OECD, champion of knowledge access

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In 1998, when I came across the OECD, I had been working in scholarly publishing for more than a decade, with–I thought–a good view of the market and its participants. Yet I had no clear idea of what the Organisation was, what it did or that it even had publications. By my reckoning, in 1998, total readership of OECD works was around 250,000, which meant it really only existed for a very small, niche audience. In addition, readership was falling fast because the content was in print only and by the late 1990s, everyone was looking for stuff online. By existing only in print, OECD publications were so hidden people weren't picking up on the organisation's first-class work!

My next shock came, when I, now a member of the OECD Publishing team, made my first visit to the Frankfurt Book Fair, where I discovered a room full of other IGO publishers with full publishing programmes! So, it wasn't just the OECD that was "off radar"; there was a whole class of institutions with relevant content that was "off radar"! I felt that I had discovered a hidden gold-mine of valuable content that needed to be brought onto everyone's screens and that this would be a wonderful professional challenge. I set myself a mental objective to not only get the OECD's content into the mainstream, but to do the same for all IGOs.

Of course, this challenge was tremendous: no money for investment, heavy institutional context, and at a time of "speed-of-light" change because of the arrival of the internet. However, we were lucky: Ingenta (a content services provider) agreed to build SourceOECD, the OECD's first online library. Clunky and basic as it was, it got us going and it helped us to shift a longstanding publishing paradigm: the division between periodicals and books. Historically, publishing was separated into these two worlds and data didn't even figure in. Same authors, same readers but everything in between–editors, production processes, supply chains, librarians and budgets–was different, depending on whether the product was a book or a periodical.

Always a strong believer that publishing is primarily for the benefit of readers, I wanted to bundle all our stuff–books, journals, grey literature, data–into one single, seamless, content service. This shaped how we built SourceOECD; it shaped our sales strategy, and it even shaped how we managed our editorial and production streams. It meant innovating and that we did: we were the first to sell books as subscription bundles; the first to sell packages comprising books, journals and data; to provide readers with special e-editions for sharing and embedding in their social media channels and websites; the first to publish supplemental data–and not just among IGOs, among any scholarly publisher. We even started experimenting with the concept of "Freemium", offering 10% of books free to read.

Technology moved on and SourceOECD was re-built and re-branded as OECD iLibrary. This new platform taught us that audience penetration requires a marriage of great content with great technology–let one or the other decline and you lose your readers. With the OECD now "on radar", conversations started with other IGOs, to help them reach their audiences more effectively and to deliver even more great content. We started small, with The Commonwealth and that led to bringing the Nordic Council on board. Now, we also disseminate the content of the United Nations, the International Telecommunications Union and the World Trade Organization. And we are talking to others as well.

What has this experience taught us? We've discovered that we have to do more than just share our technology, we need to share our skills as well, in order to ensure that the content is prepared and managed to stringent, but flexible, quality standards. This is essential because with 430,000 content items now managed by the iLibrary system and more than 50,000 new items being added every

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year, efficiency is key. Our consistency and quality were rewarded when, in 2017, OECD Publishing was awarded the coveted Academic and Professional Publisher Award, given by the London Book Fair and the Publishers' Association.

But the internet and things digital create a winner-takes-all environment, where scale matters, where investment cycles are never-ending, where network effects are multipliers. Publishing on our own, OECD is too small. We risk our audience drifting away to the huge knowledge stores run by the "big five" science and scholarly publishers. On our own, we lack the ability to invest and offer scaled solutions. Eventually the unyielding economics of digital publishing would force us either to license our content to one of the big commercial players or to drift to the margins of the Internet highway and back to the niche audience we had two decades ago.

To generate sufficient scale to win our fair share of audience time, I am now looking to collaborate with IGOs who do not need our iLibrary platform, but who–like us–would benefit from partnerships and scaling. I hope that together we will build a combined search engine for our content, so we can co-create a virtual bundle of trusted, internationally relevant content that meets the needs of a wide range of readers.

I firmly believe that if IGOs together build a larger content service, we can pull in more readers to the benefit of everyone–the network effect in action. In 2018, we relaunched iLibrary, enhancing the features and usability of the platform to better engage users. We are determined to make sure that those who want our work can get access to it, at increasingly granular levels, as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The next steps are is to broaden the iLibrary partnership with other IGOs who need a platform and to collaborate around search with those IGOs who don't. Building a discovery and delivery system for IGO content that means all our content remains firmly "on radar" and winning audience share.

The world has changed and so have we. In 1998, I estimated we had 250,000 readings per year; today, we're delivering 250,000 readings *per week*. Worth bearing this in mind because if no-one reads us, we cease to exist.

Visit OECD iLibrary: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/

UN iLibrary
FOR GLOBAL RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY

To support the UN mission of international co-operation as reflected in the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, United Nations Publications promotes a myriad of work and knowledge worldwide comprising facts and expertise on international peace and security, human rights, gender issues, economic and social development, international trade, climate change, international law, governance, public health, transportation, and statistics. With the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries will mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Our reports provide key time-sensitive information on these issues, capturing the state of the global economy and the welfare of people and planet. Scholars, information specialists, policymakers and influencers are the primary audiences for United Nations publications, making effective dissemination and distribution of information an imperative to support the success of the agenda.

We're proud that the UN iLibrary platform aggregates the United Nations' knowledge in one place. It has allowed us to grow to its current state of over 5,500 publications, data and working papers pooling key content from the 25 UN Secretariat departments and 25 agencies, funds and programmes. This powerful platform enables anyone with an internet connection to discover, read and share content quickly and seamlessly.

www.un.org   www.un-ilibrary.org

Nordic iLibrary Co-operation

The Nordic Co-operation is one of the world's most extensive forms of regional collaboration, involving Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Aland. Although the region's total population represents about 26 million people, its economy is the 12th largest in the world. The Nordic countries have been setting standards on a range of issues for decades in healthcare, gender equality and energy sustainability, and the Nordic brand and

trademark have come to epitomise high productivity, social security, gender equality and a healthy environment.

In 2018, The Nordic Co-operation is pushing for further collaboration among our members and other international organisations to raise the profiles globally of countries in the "Team Norden" spirit. Our partnership with the OECD and its digital iLibrary platform allows us to reach a wider audience and inform about our co-operative efforts. Its digital library is one of a kind, and it has allowed us to publish and spread our work more efficiently and effectively. Our partnership will continue to evolve and we look forward to future collaboration.

www.norden.org   www.nordic-ilibrary.org

ITU iLibrary

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialised agency for information and communication technologies. We allocate global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develop the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strive to improve access to ICTs (information and communication technologies) to underserved communities worldwide. We are an organisation based on public-private partnership since its inception with a membership of 193 countries and almost 800 private-sector entities and academic institutions.

ITU's strategic framework for 2016-2019 aims to foster an "information society" empowered by an interconnected world that supports social, economic and environmentally sustainable growth and development for everyone. This includes ICT access for all, towards which the ITU will continue to push for, encouraging SMEs from all over the world to also join the ITU.

Having our content powered by the OECD iLibrary will ensure consistent content outreach to our networks. We are pleased to be partnered with the OECD alongside the Commonwealth Secretariat, Nordic Co-operation and the United Nations. In the future, we hope for increased views and usage of our publications, with the aspiration that we can achieve our goal of connecting the world through this iLibrary collaboration.

www.itu.int   www.itu-ilibrary.org

The Commonwealth iLibrary

The Commonwealth is made up of 53 independent countries that work together to pursue common goals to promote development, democracy and peace. The Commonwealth spans all continents and represents about 2.4 billion people in total, 60% of which is aged 29 or under. The Commonwealth's strength lies in its shared values and diversity; 30 of our members are small states, most with populations fewer than 1.5 million, and 24 members are small island developing states.

Established in 1965, The Commonwealth Secretariat represents the interests of member countries, especially small and developing states, which can sometimes

be overshadowed by larger, more powerful countries. The Secretariat works with governments to deliver on priorities agreed by Commonwealth Heads of Government. We bring policy-makers together and provide guidance and technical assistance to member countries on a range of issues from democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, to governance, economic and social development, small states and youth development.

The Commonwealth Secretariat was the first international organisation to partner with the OECD iLibrary. We are delighted to have been part of this growing digital publishing platform from the start, promoting wider access to our work, and look forward to continuing our partnership to give readers access to fresh perspective on global issues.

www.thecommonwealth.org   www.thecommonwealth-ilibrary.org