

Independent Publishing Conference 2013

Call for Papers

www.spunc.com.au/ind-pub-conference



Extended Deadline: 20 September 2013

Australian Publishers and Their Reading Publics

The conference will be launched with a keynote speech by Dr Anne Richards titled ‘Coming Out: Rewriting the Public Face of Publishing’. Dr Anne Richards is a research fellow at Griffith University and editor of *Making Books: Contemporary Australian Publishing*.

Publishing, as a commercial enterprise, consists in rousing the curiosities and satisfying the desires of those consumers we know as readers. But the relationship between publishers and the broader reading public (or *publics*) has often been more complicated and fraught than a simplistic supply-demand model suggests. Peter Sloterdijk, quoting Jean Paul, has argued that books are ‘thick letters to friends’, with the key distinction that the identity of these friends remains unknown. In a similar mode, Jacques Rancière has argued that publishers and readers have an epistolary relationship that is inherently democratic, since books circulate like letters, but ‘without any specific addressee . . . in the form of those printed booklets that trail around just about everywhere, from reading rooms to open-air stalls, making their situations, characters, and expressions freely available to anyone who feels like grabbing hold of them.’

Questions of the relationship between publishers and the readers have taken on a new urgency in a post-convergence environment that has empowered consumers with new knowledge about pricing and availability. Publishers can no longer rely on a diffuse book-buying audience to purchase their works through bricks-and-mortar bookshops, and online sellers provide almost limitless product choice for would-be book buyers. Publishers in general—and independent publishers in particular—increasingly must either publish into a well-defined niche or else seek to manufacture their audience through events and other forms of participatory communities, whether in-person or online.

We are seeking papers that explore the relationship between Australian publishers and their readings publics either in the contemporary moment or throughout history. Though our preference is for papers that focus on independent publishing, presentations on all aspects of Australian publishing are welcome. Papers from related disciplines, such as literary studies, creative writing and media studies are also welcome. Possible topics might include:

- Australian publishing in a fragmented public sphere
- Marketing books and branding publishers
- Writers’ festivals, literary organisations, and audiences
- Book clubs, ‘amateur’ reviews, and literary blogs
- Australian publishing and literary criticism
- Gender and publishing
- Publishers and social media

- The relationship between authors and readers
- Publishers, crowdsourcing, and new author platforms
- Consumers and changing modes of book-buying and discovery
- The bookshop as a community space
- Magazines and new subscription models
- Imagined readers

Please send abstracts of 200-300 words, including paper title, institutional affiliation, and contact details to Aaron Mannion at manniona@unimelb.edu.au by **Friday, 20 September 2013**. Selected papers will be recommended for publication in a special issue of a journal. Details will be confirmed over the coming months.