




# EJ van Lanen

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At each step in my career, I've created change by learning a business, its customers, its constraints; conceiving and communicating a compelling strategic vision; and delivering a new experience via product and product thinking. **I'm looking for an opportunity to apply my product and leadership skills in a technology-focused setting.**

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**Senior Product Manager @ [Frontiers Media SA](#)** - (February 2022 - March 2024) -  Vienna, Austria


Peer reviewers make scientific publishing go, but they're overwhelmed with invitations and current platforms don't support their work. I built a platform that enabled Frontiers to attract reviewers without sending emails and an MVP reviewing platform to engage users.





- Conceived, prototyped, user tested, and delivered a platform ([Frontiers Discover](#)) to transform Frontiers's peer review invitation system.
- Discover attracted tens of thousands of users, boosted invitation conversion 6x (to ~18%), shortened review time by ~7 days, and improved the overall user experience at Frontiers.
- Co-created a vision and strategy to modernize Frontiers's aging peer review platform, the heart of its business.
- Rallied support for the new reviewing platform across the company, following years of stagnation, and served as lead product manager for implementation of its MVP.
- Led 3 cross-functional teams (~30 colleagues) – product managers; UX designers and researchers; frontend and backend engineers; architects; and other business stakeholders.
- Carried out market analysis, organized design sprints, conducted user research, constructed interactive prototypes in Axure, and developed product strategy aligned with Frontiers's business goals and the needs of 1.5 million users.
- Managed product roadmaps, backlogs, and sprint planning to ensure the agile and timely delivery of features, fixes, and enhancements.

**Senior Manager, Publications @ [Helmholtz Munich](#)** - (June 2019 - January 2022) -  Munich, Germany

German research institutions are generally unhappy with the costs, and constraints, of scientific publishing. Leveraging the emerging trend of preprints, I created an MVP for a two-sided market to transform scientific communication.

- Analyzed scientific publishing market to find space for modern publishing workflows.
- Created product vision for a two-sided marketplace for the exchange and validation of scientific work.
- Conducted user research and validation across Helmholtz's [19 research centers](#).
- Recruited and product managed external contractors to develop an MVP 'preprint review' platform, leveraging [bioRxiv](#).
- Created web design for the platform, implemented the design using Tailwind CSS, and contributed Javascript fixes and minor functionality.







**Senior Publisher / Publisher @ [Elsevier GmbH](#)** - (October 2014 - June 2019) -  Berlin, Germany



Researchers in Africa had a problem: communicating their science was difficult. Following extensive discussions with researchers and stakeholders – including in  Ghana,  Kenya,  Rwanda,  Senegal, and  Ethiopia – I created *Scientific African* in partnership with the [Next Einstein Forum](#).


- Developed, built a partnership for, and published [Scientific African](#), a critically valuable source of scientific information for, and by, researchers from Africa.
- Launched *Scientific African* with [Elsevier's CEO](#) at the Next Einstein Forum Global Gathering in Kigali, Rwanda in March 2018. Covered in *Die Zeit*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *The Economist*, *Le Monde*, and *Science*.
- Managed a portfolio of Food Science and Oceanography journals, with annual revenues of \$16,000,000 USD and an annual operating budget of \$1,000,000 USD.
- Actively managed scores of Editors-in-Chief from dozens of countries, helping them achieve growth and quality targets for their journals by providing technical, publishing, and strategic support.

**Founder & Publisher @ [Frisch & Co. Ebooks](#)** - (September 2012 - May 2016) -  Berlin, Germany

At heart, I'm a reader, especially of literature from outside the English-speaking world. I founded Frisch & Co. to publish translated fiction by taking advantage of the efficiencies inherent in the emerging ebook market.


- Created 6 unique publishing partnerships, with  [Companhia das Letras](#),  [Suhrkamp Verlag](#),  [Atlas Contact](#),  [Edizioni Nottetempo](#),  [Natur & Kultur](#), and  [Editorial Anagrama](#).

- Secured funding from government arts institutions in  Germany,  Austria, and  Argentina.
- Secured ebook distribution on Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, Google Play Books, and other outlets through [Faber Factory](#).
- Produced Frisch & Co.'s epub's using a Markdown-based editorial workflow and outputting via [Pandoc](#).

**Co-founder & Editor** @ [Open Letter Books](#) - (January 2007 - August 2012) -  Rochester, NY, USA

With two colleagues, I co-founded Open Letter Books at the [University of Rochester](#). We built one of the leading publishers of translated fiction in the English-reading world.

- Acquired and edited ~50 book-length translations; designed Open Letter's book covers; and coded a CMS for the press's [website](#) using Ruby on Rails.

**Editor** @ [Dalkey Archive Press](#) - (July 2006 - December 2006) -  Bloomington, IL, USA

- Designed and coded a CMS for the press's [website](#) using Ruby on Rails and edited several book-length translations.

**Assistant Editor / Marketing Manager** @ [HarperCollins Publishers](#) - (March 2001 - June 2026) -  New York, NY, USA

- Acquired, edited, and published books by authors from  Croatia, the  UK, and  India.

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## LANGUAGES

 English Native +  German B2

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## EDUCATION

**BA in Philosophy**

[University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee](#) - Milwaukee, WI, USA (1994 - 1997)

Advanced studies in Philosophy

[New School University](#) - New York, NY, USA (2000 - 2001)

Advanced studies in Philosophy

[Ohio University](#) - Athens, OH, USA (1998 - 2000)

Studies in Computer Engineering

[Milwaukee School of Engineering](#) - Milwaukee, WI, USA (1992 - 1994)

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## HONORS + VOLUNTEERING


**Panelist and Speaker**, [Responsible Research](#), Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität -  Munich, Germany (March 2021)

**Workshop Leader**, [African Journals Partnership Program](#) Annual Meeting -  Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (September 2018)

**Board Member**, [The Annals of African Surgery](#) -  Nairobi, Kenya (December 2016)

**Volunteer**, The Annals of African Surgery / [Research without Borders](#) -  Nairobi, Kenya (November - December 2016)

**Panelist**, "Meet the Publishers", [The London Book Fair](#) -  London, UK (April 2014)

**Panelist**, "Bridging the Gap: Bringing Together US and UK Translation Communities", [The Society of Authors](#) -  London, UK (April 2014)

**Panelist**, [Kongress "Literatur Digital"](#), Haus der Kulturen der Welt -  Berlin, Germany (March 2014)

**Fellow**, [Più Libri Più Liberi Book Fair](#) -  Rome, Italy (December 2013)

**Panelist**, [Paths to Publishing Conference](#) -  Berlin, Germany (May 2013)

**Fellow**, [Sharjah International Book Fair](#) -  Sharjah, UAE (November 2011)

**Fellow**, [Finnish Literature Exchange](#) Editor's Trip -  Helsinki, Finland (August 2010)

**Fellow**, [Più Libri Più Liberi Book Fair](#) -  Rome, Italy (December 2010)

**Judge**, [Best Translated Book Award](#) - (December 2009)

**Fellow**, [Frankfurt Book Fair](#) -  Frankfurt, Germany (September 2008)

**Fellow**, [Norwegian Festival of Literature](#) -  Lillehammer, Norway (May 2008)