

A Case Study: How Do We Compensate Minoritized Social Justice Authors and Still Use an Open License?

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BOB CASPER

Hi, my name is Bob Casper, and I'm here with Dr. Keith Anderson and Frederick Johnson, and we're doing a presentation on A Case Study: How to Compensate Minoritized Social Justice Authors and Still Offer an Open License for Their Material. And so, by way of introduction, I am part of the Center for Teaching and Learning over at Boise State, and I am an instructional designer. Dr. Anderson and Mr. Johnson will introduce themselves when their portion of our presentation comes up, and so we've divided it into several sections. But I want to talk about our outcomes and key takeaways. We're hoping that by the end of this, you will have some type of idea of how to create OER in several formats, including print-on-demand and digital, and then also we're looking to have the work be openly licensed, and at the same time create an avenue of compensation for the author. And then our third item would be create an avenue for the author to address future works by offering work via OER as a catalyst for more opportunities for that future work.

And so, let me just set the stage here a little bit. One of the things that we were working on to get people who are interested or already working on putting some materials together to come over to open educational resources and so, amongst others, Dr. Anderson was someone who I'd known for a little bit before and had admired his work and understood, uh, some of his goals and ideas, and he wanted to put something online, but wanted it to look credible and nice and polished. And so, one of the things we could do was take his book that he had been working on and put it into a format that was online. So, one of the things we did was we used Pressbooks. If you're familiar with Pressbooks, not only does it create PDFs and MOBY and other types of digital formats, but it creates a web page as well, in addition to, like I said, a PDF version.

So, we had all these different versions of the book and then we decided that maybe the best way to use this type of money, and actually this was Keith's decision – Dr. Anderson's decision – was

to use that to make some printed versions of the book. We hired a local printer and began that process, and we'll talk about that a little bit further down in our talk. We ended up also having several digital versions, and ultimately released those to faculty and students to use in ethics classes and other classes that would talk about social justice, racism, anti-racism, and those topics as the book addresses those very well. What we ended up doing after that was saying, okay, well we've got a printer that's printing this book, but we need something when those books run out. How do we get it so that people can buy their own books?

And so that's where we ended up turning to Kindle Self-Publish, which is part of the Amazon family of companies, and we'll talk about that as we get going in this as well. So, that's how we got to where we are. And what's happened is, or what we hope continues to happen is, as people, either students or faculty, see Keith's book, as people in the public or government agencies or the private sector get his book via Amazon, that there's an invitation in there to contact Keith and to see what his availability is to either come give workshops on these topics, or have discussions, and— and in other ways use his expertise to discuss how they can benefit — whether you're a government agency or a for-profit — from an anti-racist point of view. And so that's the hope, and we'll address these as we go through. What I'd like to do now is bring on Dr. Anderson and have him introduce himself and talk about why the book was created, what's in the book, and those types of items. So, Dr. Anderson, if you would go ahead and come on.

KEITH L. ANDERSON

Okay, my name is Dr. Keith Anderson. I taught at Boise State for over 18 years as an adjunct instructor. I've conducted numerous anti-racism workshops for private companies and for the federal government, but as my— the work I do with low-income students, working with students with the Trio Program, has given me an opportunity or gave me an opportunity to— to watch and understand racism and education and things like that. So, one of the things I wanted to do is teach teachers how to work with students from diverse backgrounds. So, I kept an eye on that, and as our society started to change, I was keeping an eye on, uh, the things that were going on racially in our in our country, and I've always had this idea for a book. But, those of you who have been teaching for a long time, you understand that getting a publishing deal as a college instructor is not the easiest thing in the world to do.

And so, I wanted to put my information that I've collected, I wanted to put it online, but I wanted it to be very simple. Uh, my book is not a book that's gonna make you an expert on slavery, it's not gonna make you an expert on Jim Crow or black history or the Civil Rights Movement. My job with this book is one simple thing: it's to teach you to go from racist to non-racist to anti-racist, with my theory being that we can't do anything about racism until we move from non-racist to anti-racist to start undoing it. And so, I just wanted a place where people could come

and read the information. I wanted to have something in my hand when I continued to do workshops and racism seminars, and I wanted something, so I— I got a hold of Bob and talked about having a website, and he informed me about the things that he was doing and— and that I could probably— with the OER I could probably get a book printed professionally.

But the— the one caveat was that students and professors could get it for free. I didn't have a problem with that. I could use— I could still have a professional-looking book as a— as an instructor, and I could use these, uh, books in my seminars. So, I did not have a problem with, uh, students having my information and professors having my information, and using it in class. I saw that as a good trade-off. And so now, because of it, I have a professional book — looks just as good as any other book — and this is, uh, helps me when it gives me more confidence, and when I do a seminar, when I'm talking to people and they see the book and they see, "Oh, this book is written by this guy," so it— it works. And so, I think a lot of professors, if they had the opportunity to do what we've done, I think they would take that opportunity, and I think it would be a good thing for the— whatever course you're teaching. So, with that I'll give it back to Bob, and I think he's going to move on to Fred.

BOB CASPER

And we'll come back to Dr. Anderson in a bit. So now we have the idea, Keith— Dr. Anderson has the materials in hand, and we need to figure out a way to format them, to put them into a book format. And for that we needed someone who knew about books. So, at the time we at the CTL, we also had a program for a graduate assistant, and that particular graduate assistant is here with us today. Uh, and so I'll, uh, go ahead and just ask Frederick to kind of introduce yourself, tell us about your specific skill sets, and then how you got the book to the way that it needed to be for it to be published interesting.

FREDERICK JOHNSON

Thanks Bob. Um, yes, I'm Frederick Johnson. Um, profession in training, I'm a librarian. More recently I was also a graduate student working on a history thesis, and, as Bob explained, I was hired to be a graduate assistant for the Center for Teaching and Learning. I was hired specifically to help with their initiative to advocate and increase adoption of OER at Boise State University. There were kind of three prongs to— to what— what we were all doing, but what was specifically my mandate, because that was the only thing I had to focus on, which was— I think it sometimes might have made Bob a little jealous. Um, but, um, one thing we were doing is we were trying to identify high impact courses and departments where the adoption of OER could benefit the cost of textbooks for students the most. Another thing we were doing was encouraging and providing focused and specialized support for early adopters of OER. I would help professors locate materials, navigate sites, and help them along so they could then take that material to

instructional designers like Bob to integrate the materials in their courses. Lastly, we were encouraging— as these early adopters became more— more confident and more interested in it— we began to encourage the production of their own OER, and by this time Boise State had invested in an account with Pressbooks, which is related to Wordpress, but is specifically geared for the creation of books that can be accessed online.

So, this idea that Dr. Anderson had of wanting to have a website or way that people could see his work, and Pressbooks, everything just came together perfectly. So specifically for Dr. Anderson's book, I was tasked with learning, mostly teaching myself, Pressbooks, how it worked and how to get his book in— into it. Um, first I was given a— a printed manuscript based on a Word file, which I was also given access to, and I began reading and began learning Pressbooks, and the process began where I began entering things and taking notes. This was very— we were all— all three of us were involved in this at every step of the way. Every time I would make changes or find things, we'd get back together. This printed version of the manuscript went back and forth with my notes and Dr. Anderson, and, and at the same time I was entering things into Pressbooks and finding out that it's not quite as simple as just copy and pasting, but that I had to learn quickly a little bit about some basic HTML coding and things to make sure that, stylistically, things matched up, and that formatting and— and fonts and things were consistent throughout. And so, there were all these little snags.

Additionally, we wanted to use Pressbooks because it provides an— a relatively easy way for a writer to make the work available in a number of formats. For example, we wanted to make sure that the book was available as a printable PDF, a digital PDF, but also an ePub file and a MOBY file that are compatible with Kindle Readers and— and other devices for reading books. So, Pressbooks is able to do this, but there are oftentimes— there were just little— little snags where I had to learn the HTML because something didn't quite translate, and I would have to, you know— and it wouldn't look right in one format or another. But over working all together, and each one of us focused in our— on our own little spot, we slowly, uh, got this project moving along.

For me an interesting part of this, and I think worth special mention is, designing a cover for the book. And we kind of threw around some ideas and— and naturally I went and did some image searches for open, um, photography and I found an image that I liked that I thought was interesting. I liked that it had a story. It was— it was a beautiful, high definition, uh, image of a quilt what— that was in the collection. It was the New York Museum of Art or the Smithsonian — I don't remember now, but it had been— it had been sewn by two sisters who happened to be slaves. And I thought, well, this has got an interesting pattern. It would look— it'd be easy to to manipulate this image to make it into a cover, it has an interesting story, it ties into the subject matter of the book, and what was really neat is I— I just kind of thought this idea, and I— I sent a copy of the image to Bob and— and Dr. Anderson, and Dr. Anderson took it and clearly was

inspired because he came back and designed his– his own cover, uh, using a quilt that his wife had made, or a couple of quilts that his wife had made, making it that much more personal and having that much more of a– of a story to tie in, collaboration for this– for this book. So that was a neat thing, and doing all those things together, I think we– we managed to make something that really did look good and that we– that we're all proud of and happy to share with you today. It's been a– a wonderful project to work on.

BOB CASPER

Thank you both for sharing your perspective on– on the project. The first thing we did, which was the Pressbook. And so, this is in Boise State's Press Book account. So, our university, and I believe even the State of Idaho, has a Press Book account. And so that's where this lives, um, as you can see there. Here's the book, and we'll get a bigger picture of it in just a moment, but you can see the quilt pattern on there. Underneath that, just like in every Pressbook that's ever been published, there's an option that can be chosen to be offered, which was to download the entire book, that would be a digital PDF version, and here's the different versions you can click on as well. So, if you intended to print it out, you could do this or there's another way to get a printed version, and we'll get to that in just a moment. Also, you see the licensing here. So, this book is owned by Keith. Just because something is openly licensed doesn't mean that it's not owned by that author. If you're going to use this book, then you know it is still owned by Keith, copywritten by Keith, you need to provide an attribution, you're not allowed to sell this book, and you need to use, um, use it as it's presented. Um, and so those are the licensing terms that we have for this particular book.

And if you decide you want to read it online, here's the part that initially Keith came to to me about, said, "Is there a way to do this?" And then I said there certainly is, and this is what we came up with. Now you can kind of see the detail of the quilt, um, which is layered, uh, upon this, because maybe you can interpret that as there are multiple layers to this topic. That was created by his wife, and we've used it in this cover. So, you get past the cover and you start to go back into the licensing and so forth, and you just get to the bottom of the Pressbooks page. But, um, you can come up here to content, and when you click on the down arrow, you can go back into the– the cover page, but there's acknowledgements, the introduction, Cost of Freedom – these are different writings by Keith – but then you get to the main body, and just like any other book that's online, there's different chapters. He has essays in here that you can go right to. I'm going to share another screen with you and I'll go ahead and stop this one from sharing.

So, we had the issue of, okay, now we have this resource for our students and our faculty to use Keith's book and his expertise in their class, so an ethics class, a business ethics class, a social justice class, um, an equity studies class – all these resources – all these courses, rather – have

this as a resource now, and it's also available on OER commons as well. But Keith doesn't get any compensation for this, other than maybe a nice email every once in a while. And so, earlier on, one of the outcomes and takeaways was how do we get to, uh, where we can compensate our social justice authors? And so, we're going to take it to the next screen here. And so, if you were looking for something like this, what we came upon – and there might very well be other ways to go about finding a way to compensate these experts – is to go to Kindle Self-Publish, which, this is a part of the Amazon group of companies, and you can see here: same book, same cover, um, and you can even look inside and peruse the book, as it were. And so, there's the introduction.

Now the entire book is not here because obviously at this point we're looking at a way to compensate Keith for his expertise and his time in creating these materials. This also does something else for us in that it provides a print-on-demand solution. And so why would we need a print-on-demand solution? Couldn't someone just take the PDF to their local print shop or, you know, Xerox shop? So, this particular solution on how do we compensate minoritized social justice authors was to have the print-on-demand feature be a way for Keith to control the price of the book. Now if he came across someone– an email of someone who wanted a book but could not afford it, there are ways for him to get a copy of the book to that particular person. However, if it's a corporation, a government agency, or some other type of group that's wanting Keith to come give his workshop, he could then let them know, "Make sure you give this book out to everybody who's going to attend a week before the workshop." He can go on Amazon, he can set the price. So, he can make it at-cost or he can build in a little profit for himself, so that, like I said, his work expertise is compensated for. And so that's how we did that.

Basically, a lot of the work was done by Frederick, as far as getting the formatting concerned. I would say 99.9% of the work was done by Dr. Anderson, in getting the book, where the different chapters and poems and stuff, flow nicely so that a lesson can be presented. And so that is– brings us to our third idea here, is that, if you remember, uh, there's a video available from the Creative Commons New Zealand, and it has basically the idea of a photographer trying to get her name out as a photographer. And so, she openly licenses an image of a kiwi bird, or a picture that she took, but then it explains that she's only giving that one picture out for free.

KEITH L. ANDERSON

One of the most difficult things for instructors, professors, writers is to get their work published in a very professional way, and this offers that opportunity to– and it offered me that opportunity to get my book into a professional format, and– but also, I wanted professors to be able to use it. I wanted students to be able to use it, and I didn't want them– I was a student, I remember how much books cost, so I wanted to alleviate that problem so that a professor could use that

book to— to teach students about what I think is a very important concept in an understanding how to move from non-racist to anti-racist.

But, as a as a writer, it's hard to put bread on the table if you're constantly giving things away. But this offered that opportunity to say, okay, I can get a professional book, I can get it done, I can put it in front of people, who may in-turn turn around and talk to other people about that. Uh, the students, the professors, whoever it may be, and now they know they can go someplace, to Amazon or— and then— and I'm sure there's others — that they could buy the book. When I go do seminars for corporations or companies or the federal government, I can tell them, "Okay, here's some of the materials you need to get. You need to be able to order these." And I can set that price, and so I can— I'm sort of, uh, being in control of my own product. Do I wish I could sell a million copies and don't have to worry about it? Of course I do. But that's— that's not happening for me right now. So, the best thing to do is to put something that's very professional out there, and then get a number of people to read it through the OER — the open, uh, educational process — so where they can, uh, read it.

And they will do a lot of publicity for me. They will tell other professors about the book, they will tell other students about the book, and then they can go to Kindle or, uh, to Amazon, I should say, and— and find that book. But not only that book, a couple other books I've written in the past. So this is— I think is a viable process that makes everybody a winner. Uh, the students and the professors get information that I think is important, and it's— it's— it comes at, uh, no price for them, but the information is there. And I've studied and showed myself approved, as they say. Uh, so it's good information. It's written— I think it's written well. People who have read it so far think it's well-written. And so, I can, uh, I can feel proud of the fact that, there it is. Something that's solid, uh, and also something that is helping students and professors. So that's one of the— that is probably the main reason why— that I— I went with this opportunity, and I think it's a viable opportunity for a lot of, uh, professors out there who have not heard about it yet.

BOB CASPER

Okay, thank you. Frederick, uh, anything else you want to add?

FREDERICK JOHNSON

The takeaway— the only takeaway I would want to leave is just to say that, you know, that this can be done. You know— We're— we've demonstrated between the three of us that— that we were able to collaborate and bring this work to fruition, and it's something that none of us alone could have done, although you know as we pooled our different, um, hats and— and abilities, we did it. And it's— it's doable, and it's worth it, and it's a gratifying, uh, experience. I'm— I'm glad I was able to be a part of it. It's been a neat thing.

BOB CASPER

All right, thank you. Thank you both. Thank you for everyone who's listened in, and we're hopeful to have a— enough time to have a question and answer session here in just a bit.

END OF TRANSCRIPT.