



Monographs & Open Access

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HEFCE Monographs & Open Access Project

Why was the project set up?

- Not for REF 2020
- Longer-term perspective for online monographs
- Identify & clarify issues, move forward thinking
- AHRC & ESRC support, British Academy involved
- What do we mean by 'monograph'?
 - includes collections of essays, scholarly editions of texts, research-based exhibition catalogues etc

Why the ampersand?

- Must start with what monograph is and what is happening to it
- Three core dimensions of work
 - what is place and culture of the monograph within humanities & social sciences?
 - is there a crisis of the monograph?
 - how will innovation in publishing & access models affect the monograph?
- The project itself
 - Expert Reference Group, collected data, focus groups, consultations, OAPEN-UK survey, commissioned research

1. The culture of the monograph

- Monograph in ecology of scholarly communications
incl. research books not formal monographs
central to much of AH&SS – not some awkward outlier
- How much variation across disciplines?
- Key question – why write and why read monographs?
- Understanding research culture of monograph central to report
way knowledge developed, articulated, disseminated
including thinking through writing the book
- Culture of attachment – how scholars identify with their work
- Career progression and reputation

2. Is the monograph in crisis?

- Long-established discourse about ‘crisis of monograph’ intensified in some arguments for open access
- Decline in numbers published?
the 4 largest UK monograph publishers
2004 – 2,523 new titles, 2013 – 5,023 new titles
- Harder to get published some sub-areas than others?
- Decline in print runs?
from remainder bookshops to print on demand...
- Decline in numbers purchased?
individuals
libraries
- Current ‘crisis of monograph’ not key argument for open access
but different crisis looming: might open access save monograph?

3. How will innovation in publishing & access models affect monographs?

- In context of culture and situation of monograph
what are implications of move to online & open access?
must assume move to online access will come – and open?
- The print monograph: *where text does not reign alone*
materiality of book
distinctive implications for digital access cf. journal articles
- How can strengths of print monographs be sustained in digital?
must if open access is to work, although print won't disappear
e-books not good enough yet
- But real opportunities with online delivery and open access
opportunities of wider access, readership, use
freely access whole book
and enhancement and dynamics of how used

Some key other issues from report

- Third-party rights
 - many disciplines where others own rights
 - esp. art history, music, dance, drama, film, literature
 - open access will exacerbate problem
- Open licensing
 - gratis or libre?
 - how restrictive CC licences should mandates allow?
- Technical and process challenges
 - technological improvements to capture user experience of print monograph not simply a linear text
 - long-term storage & usability
- Economic & business models

Economic and business models

- Proliferation of initiatives
too new and/or too confidential to clearly assess as pilots
- Asked London Economics to do economic analysis business models
their report available HEFCE website
- Models:
traditional publisher; new university press OA;
mission-oriented OA; freemium OA;
aggregator/distributor; author payment.
- My conclusions?
need for more development – but no one model would prevail
cf. simple current journals models
business model must be invisible to user

The way forward

- Much else in the report
on these issues and on others: eg peer review, doctoral theses
implications for key stakeholders such as universities, libraries,
learned societies
- Report published January 2015
reception
- The way forward
HEFCE & other funding councils
research councils
- International dimension
major issue – academic collaboration & mobility
trend towards open access – but speed & emphases differ

A historian's final reflection

- Is open access the disruptive force in a stable system of research and of scholarly communication?
- A historian's response...



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