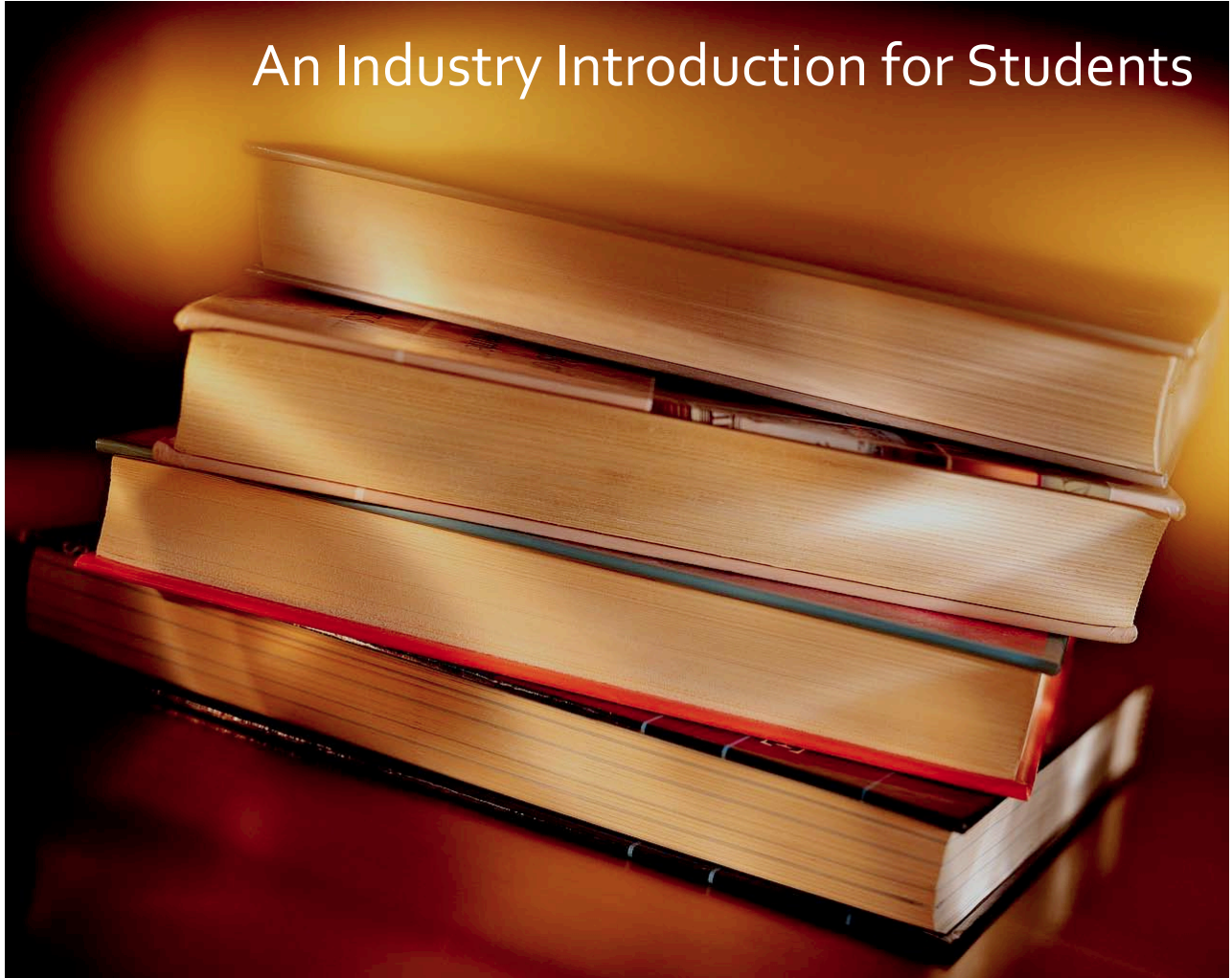# Educational Publishing:

An Industry Introduction for Students

Project Proposal and Audience Analysis
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Background

The 2010 spring semester of TWC 421 Writing with Technology offers a unique opportunity for me to learn a new software application through the lynda.com Online Training Library. I have chosen to work with Adobe InDesign CS4. This particular software is significant to me because it is widely used in the educational text industry, which is where my career is headed. For instance, Pearson Education's Chandler branch utilizes InDesign. I heard about this software when I was researching career opportunities with Pearson. They list it as a preferred skill for some of the editor positions.

I have no experience at all with Adobe InDesign. I truly have no clue what it will be like because I have never even seen the application in action; lynda.com will be my personal introductory guide to InDesign discovery. While I have never used this program, I have some fundamental experience with Adobe Photoshop. I assume the learning process will be at a higher difficulty level simply because I am under the impression that InDesign is a more heavy-duty program. My aunt has some rudimentary experience with InDesign and she tells me it is a fantastic tool that is fun to use. I hear it is especially practical for constructing very long documents such as books. This encourages me to be brave and tackle the program no matter how difficult it may seem. I learn software quickly so I am confident my course project will be a success. The project outcome will be a brief, original reference guide concerning the educational publishing industry.

Goals

My aim is to become practiced with the program's basic features and have a working knowledge of InDesign document and book construction. Some of the more advanced exposure I plan on reaching involve GREP, and typography features. The genre I am attempting to produce with this software is the modern, paperback textbook. I would like to include all dimensions found in a typical reference book, but in a shortened form for the sake of time. For instance, I would like my project to utilize many of the following:

- Activities
- Answer sets
- Appendices
- Bibliographies
- Cases
- Chapter Summaries
- Examples
- Glossaries
- Graphics
- Index
- Professional Interviews
- Questions
- Strategies
- Table of Contents

The content of my textbook will revolve around the educational publishing industry. My project will act as a reference guide for students interested in pursuing this field. The book will be brief and is tentatively expected to include these main sections:

- Front matter and forward
- The history of textbooks
- The components of a textbook
- The typical publication process
- Leading publishers and markets
- Digital adaptation and current trends
- Thinking critically about improvements
- Back matter

InDesign is a gateway for me. I hope to become an editorial assistant at Pearson upon graduation from Arizona State University. This software project experience will teach me technological skills that will give me a competitive edge as a candidate for employment. My project will be tangible evidence of my skills with this software. I hope to employ a professional to print and bind my work so I can present it alongside other projects in my dossier during the hiring process at Pearson. The finished product will have several functions during this time. It will:

- Be evidence for Pearson that I am skilled with InDesign and technology
- Convince Pearson of my passion for and knowledge of educational publishing
- Exhibit my strong attention to detail and aesthetics
- Show my competency with the Chicago Manual of Style

Audience

The indented audience of my work are undergraduate students who may be interested in pursuing a Scholarly Publishing Certificate (ASU offers this under the graduate Public History Program). This reference is optional reading that may supplement many undergraduate majors such as English, Education, or Technical Communication. My work will be freely available to them online. They may also request a printed copy from me for a charge but I highly doubt this will ever be a request.

Reading Level

The primary audience will all be at the college reading level and will not be subject matter experts. They may have moderate to no previous knowledge on the book's content, thus this book is meant to be introductory and key terms will need to be defined. If my readers are passionate enough about textbooks to consider this field, I would expect them to be excited to read this material. It will offer them a glimpse into their future, which is stimulating for any young person. The level of education among my readers may vary slightly. I estimate that my primary readers will range from high school seniors, to college level seniors. It will be easy to achieve a professional voice and tone for this audience window. As a peer, I can also anticipate their needs.

Circumstances and Context

Educational Publishing; An Industry Introduction will give college students a reference to help them explore the educational publishing industry. It can both help them make the choice to follow this path or give them more insight if they already know they want to work in this field. I will be sure to post the finished project online where students will view this book as a PDF document on the internet from home, school, work, or the library. Students will read this work when they need to consult basic information about educational publishing. They may read whole chapters at a time, or simply scan through for specific information. The book is meant to be versatile this way in its delivery mode. Organization and clear content directory is vital to this.

Intended Effect

I want my project to inform readers about the basics of textbooks and their publishers. The book will persuade readers that this is an exciting, innovative field that is rewarding to pursue. After using my reference guide, students will have base knowledge that sticks. The intent is to enlighten by *teaching*. I do not want to simply hand over the information, but force readers to internalize and meditate on it, just the way a real textbook would. Learning objectives for this book include the following:

- Understand the history, design, and production of textbooks
- Know leading publishers and markets
- Be aware of digital adaptations and current trends
- Think critically about how text books and materials can be improved

Secondary Audience

My secondary audience may include those who surround my primary audience. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Parent
- Teachers
- Advisors

These people may see my work. For instance, they may find this book online if they are researching publishing career paths for students. They may want to read it so they can explain this industry share the book with students. They are more likely to find this book when students are expressing an interest in publishing. Like my primary audience, these readers will view my work from a computer at home, work, school, or the library. Certain considerations should be taken for this audience. They will need a very clear introduction to explain what this book is about. This introduction will require an extremely apparent scope so that readers will not waste their time if my content is not what they are looking for. They should not feel alienated because there is fair warning in the book's title that my work is intended for the student audience. The secondary audience reading level should be at or above that of my primary audience, thus I do not foresee any technical confusion.

Tertiary Audience

One of the tertiary readers of this book may be the group of individuals who despise or dislike the textbook industry. It is no secret that many people get upset over the high prices of textbooks. This common gripe will be addressed in the book when I focus on the publishing and production process. It is a completely justifiable issue that if argued correctly may settle some of the animosity towards textbook prices. Another qualm some textbook-haters have is in regards to learning styles. People say textbooks cannot effectively meet student needs due to diverse learning styles. I will address the recent innovations that the industry has implemented to solve this problem. Finally, a huge complaint about textbooks is their weight. People worry that students obtain back problems from carrying a heavy backpack full of textbooks. This is very much becoming a thing of the past and I will show why in the sections about digital adaptations of the industry. Tertiary reader will have these and other concerns. I will try to answer their concerns in a tactful, friendly way throughout my book. Thus, when they are using my book as a reference in a report demonizing textbooks, they will find nothing to slander from my words. It should be noted that these users will find access to the book online in PDF form just as any other of my readers would.

Others that compose my tertiary audience are industry specialists and textbook experts. This is the most intimidating audience group because I fear they will find errors with my information. Because of this, I need to only choose the most reliable sources for my work and cite everything properly. This protects both my liability and reputation. While I do not intent them to read my work online, it is a possibility they may stumble upon it. Also, some experts will be reviewing my work in my dossier. I need to keep this expected audience at the forefront of my mind at all times. Keeping my work professional is of the utmost importance. I will be evaluated for employment and this book may factor into their decision making process. When they read this book after my December graduation of 2010, they will view it in print form if possible. If this is unavailable, I will offer the book on a physical disc or URL reference. To me, there seems to be something more attention-grabbing to the printed form. This is preferable.

Conclusion

I am very excited about the next thirteen weeks. The next steps of this project involve plowing through the lynda.com tutorials so that I can begin creating my book. I also need to be continuously gathering source material for my book. Finally, I wish to begin developing a more thorough outline for the guide book. Every aspect of this project is vital to my future after college. I am grateful for the opportunity to expand my technological and editorial horizons.