

A behind the scenes look at a grand backfile project

Brill gains visibility through IngentaConnect hosting

Timeline: 2008

Publisher: Brill

Location: Leiden, the Netherlands

Products: Backfile of 5,000 journals

Subjects: Academic

Status: Established publisher seeking to make their backfile available online



BRILL

For scholarly publishers of online content, the need for visibility, academic recognition and a following amidst a sea of competition is paramount.

For Leiden-based humanities and social sciences publisher Brill, these goals were of the utmost importance when planning their largest backfile project to date.

Founded in 1683, Brill is an international specialized market publisher with a rich history in delivering such influential works as Bayle's Dictionnaire historique et critique—coined by some “the arsenal of the enlightenment.” Brill's historic significance in publishing spans the enlightenment through today as it continues to deliver high quality, professionally relevant literature to libraries and academics. With such an expansive history of publishing, and approaching its 325th anniversary, Brill set its sights on bringing the past to the present—but how does a publisher deliver 60,000 buried journal articles dating back to 1850 to the modern researcher while benefiting from such a grand undertaking?

In a move designed to not only benefit the research community but to remain relevant, improve visibility, maintain quality, attract manuscripts and increase sales, Brill enlisted the help of Publishing Technology for their guidance, archiving abilities, expansive reach and online hosting.

Remaining Relevant

With its 325th anniversary drawing near, Brill evaluated its market, competitors and place in the online publishing spectrum, and as Sam Bruinsma, Director of Business Development & E-Publishing for Brill explains, “The big publishers had already digitized their backfiles and successfully sold subscriptions; we thought it was time for the smaller ‘guys’ to do the same.” Deciding that there was no better time than the present to offer its entire journal history online, Brill commissioned the help of a trusted service from its past, IngentaConnect, now part of the scholarly division of Publishing Technology Group following the merger between Ingenta and VISTA International in 2007. With a collaborative relationship spanning 9 years, the decision to commission Publishing Technology to archive and host Brill's expansive additions was the result of satisfaction in services and a history of Brill's material on IngentaConnect, Publishing Technology's website for scholarly research.



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Overcoming the Obstacles

This project, nearly 90% complete and consistently progressing, required an intense amount of dedication to overcome its obstacles. Working to contend with its self-imposed 325th anniversary deadline, the Brill team of only 4 people worked as hard as a staff four-times its size—with each staff member working a regular 9-5 day job in addition to his or her project responsibilities. When working with limited man-power it is important to get things right the first time, so in addition to archiving and hosting, Publishing Technology was readily available to advise. Sam Bruinsma recalls discussions with Louise Tutton, Senior Vice President of Publishing Technology's Scholarly Division, and Andrew Dobson, Senior Client Manager for IngentaConnect, concerning formats, supply materials and guidance on what to do with bounced material from the third-party digitizer.

Although Publishing Technology offers everything from digitizing to hosting, this project involved a third party digitizer, and thus, required all parties to work in connection and collaboration. What could have been seen as a challenge—orchestrating work between three parties—turned out to be “an exemplary effort of cooperation on behalf of all parties,” said Sam Bruinsma.

Putting Plans into Action

Motivated by the end result—5,000 journal issues spanning the 20th century made available to the academic community and a myriad of benefits to its brand and business—Brill asked Publishing Technology to add functionality, distribute data to the KB and also host its newly digitized collection of 60,000 articles on IngentaConnect.

The collection was and is currently being compiled into Brill's research database, adding an enormous value to its market share and subscription offering. According to Sam Bruinsma, *“For Brill's journal customers, it is like free access to the backfiles because the journal subscription price includes access to the journal's archive.”*

Brill is also gaining exposure to a larger and more diverse audience through IngentaConnect, as users are continuously funneled to its articles through their searches, subsequently increasing Brill's sales and earned royalties. With 90% of the backfiles already available, sales have grown 8-10% this year as Brill

has increased its traffic through IngentaConnect and been able to increase its fees for pay-per-view and subscription access.

The decision to bring such an expansive collection to the forefront of academic research through the services of Publishing Technology is certainly proving to be a fruitful one. As Sam Bruinsma explains, “30-40% of all hits on Brill articles are in the archive area which consists of materials from the 19th century up to 2000.”

To the Victor go the Spoils

For Brill, the backfile project with Publishing Technology is delivering many positive results to its business, brand and reputation. Sam Bruinsma, cites the project as an overall enhancement, stating “The backfile project ensures our position in the market and makes it stronger—the project makes Brill's journals visible, attracts authors, editors and editorial boards.” He continues, “As of yet Brill is receiving positive comments, a lot of interest, and the backfile project has earned Brill the attention of the academic community.”

Senior Client Manager of IngentaConnect, Andrew Dobson, recently reported that the academic community's reception of Brill's new archive has been so positive that JISC, Joint Information Systems Committee, has purchased the entire archive on behalf of the United Kingdom Higher Education community. Sam Bruinsma elaborates on the new deal, stating, *“It was an outright purchase—JISC bought the entire collection.”* And he speculates, *“A move like this is likely to inspire others to purchase our packages too.”* With such a positive reception from JISC and the academic community, Brill expects an increased manuscript flow due to greater visibility.

In general, Brill anticipates the dawning completion of its grand backfile project with Publishing Technology and expresses its satisfaction in working once again with a trusted partner. Sam Bruinsma comments;

“Publishing Technology added a quality aspect to the project and we couldn't have had such success without its guidance and services. We look forward to the many new benefits awaiting Brill as the result of this successful partnership.”