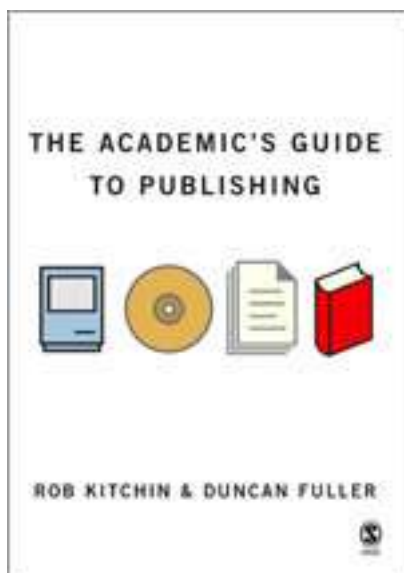


Book Review



The Academic's Guide to Publishing

by Rob Kitchen and Duncan Fuller
London: Sage Publications (2005).

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Review by **Thomas Hillman**

The oft heard quip 'publish or perish' is enough to strike fear into the hearts of many a doctoral student. While disseminating research is a vital part of a career in academia, learning the rules of the game can be daunting and sometimes frustrating. In *The Academic's Guide to Publishing*, Kitchen and Fuller set out to improve the situation by offering a kind of rule book for many of the ways that academics share their work. While issues related to where and how to disseminate research have likely always been of concern to academics, the authors position their book as being particularly relevant in the current climate of what they view as "pernicious forms of research accountancy presently used in higher education around the world" (p. 160). Working within such a context, Kitchen and Fuller suggest, makes it all the more important for academics to be carefully strategic about where and how they share ideas. From their experiences as well-published academics that have written and edited numerous books and articles (eg, Fuller, 1999; Kitchen, 2007), the authors offer a wealth of insights on a wide range of publishing activities that while not specifically aimed toward the field of educational research, certainly seem applicable.

Divided into 22 short chapters, *The Academic's Guide to Publishing* covers a multitude of different ways to share academic work and offers insights into the roles involved in publishing processes. Though the book is not explicitly divided into sections, there are four major themes around which the chapters are organised.

First, the authors offer general advice on strategies for writing and publishing at different career stages. While the section on strategies for postgraduates may be of most interest to doctoral students, Kitchen and Fuller's advice for each career phase provides a good overview of the key stages of an academic's working life. Much of this overview deals with specifics of the UK system such as the *Research Assessment Exercise* but at least from my perspective in the Canadian system it offers insights that are transferable to other countries.

Second, several chapters are dedicated to specific guidelines for publishing or presenting in journals, reports, on the internet, and in the mass media. In this section, the authors dedicate a chapter to each form of dissemination and offer a level of detail that goes beyond listing the steps involved in a peer-review process, for instance, providing insights into such areas as the kinds of feedback that can be expected from reviewers and how to respond to questions from journalists.

Third, Kitchin and Fuller address the challenges of proposing a book or journal to publishers, negotiating contracts and the production process. This series of chapters offers advice based on the authors' own experiences of working with publishing companies that includes an overview of the steps involved and detailed descriptions of such important elements as the standard symbols used by proofreaders.

Finally, in the last three chapters the authors make suggestions about proposing items for conferences, attending them, organizing them, and networking with participants. As with the previous areas addressed in the book, Kitchin and Fuller go beyond listing the steps involved in proposing items for, or organising, a conference. Instead, the authors offer some fairly detailed insights into the processes involved in academic conferences but also discuss such broader areas as effective strategies for networking and maintaining communication with contacts after an event.

While there are numerous books available that address specific aspects of academic publishing (eg, Germano, 2001; Moxley, 1992), *The Academic's Guide to Publishing* offers advice on a large enough range of ways to disseminate research that I am left with a sense that it is a fairly complete though not overly detailed reference. The book is written in a very readable style and divided into short chapters that each addresses a well defined aspect of the publishing process. In the few months that I have had *The Academic's Guide to Publishing*, I have reached for it on several occasions, drawing on it as a reference when thinking about how best to disseminate my PhD findings as they emerge, preparing an article for submission to a journal and helping to plan a colloquium. In each of these cases, I have found it easy to quickly find and read the section of the book that relates to what I am doing and have found the insights offered to be a useful orientation. As a guidebook for the world of academic publishing, I have already found *The Academic's Guide to Publishing* to be helpful and expect to continue referring to it.

References

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