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Authors Alliance Partner Program (A2P2) [Product Review]

Emily Kilcer
University at Albany, State University of New York, ekilcer@albany.edu

Ann C. Kearney
University at Albany, State University of New York

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Product Review
Authors Alliance Partner Program (A2P2)

Emily Kilcer & Ann Kearney

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**Developed and hosted by the Authors Alliance. https://www.authorsalliance.org/a2p2/.
Subscription-based membership program.**

INTRODUCTION

The Authors Alliance Partner Program (A2P2; https://www.authorsalliance.org/a2p2/) is a recent addition to the educational content from the Authors Alliance. This nonprofit advocacy organization aims "to advance the interests of authors who want to serve the public good by sharing their creations broadly." And this new initiative provides prêt-à-porter instructional material with the express purpose of supporting the scaling of rights–related programming—a goal that distinguishes A2P2 from other well-established and deeply valuable copyright-focused resources (Authors Alliance, 2020).

While copyright touches nearly all we do in libraries, outreach in this area can often fall to scholarly communication or copyright librarians. As Schmidt (2019) notes, "providing copyright information services in the library has become part of the standard operations of academic libraries in the U.S." We must, consequently, train ourselves up and stay current on copyright issues, as well as instruct our peers and our communities on copyright- and author rights–related concerns (Reeves, 2015; Norris, Tierney, & Dubach, 2019; Secker, Morrison, & Nilsson, 2019). We need to build resources on topics that are nuanced, evolving, and carry risk. These efforts take time, care, and confidence. For professionals who may well have varied and competing job responsibilities, time and confidence certainly may be at a premium (Charbonneau & Priehs, 2014).

A2P2 Content

Members of the scholarly communication team at the University at Albany (UAlbany) Libraries participated in a pilot of the A2P2 program for about a year. Our roles are diverse and distributed, and as we were looking to expand our rights-related outreach offerings to the community, A2P2 presented a unique solution.

During our time with this pilot, we had access to several workshops-in-a-box, including preassembled slide decks with speaker notes, and pre-recorded webinars, covering the same material as the workshops-in-a-box. These resources addressed rights reversion, fair use, open access, and more. Additionally, the A2P2 membership provided numerous issue briefs, which offer updates on copyright and publishing news, and a tightly curated resource library.

We delivered the "Understanding and Negotiating Book Publication Contracts" workshop-in-a-box to our Libraries colleagues, before sharing it with the broader university community. We also shared the "Fair Use for Nonfiction Authors" pre-recorded webinar with colleagues at the Graduate School, which helped contextualize the information we were providing to students in joint Graduate School—Libraries outreach sessions.

We are currently working on dividing, customizing, and recording material from the "Copyright for Graduate Students" workshop-in-a-box. We plan to plug these 5–10-minute videos into the Libraries' and Graduate School's websites. This content will offer students an opportunity to learn about using third-party material, depositing their theses in our intuitional repository, and managing their scholarly profile in small intervals at their leisure, in addition to attending longer in-person sessions. We are also looking to remix this student-focused content to be suitable for an undergraduate audience.

Anecdotally, the feedback we have received on all these efforts has been very positive, and we are planning on continuing to use this material as widely and creatively as we are able.

One of the real strengths of this material is its flexibility. Whether delivered in person or virtually, sent by email or plugged into a webpage, this approachable content has proven to be an effective tool in reaching our communities. Our rights-related outreach has expanded quickly thanks to A2P2's material, and we see additional possibilities for repurposing this content to further scale our programming. These ready resources dramatically reduce the amount of staff time needed to deliver informative content.

The workshop-in-a-box slide decks are comprehensive and well designed, though there are some small tweaks that would improve the accessibility of the content (e.g., alt text, slide titles, and improved contrast). Speaker notes and FAQs are included for the presentations, which are intended to be an hour long. The content is chunked into sections by topic that make for easy division (e.g., into smaller segments for sharing presentation duties or for recording purposes). The supplemental content with each workshop includes promotional messaging, exercises that dig deeper into the workshop material, an overview of the workshop's content, and a notes sheet for attendees.

The content is practical, engaging, and approachable. Following our delivery of the book contract negotiation workshop, both attendees unfamiliar with author rights and seasoned authors rated the material highly, which is no small feat. The slides are also editable and openly licensed. While we had some difficulty with formatting because there didn't appear to be gridlines or intuitive color-matching options, we figured things out relatively easily. In our test run, we found the package as written was a very full hour. Having an abundance of information on hand was helpful, however. We pared down the content and removed some of the examples to leave time for questions in between sections. This also allowed us to customize the material to our needs. If there's to be any sort of introduction and interaction, then users will need to do some trimming.

We folded in a couple of additional pieces that helped with the success of our delivery. Because all instruction at the UAlbany Libraries is currently remote, we added some discussion questions into the slides to make the experience more interactive on Zoom so our attendees would stay engaged. We also added an assessment tool. While it wasn't difficult to do either, it could be helpful to have something pre-made as part of the membership, particularly if the content is intended to be used as a complementary suite of materials.

The webinars are Authors Alliance–created recordings of their workshops-in-a-box topics. These private videos do have closed captioning and are sharable from their home in Vimeo. They run about an hour long, as well. If you don't have time to deliver the presentation, then they are an easy plug-and-play alternative for your community.

Similarly helpful are the issue briefs, which are just that: concise updates on current copyright and publishing current events. These resources deliver the news that library staff need to know to do our job well in an easily digestible form. Last, the "Resource library" serves as a quick stop for reliable external resources, organized by topic.

A2P2 content is developed with "U.S. laws and practices in mind." As a result, not all the information will be applicable for use in other jurisdictions. That said, Authors Alliance does openly welcome adaptations and translations to extend the utility of the material (https://www.authorsalliance.org/a2p2-faq/).

CONCLUSION

Since officially launching in August 2020, A2P2 annual subscriptions are available on a tiered structure by institution size and budget, with all members receiving access to the same content (https://www.authorsalliance.org/pilot-subscriptions/).

This effort is clearly building capacity. Two new workshops were released during our time with the materials, with the promise of more to come. Authors Alliance openly invites recommendations for future material and was very interested in our feedback. Organizational members surely will have an opportunity to help extend the utility of this initiative for the broader community.

Thanks to this pilot, we were able to deliver high-quality author rights programming that would otherwise have been a much harder lift. Even after our trial membership has ended, we still have access to the materials.

A2P2 fills an important niche, recognizing that time is precious and projects are many. This well-crafted content offers library professionals with scholarly communication and rights-related responsibilities that are building out more robust programming a very solid, much needed, leg up.

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BIOGRAPHY

Ann Kearney is the Collections Conservator in the Preservation Department at University at Albany Libraries. Since coming to this position in 2009, she has overseen the care of general and Special Collections items, worked on responding to copyright questions and maintaining the Copyright LibGuide, participated in the Libraries' Scholarly Communications Team efforts, and has been actively involved with preservation outreach initiatives.

Emily Kilcer is the Scholarly Communication Librarian at the University at Albany where she works to educate, support, and connect open efforts on campus. Before joining UAlbany Emily spent several years at Harvard's Office for Scholarly Communication on projects that supported outreach and education around open access, copyright, licensing, and electronic theses and dissertations.