Edited volumes are collections of chapters on a particular topic by various experts. In my own experience as a co-editor of three (3) edited volumes, the editors select the topic, select and invite the experts (or authors), and identify a publisher. Once secured, a publisher typically offers a cash advance to the editor(s) along with a small percentage of sales going forward in the form of royalties. The publisher may also provide reviewing services for the collection of chapters, and will advertise the edited volume when it is released. The two primary ways for consumers to access the chapters is to (a) purchase the book, or (b) obtain a copy of the book from a library.

With technological advances it is now possible to publish edited volumes without a professional publishing company. Why would someone choose to not use a publishing company? Indeed, they are literally publication experts. Perhaps the biggest reason is that the resulting volume will be open access, or available to anyone with a connection to the internet, free of charge. There are also some career advantages to sharing knowledge open access. Also, a publishing company is simply not needed for all publication projects.

There are very likely many different ways to publish an edited volume without using a professional publishing company. Below, I outline one possibility that involves using the Open Science Framework (OSF). Suggestions for improving these suggested steps are welcome.

Steps to Using the OSF to publish an Open Access Edited Volume

1. Identify a topic for the edited volume, and then identify a list of experts that you would like to invite to contribute chapters.
2. If you do not have an OSF account, create one (it is free). Create a new project page for your edited volume, and give it the title of the proposed edited volume. Select one of the licensing options for your project to grant copyright permission for this work.
3. Draft a proposal for your edited volume (e.g., the need for this particular collection of chapters, goals of the volume, target audience, and so on). Add this file to the project page.
4. Send an email inviting potential authors, providing a link to your OSF project page so they can read your proposal.
   - You can make the project page public from the start and simply share the link, or,
   - You can keep the project page private during the development of the edited volume and “share” a read-only link to the project page with prospective authors only.
5. Ask all authors that accepted the invitation to create on OSF account. Then create a component for each individual chapter; components are part of the parent project, but are treated as independent entities in the OSF. Use the proposed title for each chapter as the title of the component. Add the
author(s) as administrators for the relevant component (e.g., A. Smith has agreed to author chapter #4; add A. Smith as an administrator of component #4).

6. Ask authors to upload a copy of their first draft by the selected deadline. Provide feedback on every chapter.
   - One option is to download a copy of the chapter, make edits using the track changes option, and then upload a copy of the edited chapter using the same title as the original in order to take advantage of the “version control” function of the OSF (i.e., all versions of the chapter will be available on the project page in chronological order, with the most recent version at the top of the list).

7. Ask authors to upload their revised chapter using the same title (again to take advantage of the “version control” function of the OSF).

8. When the chapters are completed, “register” the project and all components. This will “freeze” all of the files, meaning changes can no longer be made. The registered components, or chapters, represent the final version of edited volume. Then...
   - Make all of the components, as well as the main project registration, public;
   - Enable the “comments” option so that anyone can post comments within each component (e.g., to discuss the material presented in the chapter);
   - Click the link to obtain a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for each component (i.e., chapter).

9. Advertise the edited volume
   - Use social media, including Facebook discussion groups and Twitter (among others). Encourage readers to leave comments for each chapter on the OSF pages;
   - Ask your University to issue a press release;
   - Ask your librarian for tips on how to advertise your new Open Access edited volume (librarians are an excellent resource!!).

Prior to following these steps to create your own Open Access edited volume on the OSF (or by using a different approach), there are some pros and cons to consider:

Pros

- You have created an edited volume that is completely Open Access
- The volume cost no money to create, no money to advertise, and no money to purchase
- Given that the chapters are available to a wider audience than a traditional edited volume released by a for profit publishing company, it is likely that they will actually reach a wider audience as well and have a greater scientific impact

Cons

- You do not receive a cash advance or royalties
- You do not receive any assistance from a publisher for reviewing or advertising
- This approach is new compared to traditional publishing, and therefore you may be concerned that you will not receive proper credit from others (e.g., people evaluating your contributions to science when deciding to hand out grant funds, jobs, promotions, and so on)

Final Thoughts

There is usually more than one way to achieve the same aim. Professional publishing companies work with academics to create many edited volumes every year, but creating an edited volume does not inherently require the assistance of a professional publishing company. The purpose of this post was to present one alternative using the functionality of the Open Science Framework to publish an edited volume that is Open Access. I am sure there are even more ways to achieve this aim.