



Open Access and the Humanities

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About me

- Humanities background (philosophy & literature)
- Joined PLOS in 2008
- Began PhD on Open Access and the Humanities in 2012
- Now also work for the researcher-led, open-access publisher Ubiquity Press



Why is Open Access important?

- Increased access (obviously)
- Should save significant sums of money for the global research budget
- **Opportunity to reassess publication practices in the humanities**

The Humanities Situation

- Underfunded (1% of research budget in EU, 0.5% in USA¹)
- Employment is both scarce and precarious
- Rising scientific journal prices affect libraries' ability to purchase books

All of this is relevant to publication practices

1. <http://4humanities.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/humanitiesmatter300.pdf>



Excessive Managerialism

“Everyone in academia had come to learn that the REF is the currency of value. A scholar whose works are left out of the tally is marked for assisted dying.”

- Marina Warner, ‘Why I Quit’, *London Review of Books*



Disincentives for Experimentation

- Prestige is the currency (difficult for new/experimental publishers to gain traction)
- Economic dimension to publishing research
- Multi-author publications not rewarded
 - Collaboration discouraged
- Non-paper-centric scholarship un-assessable by traditional mechanisms



Open Access = Opportunity regain
control of humanities publication
for the betterment of the
humanities as a whole



What can ECRs do?

- Publish Open Access (obviously!)
- Support/Start Scholar-Led Initiatives
- Experiment!



Publish Open Access

- Upload your research to repositories
- Open Access journals (DOAJ)
- Negotiate publishing contracts
- Link to public domain versions of studied texts
 - e.g., Open Shakespeare
- Release digital source material (open data)



Support Scholar-Led Initiatives

- Open Library of Humanities
- Open Humanities Press
- Mattering Press
- Open Book Publishers
- Start your own?



Experiment!

- Open Peer-Review
- Online Commentary/Annotations
- Remixed/Liquid Books
- Wiki-based Authorship
- Anonymous/Pseudonymous Authorship?

Open Peer-Review

One: Peer Review

media commons press
open scholarship in open formats

Planned Obsolescence

Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy


interest in the extent to which the means of media production and distribution are undergoing a process of radical democratization in the Web 2.0 era, and a desire to test the limits of that democratization.

¶ 7 To a surprising extent, however, scholars have resisted exploring a similar sense in which intellectual authority might likewise be shifting in the contemporary world.^[1.4] One might see such a resistance manifested in the often unthinking and over-blown academic response to Wikipedia – for instance, one might see reports of the Middlebury College history department’s ban on the use of the online encyclopedia as a research source, and the debate that ensued – which seems to indicate a serious misunderstanding about the value of the project.^[1.5] Treating Wikipedia like any other encyclopedia, by consulting only the entries, runs the risk of missing the point entirely; as Bob Stein has suggested, a user has to learn to read Wikipedia differently, given that the real intellectual heart of the project lies on the history and discussion pages, where one can see the controversies inherent in the production of any encyclopedia entry enacted in public, rather than smoothed over into an untroubled conventional wisdom.^[1.6] More centralized projects like Citizendium, which seek to add traditional, hierarchical modes of review to a project like Wikipedia,^[1.7] overlook the fact that, first, the wiki is in its very architecture a mode of ongoing peer review, and second, that not only the results of that review but the records of its process are available for critical scrutiny. Failing to engage fully with the intellectual merits of a project like Wikipedia, or with the ways in which Wikipedia represents one facet of a far-reaching change in contemporary epistemologies, is a mistake that we academics make at our own peril. As one librarian frames the issue, “Banning a source like Wikipedia (rather than teaching how to use it wisely) simply tells students that the academic world is divorced from real-world practices” (Badke, qtd in Regalado). The production of knowledge is of course the academy’s very reason for being, and if we cling to an outdated system for the establishment and measurement of authority at the very same time that the nature of authority is shifting around us, we run the risk of becoming increasingly irrelevant to the dominant ways of knowing of contemporary culture.^[1.8]

¶ 8 For this reason, what I am absolutely *not* arguing in what follows is that we need to ensure that peer-reviewed journals online are of equivalent value to peer-reviewed journals in print; in fact, I believe that such an equation is instead part the problem I’m addressing. Imposing traditional methods of peer review on digital publishing might help a transition to digital publishing in the short term, enabling more traditionally-minded scholars to see electronic and print scholarship as equivalent in value, but it will hobble us in the long term, as we employ outdated methods in a public space that operates under radically different systems of authorization. Instead, we must find ways to work with, to improve, and to adapt those new systems for scholarly use – but we must also find ways to convince ourselves, our colleagues, and our


CONTENTS COMMENTS ACTIVITY

5 Comments on paragraph 7

 David Parry
22 September 2009 at 2.12 pm

I really like the repetition of the word irrelevance here, the sounding of it against the Cathy Davidson epigraph. For me this is one of the strongest arguments that can be made. Be online, engage public knowledge where it exists and is produced, or be irrelevant. The anti-intellectualism that many in the academy somewhat correctly observe to be a feature of American culture, is also a two way street, a anti-public discourse on the part of those within the academy. This seems to me the crux (or one of) your point, the network lets us expand and rethink what a peer is.

REPLY TO DAVID PARRY


 Katherine Rowe
3 October 2009 at 6.06 pm

I’d like to second that comment and suggest moving what seems to me the key conclusion out of footnote 1.8 and into the body of the text. (I’m assuming, Kathleen, that you can make changes before this goes to hard covers?)

The key idea comes at the end of the sentence: “thus reminding scholars that our very professional existences...may be dependent on...the inclusion of a broader public...such that they understand the value of academic ways of knowing.”

(This platform won’t allow cutting and pasting text from a footnote, btw – annoying)

REPLY TO KATHERINE ROWE

 Kathleen Fitzpatrick

Anonymous Authorship

LOGIN

Make your own
books on

PRESSBOOKS

Speculate This!

uncertain commons

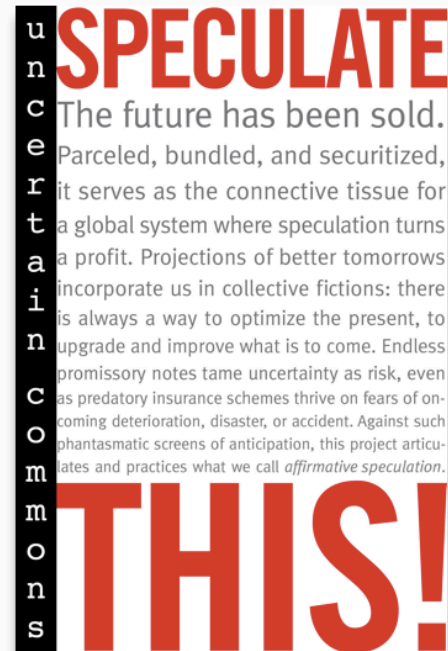
The future has been bundled, defined, and sold by speculators. "Speculate This!" reclaims speculation as a creative force.



A short, timely manifesto critiquing predatory modes of financial speculation that seek to minimize uncertainty and risk, while advocating speculative practices that embrace uncertainty, spur radical change, and enable alternative futures.

READ

BUY



Book Description

About the Author



“One significant means by which the humanities may come to impact on the open access movement in the future, then, is through the very openness of some of those in the field to **the challenge to academic authority and professional legitimacy** presented by digital modes of reproduction.”

- Gary Hall, ‘Pirate Philosophy (Version 1.0)’