

Facet eBooks Chapter

You Can't Judge a Digital Book by its POD Cover. E-Books and Scholarly Communication Futures.

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‘Given the absolute faculty of reading, the task of going through the pages of a book must be, of all tasks, the most certainly within the grasp of the man or woman who attempts it! Alas, no; - if the habit be not there, of all tasks it is the most difficult. If a man have not acquired the habit of reading till he be old, he shall sooner in his old age learn to make shoes than learn the adequate use of a book. And worse again; - under such circumstances the making of shoes shall be more pleasant to him than the reading of a book. Let those who are not old, - who are still young, ponder this well’ (Trollope, 1866).

The impact of the digital revolution

It is a truth universally acknowledged that in the twenty first century, we are witnessing a revolution in communication unparalleled since the invention of the printing press in the fifteen century. As in the fifteenth century, however, there is a time lag between technical innovation and the impact on society of changes in the distribution and publishing of scholarly knowledge. Initially, the first printed pages of incunabula replicated the physical lay out of manuscripts, and in the same way digital

journals and books have remained influenced by historical print and research assessment frameworks.

In the monastic scriptorium, the dissemination of knowledge was limited by the productivity of the output of the scribes and then public accessibility to appropriate libraries or personal collections. Books generally impacted little on the general public, for whom, oral transmission (perhaps now called social networking) was the norm for the transmission of knowledge and gossip. With the introduction of movable type, these access limitations were overcome quantitatively, although it was probably not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the mass of the reading public and the print world significantly coincided. By the nineteenth century, books were no longer individually crafted works of art, but products of industry in a variety of formats (Battles, 2009).

E-books, by which one means the text, rather than the device, are another significant variant in the evolution of book publishing and distribution. An issue, as Siracusa (2009) contends, 'is right there in the name: *e-book*. In the print world, the word "book" is used to refer to both the content and the medium. In the digital realm, "e-book" refers to the content only—or rather, that's the intention. Unfortunately, the conflation of these two concepts in the nomenclature of print naturally carries over to the digital terminology, much to the confusion of all '. For the purpose of this chapter, e-book means born digital.

In one sense, it could be said the historical print world focused on a process, in which the final product went through a series of sequential processes to reach the final text.

Now the immediacy of the Net provides a myriad of different knowledge distribution paths. We are moving from a world of review then publish, to publish then review for many outside controlled scholarly environments.

If one, however, was now able to establish *de novo* the production and distribution of academic knowledge in the digital era, it is unlikely that the present publishing formats would result. The Net, and the rise of associated outlets have not only broadened the geographic scope of scholarly communication beyond that of the print environment, but new mechanisms of social dialogues, such as blogs and open access frameworks, have emerged.

Reading the change?

New methods of textual output and sharing have an impact on modes of transmission and attention. Social networking tools, such as Twitter, Blogger, Facebook and YouTube are allegedly impacting on attention spans, particularly of Generation Y and the resulting lack of appreciation of book formats and lengthy texts. Jeff Bezos, Amazon CEO, has stated that ‘long-form reading is losing ground to short-form reading... we change our tools and our tools change us’ (Feldman, 2009). Power browsing is the norm for the Net’s ‘promiscuous users’, who want instant online access, preferably free.

Rosen (2009) worries that ‘collaborative “information foraging” will replace solitary deep reading; the connected screen will replace the disconnected book ... Literacy, the most empowering achievement of our civilization, is to be replaced by a vague and

ill-defined screen savvy. The paper book, the tool that built modernity, is to be phased out in favor of fractured, unfixed information. All in the name of progress'. But then, in 1477, the Venetian humanist Hieronimo Squarciafico worried that an abundance of books would lead to intellectual laziness, making men 'less studious' *Plus ca change*.

Noted science fiction author and physics professor, Gregory Benford (2009) reflects that 'people read like crazy on the Internet – but they are not reading 60,000 narratively coherent words in a row ... they live within a flow of mediated micro particles'. Carr (2008) believes that he can no longer connect with long articles or books the way he used to: 'And what the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.'

Rosen (2009) quotes the noted critic George Steiner from a 1988 *Times Literary Supplement* article, 'I would not be surprised if that which lies ahead for classical modes of reading resembles the monasticism from which those modes sprung. I sometimes dream of *houses of reading* – a Hebrew phrase – in which those passionate to learn to read well would find the necessary guidance, silence and complicity of disciplined companionship'. Words reflected by Terry Pratchett, the English author, when I interviewed him in 2007, when he decried the transformation of the English public library into a noisy internet café cum mall, favouring a return to quiet places in public libraries. Maybe the wheel will turn and libraries will provide monastic e-

cubicles of silence amongst the noise of the information commons and the decline in public space etiquette.

Similar trends in changes in reading patterns and attention spans have been reflected in analyses of useage of the scientific literature. The time available by scientists to read articles has declined almost in proportion to the growth of scientific literature itself. Coates (2009) has reflected on a knowledge overload: ‘and so, we read indexes rather than journals, abstracts rather than papers, review essays rather than books. Awash in a sea of academic discourse and analysis, we look desperately for an intellectual life-raft, all the while feverishly seeking to add to the accumulated scholarly wisdom ourselves’.

Unfortunately the deluge of publications from the academic community is set to increase as university administrators and funding authorities place an arguably wrong emphasis on the value of publication metrics and journal rankings to establish research quality frameworks and thus funding. These metrics, however, can be manipulated and lead to significant unforeseen changes in academic scholarly communication and publishing practices, which is often not anticipated by those who change the ground rules (Steele, Butler, Kingsley, 2006).

Changes in publishing settings

The changes in economic settings from late 2008 onwards have raised questions as to appropriate global models for the twenty-first century in areas ranging from banking to the car industry. The demise of the printed newspaper has occupied many column

inches, both online and in print, and now the same angst is prevailing in the publishing industry (Engelhardt, 2008). Robinson (2009) has argued ‘this is not to say that the book is doomed. But publishers will surely have to change the way they do business...An industry that spends all its money on bookseller discounts and very little on finding an audience is getting things the wrong way round’. Most academic books, under current models, have limited print runs, sales and thus audiences.

The first years of the twenty-first century have seen a very significant development in the open access to information. How this will play out in the coming years in terms of the economics of scholarly communication and scholarship will be an intriguing process. There may well be a transformation in the traditional flows and costs of scholarly publishing to rectify the situation whereby universities give away most of their research and provide mostly free peer-review services towards the finished product, which university libraries then buy back. The increasing adoption by Research Councils to ensure “public funding, public access, public good” will undoubtedly continue. We can only distribute and access effectively what we own.

Universities are also recognising the need for change in access for a variety of reasons. The economic downturn has impacted severely on library budgets, particularly, for the first time in decades, in the United States. The research community there has been largely protected until now by the strength of its libraries, but with 50% of Harvard’s library acquisition budget being funded from endowment returns, even the world’s richest university is feeling the pain. Is it any coincidence that Harvard’s Open Access policy emerged in 2008, attempting to protect the copyright of its research output and to ensure its effective distribution on a global scale.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology announced in March that it will make its research available to the public free of charge, becoming the first US university to mandate the policy across all departments. MIT's policy is based on the one adopted by Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences in 2008 and retains non-exclusive publication rights for its authors to advance research and education by making them globally available (Lauerma, 2009). Academic e-monographs can readily be accommodated in such frameworks.

At the time of writing, in early 2009, a number of the major commercial US publishing houses are experiencing significant downturns in their operations. As indeed are major bookseller chains such as Borders and Barnes & Noble. The editor of *Publishers Weekly* (before she was sacked in late January 2009) was quoted that 2009 would be 'the worst year for publishing in decades'. Many commercial publishers have thus decided to utilise new social media in order to promote their publications. Ettinghausen (2008) reported that Penguin at that time, had '5,000 friends on Facebook, we're on Twitter, and were the first to go into Second Life, where we took William Gibson, the writer who invented the word cyberspace. We don't believe books will disappear - 99 per cent of our revenue still comes from ink on paper - but the way people read will change. People have shorter attention spans - a website has about three seconds to capture their attention. As a result we are spending time learning from what Nike, Sony, Xbox, YouTube do - we're competing for people's entertainment time, particularly with a young audience'.

Self publishing and widespread access to publications is encapsulated in Scribd. (<http://www.scribd.com/about>), ‘the place where you publish, discover and discuss original writings and documents’. ‘YouTube for documents’ is the term used to describe Scribd, with more than 50,000 new documents being posted daily at the time of writing (Flood, 2009). If new modes of publishing take off then the opportunities for authors, through wider web distribution, could lead to significant shifts in the marketing of and access to book content. A relevant point in this context is that most authors, despite being the content creators, receive relatively little financial reward for their books as well as limited print life.. If digital distribution and preservation patterns change, then the author’s lot can be improved in terms of both remuneration and access.

And whither unpublished academic research? Alexander (2009) claims that ‘keeping in mind that university presses publish roughly 10,000 new books annually, and assuming that they publish only 1 out of every 10 manuscripts, that means university presses are filtering 100,000 manuscripts per year. Of those, probably 15,000–20,000 get sent out for peer review’. There is a huge amount of unproductive academic time going into publishing processes with limited outcomes. Better to re-engineer resources in the press context to perhaps establish a Scribd type environment for academia via cross-searchable institutional repositories?

Digital POD futures

While most books are created and published digitally, distribution patterns reflect the pre-Internet era. Even if the text is transmitted digitally across continents, as is the

case with many fiction books in Australia, physical books are still then shipped to customers via bookshops from publisher warehouses. On average, books remain for shorter periods in bookshops, where it is not unknown for publishers to pay for premium space at the front of the shop. Books unsold are returned and subsequently either remaindered or pulped. So in effect the customer is paying for both the creation and destruction of a book. This is an increasingly uneconomic and inefficient distribution and stock control process, which will eventually be overtaken by digital delivery directly to bookshops and libraries within e-preservation frameworks and POD (Print-on-Demand) options.

Jason Epstein, the former editorial director at Random House, promulgated POD delivery in *The Book Business* (2001). Epstein's vision is now becoming a reality as the Espresso Book Machine (EBM) is being introduced into bookshops in a number of countries. The major British bookseller chain of Blackwell introduced its first EBM machine into one of its London stores in April 2009. The University of Michigan Library has installed an EBM, which can produce a paperback book on demand, in about five minutes, at roughly \$10 per book. These are usually reprints of public domain titles from the library's digitized collection of nearly two million books, as well as books available from the Open Content Alliance.

Cox (2008) aptly notes, that with the POD, the 'future of the printed monograph has arrived'. Cox outlines the benefits of the EBM, particularly in the delivery of text across distances, citing the collaboration between OECD Publishing and DA Information Services in Melbourne. Cox not only sees a speed of delivery, but also a contribution to global greening. The OECD believes that such a process to Australia

will save over 12 lbs or 5.8 kg in carbon emissions per book sold. Surface mail to Australia currently takes three months from Europe, whereas a text can be delivered in three minutes on site. The issues for libraries and their technical processing are also relevant here in terms of future ordering, receipt and distribution patterns. Once the price of EBM's reduce, there is no doubt there will be a much more rapid take-up in bookshops and libraries.

Willes in *Reading Matters* (Yale, 2008), reminds us, however, that nothing really changes in conceptual terms of production, only the technology. In her book she features a photograph of the famous British publisher, Allen Lane with his 1930's 'Penguincubator', a slot-machine which dispensed Penguin paperbacks at six pence a time directly to the reader. This was undoubtedly a precursor to the public EBM.

Who owns information in the digital era?

In historical terms, whoever dominated the trade routes dominated the world, as exemplified by the Dutch, French, and British empires. The control of natural resources, such as oil and gas, have been another major factor in power structures to the present day. Who now controls and owns information has been an emerging debate in the last decade as the Science, Technical and Medical (STM) publishing world has been dominated by a relatively small number of large multinational publishers to the detriment of the output of smaller publishers, learned societies and book purchasing by university libraries.

Firms that begin small and emerge as giants often lose *en route* their pioneering zeal to the God of mammon - think Microsoft and Reed Elsevier. It could be argued that Amazon and Google are moving down that track. Google's digitisation program currently adds another layer to the complexities of the publishing world. The US Google Book Search settlement has led to both positive and negative feedback.

A key player in the Google debate to date has been Professor Robert Darnton, Director of the Harvard University Library. Darnton (2009) is concerned that: 'Google will enjoy what can only be called a monopoly...of access to information ... what worries me is the fact that Google has no competitors. The downside has to do with the danger of monopoly'. Darnton feels we now 'have a situation where Google can really ratchet up prices, and that's what really worries me...There's no real authority to enforce fair pricing... I'm worried that Google will be the Elsevier of the future, but magnified by a hundred times' (Oder, 2009).

In a forum at Columbia University on 13 March 2009, Google's Alexander Macgillivray, Associate General Counsel for IP, responded to these issues by 'reading the pricing objectives in the settlement: the realization of revenue at market rates and the realization of broad access to books by the public. He suggested that "there's an enforceable provision that limits pricing' (Oder, 2009). The debate continues at the time of writing, but very important long term issues are at stake here. The fact that Google is offering to make texts available, via a single free access terminal in every public library building in the United States, means that public access will be available to content in a way not previously possible, but it does place a very restricted view on

access, ie to one terminal in one physical location, which runs contrary to the patterns of ‘access anywhere, anytime’ of Generation Y.

Google’s restrictions on textual access outside of the United States, because of copyright caution about territorial rights, is an example of digital narrowness. This blockage of access from users outside the United States will fall within the framework of the ‘tragedy of the anti-commons’: ‘Will it matter that Google Book Search, when it is marketed as a commercial subscription service for libraries and universities cannot be accessed or read in the world at large? ... Yes, it will matter, and that it matters will be another instance of the tragedy of the anti-commons’ (Hodgkin, 2009).

Brewster Kahle, who has laboured long for the free access to digital information through his Internet Archive, has noted that Google restricts scanned books to Google search only and enforces restrictions on some uses of public domain books, even those scanned from public institutions, like the University of Michigan, with whom it cooperates.

‘Although the library (Michigan) can share content with other libraries, it cannot provide the optical character recognition (OCR) of the books to individuals, even if the content is in the public domain. If the texts had been self-scanned, some of the limitations would not be in place, and the library would be freer to share its content. ...Libraries will be able to sign up for a subscription to view copyrighted material that has been digitized by Google partners, but a subscription won’t be needed to access public

domain materials. ...Although there are indications that subscriptions will be reasonably priced, some have been wary of the agreement with Google, noting that there is no guarantee that the costs for subscriptions would be or stay low. The outcome of negotiations around subscription prices for Google partners and others is yet to be determined' (Guevara, 2009).

Synergies for the library, institutional academic publishing and the campus bookstore

When I gave the Follett Lectures in Britain in 1995, Google was not even on the horizon. In those lectures I stated:

'In this process of integration of services, the publishing activities on campus must not be forgotten. The Campus Bookshop, the printing and multimedia services, the network backbone providers will need to come together with libraries to provide a structured network integration of services. It may well be that campus bookshops as we know them will disappear in a networked environment as will certain of the book supplier middlemen unless they restructure. University presses, a declining force in recent years, may well become transformed as they mutate into distributors of information from their own and other universities in electronic format, thereby making available information that was too prohibitively expensive to produce and distribute in conventional form' (Steele, 1995).

A decade later, the integration of POD production, publishing and libraries is becoming increasingly feasible, as developments at Sydney and Michigan universities have confirmed. As students reduce their purchasing of books and textbooks, the campus bookstore has largely become a mixture of university memorabilia, paperbacks and course reading material. Meanwhile, university libraries are moving large numbers of books and bound serials into off campus stores so that information/learning commons facilities can be installed. The similarities in access to and provision of information ‘fast food’ will blur and integrate the roles of the library and campus bookstore.

The historic decline of the academic monograph

Bauerlein (2009), citing Association of Research Libraries data, reveals that that the number of monographs purchased by US research libraries rose just one percent between 1986 and 2006 (Bauerlein, 2009). The British Academy (2005) was greatly concerned about the impact of such trends and the decline of the scholarly monograph:

‘In the 1960s and 1970s, far fewer monographs were published than now, with routine global sales of 1500 or more. But these sales levels were not sustained, and a declining sales step-curve has been evident throughout the past quarter century, with a vicious circle of declining sales driving higher prices driving declining sales.

Individual publishers have responded by issuing more and more individual titles, but with lower expectations of each. Global sales can now be as low as 250 or 300 in some fields. At some point in the

1990s, the UK academy ceased to be a self-sustaining monographic community: the subjects that have survived and/or thrived in this context have been those (like economics or linguistics or classics) with international appeal’.

In the increasingly complex world of digital scholarship the individual researcher is often out of touch, for a variety of reasons, with the problems and solutions to scholarly communication issues. Thompson (2005) argued that while many academics “depend on the presses to publish their work ... they generally know precious little about the forces driving presses to act in ways that are sometimes at odds with the aims and priorities of academics ... the monograph can survive only if the academic community actively support it”.

Whither the university press?

Historically university presses were established to distribute the scholarship of their university (Steele, 2008). They lost their way, in this context, in the last decades of the twentieth century, when commercial publishers, mostly in Europe, grew rapidly to fill the publishing vacuum in the post-Sputnik expansion funding of university research. The rise of the multinational STM ‘Big Deals’ and the decline in university library budgets in real terms saw a significant reduction by libraries in the purchasing of monographs and the output of learned societies and small publishers.

Big Deals can bring considerable benefits and underpin research by making a far greater range of material widely available at the desktop, so naturally they are very

popular with researchers, who are, however, largely distanced from the issues of scholarly communication and the ever increasing costs of subscriptions. The UK Research Information Network (2009) has outlined the advantages of Big Deals with university libraries, but has also cautioned that they ‘they also bring risks: libraries are often locked for several years into deals that may take up 75% or more of their acquisition budgets, leaving them little scope to spend funds on other materials, particularly monographs’. Books are especially in danger in budget downturns because they are, in a sense, disposable income in a way fixed serial subscriptions are not. So, just as casual staff are laid off before tenured staff in universities, books are simply not ordered to meet budget shortfalls.

A decline in revenues led many university press publishers away from their academic core business to publishing product which was often indistinguishable from that of wholly commercial trade publishers. University presses found themselves in a quandary. On the one hand, they had a foundation brief to publish original and often esoteric scholarship, but on the other, they needed to achieve financial viability. They were between an academic publishing rock and a financial hard place.

Sutherland (2007) has also commented on the differing standards of university presses and their monographic output: ‘There are, as every wide-awake academic knows, presses with acceptance hurdles so low that a scholarly mole could get over them. They edit minimally, publish no more than the predictable minimum library sale (200 or so) and make their money from volume. They repay their authors neither in money nor prestige. They put out a few good books; and a lot of the other kind. The best imprints (Oxford and Cambridge University Press, for example) set the bar

deteringly high. A scholarly kangaroo will have trouble clearing their hurdle’ (Sutherland, 2007).

The £2million losses, however, by CUP, as reported in April 2009, means that one of these two publishing kangaroos has lost some of its publishing bounce. During 2008 and 2009 a number of smaller American university presses experienced significant financial downturns, of which the University of Missouri and New Mexico Press, at the time of writing, were the latest examples. In these trends, the university press often has become disengaged from its parent institution. Within new frameworks of institutional scholarly communication, the digital era provides the opportunity for new models for the academic monograph.

New institutional scholarly frameworks

The Ithaka Report on *University Publishing in a Digital Age* (2007) reaffirmed the relative isolation of many American university presses from their core administrative structures: ‘Publishing generally receives little attention from senior leadership at universities, and the result has been a scholarly-publishing industry that many in the university community find to be increasingly out of step with the important values of the academy’ (Brown, Griffiths and Rascoff, 2007). There are, however, increasing initiatives to reconnect the university press to the scholarly communication process within universities. Hahn (2008) noted that in a survey of the 123 ARL libraries that the majority were ‘either producing publications or developing publishing services’.

The Association of American Universities, the Association of Research Libraries, the Coalition for Networked Information, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges issued a collective call for action in early 2009 that urged universities to become leaders in spreading research and scholarship (AAU, 2009). ‘Digital technologies have opened the door to a host of new possibilities for sharing knowledge and generated entirely new forms of content that must be made broadly available. This shift demands that universities take on a much more active role in ensuring dissemination of the knowledge produced by their institutions—both now and in the future’ (Lynch, 2009).

The main drawbacks in terms of immediate change are the conservative and rigid concepts of judging excellence for tenure and promotion embodied in the book. Another Ithaka Report has highlighted the problems between the potential of new models of scholarly communication and the fact that ‘anything that doesn’t look like a traditional work of scholarship is not a scholarly work; thus the immutability of traditional publishing models becomes axiomatic’ (Maron and Smith, 2008). The book is still seen as the metric par excellence for the humanities and parts of the social sciences in the international research assessment exercises.

We thus are confronted by a situation in which the mechanisms for the digital distribution of academic monograph is increasing, yet academic conservatism and research evaluation standards currently negate a variety of forms of e-production. E-books, in particular, have been viewed as less ‘academic’ than their print counterparts, yet they experience the same peer review processes and can be available just as easily as print through POD outlets.

A University College, London (2009) survey on the role and future of monograph in the arts and humanities, notes in the words of one interviewee that ‘monographs are like the main course of a meal, journal articles and other scholarly communication are like tapas and the monograph represents the “gold standard”’. The physical appearance of the monograph, however, is not simply enough to constitute the intellectual meal. Effective distribution of the content will ensure all get their just desserts.

Another UCL interviewee felt that ‘most people appear to rely on contacts or reconnections, such as one’s PhD supervisor, to get published’. Kingsley (2008) has noted in her doctoral thesis, in which she interviewed academics at the Australian National University and University of New South Wales, that many researchers were unfamiliar with recent developments in digital scholarship and e-publishing, and that researchers often continued to reflect publishing frameworks from their own early research experiences, thereby giving advice to current doctoral students which was largely out of date.

A case study of the ANU E-Press

The potential for more effective distribution of university scholarship can be seen in the following example. Professor Oskar Spate’s award winning book *The Spanish Lake* (1979) was a critical and commercial success for the then ANU Press, but after it went out of print, copies soon became difficult to find. By 2005 there were only two copies of *The Spanish Lake* listed on Antiquarian Book Exchange (ABE), both at prices over \$US400. Subsequently, the ANU E-Press published the book free on line

in 2004 and the Spanish Government supported a Spanish translation *El Lago Espanol* in 2006, which saw just over 28,000 complete PDF downloads in 2008. There is surely no contest in the ability to distribute the scholarship in the new E-Press frameworks. The costs are relatively small in the totality of the library or information budgets, let alone the university (Steele, 2008).

ANU E Press titles are freely available in HTML, PDF, and mobile device formats and are discoverable through Google Book Search and Google Scholar. A total of 8,643 print-on-demand copies were sold January to December 2008, but since the press monographs are downloadable, free, around the world, high print sales were not the original aim of the Press, but clearly these are growing. ANU E-Press statistics for PDF and HTML downloads for 2005 were 381,740 downloads; for 2006 745,288 downloads; for 2007 1,252,735 downloads; for 2008 2,747,445 downloads. Contrast these figures with the average print run of a monograph cited by the British Academy. The 2008 PDF top five global downloads were as follows:

1. *El Lago Español* - 46,394 (28,041 complete book)
2. *Ethics and Auditing* - 46,310 (22,354 complete book)
3. *The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon* – 41,532 (19,692 complete book)
4. *The Austronesians* – 38,750 (24,839 complete book)
5. *Myanmar-the state, community and the environment* – 34,876 (24,882 complete book)

Outside looking in or inside looking out?

One sometimes feels, however, that if it does not happen in the United States, it doesn't happen. Thus antipodean e-Presses were somewhat taken aback when various US educational outlets announced in March 2009 that University of Michigan Press (U M Press) was the first to move to a digital free online monograph model with POD sales. This was some 3-4 years after Australian e-press initiatives with the same model were launched (Steele, 2008). Michigan's Provost stated that 'a university press should be judged by its contribution to scholarship and that university presses have been "marginalized" by their economic challenges' (Jaschik, 2009).

The U M press release notes that 'digital publishing helps the U-M Press to adopt a business model more consistent with the university research goal to disseminate information as widely and freely as possible' (University of Michigan, 2009). The digital model will allow 'enhanced digital options, including hot links, graphics, 3D animation and video'. Publishers have been changing content and formats to reflect economic circumstances. Even major publishers like Oxford, however, are dropping or repositioning footnotes because of costs. Digital e-books with hyperlinks, not only to footnotes but also to additional content, as at Michigan and Sydney university presses, are the means of overcoming the restrictions of print.

Crane and his colleagues (2009) have commented: 'we must now face the challenge of rebuilding our infrastructure in a digital form. Much of the intellectual capital that we accumulated in the twentieth century is inaccessible, either because its print format does not lend itself to conversion into a machine-actionable form or because commercial entities own the rights and the content is not available under the open-

licensing regimes necessary for eScience in general and ePhilology in particular.’

Lynch (2005) has noted:

‘The problems are cultural, generational, and, to some extent, based on the unfamiliar nature of the digital genres. In the networked information environment, they now have a growing range of alternative genres through which to communicate and share their research. We may begin to see a significant sociological shift in the humanities and social sciences toward a more collaborative scholarship that embraces both individual analytical and critical work and the creation of large community knowledge bases. Balancing and integrating individual and community perspectives in these knowledge bases will be a fascinating and fertile process....Over the next decade, our challenges will be twofold: We must find ways to formalize and underwrite these efforts on an institutional basis, recognizing that they will strengthen research, scholarship, teaching, and learning in all the disciplines, but particularly in the social sciences and humanities. And we must ensure that the new genres are institutionalized, managed, and preserved as effectively as is the traditional print monograph’

University scholarly one stop shops?

The University of Michigan Press is being 'restructured as an academic unit under the Dean of Libraries, placing the publishing house at the centre of the University's digitization efforts' (Swanson, 2009). This process of scholarly communication integration on campus, however, should not be simply restricted to the university press. There is a growing tendency within universities to bring together their research outputs, making the publications of the university globally available in a one-stop shop repository. These outputs, which include opinion pieces, working papers, digital theses, pre and postprints and associated research data, are seen as making them more accessible and branding the university output. The fact that the more formal peer-reviewed outputs of the university are required for research assessment exercises, notably in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, has led to the development and promotion of institutional repositories to become the focal point of university research in a collective sense.

The collecting of publications for research assessment exercises such as the UK's REF (Research Evaluation Framework) and Australia's ERA (Excellence in Research Assessment) provides university platforms for the initial fillings of repositories. In this process, open access e-books can just as easily be collected and/or linked within the segments of the repository. As a by-product of these repository downloads, there is no reason why downloads and associated metrics should not be considered in assessment procedures.

California eScholarship is now one of the success stories in the distribution of institutional scholarship. This repository is part of the California Digital Library initiative. Research and scholarly output included is selected and deposited by the

individual University of California units. On 2 April 2009, the website recorded 35,042 full text downloads of repository content in the previous week, while it had 8,026,215 full text downloads to that date.

Commercial publisher Open Access initiatives

It is relevant in this context that the major UK publisher Bloomsbury (*Harry Potter*) established in late 2008 an “on-demand” imprint which would publish titles online for free (Pinter, 2008). *Bloomsbury Academic* will use Creative Commons licences to allow non-commercial use of all its titles online as soon as they are published, with revenue generated from the print copies sold using short-run technologies and POD. This apparently is the first time a commercial publisher has devoted a whole imprint to the model.

Pinter notes

‘It’s a totally different paradigm...If you start with the assumption that everything you access should be paid for at the point of use, then what we are doing is charity. If you take the view that the internet should be more of a library and less of a bookstore, and that one way of funding the publishing process is through those who access books, then free [online] access is not charitable, it’s just part of the way you do business...I am going to have to sell enough copies of my books to keep my business alive. I expect to lose a few sales [because the material is available online for free]

but gain a few sales because more people will know about the work. If I'm right, we'll be profitable. If I'm wrong, I'll get kicked out' (Pinter, 2008).

Bloomsbury Academic aims to publish 40 to 50 titles in its first year. The jury is still out, given it is only early days for Bloomsbury, but it certainly throws down the gauntlet to many traditional university presses. Another interesting variant is Faber's 'pay-what-you-want ebook', giving readers the chance to pay what they believe is appropriate for historian Ben Wilson's latest book, *What Price Liberty?* Its print price is £14.99, with Faber giving readers the opportunity to set their own price, or even download for free. Faber is expecting the experiment to increase the sales of the paper book, 'adding sales rather than replacing them' (Lea 2009). A number of internet commentators, such as Doctorow (2007), have argued that putting your material free online leads to more print sales, either through traditional publishers or POD outlets.

The Open Monograph Press (OMP) software will also encourage an alternative approach to monograph publishing. OMS is 'based on a modular design for an online system that would foster, manage, and publish monographs in digital and print forms using open source software developments, drawn from journal publishing, and social networking technologies that might contribute to not only to the sustainability of monograph publishing but to the quality of the resulting books' (Willinsky, 2009).

Textbook publishing

Gomez in *Print is Dead* (2008) traces the history of the relatively slow acceptance of the e-book. Users have had have issues with e-readers, reading a full book online, interoperability between providers, and prices of e-content. Before the major economic downturn of late 2008, textbooks had already been under pressure from declining student budgets and the Google Generation's desire for online 'gobbits' of information. Students used to accessing information and entertainment for free, either through university libraries or music downloads, are increasingly reluctant to pay significant amounts of money for textbooks, particularly as their economic circumstances decline. The UK Research Information Network (2009) has noted that book purchasing over the past decade has dropped per FTE student from £32 to £30.

As student tuition fees increase around the world, the ability or desire by them to buy expensive textbooks diminishes. Business models for textbooks are under as much scrutiny and experiencing as much change as the commercial and academic monograph sectors. The US State Public Interest Group has argued in *Ripoff 101: How the Publishing Industry's Practices Needlessly Drive up Textbook Costs*, that textbooks are hugely overpriced With many textbooks in the US costing over \$US200, there is considerable resistance to e-book purchase by other than libraries (Eunson, 2009).

The publishing of textbooks has been dominated by a relatively small number of educational publishers. Debus (2008) has provided an historical overview of the educational textbook scene in Australia, highlighting a 'golden era' from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s. By 2008, however, as detailed in the Australian Society of Authors' *Educational Publishing in Australia* (2008), publishers had 'drastically

reduced terms and conditions offered to authors...commercial educational publishing in Australia, for Australia, by Australians no longer works' (Debus, 2008). The ASA report highlights some of the same issues from the US SPIG 's findings, in that publishers produce expensive add-ons to textbooks, publish editions that differ little from earlier ones, except for adding 'digital ancillaries...like the free prawn crackers given away with many Asian take-aways...to sweeten the deal.' Debus concludes 'the business model for educational textbook publishing is broken.'

Given that textbooks are not generally accepted as research output by research assessment bodies, then apart from the relatively few academic authors who still receive substantial royalty payments, the case for on-line institutional textbook framework in terms of digital 'mix and match' seems increasingly likely. As the price of college/university textbooks continues to rise, new models, including rental of texts and various open options will also be explored. Online access is imperative in a 24x7 environment including library provision to online course pack readings. Links by them to campus learning management systems are essential.

In the UK, the UK national e-book observatory Project developed from initiatives of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) e-books working group. In 2007, the latter commissioned a consultants' report, which highlighted a number of challenges: 'the key message to come out of the report was that publishers are not making the right textbooks available electronically on the right terms' (Estelle *et al*, 2009). Ebrary (2007) also carried out a global eBook survey, which reported that e-book collections and the research tools they provided were not well understood by a significant

percentage of library users. Part of the difficulties also reflected a confusion with e-book models and difficulties with interfaces to the collection (Ebrary, 2007).

Under the aegis of the e-book observatory Project, 36 e-books were made available to all UK higher education institutions for the start of the academic year 2007/08. Key points of the usage study, which concluded in December 2008, reveal:

‘Sessions typically lasted around 13 minutes and users viewed 6 pages on average of the JISC e-books...The way in which the JISC e-books are being used perhaps indicates that e-books are not being used as a substitute for printed books. 85% of users are spending less than one minute per page. They are using e-books in a non-linear way - dipping in and out. This may indicate that if a user wants to read in a constant, frequent or linear way they will still buy or borrow the printed book. E-books are for ‘just in time’ or remote use. ...Students are using e-books in addition to the print they bought or borrowed. Publishers need to recognise that a new pricing model for e-books is required which reflects the actual use and usage behaviour. Library provision of e-books is not a threat but a chance to grow a new market’ (Estelle *et al*, 2009).

Some academic publishers have called into question the usefulness of existing e-book devices for their target market, claiming students and researchers need more "ability to interact" with the internet and other sources. Roger Horton, CEO of Taylor & Francis, has stated that e-book-specific devices were a ‘peripheral’ part of his

business, despite the firm having produced more than 20,000 e-books. ‘Most of our online business is through academic libraries or associated parts of the university, therefore nearly all desk top. Horton added digitisation was not the main concern, but price models and distribution models ... Of the (Taylor & Francis) book backlist of some 50,000 titles, over 20,000 are available as e-books (e-book revenues increased 30%) with a print on demand facility for 18,000 titles’ (Neilan, 2009).

Ernst (2009), in his ‘end-user perspective’, states that from Springer’s experience, reading from a computer is still perceived as difficult by many and print books are still preferred for cover-to-cover reading. The JISC e-books working group have also noted some of the issues that have to be resolved by libraries, such as the problems experienced with usage based models, the fact that students expect to be provided with free access to e-books for their courses as they have already paid, and that it is still too early to explore open access models for e-books due to copyright issues.

Publishers need to consider unlimited access subscription models too, given the flows of student demand. Pollock (2009) argues that ‘the addition of interactive features such as podcasts online, interaction with Learning Management Systems, and the ability to embed revision notes (flash cards) can increase the e-book's value by offering an enhanced experience to both students and teachers. The personalised experience of e-books also adds a direct-to-student channel to complement the established golden triangle (in the textbook world) of publisher, lecturer and bookseller’ (Pollock, 2009).

E-books and facing the music?

While publishers want to retain revenue by strict controls against illegal distribution, users usually want flexibility in price and access. Nothing is set in concrete in terms of user habits as *Encyclopaedia Britannica* found out. Consumer habits are driven by ease of delivery and economy of scale. The music industry has possible lessons for the book industry, given the former ultimately encompassed cheaper media and a willingness to let a product be given away for free. If the music industry learnt the hard way, in terms of distribution and price, then maybe the publishing industry, outside of the major STM multinationals who have had a stranglehold on their disciplines to date, have not yet faced the music?

Chris Anderson is author of the bestselling book *The Long Tail*. He (quoted by Page, 2009) 'dismisses as "a common misunderstanding" the idea that free has ruined the music industry. "Music labels are one tiny bit of the music industry. Every other aspect—the artists, the tours, the merchandise, the licensing—is growing. Only the publishers of the silver discs (that silly old way we used to sell music to consumers) are struggling—and the retailers of those discs " '.

Piracy and illegal downloading of e-books is clearly a problem, yet one of the most vexed issues in the debate is about digital rights management (DRM). It is perhaps instructive that since music companies began dropping DRM, sales of legal downloads have risen steadily. In 2004, according to the IFPI, global downloads were worth \$400m (£280m) at retail value, while in 2008, that figure stood at \$3.7bn (£2.6bn) (Tivnan, 2009). Most publishers, however, continue to deliver e-book

content protected by DRM. Springer is a notable exception, offering 30,000 DRM-free e-books within flat pricing models based on an institution's size (Ernst, 2009).

The market for e-books, although growing rapidly, is still less than 1 percent of the total publishing business (Neilan, 2009). Amazon's Bezos believes that e-books should be substantially cheaper than the print book, a view which has not always been accepted by the traditional publishing industry. In the UK, Hachette plans to sell at "no more than 10% off the physical price" while Australian publisher, Allen and Unwin, sells its e-books at approximately 80% of RRP (Evans, 2009).

So what e-price is right? The jury is again still out. But one would have to agree with the Australian Booksellers Association's CEO that 'fundamentally e-books won't work unless they're considerably cheaper than the paper product. The consumer hasn't been trained to expect digital product to be the same prices as physical product' (Evans, 2009). One possible outcome could be a largely free corpus of material, for and from academics and students, within Net frameworks at one end of the e-book spectrum, with both subscription and micropayments at the other. In this respect, there are similarities with trends in the serial area. Key players in these debates will be Google and Amazon. Paul Aiken, the Executive Director of the US Authors Guild, states (Stone and Rich, 2009) that ultimately 'there might be one very dominant player who could squeeze most of the profits out of this new market' (which) is frightening for authors and publishers'.

Conclusion

Ray Bradbury once said in the context of his book *Fahrenheit 451*, "You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture...Just get people to stop reading them." What form of reading will be the prevalent form in the twenty first century is a moot point. As e-devices increase in efficiency of delivery, and they and their content decrease in price, then the modes of transmission will influence patterns of reading behaviour.

Who will own, however, what we read and at what price, particularly in the academic world? When I worked in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, new readers had to read an introductory statement which includes the words: 'I hereby undertake not to...kindle therein any fire'. Back to *Fahrenheit 451*? The Amazon Kindle reader and Google Book Search both bring many advantages in terms of access to a variety of text and form, but we need at the same time to continue kindling the flames of public access to knowledge to ensure the digital era provides as many opportunities for the freedom of expression as possible.

The challenge for twenty-first century scholarship, which includes e-books, is to implement an infrastructure for the digital world untrammelled by the historical legacies in the frameworks and costings of print culture. In academic monograph and textbook production, digital online access will become the norm, more often than not supplemented by data and multimedia additions. Print, however, will not die, given the likely explosion of cheap POD outlets. Readers will still be able to judge a book by its POD cover.

E-book futures are still clearly evolving and cost and ease of access will be crucial issues. A discernible trend is, however, emerging with open access e-book

environments. If e-outputs and their impacts become embedded in promotion and tenure and research assessment exercises, then more institutions will assume responsibility for harvesting and providing global access to their scholarship, scholarship that combines authority with public accessibility. A suitable vision for the twenty first century? ‘Let those who are not old, - who are still young, ponder this well’ (Trollope, 1866)

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