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## The Publishing Silver Lining Of COVID-19: New Opportunities for Institutional and Professional Relevance

There are many ways in which libraries, as vital centers of knowledge, can revitalize their academic role. Publishing is one of them. As James M. Donovan and I recently revealed in our forthcoming article in the *Journal of Law and Education*, ("Academic Law Libraries and Scholarship: Communication, Publishing, and Ranking"), law journal publishing by law school libraries is already on our radar. What is not yet on our radar is book publishing.

For instance, Columbia Law School Professor Katharina Pistor's book, *Law in the Time of COVID*, is a perfect example. Neither the content production nor the publication required any direct financial investment. All contributors were faculty members. The various copy editors were also Columbia Law School faculty.

Like all good stories, this amazing project has a long history. It started with strong faculty services and a time of crisis. Professor Pistor was the driving force behind this project, as she wanted the faculty to respond to everyone's needs in this time of crises. The book, "a long-form linear text narrative," as John Pavlik defines the scholarly genre in *Journalism and New Media*, thus needed to be published "as soon as possible."

The library involvement in the knowledge production phase commenced with the faculty member contacting the librarian, myself, about collaborating with her faculty assistant. Together we centralized the chapters co-authored by various faculty members in Google drive, and then formatted them and added bibliographical notes-the equivalent of "for future readings." The latter became appendices with vital information such as legal resources for medical labs in need of finding state loopholes to bypass FDA regulations and New York state pro se litigation resources.

When it became clear that the digital-born book could not be published through the ordinary channels because it would take too long, the publishing phase of the project started. The faculty

contacted me about investigating ways to have it self-published. Upon consulting the interim library director, the obvious choice was the CLS Faculty Scholarship Repository (CLSF SR) managed by Columbia Law School's Arthur W. Diamond Library.

While the chapters were still being received and organized in individual documents in Google drive, the CLSF SR coordinator, the second library employee involved, started working on creating the metadata, which incorporated keywords provided in the chapters' descriptions, the title of each chapter, and the authors names. Step by step, the publication process required accessing the library's Bepress/CLSF SR account, opening up the submission form, and entering the metadata. With the metadata in place at the end of the day on Friday, less than a month after the entire creative process started, the CLSF SR coordinator was able to meet the Monday deadline, although she received the digital-born book with only minutes to spare. She uploaded the PDF, submitted the Bepress publication form, and then waited for the site to be updated.

Thus, the ebook was library-published in less than 15 minutes upon delivery, and its cost was minimal: the majority of the participants were on the Columbia Law School payroll.

The digital-born book was downloaded 5,000 times in its first 40 hours. Upon having spent as much energy as my involvement with its production and publication, it is now indexed via [CLIO](#), the main [CU library catalog](#) .

In the new COVID-19 world, digital-born information, whether books or journal articles, published on university repositories bring new exciting options for institutional and professional relevance.

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