

# The Role of Libraries in Emerging Models of Scholarly Communications

Sigi Jöttkandt, John Willinsky, Shana Kimball

LIANZA, 13 October, 2009

Christchurch, New Zealand

## Open Humanities Press

Sigi Jöttkandt,

I'm going to start by talking a bit about the crisis in scholarly publishing and about the open access movement, which has emerged as a grassroots response by academics to the crisis. Then I'll talk about how some scholars are creating alternative publication models to meet the communication needs of their disciplines with the help of libraries. I'll talk about how John Willinsky and the Public Knowledge Project's suite of open source publishing tools are making projects such as the one I'm involved with, the Open Humanities Press, possible. And I will end with Shana Kimball's presentation on the University of Michigan Library's Scholarly Publishing Office, whose support for OHP's latest venture, open access monographs publishing, is critical for enabling scholars to move beyond the journal form by putting born-digital book-length scholarship freely out into the wider community.

[Slide: Crisis in Scholarly Communications]

I'm sure I don't need to be telling LIANZA members about the exponential rises in journal subscriptions over the past 20 or 30 years, which has forced libraries worldwide to cancel subscriptions and to curtail their book purchasing. Couple this with a steady decline in library budgets over the same period, and a massive consolidation of publishers into a few large players and you have a recipe for a full-blown crisis of scholarly communications. This is affecting nearly everyone in academia today, but it is having a particularly invidious effect on what are called the "book disciplines", which are mostly in the humanities.

To explain why this is so, let me point out how the crisis actually has two aspects. The first is the problem of access to scholarly materials. This is obviously not a new problem, particularly for smaller libraries, but it is also forcing itself in today's economic climate on even the best-endowed institutions who can no longer afford to take their traditional buy everything approach.

[Slide: Access crisis]

The second aspect is the less well-known and less talked about crisis in access to publishers, which is being fed by the previous crisis. As libraries make cuts in their book budgets to keep up with inflated serial prices, publishers have been forced to reassess their lists and reduce their offerings in those subject areas that consistently fail to break even (let alone make a profit). Unsurprisingly perhaps, many of these fields are in humanities disciplines such as English, History and Art History in particular.

At the same time as publishers are cutting their offerings in these fields, however, academics are being told by administrators to raise their research output, and in humanities disciplines, this means publishing peer-reviewed articles in quality journals and, particularly, publishing one or more books. In the United States, for example, the book is a standard requirement for obtaining tenure in English departments, and is also increasingly becoming a factor in junior hiring decisions there as well.

[Slide: What is Open Access?]

As many of you will know, the open access movement emerged out of a happy marriage of the global distribution possibilities opened up by the Internet and the growing perception among academics that they and their libraries were not being well-served by the current system. Peter Suber, one of the movement's founders, defines open access as "putting peer reviewed scholarship online, making it free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. Removing the barriers to serious research."

[Slide: Green Road]

The scientific community has been the clear leader in the open access movement to date. Scientists have been active in promoting the principle of self-archiving, where scholars deposit the results of their research in disciplinary or institutional repositories and make them freely available to anyone with an internet connection. There are also a growing number of open access publishing houses, with the Public Library of Science and BioMed Central the most well-known and respected of these.

In close collaboration with their scientific colleagues, librarians are moving to forefront of the open access movement, as both leading proponents of and partners in the transformation of scholarly communications that the Internet is making possible. Many university libraries and other institutions have founded IRs in support of scholars' self-archiving. And as open access now starts to move into other disciplines, libraries are discovering other ways of supporting and promoting OA to scholars for whom the institutional repository does not entirely meet their communications needs due to reasons of disciplinary cultures.

[Slide: Gold Road]

## **Scholar-led publishing**

The rise of the Internet has leveled the barriers to entry in many industries but this particularly true in publishing. Digital printing technologies such as print on demand have radically reduced the need for capital in order to produce cost-effective print runs, while born-digital publication is becoming increasingly common as publishers move online to take advantage of the Internet's global distribution. This is leading to a remarkable renaissance of scholar-led publishing, as scholars in all disciplines are

discovering that they can combine their traditional scholarly service as editors and peer reviewers with departmental, library or independent hosting to publish open access journals outside the commercial publishing channels. The figures are impressive. The Directory of Open Access Journals now lists close to 4500 journals and more are being added every day.

[Slide: Open Humanities Press]

Although, as I said, humanities disciplines have been hit hard by the dual crises of access, on the whole humanities scholars have been slower than their colleagues in the sciences to embrace OA. One reason that has been suggested is the still fairly widespread perception among humanities academics that the Internet is not an appropriate medium for publishing serious scholarly research.

In late 2006, Gary Hall, Paul Ashton, David Ottina and I co-founded the Open Humanities Press (OHP) precisely to counter this perception. As open access advocates we felt that the chief barrier to OA in humanities disciplines was cultural one, and that to be successful in our disciplines of English, continental philosophy and cultural studies, open access required a different approach to that taken in the STM fields. Our sense was that OA would not take off in the humanities until it met the specific communication needs of scholars working in those fields. And the primary consideration for these scholars, rather than time to publication as for many scientists, is the question of a publication's prestige. We concluded that unless OA publications in the humanities could compete on the prestige factor, they would continue to be marginalized by scholars and administrators as a less desirable publication venue, despite the fact that there are many highly regarded humanities journals publishing in open access today.

[Slide: OHP Board]

So when we began, we very consciously looked to the Public Library of Science as our model, that is, a very high-profile, prestigious, scholar-led publishing initiative with strong supporters in the senior ranks of scholars. But we were also acutely aware that in order to be successful as a humanities OA initiative, we'd have to approach things a little differently. Author-side fees, for example, would be entirely inappropriate for a humanities publishing initiative. We also wanted to simply get started without waiting for lengthy fund-raising cycles, etc. (which might not be successful anyway). So rather than found new OA journals as PLoS did, we looked to existing OA humanities efforts and sought to bring them together under a single umbrella and central portal.

[Slide: OHP Journals]

OHP launched last year with 7 journals in critical and cultural theory, continental philosophy and new media. We've been adding new journals ever since, including the latest, a hybrid print and OA journal, *Filozofski vestnik International* from Slovenia, which we helped to bring online.

[Slide: Filozofski vestnik]

We chose to focus on journals initially, and to build the OHP brand around the growing number of outstanding humanities publications that have been appearing online, in some cases since the late 90s. Our idea is to raise the profile and credibility of these existing OA journals in the eyes of academics and administrators by way of a meta-refereeing process. OHP's Editorial Oversight Group (a rotating group of 13 scholars drawn from the wider editorial board each year) assesses journals according to a set of policies concerning publication standards, technical standards and intellectual fit with OHP's mission. These policies are available on the OHP website.

Once a journal has been accepted for inclusion, OHP can offer the editors technical assistance and hosting, help with graphic design if needed, as well as links to their journal and other promotional material on the OHP website. OHP operates entirely as a volunteer collective, where editors support one another and share knowledge and skills, very much like an open source software community. And in fact, one of the things that makes a peer publishing initiative like OHP possible is precisely open source software, such as the Public Knowledge Project's suite of open source publishing tools founded by John Willinsky at Stanford University, which I will talk about shortly.

But before I do so, I just want to say that as I mentioned, when we began our original plan was to focus for the first few years on building the OHP brand with a strong journal list before addressing publishing OA books, although books were always in our long-term sights. But as soon as we launched last year, we got a lot of inquiries about books - we even read one university library's internal report stating that OHP would soon be publishing OA books! So we thought we'd better run with the zeitgeist and in June 2008 we formed a discussion list to examine the feasibility of open access book publishing.

This led to our connection with Shana Kimball and Maria Bonn at the University of Michigan Library's Scholarly Publishing Office. Between us, we're developing a model where international scholars coalesce around areas of interest through a book series and perform the editorial oversight, manuscript selection and development for that series, often with their own internal editorial boards and consulting editors. The Scholarly Publishing Office then takes the finished manuscript and runs it through their suite of publishing services to produce OHP's finished online, print on demand and, eventually also, epub books.

In August this year, OHP announced it will begin publishing our first 5 open access book series in various fields of critical theory, postcolonialism, continental philosophy and cultural studies. We have an ambitious scaling plan that will see us doubling our production and number of book series each year in more fields of the humanities.

What we'd love to see is this model take off more widely. From the academics' viewpoint, it doesn't really require that much in the way of substantial change: scholars already research, write, edit and peer review original scholarly content. Peer publishing initiatives such as OHP represent tremendous opportunities for the library community as well, although again, as Shana Kimball points out in her presentation, it doesn't necessarily mean significant changes in how libraries do things either. It's more a matter of re-jigging some existing services. In reflection of this, we're starting to see research libraries in the US and Europe moving further up the research chain

and assisting academics directly in the production and dissemination of knowledge, through library publishing units such as the one based at UMichigan, but also at the University of Leiden, Gottingen, and the Sydney University of Technology to name just a few.

OHP is still a community, all-volunteer project - most of the steering group are academics and/or librarians who work on this in our off-hours. We see ourselves more as open access advocates rather than publishers per se - publishing entered the equation mainly because that is the chief means of disseminating humanities research today. If and when that changes, OHP will also no doubt change, if we feel we can still accomplish our goals through this type of organization.

I'll end this part of the presentation by pointing to the two really critical pieces that make the OHP/SPO partnership possible - and which will enable this sort of publishing model to be replicated in other disciplines. These are: SPO's openness to all-comers, and OHP's disciplinary-based international brand. Many library publishing offices we've come across, including some of the ones I've just mentioned, offer services only to local faculty, while some of the new OA presses based at libraries such as at University of Tennessee have editorial boards that have to be made up of primarily local faculty. OHP, on the other hand, has no institutional affiliation with any one university, and its subject boards can therefore be made up of the most appropriate figures for any particular area of study. This openness at both levels (editorial and production), coupled with free open source publishing software that reduces and distributes the administrative burden of publishing across a large number of participants, is the key that will enable this sort of direct scholar-library partnership to scale.

# Public Knowledge Project: Open Monograph presentation

‘Given the power of these new technologies to make resources readily available, something seems terribly amiss for people to have so little public access to the work of so many scholars.

How is it that we have such a substantial body of knowledge that lies beyond the reach of public life and political forums, private lives and educational institutions? This world of knowing needs to be transformed into a public resource.’

- John Willinsky, “Education and Democracy: The Missing Link May Be Ours.”

The Public Knowledge Project is a visionary research and development initiative based at Stanford University and directed toward improving the scholarly and public quality of academic research through the development of innovative online publishing and knowledge-sharing environments. Begun in 1998 by John Willinsky in the Faculty of Education at University of British Columbia, PKP has developed free software for the management, publishing, and indexing of journals and conferences. Developed by a consortium of university libraries including Stanford, Simon Fraser University, UBC and Arizona State University, PKP software is being used around the world to increase access to knowledge and improve its scholarly management, while considerably reducing publishing costs.

PKP’s current suite of publishing and indexing services are Open Journal Systems, Open Conference Systems, Open Archives Harvester, Lemon8-XML and, still in development, Open Monograph Press.

[Slide: OJS]

## Open Journal Systems

OJS is a journal management and publishing system that is being used by over 2000 journals around the world, including many of the OHP journals.

OJS assists with every stage of the refereed publishing process, from submissions through to online publication and indexing.

[Slide: OJS backend]

## OJS Features

1. OJS is installed locally and locally controlled.
2. Editors configure requirements, sections, review process, etc.
3. Online submission and management of all content.
4. Subscription module with delayed open access options.
5. Comprehensive indexing of content part of global system.
6. Reading Tools for content, based on field and editors' choice.
7. Email notification and commenting ability for readers.
8. Complete context-sensitive online Help support.

[Slide: OMP]

Open Monograph Press is a new platform in development by PKP, which is an extension and modularization of the OJS. It is intended to assist editors through the steps that have been traditionally followed in book publishing. The software is designed to reduce, and at times automate, the typical clerical tasks of filing, recording, and retrieving information. It provides the tools, files, emails, records, and workspace needed to do the job to the highest standards. OMP's approach is to reduce publishing costs, as well as the energy invested in clerical tasks, while extending the quality and reach of scholarly communication.

Like the other software PKP has been involved in developing, OMP is part of an experiment in what Willinsky calls a larger twenty-first century e-research phenomenon. In a word, it amounts to another step in the openness of knowledge. The question is whether such a system will restore some measure of the monograph's vitality and viability, as well as the intellectual scope of scholarly work in fields where it may be said to have been diminished by the rise of the article; could OMP boost the book's contribution to the larger opening of the academy and its work? We at OHP, certainly hope so, and look forward to trialling the software once it is ready for release in the next few months.

# Scalable Library-Based Publishing Services at the University of Michigan: Partnering with Open Humanities Press

Shana Kimball

[Slide: SPO]

I'd like to start by giving some background about the Scholarly Publishing Office at the University of Michigan Library, explain how we operate as a publisher and why we're partnering with OHP, and finish up by describing a bit about how the partnership will work. [In case I run out of time: We're the production and distribution arm for a variety of OHP series during the pilot project; in short, we'll convert, host, provide access to, and archive these monographs. We're interested in talking to others from the library community about partnership opportunities as well. ]

Our unit was formed eight years ago with the goal of developing low-cost, scalable mechanisms for electronic publication and distribution of scholarly content in a variety of forms. We put scholarly resources online and sometimes into print, and currently support over 40, primarily open-access, publications and digital projects, large and small scale by leveraging the library's digital infrastructure. We run a robust reprints service, with over 9000 titles on Amazon repurposed from the library's digital collections; and this reprint service is beginning to grow into a service for scholars to put their out of print books back into print.

While our core principles include a dedication to preserve our digital publications for the long-term, and an attention to technological standards and best practices, I would say that our energies are primarily devoted to making scholarly publishing more sustainable and scalable in a variety of ways. For the rest of this discussion, I'll lay out a few ways that we're try to achieve sustainable publishing methods, and reflect on how these sustainable methods enable us to partner with scholars from both our home institution and beyond, as is the case with Open Humanities Press.

## 1) Remixing existing services

We operate at the margins of library activity by organizing available resources and infrastructure in a new way to provide publishing services. The raw materials are there – it's a matter of remixing them to support publishing.

To this end, we work closely with other departments for a variety of functions:

- Digital Library Production Service (DLPS) - software development, some content conversion

- Core Services - network and server administration, as well as authentication mechanisms
- Cataloging - for a good portion of our descriptive metadata
- Finance dept for support for our more complex financial transactions.
- Copyright specialist for intellectual property rights consultation, and General Counsel for complex legal or contractual issues.

There are plenty of tangible benefits to being located in the library – space, computer support, and the like. But there are intangible benefits as well; libraries have a great deal of aggregated expertise about the lifecycle of publications and the needs of scholars, not to mention creating, managing, preserving, and providing access to digital collections. Our staff participates in working groups on usability and communications, helps to staff the reference desk, assists with technical support– all of which help to create a strong alliance between our unit and the rest of the library. So, rather than a satellite office merely “doing publishing,” we are an integrated part of the whole. And we couldn’t do this work without this arrangement.

## **2) Partnerships**

We do a lot of the work ourselves, but in order to extend and supplement our services, we create partnerships with entities outside the library to fulfill other functions.

- quality content from collaboration with scholarly societies, academic departments, and our university press; we don’t actively acquire content.
- publication referrals from our participation in the SPARC publisher’s assistance program - projects also come to us via subject specialists in the library – as well as “cold calls”
- print services from on demand and short run printers (Lightning Source and BookSurge)
- large-scale conversion from vendors when necessary

## **3) Author-friendly copyright**

SPO offers author-friendly rights agreements because we believe authors should retain robust rights to their scholarship and ask for a non-exclusive right to distribute the content. The author is free to circulate, distribute, republish, or remix her content in any way she sees fit.

## **4) New forms of dissemination**

Just because we’re running a lean operation does not mean that we’re restricted to one way of doing things. Because we’re a new model, we’re not tied to the standard of The Printed Book. This allows us to be open to experimentation and to scholars’ curiosity and willingness to try new forms of disseminating their work. In the past, we have mounted work in CommentPress, the WordPress theme from the Institute for the

Future of the Book that allows comments in the margins of texts, and we have published an article in one of our journals that was developed inside CommentPress. We employ a learning-by-doing approach, control our growth, and take small risks that make sense. We're not a one size fits all approach.

## **5) Flexible array of services**

Finally, we articulate and provide a flexible array of core publishing services that are responsive to the needs of scholars. I've touched on a lot of them, but let me run them down once more:

- Conversion of content to structured XML from a variety of native formats
- Electronic publication and distribution of journals, monographs, and other scholarly content, by leveraging our library's digital infrastructure
- Robust search and navigation
- Long term preservation and archiving
- Collecting and reporting item-level usage statistics
- Support for print on demand
- Author-friendly rights agreements

## **6) Working with OHP**

It is this suite of services that we will bring to bear on the books we will publish in collaboration with Open Humanities Press. Our new partnership with OHP enables us to extend our publishing capacity to support the development and distribution of high-quality monographs in the humanities. Specifically, we are launching the partnership with a number of Open Access book series edited by senior members of OHP's editorial board.

### **Here's how it will work:**

- Series editors & OHP solicit proposals for series; the OHP editorial board reviews proposals; OHP publicizes series; series editors solicit manuscripts
- Series editors work with authors on manuscripts
- After the review process and a pre-production check by OHP, manuscripts will be handed on to my office for formatting, conversion to XML, and hosting in our delivery system
- Each book will be freely available in full-text, digital editions and as reasonably- priced paperbacks (POD)
- Authors will retain the copyrights for their works and have a choice of Creative Commons licenses. They will also have the option of making their manuscripts available online in various pre- and post-publication versions for reader commenting and annotation if they so wish.

Not only do we have the production and distribution “muscle” to lend to the effort; we share a set of scholarly publishing principles with OHP as well.

As you’ve heard, our partnership is intended to push forward OA book publishing in humanities disciplines by providing a library-based managing and production support infrastructure to facilitate self-organizing groups of scholars to publish leading research in book form.

SPO is enthusiastically supportive of these aims: we’re used to publishing open access digital alongside print editions; helping to publish in areas that are under-served by the traditional publishing models; and experimenting with new models of scholarly publishing. The partnership capitalizes on the complementary strengths of the groups—the library has infrastructure, scale, experience; self-organized scholars build the brand, lend reputation, and provide the editorial functions.

However the University of Michigan Library’s Scholarly Publishing Office alone can’t meet all the needs of OHP. We are actively seeking partners to collaborate with and help us think about, refine, and extend the model. In order to effect a broader change in attitudes to OA, we are more effective working together.