

## Digital Publishing in Humanities | FINAL AiDP Episode 2\_i used to love to dream

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Hello, everyone and welcome to the second episode of Adventures in Digital Publishing: Collaborations and Conversations. A web series exploring the creation of enhanced and interactive digital publications. My name is Allison Levy, I am digital scholarship editor at Brown University, and co-producer of the series with Sarah McKee who is senior associate director for publishing at Emory University.

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The series showcases and explores enhanced and interactive digital books, that have been published by or forthcoming from members of AUPresses often in collaboration with stakeholders at the author's home institutions. Each 75 minute episode highlights the workflows and collaborations behind the making of a digital book, or an interactive work, by bringing together members of one project team. Typically including the author, acquisitions editor and key development, production, and marketing professionals to share their stories and answer your questions.

Episodes are recorded and available on the series website, and you'll find the link to that website in the chat. We encourage you to visit and explore further. Today's episode features the team behind *i used to love to dream* a peer reviewed rap mixtape/essay by A.D. Carson, published on the Fulcrum Platform by the University of Michigan Press in July 2020 as part of the Tracking Pop series.

I'll be moderating today's episode with Walter Biggins, editor in chief at University of Pennsylvania Press. But before I turn things over to Walter, I'd like to call on the panelists to briefly introduce themselves beginning with the author A.D. Carson.

Peace everybody. My name is A.D. I'm assistant professor of hip hop in the Global South at the University of Virginia. And I wrote *used to love to dream* with well, lots of people, particularly, Vintage on the Beats-- Vintage Beats with Soul is what he goes by, Truth Marcus Fitzgerald and De'Andre Lawrence were the primary folks who made beats on the album.

Thanks A.D. and Loren.

Thanks I'm Loren Kajikawa I'm here because I'm one of the series co-editors for Tracking Pop at the University of Michigan Press, which is the series in which *i used to love to dream* appears. And I'm also an associate professor of musicology at the George Washington University. And currently just became program head of the music there. So it's nice to be here today, distraction from those duties.

Great. Sara.

I'm Sara Cohen, I'm an acquisitions editor at University of Michigan Press, and I worked with Loren and A.D. and all the folks at Michigan on this project.

Jillian.

Hi, I'm Jillian Downey. The director of the editorial, design, and production department at the University of Michigan Press. Good to be here.

Great. Theresa.

Hi, I'm Theresa Schmidt. I am the marketing manager at the University of Michigan Press, and worked on the publicity and marketing efforts for *i used to love to dream*.

Emma.

Hi, everyone. I'm Emma DiPasquale I'm the library relations manager on the marketing team at the University of Michigan Press. And I've had a few other roles there. So it was cool to be involved in this project in a few different ways.

Great. And Greg.

Oh Hi, Greg Kostin I'm from University of Michigan Library, applications development for the Fulcrum platform.

John.

Hi, Everyone. I'm John McGlone, I'm a front-end developer, and UI designer, and accessibility specialist at Michigan Publishing. I work on the Fulcrum Platform, and worked on this project.

And Timothy.

Hi, I'm Tim Belch, I'm an application developer, and a member of the University of Michigan Publishing Technology Group, and I assist-- I assisted in the production of the Fulcrum monograph.

Thank you all for being here. I'm going to send it back to Emma for an overview of Fulcrum and a brief demo of the project.

Great. Thanks Allison. And I am now going to share my screen, and I'm going to ask one of my co-panelists to just give me a thumbs up if we can see the Google Slides. Thank you. And can we still see them in presentation mode? Another thumbs up. Perfect.

So I just wanted to give kind of a quick overview of the Fulcrum platform. Luckily we have a few developers here, who can certainly answer some more technical questions later in the episode. But Fulcrum is a community-based open source digital publishing platform that helps publishers present the full richness of their author's research outputs. And we'll get to that a little bit more in a second.

This platform is developed and maintained by Michigan Publishing and the University of Michigan Library. We've received support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation since 2015. And Fulcrum was a project that emerged alongside other projects and platforms, that some of you may be familiar with Manifold, PubPub, Vega. And I've linked here to another article that kind of highlights some of those projects that emerged around the same time.

Fulcrum was essentially built to support enhanced e-books so very much a monograph focus with an additional focus on humanities and social science content.

The platform is built in the Samvera open source community framework. It essentially is a EPUB 3 and PDF web based e-reader that's been optimized for mobile devices. I'm going to do a demo of it in a second. The platform consists kind of an e-reader and then repository layers.

And to be clear this is not an authoring platform, so the content kind of comes to us ready to ingest. Jillian and the tech team will speak to this a bit more. So we kind of get that content when it's ready to go. And again our focus has been on enhanced e-books. So projects that have a lot of audio material, videos, interactive maps, 3D models.

We're trying to bring all of those really rich media elements that authors are collecting through throughout multiple points in their research. And kind of writing process, and integrate those within the narrative in what is-- and you'll see a pretty kind of standard monograph format in the platform.

We have thought a lot in the past few years about our values and very much try to kind of publish and develop with these in mind. Those are flexibility, durability, discoverability, and accessibility. So I think the accessibility component and the preservation component are very important when we're thinking about, OK, how do we support this project, how do we make sure that this lasts a very long time, and that folks can reach this long after we're gone right.

And quickly just to say the platform, we kind of have a few different partnership models, that is a hosted title. So if you kind of go online explore the website a bit more, you'll see some publishing partners and presses who have published kind of one project with us, that maybe had some elements that they needed the platform support for. You'll see a few hosted publishers, to Lever Press for example we host all of their content on the platform. And then you'll see a few hosted collections.

So for the University of Michigan Press, which is obviously what we're talking about today, that's an entire hosted collection on the platform, which I'm now going to do a quick demo of. And I just want to make sure another thumbs up, we can now see the Fulcrum platform with the University.

Great, OK, so this is the University of Michigan Press landing page. Folks once they hit this page can scroll through they'll be able to see everything that we currently have in the platform. This I've logged out of my account. So if your library is a purchaser, you'll see different kind of keys right here to see what you have access to.

But this title of course today is open access. So folks can filter open access content here, and scroll through that a bit later. But I am going to bring us right to *i used to love to dream* which folks can access from this search bar at the top here.

So this is what we call kind of a monograph landing page. This is the landing page where *i used to love to dream* obviously. So this is the table of contents, folks can click any-- can track here. And it will jump to that specific track in the e-reader which I will show you in a minute. Up here you'll find kind of the description, some different metrics, different metadata. You have the option to read the book or to go into the e-reader to download this particular work.

And if you click into the Resources tab here, this is something that, again, is kind of hosted on our own University of Michigan Library infrastructure. So all of these different elements are preserved. This is essentially kind of outlining what we'll see in the e-reader in a moment. But we have different kind of films, audio, clips.

And if you were to click into any one of these you would be able to access the track, take a look at the transcript, you have the option to share this out via different social media platforms. And then there's additional metadata for folks who need that information. As well as stable, citable, DOI links for both the individual media components as well as the entire work. And you'll see that when we click back here to this DOI link.

So going into the actual e-reader, when you open this tab again web-based e-reader, folks can explore the work via the table of contents. On the left hand side, you're able to toggle that on and off.

If you click the Resources tab that will bring you right back to that kind of individual list of resources you can search different keywords in the text, grab a citation. Again share this out via social media, download this work, or turn on hypothesis, which is an annotation tool. So you can toggle that on and off you can create an account log in, create public annotations, which has been really useful tool for classroom use, or more private annotations just for yourself to consult.

We have some setting options over here, and then folks are able to kind of scroll through down this bar at the bottom. But you'll see how this can fit, a traditional monograph and that you'll be paging through, you might see some elements interwoven in there, whether it's a photo, or an audio clip.

So for this work in particular, what was great was that we were able to use this kind of same application as we had it developed, and really just take advantage of some of those tools and integrations we had already built. So you'll see here this is an audio, one of the tracks of the album, the transcript is here. As you're playing that if I play it I know folks won't really be able to hear it. But we were also able to use this kind of page feature to also include the lyrics right here.

If folks were to click on this Fulcrum logo. This will take you out to that individual track where again you can kind of explore that in more detail. So what's really nice about being able to use this is, this works in the structure we've already built to be able to preserve that content, we've done a lot of work as John might speak to a little bit later and Jillian about accessibility.

So I know that John spent a lot of time making sure that these tools are-- we can slow the speed down, we can adjust the settings so that's accessible for all different types of users.

So I think hopefully that's a helpful overview. Again, we're happy to kind of dig into this more later, but I think I'm going to stop my screen share and hand it back over to Allison so we can dive into some more of the conversation.

Fantastic. Thanks Emma, that was really useful. I know you all are eager to hear from the team. Walter is going to get things going. We encourage you all to also add your own questions in the chat, either the chat or the Q&A feature. I'll be monitoring those. And Walter's going to engage this great team.

All right, thanks. Again thanks so much for having me be a part of this in any small capacity. And thank you for all the people who are involved in *i used to love to dream*. It's a fantastic project, it is-- I think in many ways a revolutionary project there's not been a lot of hip hop scholarship done in the form of an album. I can think of Cornel West, *Sketches Of My Culture*. This is A.D. I can say this, a dramatic improvement over that, it's stylistically and informally in a lot of ways.

So let's get to it. We heard a lot about, we've seen a lot of the functionality and the visibility of the project, and all the things it can do. Can you and Loren talk us through-- can you tell us a little bit about the early conversations about this album as a publication? How did it begin? What's the genesis of this look like?

All right, I guess A.D. and I agree that I was going to take the lead on this. Thanks Walter. So just by way of introduction, additional introduction. I'm a popular music scholar, right. I'm a musicologist who writes about American popular music, with special attention to race, politics. And I'm also a hip-hop scholar a lot of my research and teaching revolves around hip hop music. I have a book *Sounding Race and Rap Songs*, that came out in 2015.

And so when I saw on social media. I think it was back in 2017, that someone at Clemson University had published-- had gotten their PhD in rhetoric by doing a hip hop album as a dissertation right. And that was of course A.D. Carson, I was instantly attracted, or interested in who is this guy what is this project.

And I think that album or the dissertation was available on Bandcamp. And I think I bought it off a Bandcamp, as soon as I heard about it and started listening and I have to say with some trepidation. I was like, what if it's wack? You know like, I like the idea but just what if it-- what if it doesn't-- what if I just don't like it? But you know fortunately, it wasn't I was immediately-- like, it was from the opening bars, it was like OK this-- you know, he has the skills the sounds like the quality is there.

And as music as a music fan and listener I was immediately compelled. And the more and more I listened I kind of became a fan of A.D.'s work, and got more familiar with it. And then I learned soon after that, he was hired as an assistant professor at the University of Virginia. And not just hired as an assistant professor but hired by a music department right.

Music departments have historically been very centered on Western classical music. And it's becoming increasingly accepted and legitimate for musicologists, or music theorists like, academics, research and write about music to study hip-hop kind of from a distance.

But the idea that hip hop would be valued and incorporated as music, as performance, and that an artist, a composer, a scholar of hip hop, who practices hip hop would be hired as a music professor was new, and so that also caught my attention.

And so I think I visited UVA in 2018, or 2018 to give a talk. And so I just reached out to A.D. I just sent him an email, I said, I'm coming to Charlottesville, do you want to have lunch, and talk? And so we got together and just started talking. And met that way because I was just really interested in his work and wanted to get to know him.

And from there, I think as we got to get to know and get to know one another a little bit, he started sharing some of his work with me, things he was working on I heard early versions of *Sleepwalking*. I think *Sleepwalking 2* might have been out by then, but or it was maybe it was an early version of that. And then certainly an earlier version of *i used to love to dream*. I started corresponding with him just sharing my thoughts and reactions, asking him about how things were going.

And so one of the things that I instantly was concerned of because I was supportive of what he was doing. I thought it was innovative and really important to our field. I got concerned about, well, what's going to-- how are you going to demonstrate-- it's great to get hired, how do you keep the job.

And so we started having conversations about what form his published scholarship was going to take. And I think I put him in touch with Mary Frances, who had Sara Cohen's job prior and until she became your colleague Walter at U Penn. And so A.D. and Mary Frances had early conversations about the possibility of how his work could fit with an academic publication. And then I think Sara came into the picture when Mary Frances left.

And I think in part because I felt like I understood what A.D. was trying to do and wanted to support it, those conversations went forward. And I mean, I can talk a little bit more later I think about why I think this work is important, how I think it fits into an academic context. But that's the essential back story. And then I can't remember whether it was Sara or Mary Frances who first told us about the Fulcrum platform.

But I think once we learned about Fulcrum at least from my-- the way I remember it, that's when this really started to come into focus and like, Oh, this could be possible, there really is a platform here where an album could live as a form of scholarship online.

Sorry, that's how I remember I'm really interested to hear what A.D. remembers of the origins, and how we met. Maybe I'm just making this up.

Yeah, no I think that that's pretty accurate. Thank you, Loren and thank you Walter and everyone who's worked on putting this event together.

So in-- from 2017. Yeah, well, 2017 was kind of wild and all over the place. And I guess if you go to the website for the, my dissertation, which is [phd.aydeethegreat.com](http://phd.aydeethegreat.com). And the reason that I mentioned that is because all the stuff that I want to have collected with the album, there was no platform online to hold all of that.

And so I had to I had to make that. And I don't code, I was not interested in that. I was not interested in digital scholarship or whatever folks were calling that. I was really interested in rap music, and that's it. Whatever way that it would get done.

And so when I finished and I came to UVA, along with the attention that came from the dissertation project, there were people who were saying well, here are opportunities to publish whatever you want. But almost every one of those opportunities came with some instruction that made it seem more like those folks wanted me to publish what they wanted. And they weren't really as interested in the thing that I was trying to do.

And so I found myself in lots of conversations where it seemed really promising. Until we got to the moment where we were going to do the thing. Yeah, that we were going to do the thing. And then there was sort of this switch, where someone's like well, but don't you think that it would be cool if you did this instead, or if you did this instead, or if you did this instead. And I'm like those things sound cool but those aren't the project that I'm thinking about.

And so almost immediately I finished in May of 2017, in September I released *Sleepwalking 1*. And all of these are related to the ways that I was thinking, I mean the term is borrowed from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* from the prologue.

And so I imagine the place like the Rap Lab is being like this underground space this like powered by Monopolated Light & Power you know also known as UVA. And that we were powering 1,369 light bulbs inside of this room. And we literally had the capability to play you know like on five different, on five different machines, *What Did I Do To Be So Black And Blue*. If we chose to play something like that, we might remix any number of other things.

So when volume one came out. I didn't know what to do with it except for move forward, and that meant just putting it on YouTube. And when I was at Clemson I would use that DatPiff, and that didn't seem to be the place anymore to put music for people to be able to engage with it.

But I did put it on other streaming platforms but I needed to needed it to have a home where it would be kind of stable. So then when I started working on *Sleepwalking 2*, I was still having conversations with folks.

But I just recall one group of people that asked about my work, and they were looking forward to publishing the next project, and I sent them *Sleepwalking 2*. And we had a conversation much like this. And I think they heard the content, and then I just didn't hear from them anymore. And there was not any callback.

And eventually I did after the project was out for almost about nine months, someone got back with me and they apologized for falling off but I think that they just said that they didn't know what to do with it, and so it just kind of stalled out. Well, at that time I just put that up on Bandcamp as well. And then I thought, well, maybe I'm just going to have to continue putting these things on Bandcamp, and people are going to-- And then I'm going to have to make the case that it being on Bandcamp is the only logical place for it to be.

And so shout out to Mary Frances because this introduction that that Loren made. We just immediately started talking about what it could be. And there wasn't really a question about what it should be, or like the other thing that I might do instead. It was really about the project that you might want to do. We might have the ability to publish it, in a way that's similar to what you're trying to do.

And so Fulcrum has come closest to doing what I wanted to do on my dissertation site. Yeah, it's come closest than the closer than anything that I've seen to doing that. And so we still-- I mean I still use Bandcamp to have the functionality to sort of for the playlist function of it, so they don't play all the way through and that maybe you could loop it.

But yeah that was the beginning. And so Loren introduced Mary Frances myself, and I felt really heard in that conversation. And that made me feel less trepidation about moving forward with the project. And then I just thought well, we can do this album and again if this wack if this awful we'll never speak of it again. And if it works out then it'll be a cool thing because we will have created a space to be able to do this kind of work.

And so I guess that's my basic overview of the beginnings of our conversation. But a lot of that do-- and I really appreciate Loren, not just reaching out but having the conversation about what the work might look like because for two solid years I kind of just didn't know what the next thing was going to be.

And didn't realize that we would be sort of like making the next thing in a way that sort of moving forward through like, you know territory that had not yet been traversed. So it's been worthwhile. I think it came out all right.

Wonderful. Thank you both for giving that kind of overview. I had a couple kind of follow up questions. I do want to sort of branch this out to everyone involved at Michigan with regard to this. And so I wanted to know, A.D.. one of the things that's really fascinating about this project, and this happens with hip hop projects a lot is that you created your own archive kind of out of necessity. Because there wasn't a mode or model for that.

So I wanted to branch that out to Michigan I'm going to start by asking Sara Cohen to talk about this a little bit. About the process of, I mean obviously, this is not a conventional university press publication. Obviously, the way in which it comes together it has a lot of moving parts does not function in the same way that the monograph or an edited collection works right.

So what I guess my question to start with Sara, and I want to also ask marketing, I want to also ask people from EDP is, what were some of the unique opportunities? One and challenges, two that you saw in publishing the hip hop album.

And also a hip hop album that had these archives in different places in Bandcamp it has a video, it has all these different kinds of resources. It spreads out pretty far, the web spreads out in a lot of interesting directions. How did you-- what were some of those challenges and opportunities? And how did you go about thinking this through?

And I'll jump in because you said you were going to ask me first.

Yeah.

Yeah it's hard-- it's hard to say whether I want to talk about the challenges or the opportunities first like, but I think maybe to start with the opportunities. And to talk about the archive that you're mentioning Walter. I think the big opportunity was that Fulcrum was a really good--

And I sound like I'm getting paid to say this right, but Fulcrum was a really good platform for presenting this archive right. Because Fulcrum is a platform that is designed to make book like things out of things that might not be read as books otherwise.

And so with the exception of not being able to have a playlist which A.D. mentioned. We were able to host the tracks, some supporting writing that A.D. had done, the awesome short documentary that A.D. made which has fun discussion questions in it, and kind of lets you into the making of the album. We were able to have liner notes, where you could jump from the top of the liner notes to each track. And so I think Fulcrum was really a great platform for the project.

And I think that Mary Frances, who's in the room and can correct me if I say anything incorrect about the work that she did. But I think Mary Frances saw that. And I'm grateful to her for recognizing that, and she was able to really kind of say to A.D. well, this is what we can do. And you should work with us because of it.

And one of the other advantages of being able to present the work in Fulcrum is making something that might not otherwise be intelligible as scholarship intelligible as scholarship. And that's something that Loren talked about earlier, was OK, great A.D. you're making these albums, how do we make them intelligible to tenure and promotion committees.

And by publishing it as a book like thing, by publishing the project as a book like thing in Fulcrum and by getting it peer reviewed. I think that some of that work makes it more intelligible. And then also being able to track the citations, having the Altmetrics which maybe Theresa will talk a little bit more when she gets into the marketing.

So for me I saw this as a great opportunity to really showcase what we could do in Fulcrum. And make the project intelligible as scholarship in a way that it might not be otherwise.

And then the last sort of opportunity is because of Fulcrum we're able to preserve the work in the long term right. So on a commercial platform like Bandcamp that could disappear at any time. And by putting this up in Fulcrum, which is something that Emma talked about we're able to preserve the project on the U of M servers in the long term. And so it's not going to go anywhere.

The challenge I think. The first challenge was inheriting this from somebody, right. So to take over from like a legendary editor like Mary Frances. And have her say, Oh yeah and also here's what we're going to do this hip hop album, figure out how to peer review it, and publish it, and it's like ha! So that was a little overwhelming to me especially somebody who knows nothing about hip hop.

But when I realized that I work on a lot of books that I don't really know anything about, I was able to kind of get past that. And say, OK the things that I do know how to do are peer review things, make things look like books, make things intelligible as arguments. And I think I was able to pick up where Mary left off and do those things.

And speaking of peer review that was certainly a challenge right, how do you get an album peer reviewed? And I was grateful for the opportunity to think with Loren and A.D. about how to do that to formulate some questions that I think worked really well for us. Also a challenge I was worried about getting it past our faculty executive committee, which I can talk more about later.

And those were kind of the big things, I think there were some marketing challenges as well because-- which Theresa can talk more about because we don't publish music right, we publish books. And so we know how to reach book people but not music people. So I think Theresa and A.D. talk more about that later, but I hope that kind of gets it, the question you're asking Walter.

No that's great and actually it's a really good segue to asking Theresa essentially the same kinds of things, you know like as you were thinking about marketing a project that doesn't have necessarily a physical presence, how did you go about thinking about that? How were you measuring success? What were some of the challenges that were maybe unique to an open access digital born project?

Yeah, happy to talk a bit about that so just a bit of fuller background about how I became introduced to this project. I started at the University of Michigan Press, in the middle of June 2020. And I went back to my notes and saw that literally my second day here I was in a meeting with A.D. and Sara. And I have an email to my supervisor at the time saying, what is this project?

And so what a great introduction to the work that University of Michigan Press does, which I think is-- I really embrace that we are willing to explore these kinds of questions for the academic publishing industry.

So some of the opportunities for us were just being able to work with something that's able to cross outside of the academic sphere. Really explore with something that's also really needs to be presented to the publishing industry as well as like hey this sort of publication and scholarship is possible.



And then there were definitely some challenges with that, one of the things that we really grappled with on our team was how to describe this project marketing is all about the story, presenting it properly.

So I remember that being something that went through a lot of discussion. And then trying to address the broad audiences that we were hoping to get, we wanted academic reviews, legitimizing you know that this is something that you can review just like any other book that might come out. And then as well as getting into the more mainstream media.

And definitely balancing this distinction between it seems like in a lot of ways an album, but we weren't able to we aren't a music publisher. So figuring out how to address those audiences with something that's an album and not an album in some ways.

And that was just I think you had tied in a bit of a question about metrics Walter, that seems like a lot to answer in one go. But just briefly, we've really been able to use Altmetrics.

Which Sara I think had name dropped earlier, which for us is a really great platform that is able to crawl the internet based on references to the DOI link for the project, or our press web, our University of Michigan Press URL, and find social media mentions, citations and different scholarly works. Citations and news articles, blog posts videos even.

So that was really a great tool for us to see that while we were-- I think that I would be happy to talk about this more but definitely from a policy side of the project. I think we saw things coming in a bit slower than we would have initially wanted.

But the feedback we were getting from Altmetrics about socially the conversations that were happening around this. We saw just incredible numbers of people sharing that sharing this project that we hadn't really seen in other scholarly publications. So that was a really great feedback mechanism from us that like, this is we need to keep going, this has-- is getting like, engagement in the community just like, we need to keep pushing the more traditional publicity outlets along.

And so that was a really great reporting tool for us in coordination with the more traditional things like Google Analytics, and things like counter reports with the libraries and all of that.

Wonderful. Thank you. And Jillian don't think that I was going to neglect you here because I did want to ask about how this kind of a project worked from a production standpoint, from an EDP standpoint were there-- and working with a partner such as Fulcrum right. Which you don't necessarily always do.

So I wondered if you could talk about some of the challenges in particular, but also what you saw is really a great opportunity about working on *i used to love to dream* in this way?

Sure Yeah, like the EDP we-- all of our projects go on Fulcrum. But this one was a little bit different for sure. And almost all our projects go on Fulcrum. So acquisitions pulled together all the pieces and the technology group did the lion's share of getting those pieces on Fulcrum.

But in between was EDP and we did do some steps to move the project along. For copy editing, a small amount of material introduction. But the most interesting part that I hadn't had to do before was working with a vendor to create the EPUB. I mean we need an EPUB to put the project on Fulcrum.

So sort of deconstructing this very nicely designed liner notes PDF, that had already been created. I sort of needed to deconstruct that for the vendor and say, how to turn this liner notes into an EPUB, what goes where? The front matter, or the back matter, the content. So that was new, that was interesting. They already-- the vendor already had all of our Fulcrum specifications. They knew how to make an EPUB they just never had to do one quite like this.

So that was fun. I mean I asked them to match the look and feel as best they could. One challenge with this one that I hadn't had before was, I had asked them to match the liner notes as much as possible. But after they sent the initial EPUB, I realized I had not been specific enough because they have a lot of tools where they autocorrect content, and they had autocorrected a lot of capitalization, and spelling that they were not supposed to autocorrect.

I think Sara was the one who alerted me to this. It even went by me. So oops, so then I went back to the vendor right away. And they-- I was really specific about all the line breaks had to match, the capitalization all that. So they were fine they turned it around really fast. And provided the EPUB back to me.

And yeah one tiny little thing also EDP does we work with our library who creates MARC records for us, for all of our projects that go on Fulcrum. And they were great about providing a MARC record really, really quickly for this project. Because we like to-- we work with them to create the MARC so they can put in a lot of useful information for libraries. So they did that as well.

And that was really the main role of EDP in this project, and then technology group which John and others can talk about took it from there.

Wonderful. Thank you. And we are going to get the Fulcrum folk involved in this conversation. And I think while I think this is a good segue I do have a follow up question for Sara and Loren, which was about the process, you both kind of alluded to it, about the process of getting this approved. Either by a series editorial board, and in Sara's case by a faculty editorial board.

But can each of you talk about, whether that presented a challenge presenting it to Tracking Pop, and whether that presented the challenge to the editorial board? So Loren if you would start.

Great. Yes absolutely. Great question, and there's two parts to this. There's the editorial board at University of Michigan Press, but also I also have co-editors. So there's within the series of Tracking Pop, there needed to be an understanding that this was a project that was good for the series. And I wasn't the only one that thought that was the case.

And so I want to definitely acknowledge the other co-editors of Tracking Pop John Covach, Jocelyn Neal and Robert Fink. We've been having a lot of conversations about the series and the future of the series. And I think a part of that conversation has been the role that Tracking Pop can play in helping to define new directions for what music scholarship can be.

There are a lot of robust conversations in the field, in all fields right now, about the future of scholarship. And we want the series to serve as an outlet for that. Historically Tracking Pop has been home to book projects, in popular music studies where authors are really encouraged, and can feel safe about digging into musical detail, and analyzing the music and talking about the role of sound and shaping musical meaning.

In short it's really been a place where musicologist and music theorists, analyze and write about musical detail. And in that way, even though *i used to love to dream*. It's non-conventional, as an academic publication I felt, and I think my co-series, my series co-editors agreed that it was a good fit for Tracking Pop because we're a series that takes music seriously. We're a series that takes the art of musical production seriously. And that's exactly what A.D. is about.

And the other level about sort of made justifying this to the editor-- the larger editorial board at University of Michigan Press and thinking about that question I went back and looked at my letter of endorsement. And so I'm just I actually want to quote from that.

I think and these are things that if you look up A.D.'s original dissertation *Owning My Masters*, which was his PhD dissertation at Clemson. He says something very similar in that dissertation, which I actually didn't know, and read that like, the abstract for the dissertation and I was looking at that Oh this is almost exactly a paraphrase of what I said in my endorsement letter, which was that.

"Academic studies of hip hop while pushing traditional academic boundaries in some respects often reproduced conventional assumptions about knowledge production that render black culture in need of domestication.

A.D. Carson's work represents an important intervention into business as usual by considering many of the same themes found in conventional scholarship but enacting them through the musical practice of hip hop itself.

By rejecting the proposition that hip hop music requires translation to make it suitable for an academic context, Carson offers us a new paradigm for scholarly work, in which musical Blackness is not reduced to metaphor but remains a salient part of the intellectual and artistic encounter."

So that was part of the argument that I made to the editorial board. I also in my endorsement letter talked about how I was using A.D.'s work in the classroom already. And how suitable it was in pedagogy, and getting my students to think about important ideas through music.

And I also mentioned I think how A.D. was already working to leverage these non-academic platforms like Bandcamp in ways that really were already creatively blurring the line between public and academic scholarship, which is another I think hot topic in academic publishing today. So those are the main arguments that I felt like I was trying to contribute and make to the Press.

Wonderful. Thank you, and Sara, if you could just follow up about how that process worked on your end, for Michigan's editorial board. And I did want to fold in a question that may be for A.D. after which is if that editorial board, for instance requested revision, how did that process work?

Mm-hmm! Sure so I can just sort of build off of what Loren said. I think that in terms of getting this past our faculty executive committee at Michigan, I think Loren's letter was really important.

He made a really strong case that, this is scholarship, this is important scholarship, this is what we should be publishing. And the faculty executive committee bought that right. They saw the peer reviews and Loren's endorsement and A.D.'s response to the peer review, in addition to looking at the project.

I was-- I was a little bit nervous presenting it to the executive committee because I wasn't sure-- the thing I was most worried about was that they were going to say something like, why are we doing this? How is the scholarship? And I think Loren's letter helped us get around that.

And the thing that was surprising about the conversation that I had with the executive committee was that that's not where they went at all. What they wanted to talk about, and A.D. probably remembers this. I was just going back through my correspondence with him after that meeting, is there aren't enough women in this project.

And so and I was not really prepared for that that conversation with them, so it was surprising. And we ended up having a really robust conversation in the meeting, you know because everybody said, "Yeah, we love this project, we love the form, we love how it's pushing the boundaries of publishing. Great way to showcase Fulcrum."

It was really helpful to have our press director, Charles Watkinson's support. He's been part of this project from the very beginning, there was-- he never raised any questions about it. He was always said, "Oh yeah, of course we would do this, why wouldn't we do this." So I mean Charles there was helpful too.

So yeah, I mean it was the surprise from that conversation was just that they want to talk about women. And there were some interesting comments that people had about it. One board member said, "well, you know this is a performance, and we don't ask performers to perform from a position that they don't actually occupy, so I don't think that's important."

Another board member said, "you know, it's actually kind of nice that there are no women because sometimes in hip-hop we get representations of women that are deeply problematic. And that's not here at all."

And then actually when I went back to A.D., with these comments, he said, "no there are women on here." There's samples from women, there is "Just in Case," which is a letter to his mother, which was originally called, "To My Mother" and so speaking to her. And he didn't say this in that correspondence, but I've heard him and other panels that we've been on together, say that he cites his grandma on this you know, she's part of one of the tracks.

And so women are present in a different way than our board is used to asking our authors to account for them. And so no A.D. didn't end up making any revisions in response to that because the thing that they wanted was already there.

And so that suggests to me that maybe one of the bigger issues with the project was that, the faculty executive committee didn't have the they-- didn't know how to read it you know. And I think that Loren's letter helped them understand that. And I tried to help them understand it as well. And I think in the end it was a very smooth process, much smoother than what I feared it would be.

Wonderful. Thank you. A.D. I have just a quick question for you, that I hope will sort of dovetail into metadata concerns actually. How did you choose the particular Creative Commons license that you chose for the project? Because it's pretty unrestricted in a lot of ways, and that affects, how Jillian's work gets done for instance, how Fulcrum sort of treats the project in terms of how it can be downloaded, and how it can be shared, these kinds of things.

And so I was just curious about the sort of thinking. Because there's four sort of different licenses and they've become progressively less restrictive, if I'm contradicting myself with language, but I think that makes sense. So I was just curious about your thinking.

Yeah, thank you for that question. I think that in a perfect world, it would be like even less restrictive. That at some point I want to like maybe make available all of the instrumentals and all of like, all of the vocals, and then people might be able to take those pieces and then make other things with them.

And that's also the way that I'm looking at all of the things that I might be thinking with, or thinking through. So there are lots of films that come into the, there are lots of films that come into the production, there are lots of books.

Like I know like even there's a project right now, that I'm working on where I've gone through a film and just taken all of the instances where it seems as if the sound designer is really concerned with people's breath. And because he's recorded them breathing, I've taken that breathing and then used it for this new project that's all about breath.

And I mean, I think that we do it in-- I mean whenever I'm reading anything, I'm always thinking, what can this thing be? Or what is this teaching me? Or what can I make it into? I think is the question that I'm asking. And perhaps when we're composing more traditional prose, we take a post-it note or a highlighter and then like we pull that and then we put it somewhere and we know how to cite it. And I know that that same thing happens with music.

And lots of times folks just leave music alone because what we don't know, what we don't want to get into that the murkiness that is dealing with the, I guess like the copyright. And so I don't want someone to feel-- I don't want anybody to feel intimidated by what might happen if they want to use what I've created to make something else. Or if they want to incorporate it.

And people are pretty good. I mean I get requests for permissions all the time. And I'm like you don't really need to ask, but thank you so much for being considerate in that way to ask me. But I would prefer that more music existed that way. And I understand why it doesn't that's another conversation for another time.

But for me I also want it to be accessible to folks who are like I was when I was in middle school and high school. Who want it to be able to-- like who felt ownership over the kinds of stuff that I listen to.

And so like I wanted to remix somebody's raps or remix somebody's poems. And I realize now as an adult that you can't really get away with doing that. I didn't realize that then and I'm so glad I didn't realize it. Because it might have stopped me from doing a lot of the writing that I did at that point in my life.

Wonderful. Great and that kind of reminds me you know, George Clinton, the great George Clinton of P-Funk fame. Did a similar sort of thing in the 90s at the sort of nations of the internet, where he offered up various musical cues as samples that he wanted people to just use.

And so it didn't last long and I can't remember why. But it reminded me of that, but this conversation about pieces and sort of breaking down a thing into component pieces that can be remixed and reused that got me thinking about Fulcrum and your involvement in this.

So one of the things that you had to do was to make sure that the pieces of this album were ADA compliant for instance. And what sort of steps did you take to do that?

And what were some of the challenges that came with working with a project that had so many different kinds of moving pieces? From music cues from lyrics to video, that can be sort of repurposed in a few different formats, whether it's EPUB files or online. I'd be curious just to hear from anyone at Fulcrum really about that process. So Greg, John or Tim, you can either raise your hand, or just sort of start checking in. I see John.

Yeah, I can dive in a little bit on this. Yeah, so it was perhaps slightly, there was slightly a little bit more of a challenge, the project most of it is all time-based media. So we needed to in order to be compliant with Accessibility Guidelines and requirements we needed captions.

So there's a video, so we needed captions for the video, we needed a visual description of what's happening in the video. So that would be accessible for people who have vision impairments.

And then for all of the tracks, we needed time coded transcripts. So that you could, I don't know if it was Emma sort of gave a demonstration. But the audio player will follow along with each-- as the track plays highlighting the words, and you can jump to different sections of the track in the transcript as well.

But the-- so that was a challenge just to get that done and get it done on time. And I think it ended up being done by a vendor. And of course, the vendor work is never perfect, and so it had to be reviewed and modified a little bit. But in the end, it turned out quite well.

Some of the things that weren't challenging about it, and that Tim and Greg probably appreciate is that Fulcrum was mostly set up already to sort of handle this kind of project.

We had a video and audio player already in place, which is Able Player which has lots of accessibility features already built into it. That's an open source player that we use on Fulcrum because of those features. And then also we have the ability to-- the Able player. Sorry I just lost my train of thought. I saw Sara raising her hand so maybe she can jump in.

I wasn't going to talk about the Able Player. So if you think about what you were going to say just jump back in. But I was just going to say a few words about working with the vendor on the VTT captions, which was super interesting because kind of like what Jillian was saying with the EPUB. All of A.D.'s liner notes are written in lowercase. And so when the transcripts came through of the tracks. They had been like auto uppercased.

And so one of the corrections I had to make was go through and make everything lowercase, and my spouse was like, "what are you doing?" I said, "Oh, I'm making all these caps lowercase." He said, "Oh, I'm going to write you a computer script to do that for you. Because that's not a person job that's a computer job." So that was a great thing, and I felt lucky to have someone in my house who could help with that.

And then also there were several moments in the video that the transcript came through as like indecipherable. And I thought it was really important to try to get all of the words. And so I listened really closely. And then I emailed A.D. and was like, "I think your mom said this, can you just confirm? And so we did some of that.

And the other thing I wanted to add that felt important that didn't come through in the captions was, about like which-- I thought it was important to have which down, which speakers were Black, and which were white, and which are biracial because that seems like an important part of this project to me.

And so I've emailed with A.D. a little bit about how people identified. So that we could make sure that went into the captions. Because I didn't want somebody who couldn't see to be thinking it was all a bunch of white people talking. I wanted them to get a feel for the diversity of the project.

And so the other part, just to jump back in was that Fulcrum-- We already had a way to we had embedded media in EPUBs before. And so this was a nice project that it didn't break Fulcrum, or require new development in any way. It was a sort of model that we had used with other publications.

And I think the sort of liner note translation into a book worked, it worked really it worked perfectly for this project. And it's really cool to be able to see the audio track embedded in the liner note. And to be able to play and sort of experience it and move around and search it. And do all the things you would do with a typical book, with the bonus of some great music.

Wonderful. Thank you so much. I'm going to go in, there is it looks like a question in the chat box, about honest and scholarly standards. In the-- I guess the issue that is coming up in my mind is, how were you able to make sure that the sort of metadata throughout the production process.

So I guess this is really for you Jillian in some ways. But how were you able to-- how difficult was it to make sure that sort of metadata went through cleanly? And clearly, and how did that happen how has that affected the sort of discoverability of the project that you're on? So this is actually sort of a question for a bunch of different people. But I'm going to start a little bit with Jillian.

Sure yeah, I'll start it off. Yeah, others can jump in I mean, as far as I'm aware, we work pretty hard to put in as much metadata as we can into the systems that we have, that then automatically get sent out hither and yon.

And as far as I know, from my part of it, it wasn't different, it was just making sure all the fields are filled in, all the fields are filled in correctly. Part of the metadata that goes out to all our partners is a pretty detailed description of what the project is.

But if Theresa or John or others are aware of anything different that we happen to do I'd be interested to know as well.

Going once. Going twice.

In terms of any metadata that was stored in the EPUB. There wasn't anything different that we did, then we would have typically done for an EPUB in this case.

OK, great. I want to, I do want to discuss more granularly, some of the marketing expectations. And so these are sort of this is a question for Theresa in some ways. It's also a question for Emma in some ways you know.

But I want to start with just sort of audience, what audiences were the press hoping to reach? And were any of those audiences new or different from-- audiences with which you are more usually accustomed, and how they do accommodate those expectations?

So I like mentioned a bit when I spoke earlier, we did see that this has, this is a project with multiple audiences, there's the academic, disciplinary related audiences, versus a more mainstream music, cultural kind of interest there.

And then we were also kind of focused on, publicizing this project within the academic publishing community. So that was quite a few different ways which we have for other projects of the press we've had experience with having to go outside of academia as well. And kind of in terms of the execution of that from my end, Emma might be able to talk a bit about maybe how this was presented to libraries.

But I know that A.D. and I collaborated a lot on. We had a pretty thorough promotion plan, detailed a bunch of outlets that reached a broad spectrum, we had local versus national music, to higher ed, in addition to our academic outreach. And it was really a collaboration with A.D. to get this outreach put out there.

And he had to do of course a ton of follow up on his own with being available for interviews, and writing, op-eds and all of that. And he was also able to make some good use of contacts that he had. So I think that hopefully answers it on my end. Emma, I don't know if you had anything to say about libraries.

Yeah. I think what's a little bit different in the work that I do working more specifically with libraries, is that I will talk a lot about the work on the platform. And why that is substantial and different from how you might access other works elsewhere.

So this content on Fulcrum is the best possible version right. You have an annotation tool. So I think walking folks through how you can take advantage of all of those tools. Also explaining, folks are very familiar with this but talking through, why it's important that this is a way, why this is supporting infrastructure?

It's a slightly different conversation. But folks are certainly excited especially those schools who are really trying to grow their kind of music content, and things like that. So definitely trying to think of those folks, but also just marketing to all the potential libraries we're trying to talk to at any given point.

So I know we have a lot of other questions. So I'll stop but yeah, it's definitely helping us to think about a way projects going forward also.

And A.D. just wondered, if you could quickly address one particular aspect of marketing, that would have been a challenge I imagine, is that this was produced during a pandemic. So this was produced during a period in which you couldn't say do live performance of this work, or things like that. Were there any aspects of how you were thought about marketing and promoting the book that changed directly as a result of that?

Yes, all of it actually. So I believe that if the world was open then the way that-- I mean, I should say that probably before the album came out I was able to perform one track at a show in California. But like that, and that was before everything shut down.

And so then, as a year and a half or something like that. And the last time I was able to go back to Illinois and perform at this music festival just about a month ago. And that was my first time on stage, in a really, really long time.

And at that point then it's like, well, do I go with this new stuff that I've never performed for people before, or do I go with old stuff that people might be a little more familiar with, or if not familiar with, I'm just more comfortable doing. Because I have not had any, no test case for audience engagement with this project.

So while it feels like it's out, it still feels to me in that way that it hasn't launched. And that's just because I haven't had the opportunities to perform it in front of folks, which is a very-- it's a weird feeling to have about a project that has been in the world for a little while.

OK great.

Might be a good time to just come back to the question of revision. Because I just don't want that question to get lost there in the mix. Loren, I think you wanted to say a bit more about that, and linking it to the peer review for this project.

I did, thanks for spotlighting that. So yeah, I think because this is often described as the first peer reviewed hip hop album. I think sometimes there's some assumptions that are made about what that means.

And I think conventionally in a lot of academic publishing, we think about peer review, as you know reviewer one says this, reviewer two says this, and it's the author's job to respond, and then revise right to change their work, in response to criticism, almost like a kind of quality control.

And I have to say-- if I can like sort of clear the air on this, I think it's important, I think one thing that's often misunderstood about this particular project, and to me it was important to me, and I assume A.D. was that this wasn't about, peer review wasn't about quality control.

There was a certain amount of trust that this-- he's an artist, that his work, you know has a certain, he's holding himself and peers that he's collaborating with and working with are already holding themselves to a professional standard, in the work that they're doing.



In the same way that in a music department. I have colleagues who are composers, and written notation, and you know-- it's not-- and I don't think feedback is usually, Oh that note should go here right you know you trust that the composer knows where the notes go in the piece that they're trying to write.

And so that wasn't the function of peer review. I think Sara worked really hard. And she and I had conversations about what peer review should ideally achieve, in this case. And it was more about finding reviewers that could understand and articulate the significance of A.D.'s work. And explain what he's accomplishing in this project, why it's important? And why it's important that the project takes the specific form that it's taking?

And I think the peer reviewers were both able to articulate that in great detail. And I think also helped us make the case to the press. And I just really feel like that's an important element. And I think, I mean I'll go back and I'll quote, again I want to quote really quickly from A.D.'s original dissertation right. Which is called *Owning My Masters*. I mean he has been about owning his voice, owning his perspective, for a long time.

And if you're paying attention you know that this is important to him. He said in the abstract to that dissertation. He says, "hip hop studies while pushing boundaries in some respects particularly the intersections of many different disciplines, reproduces certain forms and assumptions about knowledge production. Additionally, some conventions in the discipline and certain types of scholarly performances of hip hop scholarship render Blackness pathological even in the service of combating what is understood to be Anti-Blackness.

And I think it's really clear that there was a danger in this project, that peer review could have meant, I'm uncomfortable with like, this line here, this lyric here. And could you change that or take that out and could introduce all kinds of doubts about what that process was really about.

And I think it was important to me as somebody who brought A.D. in and wanted this to be successful, that the peer review process wasn't about that, and it was about this. It was about really clearly articulating the significance of what he'd accomplished and trusting that the quality was there. And I think that's-- and if you're a fan of hip hop and listening to the music. I don't-- I think that's apparent.

A.D. looks like you had something to add as well.

Yeah, I do want to say that, there's I mean, what's interesting about this is also that I'm certain that the files that I initially shared with Loren and with Sara. I think I shared everything mastered before. And if I'm not mistaken it was mastered and sequenced.

And the reason for that was that like at some point, we might have a conversation, if not about what is said in a particular song? What is the best presentation of the order of things?

And I don't mean that to say that if Loren called me up and said, verse 2 on track 5 is wack I don't like it take it out. Or it should be altered or I don't can we have a conversation. Even the conversation Sara and I had about women's voices, or the presence of women. That was a conversation to gain understanding about what was going on, and what wasn't going on, more than it was you need to change this like this particular element.

But I will say that *Owning My Masters* to this point is not it has never been mastered. I mean, the project the reason the album has never been mastered, was because I knew that there was a possibility that my dissertation committee would say, something about one of the tracks.

And there was a mention of one of them in the defense, where there's a song called, "Internal Contradiction." And one of the people-- the question was like well isn't this sort of guilty of its own of what it's arguing against or something like that.

And I mean we had that the conversation, and there was no-- I don't think that he was asking me to remove the song from the playlist or anything. But what he was bringing up was that it might-- the album, I believe it happens in a kind of chronological order.

And that means that there are things earlier in the album that I do contradict toward the end of the album. Because the project starts in 2013 and then it ends in 2017. And that's really important to know if you're looking if you're looking at the dissertation site. I have the timeline there so you have context for the tracks that were produced during that particular time.

This is a much shorter project so the questions, they might be different. But none of those questions were things that I would refuse to address, if there was like a serious issue. But none of those serious issues came up, and then I went through the process of sequencing and mastering the project. And then you get the playlist that you have.

And so it existed in a little different form, but I will say that the documentary, and some of the other resources did come from the back and forth that I had with the review with the reviewers.

Great. Sara you had your hand up a couple of minutes ago. Just wanted to make sure I didn't miss you.

Yeah, I just wanted to quickly say, something about the peer review process that A.D. and I talked about a little bit, at the time that we were dealing with it like, this project went through so much revision, and polishing, and workshopping, and collaboration, and peer reviewing before it even landed on my desk. You know what I mean this is one of the most polished projects I've ever seen.

And so I think that a lot of the peer review happened-- what we might call peer review happened among A.D. and his peers as they were working on this. And I think that what Loren's saying, about finding readers who understood that, and who trusted in that, was a priority for all of us and we were really fortunate to find people who did. I just wanted to say, talk about the peer review that happened before the peer review.

So other peer review. We're close to time here. And so I wanted any one of our panelists, if there were a point that you want to raise or expand upon, raise your hand and I can call on you, now's sort of the time. Going once. Twice. OK.

Well, thank you all. Thanks Walter for leading this really great dynamic conversation. We learned so much from all of you. I can't wait to watch the recording and hear it all again. It was really wonderful. I remind everyone that the recordings are available, on the website that's the very first link, I think Sarah might put it in again for you all.

You'll also find information about the next webinar, which will be coming up in a couple of months and registration details. But thank you again for joining. Thanks to this wonderful team, especially to A.D., for your creativity, and for bringing this project to the university press community. And the much larger world as well. We appreciate it.

Thanks, everyone.

Thank you all. Peace.

Thanks, everybody.

Thank you.