



THE ACADEMIC BOOK OF THE FUTURE

Project Progress
UKSG Conference Nov 2015

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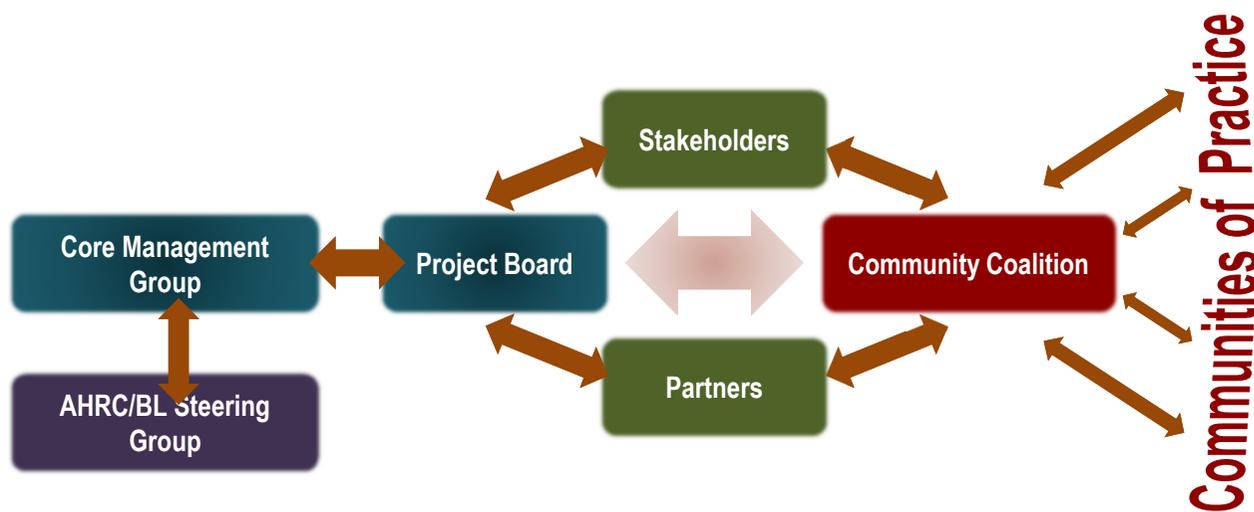




Context of Project

Project team:

- Samantha Rayner, Nick Canty & Rebecca Lyons (UCL),
- Simon Tanner & Marilyn Deegan (KCL)
- Michael Jubb as key consultant
- Project Board Chair: Kathryn Sutherland, Oxford University



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Starting Point

- **To examine the roles and purposes of academic books to serve scholarship and wider learning**
- **To examine and analyse the dynamics of academic book production, curation, and use**
- **To investigate and assess the opportunities and challenges associated with technological developments**

(via 2 phases of activity)

<https://academicbookfuture.wordpress.com/>

“What do scholars want?” We all want our cultural record to be comprehensive, stable, and accessible. And we all want to be able to augment that record with our own contributions.

Jerome McGann, *Sustainability: the Elephant in the Room*.

Paper for the 2010 Conference, Digital Humanities Scholarship: The Shape of Things to Come.

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Aims of the Project

“It is expected that this project will have a significant impact on a wide range of stakeholders in research, library and publishing communities and generate new evidence and dialogue that will inform policy and national approaches to this important area of scholarly communications.”

- AHRC Press Release, 19th August 2014



In other words...

This project **facilitates conversation** with and between all stakeholders in the academic book:

- Academics
- Publishers
- Librarians
- Booksellers
- Policy-makers

To interrogate and reflect current and emerging issues around the academic book and its contexts.



Examples and Highlights

- **University of Nottingham -SOFT Project Sprinting to the Open FuTure**
- **University of Lincoln - [im]Possible Constellations: Publishing in the digital age**
- **Katharine Reeve, Bath Spa Uni – Editors in Academic Publishing**
- **International Arthurian Society – Iconic Books**
- **Anthony Watkinson – The Academic Book in North America**
- **Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities – Training Camp**
- **New University Presses – Conference, March 2015**
- **The Future of Academic Bookselling – Conference, April 2015**



Investigating the REF2014

- **REF 2014 submissions provides a rich data set as a means of learning more about the academic books created and deemed worthy of submission in the last REF cycle (2009-2014).**
- **Focus = Main Panel D for Arts and Humanities.
Within this Panel the data can be investigated by Unit of Assessment Subject Area and by Research Output Type.**
- **Likely outcomes:**
 - **Allow an identification of who are the publishers of the book submissions**
 - **Other possibilities:- author gender, book format/length etc, books per submitting institution, open access books**
 - **Results may stimulate discourse**
 - **Caveats abound...**



Some brief reflections & directions from Michael Jubb's research for the Project

- **Sales, acquisitions, licensing etc models.** Neither publishers nor librarians nor aggregators/intermediaries are satisfied with current models, **especially for e-books**, despite recent experimentation. Further examination of current models, the constraints on all sides, and how they might be eased, could help to signal ways forward and promote the further use of e-books
- **Relationships between publishers, intermediaries, libraries and retailers.** There is considerable concern both from publishers and libraries about the complexities of the supply chain to end-users, and about the concentration in the intermediary market. Further examination of the relationships between the different kinds of agents in the supply chain could help to point ways to reduce complexity and thus to ease those concerns.



Some brief reflections & directions from Michael Jubb's research for the Project

- **The role of books in the digital scholarly infrastructure.** Books remain a critical part of the scholarly infrastructure in analogue form. But we have not yet clearly articulated how to present the broad range of scholarly resources in the humanities in an effective and user-friendly way, **integrating 'books' into the wider range of resources and tools**. Further examination of this issue could provide powerful insights into how research in the arts and humanities might most effectively develop for the future.
- **Incentives to publish books. No crisis in Scholarly Publishing.** There seem to be powerful incentives to write and to publish books, even as volumes of sales of individual titles fall; and there is concern that too many books with little chance of significant sales or readership are being published. Further examination to develop more evidence is needed.



Project Team's Recommendations

- **The OA landscape**

We urgently need a portal that allows for information about different OA publishers and initiatives to be easily obtained, compared, and understood.

- **Provide training for academics at every career level**

In copyright and IP; in OA; in how to peer review effectively; in how to work with librarians and publishers to create outputs that can be found easily, preserved safely, and configured innovatively

- **Build more cross-community projects**, like AcBookWeek, so that deeper understanding of the interdependencies between sectors can push progress forwards.



**ACADEMIC
BOOK
WEEK
NOVEMBER** **2015**



Why get involved?



“It is essential that the arts, humanities and social science community takes a lead in shaping thinking about these issues to ensure that the models that emerge sustain and improve the communication of scholarly information rather than distorting it.”

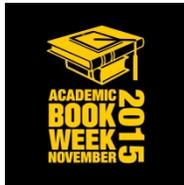
Crossick Report, p. 11.



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