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Research on the Textbook Publishing Industry in the United States of America

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to review published research literature about the publishing process and the roles of participants in this process in the textbook publishing industry in the USA. The contents of books, collected works, reports and journal articles were analysed, and summaries of the contents were then organised chronologically to present a commentary on this topic. The results showed that the main facets of the textbook publishing industry arose in the early nineteenth century. Several surveys conducted in association with a report on textbooks issued in 1931 indicated that procedures for selecting authors, their role, and the methods they applied were well defined at this time. Commentators reporting on textbook publishing in the 1950s and 1960s depicted an industry in which the publishing process and the roles of authors, editors and sales people had been institutionalised for many years. However, the textbook publishing industry of that time was faced by the challenges of integrating new technologies in printing and new media for presenting materials. Commentators writing in the 1990s were more concerned to analyse changes in the textbook publishing industry occurring in response to globalisation. Mergers and takeovers, resulting from reductions in profit margins faced by many textbook publishing companies, led to the incorporation of textbook publishing activities within multinational media, communications and entertainment conglomerates, whilst small emerging textbook publishing companies filled a vacuum in the marketplace as niche publishers.

Key words: Textbooks, Publishing, United States Publishing Industry, Changes in Publishing, Multinational Media, Technology Impact on Publishing..

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