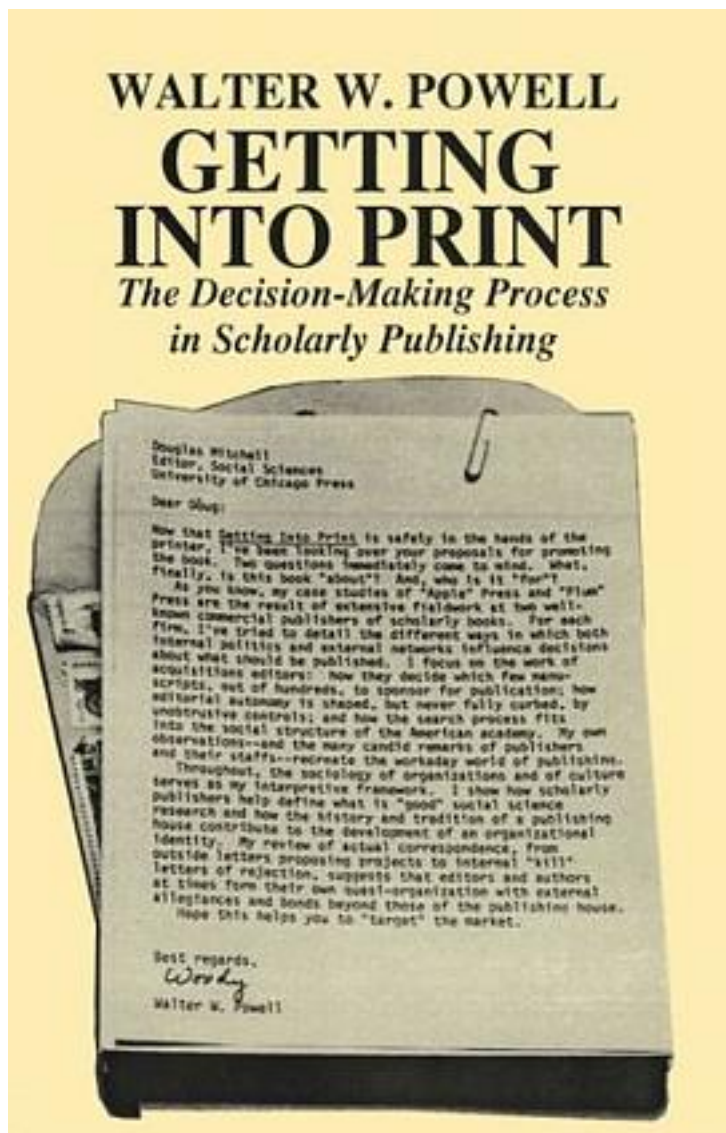


Getting into Print



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著者:Walter W. Powell

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Based on extensive fieldwork at two well-known commercial publishers of scholarly books, Walter W. Powell details the different ways in which both internal politics and external networks influence decisions about what should be published. Powell focuses on the work of acquisitions editors: how they decide which few manuscripts, out of hundreds, to sponsor for publication; how editorial autonomy is shaped, but never fully curbed, by unobtrusive controls; and how the search process fits into the social structure of the American academy. Powell's observations—and the many candid remarks of publishers and their staffs—recreate the workaday world of publishing.

Throughout, the sociology of organizations and of culture serves as Powell's interpretive framework. Powell shows how scholarly publishers help define what is "good" social science research and how the history and tradition of a publishing house contribute to the development of an organizational identity. Powell's review of actual correspondence, from outside letters proposing projects to internal "kill" letters of rejection, suggests that editors and authors at times form their own quasi-organization with external allegiances and bonds beyond those of the publishing house.

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