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Indigenous publishing in Africa – the need for research, documentation, and collaboration

by

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Author's profile



Hans Zell has been author, editor, and publisher on African topics for over four decades, and has written extensively on many aspects of publishing and book development in Africa. In addition to a substantial number of articles published in journals, he is also the author of several books, training manuals, and African studies reference resources. He was the founder of the quarterly bibliographic and book trade journal The African Book Publishing Record, which started in 1975 and which he edited until 2002. In a part-time capacity, he was the Senior Consultant to African Books Collective Ltd from 1986 to 1995, and between 1979 and 1995 also acted as the Secretary to the Managing Committee of the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa.

Abstract

This paper sets out the need for more systematic and more vigorous research and documentation, data gathering, and analysis of the African book sector. This should include, for example, compilation of publishing data and book production statistics, as important elements in measuring the growth and vitality of indigenous publishing in Africa today. It also argues for the desirability for more collaboration, knowledge sharing, and information and skills exchange within Africa; as well as the possible development of North-South links and partnership programmes, such as for example a programme to establish a North-South research group, a new research cluster or network bringing together suitable academic and research institutions in Africa, Europe, and North America. A final section offers some pointers for reinvigorating research, and possible forms of collaboration.

From the Scottish Highlands to Nigeria

This writer recently donated a substantial collection of books, monograph series, journals, articles, and many other documents on publishing and book development in sub-Saharan Africa to a university institution in Africa.¹ The collection was shipped from its previous location in Lochcarron, a small remote village in the Northwest Scottish Highlands, to the still very young Kwara State University Library in Nigeria in October 2015. Another component of the donation is a rich online database currently containing over 3,000 for the most part fully annotated records, making it the most comprehensive documentation, and ongoing analysis, of the state of the book sector and the ‘book chain’ in Africa.

The physical collection covers the twenty-year period from 1996 to 2014, and is a continuation of an earlier collection and archive (for the 1960-1995 period) that was donated to the African Publishers Network/APNET in Harare in 1995.²

The most recent donation follows an invitation to several institutions in Africa and elsewhere to express an interest in acquiring the collection, and submit a proposal for the continuation and hosting of the database. Strong expressions of interest were received from a total of eight institutions, in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the UK. After careful review of all submissions, Kwara State University Library in Malete, Nigeria, was chosen as the recipient of the collection, and as the new hosting institution for the online database.

Kwara State University submitted a detailed plan describing the implementation process of moving the database to a more dynamic digital platform, by which the existing database³ is being exported from its current solution, thereafter normalized and structured by a software development organization, before finally being imported into a Drupal based [https://www.drupal.org/ open access/open source content management platform](https://www.drupal.org/open access/open source content management platform). This migration – which will lead to a huge enhancement of the database in terms of its functionality and utility – will take place sometime during the course of 2015 or early in 2016.

Prompted by these developments, Kwara State University intends to set up a Book Institute or Centre for the Book, which will form part of its academic and research plans to establish a range of research centres that will also incorporate a Nigerian Film Institute and a Centre for Ilorin Manuscripts and Culture. This is very good news, and it has given me a measure of satisfaction to see the collection and the accompanying database finding a new home in Africa, where the work which I started over four decades ago will now be carried on. The new Nigerian hosts hope that the online database can continue to be further developed and expanded through collaborative curation with institutions elsewhere in Africa, as well as by enlisting the assistance of some of the major African studies libraries in the countries of the North.

The need for research and analysis about the African book sector

There is a vital need for research, analysis, documentation, and systematic gathering of reliable data and statistics on the whole book sector in Africa. Such reliable data is essential to reinforce advocacy and fundraising for African book-related programmes and new book sector initiatives.

Kelvin Smith, in a book review essay of the print edition of *Publishing, Books & Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Annotated Bibliography*⁴ eloquently articulates the arguments for the building of a dynamic state of the art digital resource, as well as the need for more North-

South collaboration and research links. He argues that if publishing and information professionals, NGOs and civil society organizations in Africa are going to be successful in advocating the importance of their work for the greater development goals, then more data and rigorous analysis will be required. The preservation and further development of research resources available through digital networks will be vital to this. Moreover,

A programme to develop a North-South research group could also include training opportunities in Africa on rights and digital publishing issues that are so important in the global publishing landscape. It could provide an incentive to establish long-term partnership programmes that would be of equal benefit to researchers in and out of Africa. It could provide the additional benefit of including African publishers and libraries in more public-commercial digital partnerships with partners worldwide, and give experience in new digital publishing methods. The engagement of the university and industry research sectors in the development of this resource would add weight to advocacy activities in support of book development. (p. 187)

... In global terms this is a small task, and the costs are also small when compared to research networks in other fields — think of how quickly Google could do this. There could be other benefits. In addition to ensuring the continued development of the research base, it would also be a way of showing that African documentation, too often ignored, is important to the worldwide research community. Where better to show this than in relation to publishing, books, libraries and reading? (p. 187)⁵

North-South and South-South collaboration for publishing education and training

There are currently only six university institutions in sub-Saharan (English-speaking) Africa with departments of publishing and book studies, two in Ghana, one each in Kenya and Zimbabwe, and two in South Africa (see Appendix for full details). In developing a North-South research group it could well be beneficial for these African institutions to seek collaboration or partnerships with publishing and book studies departments in the countries of the North, notably the UK, where two of the leading centres for publishing education are the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies at Oxford Brookes University⁶ <http://publishing.brookes.ac.uk/>, and the Stirling Centre for International Publishing and Communication at the University of Stirling in Scotland <http://www.publishing.stir.ac.uk/>. These two institutions have attracted a sizeable number of African students over the years, for both undergraduate or masters programmes in publishing, and graduates from the programmes have gone on to a range of publishing or publishing-related careers in the commercial as well as not-for-profit sectors in Africa. There are also a small number of institutions in North America who have shown a special interest in publishing in the developing world, for example the Master of Publishing Program at Simon Fraser University in Canada <http://publishing.sfu.ca/master-of-publishing/>.⁷

So it would make sense to establish research links, or the formation of a research cluster, bringing together suitable academic and research institutions in Africa, Europe and in North America, and which, as Kelvin Smith suggests, might then also include training opportunities in Africa or elsewhere on digital publishing and rights issues. Equally desirable of course would be active South-South collaboration and research links between the six African institutions mentioned above, and/or links between publishing training institutions in English-speaking Africa and those in the francophone regions of the continent, such as the Tunis-based Centre Africain de Formation à l'Édition et à la Diffusion (CAFED).⁸

It ought to be added that, for institutional collaboration to be effective and productive, and for long term benefits to accrue to participating institutions, all parties will need to be convinced of the value of their collaboration, which must be oriented towards long-term sustainability goals.

While seeking international collaboration, it is likewise important that there is more interaction between university institutions with departments of publishing studies and the book professions at the local level. And that these academic institutions should become more pro-active to establish book industry links, as well as actively engaging with their national book trade associations, book development council, national library board, and other stakeholders in the book sector.⁹ Additionally, university institutions involved in publishing education should seek to enhance their profile and visibility – both locally as well as internationally – by publishing the results of research undertaken by members of staff, and making this available online on their websites.

Finally, in the light of the demise of the African Publishers Network,¹⁰ there is now a need for an African book promotional organization, or a library or research institution in Africa, to accept responsibility to act as a centre of knowledge about African publishing: systematically acquiring and collecting new material pertinent to the book sector, conducting research, generating reference resources and building up databases, archiving and digitizing collections, and making these widely accessible to the African book professions, as well as to those elsewhere undertaking research into the many aspects of publishing and book development on the continent.

Can a new organization or institution – that has the will, the capacity, and necessary commitment – be found to take on the role of research and documentation about the African book sector?

Generating book industry data and statistics

An important component of such an organization's activities would have to include the systematic gathering of statistical data about African publishing output, analysis of book imports and book exports, readership surveys, as well as research about book buying and reading habits, in print or digital formats.

The need and availability of reliable book production statistics is perhaps particularly acute. In much of the literature on publishing in Africa numerous writers of articles and reports on the state of the book sector in Africa have raised the issue of Africa's total book production, comparing it with that of the rest of the world. Almost always they have cited the figure to be between 2-3% of the world's publishing output. This is the figure that has been cited perpetually for the last two decades at least. When quoted over the years, the figure has been static and has neither shown an upward trend, nor a decrease. The figure is based on analysis from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and those figures, in turn, came from the statistical data presented in the 'Culture and Communication' domains in the now discontinued UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks from 1963 to 1999, and which, as I have demonstrated in a recent article,¹¹ have unfortunately been chronically patchy and suspect for a number of reasons. For example, books in the major African languages, published in many parts of Africa, were not represented in the UNESCO data, and all those titles remained invisible in the statistics.

The UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks provided worldwide figures for the production of books in English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian. As far as the figures for African countries are concerned, the flaws in the data gathering process, and the lack of responses to questionnaires, has probably been the main reason for significant gaps in the statistics, as well as the *relevance* of the data collected and published. If non-responding countries had

provided the requested information, the statistics would most likely have shown increasing production of books in the countries of Africa. Over the years the quality of the UIS databases were probably also affected by diminishing UNESCO resources for data verification and documentation. Thus UNESCO/UIS publishing and book production data for Africa has regrettably always been highly inconclusive for several reasons, and the bottom line is that reliable figures of book publishing output for the continent of Africa, or sub-Saharan Africa more specifically, simply, and lamentably, do not exist.

Even the UNESCO Institute of Statistics would now seem to concede that its figures were unreliable, and that presumably was also the reason why publication of statistical data was discontinued. The view from the UIS¹² is that one needs to look at several key issues when talking about the production and dissemination of book statistics: the first is the capacity of countries to produce reliable statistics in this field, generated by both the public and private sectors. They assert that without reliable national data it is not possible to have reliable international data, and the primary reason why international data for the African continent is lacking is because there is a lack of data at the national level. In addition to many methodological constraints in the gathering and publication of book-related data, the other key issue in book production statistics is the changing environment in which books are nowadays produced and consumed. Technology and the Internet have dramatically changed the whole book industry landscape, and present a formidable challenge in measuring publishing output in a timely and well-coordinated manner.

In a useful UNESCO-commissioned study undertaken in 2008, *A Methodology to Collect International Book Statistics*,¹³ the authors set out convincing reasons why book statistics are a crucial key to sustain the quality and diversity of books. In that study Africa and its 46 sub-Saharan countries are seen

as the prototype for a data-poor region. With the exception of South Africa, national statistics for the book industries and its sectors are either not compiled or are seemingly without relevant relation to the economic truth. From our knowledge and recent discussions with industry participants on the development of the publishing industries in these countries we conclude that the industries as such are growing, especially in the educational sector, but there are no tangible data to back up this assessment. The most recent serious approach to collecting book industry data on a continental basis was undertaken by APNET and ADEA at the turn of the century. For this, the national publishers' institutions were issued with a detailed questionnaire, which asked for data on a range of 29 topics, from demographic to taxes. Just over 20 countries responded to this questionnaire, and a qualified follow-up concerning data research or training of respondents was not undertaken. This has led to the ADEA/APNET report being seriously flawed. (p. 22)¹⁴

The authors go on to say that “the lack of reliable data has been a negative factor constraining both the development of the individual publishing industries as well as the private and public (donor/NGO) investment in the sector.” (p. 22)

However, it has to be recognized, (i) that data collection for its own sake is unlikely to be productive if it arises from a perceived rather than an actual need, and (ii) that there are huge challenges and complexities in the goal of collecting data for book industry surveys. Extracting the survey data can be a highly time-consuming process for those contributing to such data gathering efforts. Moreover, systematic collection of data is not likely to succeed without with the full collaboration of national publishers and book trade associations, national library boards, as well as individual publishers. A great deal of thought must also be given to the survey process, the methodology of collecting and integrating data, and the choice of indicators, for example categories (of books, by subject), publishers (number of),

annual turnover (of publishers/publishing markets), book exports (by publishers), distribution (number of booksellers/retailers), book sales (sales of combined publisher direct sales and through retail channels), book imports (via the retail book trade and by publishers), libraries (number of), and possibly other cultural, media and information indicators. Such data gathering amounts to a formidable task, but with the active support of all players in the local 'book chain' it should be achievable, as indeed has been effectively demonstrated by the wealth of data that has been collected and published for the South African book industries.

Whose responsibility?

Whose responsibility, then, should it be to gather national book-related data? Through their national bibliographies, several national library boards in Africa have, over a number of years, made valiant efforts to produce statistics relating to national publishing output in their countries; but these activities now seem to have ceased, and most national libraries in Africa unfortunately remain seriously and chronically under-funded. National bibliographies could indeed be used as the basic source for creating book production statistical analysis, but national bibliographies for many African countries either don't exist, or where they exist they are currently dormant, or seriously lag behind in publication, sometimes by several years, or even decades. More than 20 countries in Africa still have no national bibliography. Only a few countries currently offer digital databases recording national publishing output and, like the print versions, they tend to lag behind in their publication schedules.

An added problem is that legal deposit in Africa – the act, and legal obligation, by publishers of depositing free copies of their published material in their country's national library – is still inadequately enforced, and probably also still poorly understood by some publishers; and sometimes the procedures for obtaining ISBNs or ISSNs from the national agency are unnecessarily laborious or bureaucratic. Moreover, unless legal deposit copies are properly catalogued and included in the country's national bibliography, there is little incentive for publishers to supply free copies.

In the absence of book industry data, use of the ISBN system is often suggested as a possible approach to obtain book publishing statistics for any country. While this sounds attractive in theory, it does not normally work in practice, and for the reasons which I have set out in an earlier study.¹⁵ Principally because blocks of ISBNs are usually obtained from local ISBN agencies in advance, but it may then take the publishers several years to use them up and allocate a unique ISBN for each new title or new edition as they are published; and some may never in fact be used. Therefore the relation between ISBNs issued and books published can be highly skewed.

Collecting book industry data would seem to be an obvious activity for national book development councils (or their equivalents), which now exist in several African countries. Unfortunately only a small number of them are currently active,¹⁶ primarily because their funding is based either on government support, or dependent on continuing external assistance from donor agencies. Apart from the South African Book Development Council, none of them would appear to offer any publicly accessible book sector data, certainly not on their websites.

Some might well argue that it is not the job of national book development councils to collect and disseminate book industry data and statistics, that they have a great many other priorities to promote literacy, books and reading, and that, instead, this should be the responsibility of national publishers and book trade associations. There are now national publishers

associations in most African countries, although some are currently dormant or their activities heavily curtailed. Like the book development councils, and again with the exception of South Africa, none of them would appear to offer any book production statistical data and analysis.

Analysis of annual book publishing output on a national basis is only available for a few North African countries – albeit patchy and not always reliable – and, in sub-Saharan Africa, only for South Africa, where that country’s Print Industries Cluster Council (now merged with the South African Book Development Council) has published a wide range of valuable annual surveys and reports relating to the book and printing sector, including the retail trade. These reports can be freely accessed at the ‘Research and Development’ pages of the South African Book Development Council at http://sabookcouncil.co.za/?page_id=22. Other reports published include an investigation into the factors that affect the cost of books in South Africa, studies relating to the development of a national book policy, as well as a national survey of the reading (e.g. of newspapers and magazines), book reading, and book buying habits of adult South Africans. The latter was an important milestone as it provided, for the first time in South Africa, quantifiable measures on the state of reading and book reading in that country.

To the best of my knowledge, such profiling of the population in terms of demographic and psychographic analysis has thus far only been attempted in South Africa, yet national surveys of this nature as a source of data can form a significant component in, for example, understanding readership trends, and personal or household expenditure on books and other reading materials.

Other data and statistics has been published by the Publishers Association of South Africa <http://www.publishsa.co.za/>, for example its *Annual Book Publishing Industry* surveys published since 2008, the latest is for the year 2013, published in December 2014 http://www.publishsa.co.za/downloads/2013_Annual_Publishing_Industry_Survey.pdf. These valuable, meticulously compiled, and highly detailed surveys are a continuation of a series of book industry profiles that form part of a systematic data collection exercise and central database developed and housed at the Department of Information Science (Publishing Studies Division) at the University of Pretoria. The reports and surveys aim to provide a mechanism to track changes in the South African ‘book value chain’, and which can also be used as a tool to monitor the impact of the country’s national book policy. The South African Booksellers Association <http://www.sabooksellers.com/> produces a variety of statistics relating to the retail sector, as well as publishing annual trade reports in its journal *Bookmarks* <http://www.sabooksellers.com/bookmark/>. It has commissioned and published a series of useful annual book retail industry surveys, while Nielsen BookScan South Africa in association with BookData SAPnet <http://www.sapnet.co.za/> publishes annual sales analysis designed to provide an overview of the trade sector of the South African book industry.

That South Africa is the leader in statistical and survey data on their book industries is not surprising, as that country has had a much longer publishing history than is the case elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, where indigenous book publishing on any scale did not emerge until the mid-1960s or early 1970s. However, what is now needed is much more vigorous and coordinated action by African book trade associations or national book development councils to systematically collect, analyse, and publish a wide variety of book-related data on an ongoing basis, in order that the continent of Africa is no longer viewed as a “data-poor region”, and reliable and authoritative sources become available to monitor African book publishing output.

Collaboration and knowledge sharing

It strikes me that, especially with the closure of APNET – which has deprived African publishers of a collective voice – there is now, more than ever, a need for *solidarity* among independent African publishers: to share experience and know-how, and leading to collaborative ventures and programmes. Many indigenous publishers in Africa share a great deal of common ground, and they all face the same formidable challenges to survive and prosper, and so more active collaboration and sharing of skills and expertise could be of mutual benefit.

There are many forms of collaborative ventures, for example co-publishing between African partners. At this time successful South-South co-publishing projects in Africa are perhaps still fairly limited.¹⁷ Yet collaborative undertakings, co-publishing projects or partnerships, surely are the key: pooling editorial and management expertise, assisting editorial capacity building, sharing of production costs, or consolidating strength in production and technical skills, especially in the new digital printing and publishing environment. Co-publishing ventures can also extend print runs, thus reducing the unit costs for markets that might not otherwise be able to afford them.

There are other avenues for knowledge sharing, such as discussion forums and groups. There have been a number of attempts over the years to set up online discussion groups for the African book professions – for debate and comment, and to provide a platform for airing views and opinion – but, quite inexplicably to this writer at least, none of them ever really got off the ground.

A new attempt was made in 2013 with the launch of the Facebook ‘Publishing in Africa’ group (recently renamed as ‘Book Publishing in Africa’ group) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/233568780016434/>, which is described as “a group for book-publishing and bookselling professionals, as well as media professionals and authors with an interest in publishing and the book trade in Africa” and currently (October 2015) has over 2,400 members. This figure sounds impressive, but unfortunately, and despite the best efforts of the group’s monitors, it continues to be heavily inundated with postings by self-published authors touting their books, or with posts that have nothing to do with book publishing. Meantime serious discussions and debate about publishing and the book industries in Africa still remain rather thin on the ground.

One interesting and positive development (as is reflected in the number of new records in the *Publishing, Books & Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa* database), is that there are now an increasing number of postings on publishing and the book trade in Africa in a number of blogs, some of which have provided genuinely fresh perspectives and insights, for example on the topic of author-publisher interaction and (often strained!) relations; on self-publishing vs. conventional publishing, the print vs. digital debate and the erosion of print culture, book piracy, debilitating government taxation and import tariffs on books, and on the issues and challenges of publishing African creative writing within Africa.

Another welcome development is that the Oxford-based African Books Collective Ltd (ABC) <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/> – the book marketing and distribution organization founded, owned, and governed by African publishers, which is currently representing the lists of some 150 independent African publishers – has recently launched a new and greatly improved website which, as a sub-site, will shortly also include a blog or forum for debate and information sharing on a variety of topics. ABC hopes to attract posts and opinion pieces

on a wide range of issues as they relate to African books and the publishing industries, and one of its principal objectives will be ‘telling the African publishing story’ to readers outside Africa, in order to generate greater awareness about the activities of the many independent African imprints which ABC now distributes. Additionally, the new sub-site will also be offering book reviews and book extracts for online reading.

A new e-journal or newsletter?

While it was still active the African Publishers Network published a useful journal entitled *The African Publishing Review*. A total of 51 issues were published from 1992 to 2004, when it ceased publication. One more issue was subsequently published online in a “New series vol. 1, no. 1”, in 2011, but no further issues have appeared thereafter. This leaves only the quarterly *African Book Publishing Record* (ABPR), which, first published in 1975, is currently in its 41st year of publication. However, although ABPR does still publish occasional articles and includes some news items, it is largely a bibliographic and review journal, primarily for libraries, and with very limited circulation within Africa.

A new e-journal could provide an important repository of articles and wide-ranging analysis on the subject of African publishing and book development. A conventional academic journal published in both print and electronic formats would probably not be sustainable, and would require fairly substantial funding or institutional support, whereas an online open access journal would seem more appropriate and more manageable. It would require an energetic and dedicated editorial team, and led by an editorial board that is not merely ‘decorative’.

An alternative might be a lively and informative online newsletter published three or four times a year, something like the *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter*¹⁸ or *Partners in African Publishing*,¹⁹ which both contained a wealth of useful information and analysis, but which ceased publication many years ago.

A Wikipedia page for African publishing?

Yet another joint effort that could assist to provide more visibility about the African book industries might be the creation of an up-to-date, fully documented, and authoritative Wikipedia page about indigenous African publishing and the book trade.

If anyone checks Wikipedia for sources of information about “Publishing Africa”, “African publishing”, “Book publishing Africa” or “Publishing sub-Saharan Africa”, they will find that no pages on these topics exist. Wikipedia does have a very dated and patchy article about the now sadly dormant African Publishers Network (APNET) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Publishers_Network, but apart from entries about the (now discontinued) Noma Award for Publishing in Africa, the *African Book Publishing Record*, African Journals Online/AJOL, a small number of South African publishing houses, and biographical profiles about one or two prominent African publishers, there is not a great deal else that is related to African publishing.

So why not put this right, and create a set of Wiki pages as a collaborative undertaking? Wikipedia’s articles, pictures and data are created by a diverse community of people who volunteer to share their knowledge with the world, and the iterative process of Wikipedia would seem to make it particularly well-suited to developing a community in African publishing, while at the same time increasing global dissemination and visibility about the African book world.

Epilogue

As others have pointed out,²⁰ continental and regional organizations, or national bodies such as book development councils and book trade associations, are often still very weak in structure and management and have been unable to survive without continuing donor support, with the notable exception of the African Books Collective mentioned above, which is now self-financing and, having moved to a largely digital model, is still going strong and is currently celebrating its 25th year of trading.

In the new digital era, with its demand for skills and knowledge, and at a time of unprecedented change and promise, more *informal* collaboration between African publishers, as one-to-one relationships, or alliances of small independent publishers, may well achieve a greater measure of success and sustainability than Pan-African or regional organizations hampered by cumbersome constitutional and administrative management structures.

Notes and references

¹ The collection consists of the following material:

(i) Books, monograph series, essay collections, conference proceedings, book sector studies, book industry training manuals, theses and dissertations, as well as reference works.

(ii) A large number of journals including, for example, complete runs of *The African Book Publishing Record* since it was first published in 1975, APNET's *African Publishing Review*, and the *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter*; as well as complete runs or back issues of a number of book professional journals, such as the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* and *Logos. Forum of the World Book Community*, that have contained frequent articles on publishing and book studies in Africa and the developing world. Much of this material was contained in the reference resource *Publishing, Books & Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Critical Bibliography*, published by Hans Zell Publishing in 2008, in both print and electronic formats. A very substantial number of new records have been added to the online database since publication of the print edition.

(iii) Also part of the collection are a large number of box files containing over a thousand periodical articles, press clippings, reports, studies, and surveys on many aspects of publishing and the book world in Africa, together with some unpublished material and ephemera.

² Unfortunately this earlier collection donated to APNET is no longer accessible, and its precise status is not known.

³ Pending its migration to the new hosts in Nigeria the current database is now freely accessible at <http://www.hanszell.co.uk/cgi-bin/online/pbrssa.shtml>.

⁴ *Publishing, Books & Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Annotated Bibliography* by Hans M. Zell. With an introductory essay by Henry Chakava. Lochcarron, Scotland: Hans Zell Publishing, 2008. 762 pp. Print and online. <http://www.hanszell.co.uk/pbrssa/index.shtml>.

⁵ Smith, Kelvin "A Magnum Opus on African Publishing." *Logos. Forum of the World Book Community* 19, no. 4 (2008): 184-187. Freely accessible at https://www.academia.edu/2700335/A_magnum_opus_on_African_Publishing. Kelvin Smith is a former Principal Lecturer at the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies at Oxford Brookes University.

⁶ With the support of the UK Department for International Development, the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies earlier carried out an exchange programme with the (then named) Department of Book Industry at Kwame University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, from 1998 to 2001. This also involved collaboration on course development, and the development of teaching and learning materials.

⁷ See e.g. <http://tkbr.ccsp.sfu.ca/pub802/2014/01/electronic-book-publishing-where-is-its-place-in-developing-countries-2/>, and also its useful list of publishing schools worldwide at <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/research-assistance/subject/publishing/schools>.

⁸ Centre Africain de Formation à l'Édition et à la Diffusion (CAFED), 9, rue Hooker Doolittle, Tunis Belvédère, Tunisia (other address: *not* verified, Immeuble Intilak, 1082 Cité Mahrajène, Tunis, Tunisia) cafed@email.ati.tn or cafed@topnet.tn, no website at this time. Principal contact: Ridha Najjar, Technical Director/CEO.

⁹ This is already happening to a large extent in South Africa, but there is not much evidence elsewhere of such book industry links, and active collaboration between the academic institutions involved in publishing education and the local book industry.

¹⁰ The African Publishers Network (APNET), the pan-African organization founded in 1992 and established to strengthen indigenous publishing throughout Africa, brought together national publishers associations and publishing communities. Unfortunately it has been dormant for several years now, and although there is still a governing board there are no signs of activities of any kind (as at October 2015), and its website has been shut down.

¹¹ “Zell, Hans M. “How Many Books are Published in Africa? The Need for More Reliable Statistics.” *The African Book Publishing Record* 39, no. 4 (2013): 397-406. Pre-print version, freely accessible, at http://www.academia.edu/4549278/How_many_books_are_published_in_Africa_The_need_for_more_reliable_statistics.

¹² José Pessoa, Programme Specialist & Head of Culture Statistics, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), personal communication, 17 October 2013.

¹³ Wischenbart, Rüdiger, and Holger Ehling *A Methodology to Collect International Book Statistics. Framework - Indicators - Methodology & Strategies - Groundwork for a Test Run*. Paris: UNESCO, Culture Sector, Division of Cultural Expressions and Creative Industries, Section of Creative Industries for Development (Document UNESCO CLT/CEI/CID/2009/PI/108,2009). 28 pp. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001824/182475e.pdf>.

¹⁴ As the authors of the above UNESCO study do not cite precise publication details of the “ADEA/APNET report” published “at the turn of the century” it is not clear from their comments which report, precisely, they found flawed.

It should be added that, in 2009, APNET published a 42 pp. report about the *APNET-ADEA Study Project on Intra-African Book Trade* http://www.african-publishers.net/images/stories/downloads/adea_apneta_study.pdf [page no longer accessible, website withdrawn]. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa, ADEA Working Group on Books and Learning Materials, had recommended that APNET should facilitate the sharing of information between national publishers' associations as it relates to the different procedures that need to be followed when exporting books from/to a particular African country, and with which all publishers and booksellers need to be familiar when embarking on the export of their books to another African country. Each national book trade association was asked to complete a detailed questionnaire setting out current procedures, and the legal and fiscal regulations in each country. A total of 29 national book trade associations responded and completed questionnaires. Each country response offers information not only on aspects of book export/import procedures and financial aspects (e.g. customs tariffs on imports, exemptions, tax systems on inputs, other taxes such as VAT, export regulations, cost of financial transactions such as bank transfers, etc.), but also a variety of information on the ‘book chain’ in each country, for example number and type of publishers, printers, booksellers and book distributors, public libraries, legislation on copyright, book trade associations, national book policy situation, and other information relating to the state of the book in each country. Albeit slightly flawed here and there, this study was a valuable and information-rich resource. Unfortunately the report is no longer available online, or in printed form.

¹⁵ “Zell, Hans M. “How Many Books are Published in Africa? The Need for More Reliable Statistics.” *ibid.* p. 7.

¹⁶ National and regional book development councils (or their equivalents) that are currently active in English-speaking sub-Saharan Africa are:

Cameroon:

National Book Development Council of Cameroon <http://www.cambookcouncil.org/> (not accessible as at 17/11/15)

Ghana:

Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) <http://gbdc.gov.gh/>

Kenya:

National Book Development Council of Kenya (NBDCK) <http://www.nationalbookcouncilkenya.org>

Nigeria:

Book Development Centre <http://nerdc.ng/academic-centres/book-development-centre> (Part of six academic centres of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council/NERDC).

Nigerian Book Foundation <http://nigerianbookfoundation.webs.com/> (not accessible as at 17/11/15)

South Africa:

Centre for the Book, National Library of South Africa <http://www.nlsa.ac.za/index.php/about-us>

South African Book Development Council <http://www.sabookcouncil.co.za/sabookcouncil/index.html>

Tanzania:

National Book Development Council of Tanzania/ Baraza la Maendeleo ya Vitabu Tanzania (BAMVITA) <http://www.bamvita.or.tz/default.asp> (not accessible as at 17/11/15)

Uganda:

National Book Trust of Uganda <http://nabotu.or.ug/>

Regional organization:

East African Book Development Association <http://eabda.or.ke/book-development-organizations>

Pan-African organization:

African Publishers Network (APNET) currently dormant, website no longer accessible/withdrawn

Book development council have also been established in Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and in Zimbabwe, but they are all currently dormant and have no Web presence.

¹⁷ For example, there has been a measure of collaboration, and publishing partnerships, between publishers in the East African region, while in the francophone countries of Africa there have been a number of successful co-publishing ventures, as well as a range of co-publishing projects initiated or supported by the Paris-based L'Alliance internationale des éditeurs indépendants/International Alliance of Independent Publishers <http://www.alliance-editeurs.org/?lang=en>.

¹⁸ *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter* (Buffalo, NY, later Oxford), 1992-2002, a total of 31 issues were published. Its online archive is still accessible at http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/newslett_index2.htm.

¹⁹ *Partners in African Publishing. Information Resource for African-European Publishing Cooperation* (Oxford, later London), 1995-2000, a total of 20 issues were published.

²⁰ Chakava, Henry "African Publishing: From Ile-Ife, Nigeria, to the Present." In [Introductory essay] *Publishing, Books and Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Critical Bibliography* by Hans M. Zell. Lochcarron: Hans Zell Publishing, 2008. p. xxxviii.

This wide-ranging essay, albeit now marginally dated, remains one of the most succinct and penetrating accounts of the African book industry today, exploring most of the key issues from a historical perspective, highlighting the most significant problems and constraints faced by the African book industries, and identifying the challenges and prospects that lie ahead.

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Appendix

University institutions in Africa with departments of book and publishing studies

Ghana

Department of Publishing Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Web: <http://publishing.knust.edu.gh/>

Principal contact:

Dr. Kwasi Opoku Amankwa, Head, Department of Publishing Studies, and Dean, Faculty of Arts kopokuamankwa@googlemail.com

Mount Crest University, School of Publishing and Communication Studies, Accra

<http://www.mountcrestuniversity.com/> (new university, established in 2011; offers a BA in Publishing Studies)

Principal contact: n/a info@mountcrestuniversity.com

Kenya

Department of Publishing and Media Studies, School of Information Science, Moi University, Eldoret

<http://www.mu.ac.ke/informationsscience/index.php/departments/publishing-and-media-studies>

Principal contacts:

Dr. Duncan Omanga, Head, Department of Publishing and Media Studies ankodani@yahoo.com

Professor Daniel C. Rotich, Associate Professor dcrotich@hotmail.com

Professor Justus Wamukoya, Dean, School of Information Sciences info@mu.ac.ke

Nigeria

Centre of the Book – Nigeria (proposed, *not* operational as yet), Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State

<http://www.kwasu.edu.ng/>

Principal contacts:

Professor Abiola Irele, Provost, College of Humanities, Kwara State University, and Director, Kwara State University Press

abiola.irele@kwasu.edu.ng or abiolairele@gmail.com

or David Dorman, Visiting Principal Librarian and Acting Director, Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Research, Kwara State University david.dorman@kwasu.edu.ng or ddorman@marlboro.edu

Department of Library Archival and Information Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan (offers a Master in Publishing and Copyright Studies)

<http://educ.ui.edu.ng/welcomelib>

Principal contact:

Professor (Mrs.) Iyabo M. Mabawonku, Head of Department [email: n/a]

South Africa

Department of Information Science, University of Pretoria, Hatfield, Pretoria

<http://www.up.ac.za/information-science>

Principal contacts:

Professor T J D Bothma, Head, Department of Information Science infosci@up.ac.za

Dr Beth le Roux, Senior Lecturer, Department of Information Science (and coordinator Publishing Studies) beth.leroux@up.ac.za

School of Literature, Language and Media, Publishing Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Wits

<http://www.wits.ac.za/sllm/publishingstudies/7719/publishingstudies.html>

Principal contact:

Colleen Dawson, Lecturer, and Course Coordinator and Administrator, Publishing Studies Programmes Colleen.Dawson@wits.ac.za

Zimbabwe

National University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Communication and Information Science, Department of Publishing Studies, Bulawayo

<http://www.nust.ac.zw/index.php/medicine/communication-information-science/publishing>

Principal contact:

Dr. Ndabezinhle Luke Dlodlo, Chair, Department of Publishing Studies nldlodlo@gmail.com