
10. Hacker, A.; Corrao, E. Laying tracks as the train approaches: Innovative open access book publishing at Heidelberg university from the editors’ point of view. *J. Sch. Publ.* **2017**, *48*, 76–89. [CrossRef]

11. Federation of European Publishers. *Consequences of the COVID-19 Crisis on the Book Market*. 7 July 2020. Available online: <http://europeanwriterscouncil.eu/fep-report-covid-booksector/> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
12. McGuire, H.; Anthony, B.; Wake Hyde, Z.; Ashok, A.; Bjarnason, B.; Mays, E. *An Open Approach to Scholarly Reading and Knowledge Management*; Rebus Foundation: Montreal, QC, Canada, 2018; Available online: <https://press.rebus.community/scholarlyreading/> (accessed on 2 September 2020).
13. Borgman, C.L. *Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet*; The MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, USA; London, UK, 2007. [CrossRef]
14. OECD. *Making Open Science a Reality*; OECD Science, Technology and Industry Policy Papers, No. 25; OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2015. [CrossRef]
15. Creative Commons Licenses. Available online: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/> (accessed on 1 July 2020).
16. Adema, J.; Graham Stone, G. *Changing publishing ecologies. A Landscape Study of new University Presses and Academic-Led Publishing*; Led Publishing, 2017. Available online: <https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/6666/1/Changing-publishing-ecologies-report.pdf> (accessed on 6 July 2020).
17. Kenneally, C.; Horn, A.; Zemskov, A.I. Discussing open access. The new publication and public exposure model as an open access version. *Sci. Tech. Libr.* **2020**, 63–78. (In Russian) [CrossRef]
18. Galerie: Primele cursuri. Available online: <https://library.upt.ro/galerie-primele-cursuri/> (accessed on 1 July 2020).
19. Cernicova-Buca, M. Organizational development and change in higher education: Implications for the Romanian universities. *AUDEM Int. J. High. Educ.* **2010**, 1, 65–71.
20. Hrib, B. *Editor de unul singur. Management in Industria Cartii*; Tritonic: Bucharest, Romania, 2018.
21. Grosseck, G.; Holotescu, C.; Andone, D. Open educational resources in Romania. In *Current State of Open Educational Resources in the “Belt and Road” Countries*; Huang, R., Liu, D., Tlili, A., Gao, Y., Koper, R., Eds.; Springer: Berlin, Germany, 2020.
22. EU. Romania, Policy Document. National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2014–2020. Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regional-innovation-monitor/policy-document/macroregiunea-doi/national-strategy-research-development-and-innovation-2014-2020> (accessed on 1 July 2020).
23. Romanian Government. Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2018–2020. Available online: http://ogp.gov.ro/nou/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Romania-2018-2020_NAP_EN.pdf (accessed on 1 July 2020).
24. Access deschis. Promovarea Accesului Deschis in Romania. Available online: www.kosson.ro (accessed on 20 September 2020).
25. Landoy, A.; Ghinculov, S.; Repanovici, A.; Cheradi, N. Open Access Policies Experiences in Norway, Romania and Moldova. *Qual. Quant. Methods Libr.* **2016**, 5, 643–651. Available online: <http://bit.ly/rrbsi42018d> (accessed on 18 July 2020).
26. UEFISCDI. Premiarea Rezultatelor Cercetarii—Articole. Available online: <https://uefiscdi.gov.ro/premierea-rezultatelor-cercetarii-articole> (accessed on 17 August 2020).
27. Coravu, R.; Constantinescu, M. A Study in Gold: Top Romanian Scholarly Journals and Their Open Access Policies. *Rev. Română Bibl. Știința Inf./Rom. J. Libr. Inf. Sci.* **2018**, 14, 104–112. [CrossRef]
28. PASTEUR4OA/Briefing Paper: Open Access Monographs. Available online: <http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/resources/212#.X3O0HmgzaUI> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
29. Taylor, M. Mapping the Publishing Challenges for an Open Access University Press. *Publications* **2019**, 7, 63. [CrossRef]
30. UNESCO. World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action. 1998. Available online: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141952> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
31. Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (ARACIS). Verification of Compulsory Normative Requirements. Available online: https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Visits_records.pdf (accessed on 1 July 2020).

32. Schoenenberger, A.M. Are higher education and academic research a public good or a public responsibility? A review of the economic literature. In *The Public Responsibility for Higher Education and Research*; Weber, L., Bergan, S., Eds.; Council of Europe Publishing: Strasbourg, France, 2005; pp. 45–93. Available online: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/Resources/Public-responsibility-for-higher-education-and-research_webversion.pdf (accessed on 25 July 2020).
33. List of Higher Education Institutions in Romania. Available online: <https://www.edu.ro/> (accessed on 7 September 2020).
34. UniRank. Ranking of Romanian Universities. 2020. Available online: <https://www.4icu.org/ro/universities/> (accessed on 30 August 2020).
35. Wilson, R. Facebook: A way to engage with your audiences. In *Share This. The Social Media Handbook for PR Professionals*; Waddington, S., Ed.; Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR): London, UK, 2012.
36. Torres-Vargas, G.A.; López, V.M. A business model for electronic books. *Procedia Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2014**, *147*, 268–274. [CrossRef]
37. Grimme, S.; Holland, C.; Potter, P.; Taylor, M.; Watkinson, C. *The State of Open Monographs: An Analysis of the Open Access Monograph Landscape and Its Integration into the Digital Scholarly Network*; Digital Science, 11 June 2019. Available online: https://digitalscience.figshare.com/articles/The_State_of_Open_Monographs/8197625 (accessed on 25 July 2020).
38. Hill, S.A. Decoupling the academic book. *Learn. Publ.* **2018**, *31*, 323–327. [CrossRef]
39. Mitrica, M. Book Market Overview # Romania. 12 October 2016. Available online: http://www.albusnet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AER_-Romanian_Book_Market_Overview.pdf (accessed on 2 September 2020).
40. Montoya-Mrva, A. Social Media: New Editing Tools or Weapons of Mass Distraction? *J. Electron. Publ.* **2012**, *15*. [CrossRef]

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



© 2020 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).