



BOOK PRODUCTION

Adrian Bullock
Foreword by John Peacock

Book Production

The digital revolution has brought with it a wider range of options for creating and producing print on paper products than ever seen before. With the growing demand for skills and knowledge with which to exploit the potential of digital technology comes the need for a comprehensive book that not only makes it possible for production staff, editors and designers to understand how the technology affects the industry they work in, but also provides them with the skills and competencies they need to work in it smartly and effectively. This book is designed to satisfy this need.

Book Production falls into two parts.

- The first part deals with the increasingly important role of production as project managers, a role which has not been adequately written about in any of the recent literature on publishing.
- The second part deals with the processes and raw materials used in developing and manufacturing print on paper products. Case studies are used to illustrate why and how some processes or raw materials may or may not be appropriate for a particular job.

With expert opinions and case studies, and a consideration of the practices and issues involved, this new book offers a comprehensive overview of book production for anyone working, or training to work in or in conjunction with the book industry.

Adrian Bullock has for the past twenty years been Principal Lecturer on the undergraduate and postgraduate publishing programmes at Oxford Brookes University, UK, where he specialises in project and production management. He now runs Oxford Publishing Consultancy, which specialises in publishing project and production management, and allows him to put to practical use many of the techniques he spends his time teaching. He is also involved in extensive publishing consultancy work in the developing world, particularly in educational publishing, for bilateral and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Soros Foundation, DfID, USAID, UNICEF and UNESCO.

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With a foreword by John Peacock

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Finally, as usual, it is often the people least involved in the subject who get the most embroiled, listening patiently to stuff that makes little or no sense to them, and offering constructive criticism. So, my thanks and gratitude go to my immediate family: Berne, Hannah and Lizzie. My father and mother, Alan and Nibby, now sadly no longer alive, were both writers, and will understand why I dedicate this book to their memory.

Foreword

When Adrian asked me to write a few words to introduce *Book Production* I was delighted to do so for a number of reasons.

First – because in today’s mixed-media scene, any new book dedicated to book production is a valuable corrective and a timely one.

Publishing, as we all know, is simply in the business of communicating with readers in whatever form those readers wish to receive their product. Publishers, or at least the resourceful and receptive ones, listen carefully to readers’ wishes, accept them willingly and respond to them. Digital products are a vital part of that response. Newer by far than print, digital products continue to make many more headlines than print – the successes of digital readers and tablets make good stories and sell devices.

But standing at the bedrock of nearly all forms of publishing is this basic truth, inconvenient as it may be: print at today’s date continues to dominate publishing in all but specialist science and similar niche markets, and is unlikely to go away any time soon. So a first key message underlying *Book Production* is that books and book-making are *important* and *enduring* – culturally, socially, commercially.

Second – because I believe that to be involved in the making of books is an absorbing and demanding career choice which requires large doses of clear thinking, leadership and diplomacy in working with colleagues – but also requires larger than normal doses of solid and factual technical expertise. So it’s vital that resources are available from which that expertise can be acquired, and that those resources are bang up to date, wide-ranging, practical in bent and concisely described.

No one needs reminding how quickly the technical aspects of digital and book delivery can change, how quickly styles and product lines can mutate, and how vital it is to continue understanding and delivering what works for customers, be it in terms of visual design, in product handling, in price and in value for money.

No one plays a more active part in these respects than the production specialist, whose range might extend from choosing typography and page design at one end, through the selection of paper, to an appropriate binding style – in effect deciding the whole look and fitness for purpose of the book, as well as its

timely delivery. These are critical factors in any title's success or failure, and important responsibilities. This book will provide a vital 'tool-kit' for carrying out those responsibilities – understanding how to specify with confidence, how to control the passage of a book through your own company and externally, and how to understand, empathise and help resolve the challenges which your suppliers meet in fulfilling your work.

Third – because any book which can provide a lively and attractive overview of its subject for a non-specialist, as well as detailed knowledge and technical intricacies for the specialist, immediately serves a double function. I believe it's a strength of this book that it can be approached to great advantage by anyone in the publishing business, whether editors, designers, marketeers, sales people or accountants, and so can make a valuable contribution to the publishing business more widely.

So I would urge my fellow-colleagues involved in the specialism of book production to let your other publishing colleagues know about this book and recommend it to them.

Lastly – it's a pleasure to commend Adrian on bringing this excellent book successfully to publication. The contents distil a lifetime's experience in and commitment to the business of producing books, both as an international practitioner and as an academic and post-graduate tutor. I'm confident *Book Production* will take its place among the 'standard reads' on the subject, and that given the inexorable pace of technical and commercial change, this will be just the first in a series of new editions in the years to come.

John Peacock
April 2012

Introduction

Project and production management is a key activity in any publishing context; whether it is dealing with printed books or digital products, their creation and development need to be planned and organised before they can appear in their final form. *Book Production* has been written for people working in or dealing with production at the start of the twenty-first century, in which traditional workflows, job descriptions, roles and hierarchies have been eroded and blurred, and where editors find themselves dealing with production issues and production with editorial ones. It has also been written for people who do not normally work in production, or who have no experience of publishing at all, who want to produce a book, but have no idea of where or how to start.

Book Production is firmly rooted in the twenty-first century and its technologies, while still bearing in mind that books are a medieval construct; and though printing has changed almost beyond recognition, and will continue to do so for some time yet, paper is still a natural raw material produced from trees, and binding is still about joining sheets of paper together to make a book.

The book is based on my own experience of working in production, and is divided into two parts. [Part I](#) is about project and production management seen from a strategic as well as an operational perspective. [Part II](#) is about the raw materials and the processes by which the raw materials are turned into a book. The accent of the book is more on what needs to be done to define and run a project, and on what needs to be done to get a book printed and bound, than on the actual processes themselves which, from a production point of view, are what the printer and the binder know all about. In this it is more like David Bann's book on production *Book Production Control* which came out in 1995, and less like John Peacock's *Book Production* which was first published in 1989 and provides a mass of highly informative and beautifully written detail on how the printing and binding processes work, as well as on how to get the most out of them. Both of these books have long been out of print, so it is hoped that the book you have before you will be seen as a worthy successor, if not a useful replacement.

[Chapter 1](#) deals with project management and how it is used to plan and organise resources and mechanisms to produce an outcome. As with the rest of the book, case studies are used to illustrate practical points, or to make things

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clearer. In [Chapter 2](#), the focus is on how the theory and practice of project management can be applied to publishing production management. It then moves on to deal with how production relates to other functions like editorial and marketing, and with outside suppliers, and concludes with how a specification is prepared, estimating, scheduling and the choice of printing processes. [Chapter 3](#) is spent looking at the implementation of the project, which is the point at which everything that has been planned and organised is turned into action, and at how the project manager monitors progress in order to prevent the project from being delayed. The chapter discusses the issuing of production orders, and what to look for in a printer to try and find the best one for the job, before ending with the end of the project and the need for reflection as part of a process of understanding what went wrong and how to avoid the same things happening on the next project. The final chapter in this part, [Chapter 4](#), works through the range of available options for taking simple text to the point that it can be transformed into a printed book or an electronic product. This covers conventional as well as various XML-based workflows, and there is some useful information about digital image files and their formats.

[Part II](#) starts with a chapter on raw materials, [Chapter 5](#), which covers everything from paper, through inks, adhesives, coatings and coverings, and their effect on the environment. [Chapter 6](#), devoted to printing, looks at what is available, from digital to litho, sheet-fed to web, single-colour to 4-colour; at printing defects and what to do when you discover that something has gone wrong. The last two chapters concentrate on binding and finishing ([Chapter 7](#)), and on getting stock into the warehouse, and the all-important subject of the legal context in which the entire project takes place ([Chapter 8](#)).

This is the only book of its kind, based on experience of and research into a rapidly moving area. What, I hope, will make it useful for you are its relevance, its practicality, and above all, its approach.

Part I

Production and project management

