Brill

A Publishing House in Transformation

Ove Kähler • Vice President Operations

Rave Annual Publishing Conference

23 October 2018 • London
What is this talk about

Brill

- Scholarly publisher founded in 1683
- Offices in Leiden (NL), Boston (US), Singapore (SG), Beijing (CN), Paderborn (DE)
- Leading in selected areas of the humanities, social sciences & international law
- 160 staff
- 300 journals, 1400 books per year, 150 databases
- Publicly listed (Amsterdam Stock Exchange)
What is this talk about
Choices & infrastructures

Client to architect: Why did the project become so expensive?

Architect: You asked for a lift in a two-story house.

Client: But I told you, the lift would be used only once a year, when by mother is visiting. Shouldn’t it be cheaper then??
What is this talk about
Choices & trade-offs

Fast + good = EXPENSIVE
(shareholders unhappy)

Fast + cheap = UGLY
(editors unhappy)

Good & cheap = DELAYS
(customers unhappy)

Fast + good + cheap = IMPOSSIBLE
(management unhappy)
What makes Brill special
Wisdom vs commerce
What makes Brill special
Special(ized) fields

*Frankfurt Book Fair, 1960:*
“We print and publish in all languages of the world”

*Leiden/Boston, 2011:*
We support our authors with a special letter type
What makes Brill special
Breadth vs depth
How we manage specialness
Standardization vs customization

Scenarios for online platforms

Scenario 1: “One size fits all” (standardization across all product types)
Scenario 2: Standardization per product type
Scenario 3: Customization within standardization per product type
How we manage specialness
Brill’s web presence: OLD situation

Brill.com
Corp. Website & Catalog

BrillOnline.com
Linking Hub

etc.

Single-product platforms

Content-type platforms

Subject-based platforms
How we manage specialness
Brill’s web presence: FUTURE situation

Brill.com

Corporate
- Company information
- Static pages for authors, librarians, book trade

Catalog
- Search through all products
- Including collections, print, microfiche

Content
- Full-text of books, journals, encyclopedia
- Linking hub to find Brill content outside brill.com (see below)

Satellite platform 1
Text editions

Satellite platform 2
Bibliographies

Satellite platform 3
Primary sources

Satellite platform 4
Dictionaries & related resources in subject area X

Stand-alone platforms
E.g. data journal, co-published encyclopedia, flagship bibliography, etc. etc.

Audience-specific sites

Firma
Katalog
Inhalte
How we interact with the business
Supply-driven vs demand-driven

1. Ticketing System
2. Impact Assessment
3. Project Management
4. Project Overview
Is Brill really so special?
Of course, it is!
Is Brill really so special?
Of course, it is! – But our dilemmas are not..

Wisdom

Depth

Customization

Supply-driven

vs.

Commerce

Breadth

Standardization

Demand-driven
Thank you! Questions?

Ove Kähler • kahler@brill.com

Rave Annual Publishing Conference
23 October 2018 • London