Beyond journals

*Developing a platform strategy for Brill, a publisher with many content types*

Ove Kähler
Director of Product Management & Global Distribution
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Brill
Overview

- Scholarly publisher founded in 1683 in Leiden (NL)
- Offices in Leiden, Boston (US) and Singapore (SG)
- 130 staff
- Leading in selected areas of the humanities, social sciences & international law
- 240 journals, 450 book series, 140 databases
- Publicly listed (Amsterdam Stock Exchange)
Brill
Tradition in diversity

• Subject areas that involve non-Latin fonts
  – Middle East & Islamic studies (since 1730)
  – Asian studies (since 1839)
  – Others, e.g. linguistics, classical studies
Tradition in diversity

• Special content types – next to journals and monographs
  – 1873/78: Awards for “oriental printed editions” at world exhibitions
  – 1886-90: Four-volume Chinese dictionary
  – 1890: First preparations of “Encyclopaedia of Islam” (1st edition, 1913-1936)
  – 1990s: Brill becomes the leading publisher for research around the Dead Sea Scrolls
Tradition in diversity

• Online resources at Brill (Dec 2015)
  – 240 active journals
  – 5,300 e-books
  – 55 online reference works
  – 8 bibliographical databases
  – 15 online dictionaries
  – 62 primary source collections
BrillOnline

Why organize diversity

• Stimulate cross-resource discovery and usage
• Find balance between two extremes
  – “One size fits all”
  – “One platform for every product”
• Present products in a transparent way to buyers
How to organize diversity

• Based on subject areas? – but then:
  – Resources belong to several fields
  – Scholars prefer cross-discipline searching

• Instead: strong reasons to organize by content type
  – Different functions in the scholarly workflow
  – Different content structure & functionalities
  – Different business models
How to organize diversity
BrillOnline
How to organize diversity
BrillOnline
Primary Sources

• **Use case:** study original material
• **Business model:** access per collection
• **Special functionality:** good document viewer, full-text search vs metadata search

**Example:** Early Western Korans Online
BrillOnline
Bibliographies

- **Use case:** scan related specialty literature
- **Business model:** access to whole works or entire platform
- **Special functionality:** e.g. not to display high-level results (because they are the product)

**Example:** search Index Islamicus
BrillOnline
Books & Journals

• **Use case:** browse and read articles & chapters

• **Business model:** access to whole works or single units, also: collections & archives

• **Special functionality:** table of content alerts (journals), visualization of book series (books)

**Example:** monograph about Quran translations
BrillOnline Reference Works

- **Use case:** obtain authoritative overview in a defined sub-field
- **Business model:** access to whole works or entire platform
- **Special functionality:** internal cross-references from article to article

**Example:** search “Lepanto”
BrillOnline Dictionaries

- **Use case:** understand linguistic contexts (also historically)
- **Business model:** access to whole works
- **Special functionality:** visualize context of words

**Example:** Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage
How to organize diversity
BrillOnline.com (& Brill.com)
Organizing diversity

Brill.com
Corp. Website & Catalog

BrillOnline.com
Linking Hub

Single-product platforms

Content-type platforms

Subject-based platforms

Non-Brill platforms

Current situation

BrillOnline Discovery provides the most relevant results across our four publishing platforms: Books & Journals, Reference Works, Bibliographies and Primary Sources.

EBSCOhost
ATLA
HeinOnline
ProQuest

Chinese Reference Library

Permanent portals (e.g. Islamic Stud.)

Temporary portals (e.g. 70 yrs. UN)
Brill.com ("three C’s")
Organizing diversity

Corporate. Brill.com
Company homepage

Catalog. Brill.com
Metadata search

Content.Brill.com
Commodity products, incl books & journals, possibly reference works

Cluster platform 1
Reference works with similar special requirements

Cluster platform 2
Primary source collections in subject area X

Cluster platform 3
Primary source collections in subject area Y

Cluster platform 4
Dictionaries & related resources in subject area X

Stand-alone platforms
E.g. data journal, jointly published reference work, flagship bibliography, etc. etc.

Non-Brill platforms
Brill online resources
How to organize diversity

- **Challenge 1**: Division by content type is arbitrary
  - **Measure**: Stop thinking in terms of content types, instead: create one main platform (commodity products) with satellite platforms (custom products)

- **Challenge 2**: Cross-discipline searching can do harm in certain cases
  - **Measure**: Split up certain satellite platforms by subject area (e.g. Primary Sources)

- **Challenge 3**: Linking hub BrillOnline.com is hardly being used
  - **Measure**: “Upgrade” that main platform into the new linking hub

- **Challenge 4**: Single-product platforms are difficult to integrate
  - **Measure**: Treat those just like any other satellite platforms in this new concept

- **Challenge 5**: Subject portals have no easy place in a platform architecture
  - **Measure**: Distinguish between subject portals as entry points (on level of main platform) and as resource libraries (on level of satellite platforms)

- **Challenge 6**: Google shows each product twice: on Brill.com & BrillOnline.com
  - **Measure**: Find a way to combine catalog & content (and corporate) under one roof

- **Challenge 7**: Librarians need easy overviews of products
  - **Measure**: Link each product back to complete product lists (per content type)
Thank you!

Questions?

Ove Kähler

Director of Product Management & Global Distribution

kahler@brill.com