

AUTONOMOUS MECHANICS | HORIZONTAL OPERATING SYSTEM

After a decade-long iteration of modeling *The Operating System* in action, this project is recentring its focus back towards the development, training, and distribution of tools and infrastructures at the origin of its mission.

This project was built around Peer2Peer (P2P), Open Source strategies and solidarity economy principals, and was first pitched as a Brick and Mortar cooperative model in 2011 during Occupy Wall Street, at Occupy Library events and elsewhere. This [original creative worker coop blueprint](#) proposed the establishment of a time banking system, shared governance and financing structure, peer workshops, counseling, mentorship, and more.

Unfortunately, without personal financing, and with many hesitant at that time to engage in unfamiliar cooperative models, it was impossible to financially get the original version off the ground. A pivot was made into an agile, largely virtual network and platform with on-the-ground charrettes, workshops, exhibitions and other events supporting a mission for artist/creator-run archive-and-access facing [print-documentation](#).

This new model invited artists, educators, writers, performers, activists and other makers to collectively participate in the development and maintenance of a creative-commons licensed *print-documentation* experimental project which sidestepped the gatekept, fee-based and rejection-financed publishing industry.

The vision was to create and blueprint this literal *Operating System*, to be offered as open source infrastructure widely, beyond the limitations of whatever creators might volunteer to be part of this particular iteration. As projects went through the production process, free open resources based on the strategies and learnings of the model were continuously developed, iterated, and hosted on the OS platform.

Years where production ballooned should be understood as R+D beta rollouts of the infrastructure: test runs to demonstrate the scalar potential with a minimum of resource influx. When understood as a test of a system designed to prove that community publishing can persist, scale, and thrive using a set of adaptive tools and infrastructure, with nearly no overhead, initial investment, or cashflow, this experiment is a great success.

However, this model's maintenance as an agile extension of existing creative practice, *not requiring or ever wanting to move to the full-time dedicated labor of a "staff"* – ie, of system admins and/or facilitators – is only possible within true shared labor models: it depends on the ongoing cooperation of the collective whose work is being produced / who are producing and supporting each others projects while collectively maintaining the system itself.

While cooperative models and solidarity economy initiatives have begun to gain steam, and are widely conceptually lauded as welcome alternatives to capital hierarchical infrastructures, introducing these systems alongside and against the entrenched power structures is incredibly

challenging not only in terms of resource availability but existentially – our bodies and minds are not only accustomed to but in most cases still engaged in capitalist modes of labor production, consumption and accumulation.

However: the experimental test run of *The Operating System* – which is, after all, a *system* – remains a resounding success. As the ten years of active publishing work, event and workshop hosting, tool and system iteration pivot into a mechanism dedicated to the sharing and open development of these strategies, the body of creative projects produced in its initial trial stand as a testament to innovation and genre defiance, across disciplines and languages.

Not only will all projects produced on the OS remain permanently housed within the Open Access Library, but any titles currently in print can remain permanently in circulation along one of two new avenues available to our community, outlined in more detail below.

In the near future, an OS Manual in both print and digital form will bring together the offerings of the long-time OS Open Resource Hub with documentary accounts, tools and strategies used in the design, development and operation of this experiment for others to iterate, hack, share, and use to create print-documentation for themselves and their communities / organizations. Through the establishment of the *Publication as Public Action* and *Pedagogy as Public Action* programs, the manual's toolkit will be introduced to libraries, schools, and community organizations.

Beginning in February 2023, all authors / collaborators who have published / produced print-documents using the Operating System model are now invited to become an OS Open Infrastructure Support Partner or to establish an Autonomous Distribution Network Node, transferring the Print on Demand / distribution of their titles to independent, distributed OS imprints in perpetuity.

Thank you for your ongoing support and enthusiasm for this project and the possibilities it continues to not only present but attempt to bring into being. You make it real.

In Solidarity and Possibility

Elæ Moss

2023

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For Current OS Author / Collaborators: Please select one of the below options and fill out the applicable rider appended to this document.

1) OS OPEN INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT PARTNER:

As an infrastructure support partner, you remain a vital part of the OS's ecosystem. Although you aren't contributing labor, in this role agree to donate future proceeds after production costs and overhead from the POD sales of your title(s), if any, through 3rd party partners (like Bookshop and similar) to the ongoing maintenance of OS infrastructure, the continued hosting / availability of our Open Access Library, the continued building of OS tools and programs, etc. These proceeds often do not cover the costs of system maintenance, but they defray them enough to keep the operation afloat.

No labor or changes are required of you, if you select this option, and you will continue to be able to order author copies of your books at 50% of the cover rate and sell these on your own website, at events, etc.

2) OS AUTONOMOUS DISTRIBUTION NETWORK NODE:

Community members who select this option will be moving Print on Demand (POD) distribution and management, as well as both its costs and proceeds to your own Ingram Spark accounts, under an independent imprint of *The Operating System*. All sales and production of the physical version of your book transfer to you under this model, but the outward facing appearance of the title, and the ISBN number for the title remain the same.

Note / FAQ: Yes, we're sure this works! We have already run successful of this transfer process with a number of publications, including Johnny Damm's two OS titles, now on an OS Imprint under Johnny's personal Ingram Spark account. As sales on third party platforms run entirely off the ISBN number for the title, which remains the same, little to no impact will be made on the user / buyer / public end.

OS OPEN INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT PARTNER
Publishing Agreement Rider

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No labor or changes are required of you, if you select this option, and you will continue to be able to order author copies of your books at 50% of the cover rate and sell these on your own website, at events, etc. Essentially, you choose the path of least resistance, and very little changes except that you explicitly state that you understand that the residual profits of your OS title(s), after back end costs, are minimal to none, and agree explicitly to donate these proceeds, if and when they exist into the future, to the operating costs of this project.

If at any point in future, the capacity to maintain the POD infrastructure becomes impossible due to unforeseen circumstances, you will be offered the opportunity to set up an Autonomous Distribution Network Node, or to move your title entirely to digital access.

Reminder: *Whether or not you select this option, under the Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND license, you retain rights to your own work and can continue to use any of the work in your title howsoever you may wish.*

Please return this rider as soon as possible, no later than March 31, 2023.

Mail to: operator@theoperatingsystem.org

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

OS AUTONOMOUS DISTRIBUTION NETWORK NODE:
Publishing Agreement Rider

Community members who select this option will be moving Print on Demand (POD) distribution and management, as well as both its costs and proceeds to your own Ingram Spark accounts, under an independent imprint of *The Operating System*. All sales and production of the physical version of your book transfer to you under this model, but the outward facing appearance of the title, and the ISBN number for the title remain the same. Under this rider, permission is given *only* for the use of “The Operating System” as an imprint name for transferred titles, although new titles can also say they use the OS’s Open Design protocol in their colophon / publishing data.

Using this option, your book remains on its current global distribution network of Ingram Content Group, one of the largest distributors in the world. Its metadata across the internet and sales platforms remains unchanged. The only change is that you are managing its publication, and responsible for physical printing – and receiving any profits. Because you wouldn’t be managing an infrastructure, you’re more likely to be able to accrue some profits.

If you select this option, a digital version of your title will remain on the OS Open Access Library. Physical copies of your title already in OS Inventory may be donated to libraries, schools, and community organizations, or used for OS events. However, no further physical copies of your title would be able to be printed by the OS, which means that if and when copies of your book might be requested for OS related events, it is requested that these be provided at cost and/or at no more than 50% of the retail cover cost of the book.

[Follow the instructions here](#) to move your book to your own Distributing Network Node.

Reminder: Whether or not you select this option, under the Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND license, you retain rights to your own work and can continue to use any of the work in your title howsoever you may wish.

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