

# Publishing Legal Scholarship: From Thesis to Monograph

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# Nature of Scholarly Publishing: a changing landscape

- Books' significance varies with discipline, country and institution
- E-books and e-resources
- Journals

## Other Trends

- Research assessment exercises
- Open Access
- Self-archiving
- Fundamental: Good content



*'The end of the book?'*

# Publisher's role in (Legal) Scholarship

- Gatekeeper – selectively building a catalogue of high quality titles
- Filter – “does the world need this book?”
- Improve quality and help shape a book through editorial feedback and peer review



- Encouraging originality, staying abreast of research trends and innovating by publishing innovative new material.
- Can be instrumental in defining a field
- Occasionally to forge new working relationships between scholars
- See and foster patterns between / across sub-disciplines
- “60 Things Academic Publishers Do” (see blog!)

# How does a law book come about?

- Direct output from research
- Approach from a publisher to write a specific book
- Publisher encourages scholar to consider developing research into a book



proposal

# What makes a good law book?

- ‘Horses for courses’ – different types of books need different features
- Interesting vs marketable
- Well written – efficient but engaging
- Not too long!




## Peer review:

- How editors read / use / react to peer reviews
- How authors should react to review feedback



# Writing a successful proposal

- Ultimate aim: make a convincing case for publication to the publisher and to independent peer-reviewers
  - Why is it needed and what does it add to the existing literature?
  - Who is it aimed at and how will it be used?

 **Edward Elgar**  
PUBLISHING

## Publishing Proposal Form

**THE AUTHOR/EDITOR**

1. Name:
2. Present position, including full academic affiliation:  
Please also supply separate CV including details of previous positions and list of publications.

**THE BOOK**

3. Likely title and sub-title of the book. Please bear in mind that to maximise sales and citations the title, and chapter titles, need to be 'discoverable' on Internet search engines. They must be concise and include key terms/concepts from the book. Please think about what search terms your readers may use to find out about the book and individual chapters contained within it.
4. Short description of the book (in 150 words) that captures the essence of the book and could be used to describe it in promotional material to persuade potential readers to engage with the book.
5. Detailed description of the scope, aim and approach of the book in at least 2 pages (Please make a clear case for the book, indicating why you decided to write the book and why you feel there is a need for it, how people would use it, and what it adds to the existing literature. Include also any important features, new material or approaches).
6. Table of contents in full (Please include chapter sub-headings, target extent, in words, of each chapter, and a short abstract for each chapter describing its content and scope):  
  
NB - If the book is an edited, multi-contributor work please indicate the author for each chapter in the table of contents, and an indication as to the scope and length of the introduction and conclusion. Please also confirm that the editor(s) intend to undertake a thorough peer review of all the completed chapters prior to delivering the final manuscript.

**THE MANUSCRIPT**

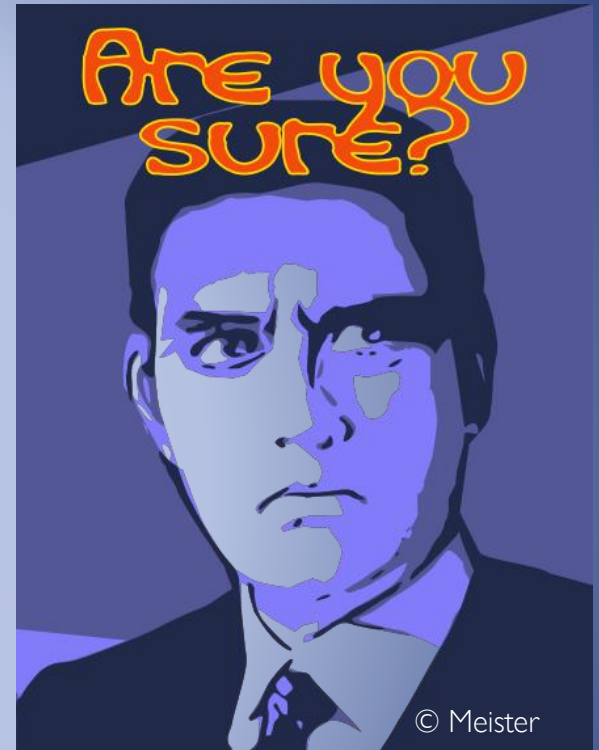
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9. Timing. How much of the typescript is complete and when do you expect to finish the final manuscript? Please provide an indicative timetable for writing and completing the manuscript:  
  
NB - For authored works please include key milestones for when you expect to finish each chapter in draft and final form. For edited books please indicate when draft and final chapters can expect to be received from contributors, building in time for review of draft chapters.

**THE MARKET**

10. Primary market for the book. Is it a research monograph that will sell primarily to academic libraries? Will it have any appeal to practitioners or policy-makers? Are there any secondary audiences that would be interested in the book? (For textbooks please use the Textbook Proposal Form).
11. Competing titles. Please identify any competing or similar books to yours and describe how your book compares to them.
12. International Market. What sort of appeal will your book have for the international market? Are there any overseas markets that might be particularly receptive to your book?
13. Price. What would you feel is the permissible price range for the market envisaged?
14. Translations. Do you think there is a market for the book in translation? If so, please state likely language.

# Do you really want to write a book?

- A raw thesis is not a book
- Written for a small but important audience
- Typically long, demonstrates you can do analysis, and know the subject with literature reviews etc
- Can take a lot of work to convert a PhD into a book. Take a break. Get advice from your supervisor



# What we look for in a PhD (i)

## The book

- International market
- Fits with our list
- Interesting subject, new material, makes an original contribution to the field
- Not too long / dense / technical
- A good proposal – demonstrates what is needed to create a good book
- Practicalities: length, not available elsewhere



# What we look for in a PhD (ii)

## The author

- Academically strong (future author?)
- Journal articles
- Recommendation
- Good written English
- Realistic expectations of the market....  
*eg, most PhDs cannot be turned into a textbook*

# Thesis to monograph: examples

- Remove jargon
- Focus on key take-home message and build stronger narrative around this
- Remove chapters on methodology or literature review
- Introduction and conclusion rewritten to be more engaging, stronger links to the rest of the book
- Reduce repetition
- Minimise signposting of theory
- Remove appendices and references to these in the text

# Tips to improve your chances

- If you can, start thinking about the book structure before you write your thesis
- Take a step back
- Don't just send a raw thesis to a publisher
- Speak with your supervisor first
- Don't send simultaneously to several publishers
- Books sell on name recognition. Foreword?
- Articles

# What happens next?

- Sign a contract
- Leave you in peace to write the book!
- Production
- Marketing

# Choosing a publisher

- Does the book fit well with this publisher's catalogue, and will it be 'in good company' alongside other high-quality monographs?
- How long will it take for them to make a decision, and to publish the book?
- Will they offer a good service, and invest in the book? (Have colleagues had a good experience?)
- Does the publisher have an international reputation, and an ability to market the book?
- What is their ebook strategy?
- Relationship

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