THE PAIN OF PEER-REVIEW FOR A SMALL PRESS

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LYNN UNIVERSITY DIGITAL PRESS

- Begun in 2014.
- Tiny press: one Library Director, one Editor, one Instructional Designer.
- Create iBooks, authored by Lynn faculty, to distribute to students freely.
- Currently publish 40+ full-length books and workbooks.
- Has reduced textbook costs for students about $250,000 per year, we estimate.
- In 2016, decided to start a peer-review pilot.
- We needed help and looked for a partner company.

I SHOULD START MY OWN PEER-REVIEW BUSINESS

There are virtually no companies that help small presses with peer-review.

Those that do exist, do not do it well.

Someone should create a side-hustle for this work.

A WASTED YEAR

- Beginning in February 2016, we offered four companies plenty of money to help us identify scholars and streamline the process. All failed.
- (The companies apparently realized this and never even invoiced us.)
- In February 2017, we accepted this failure and brought the process in-house. I would now find the reviewers and manage the process.

THE HORRIBLE PROCESS

- Five books for the pilot review.
- We had been asking reviewers to review specific chapters for free; now we would offer an honorarium of $500 to review the entire book.
- Review forms, spreadsheets and invitations via email.
- Scoured online CVs for professors who teach & publish in the relevant subject areas.
- Associate and Assistant professors only.
- To say the least: slow, grueling, unpleasant work.

BUT IT WORKED

- We got 2-3 thorough reviews from qualified reviewers for each of the books, done by December 2017.
- Faculty authors will implement suggested revisions this summer if they haven't already.
- Newly minted peer-reviewed books to be released in August.

NEXT STEPS

- Revise review forms to ensure a richer review process.
- Three new books selected for peer-review
- More slogging for me.
- Use institutional repository's (Bepress) tools and forms to manage the process
- Get dean to ~~force~~ strongly encourage that faculty members promptly implement suggested revisions.