

Publishing Science in Human and Social Sciences: Forms and stakes

“Formative, normative and transformative publishing: Technological, economic and geographic changes and their effects on discourse communities in scholarly publishing” / “Publication formative, normative et transformative: Les changements technologiques, économiques et géographiques et leurs impacts sur les communautés discursives dans l’édition académique”

Michael Eberle-Sinatra and Johanne Provençal

Michael Eberle-Sinatra
Département d'études anglaises
Université de Montréal
CP 6128, Station Centre-ville
Montréal, Quebec H3C3J7 - Canada
michael.eberle.sinatra@umontreal.ca
Tel: (514) 343-6149

Johanne Provençal
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 - Canada
johanne_provençal@sfu.ca

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Scholarly publishing innovations that have permitted increasingly widespread online and open access publishing clearly have had profound changes on publishing science in the human and social sciences. Three notable changes are in the technological, economic and geographic dimensions of publishing science, and these changes, in turn, have striking implications for the discourse communities of the human and social sciences.

Technological, economic and geographic changes in scholarly publishing are mutually reinforcing and remove barriers to authors, readers and publishers in numerous ways. The technological changes that have permitted increasingly widespread online and open access publishing remove barriers to entry for publishers that wish to extend their reach beyond the economic and geographic limitations of print, which in turn, has removed barriers to entry for authors and readers who wish increased access to scholarly works. This extended reach and access made possible through the technology and economics of online and open access publishing permits extended geographic reach, not only for small scholarly institutions and communities, but more strikingly, in an increasing number of nations and in multiple languages.

Both individually and together, these technological, economic and geographic changes in the science of human and social science publishing create a transformative force that calls into question both

the formative and the normative in terms of the paradigms and devices found in discursive practices and discourse communities in publishing science in the human and social sciences. These changes permit new voices, new languages and new media to be included in what is recognized as the public record of scholarly inquiry found in scholarly journals and monographs. Such change has profound implications for the paradigms and devices found in discursive practices and discourse communities in scholarly publishing. What is made possible and what is made public in scholarly discourse is forever changed.

Online and open access publishing have introduced new devices that allow author submission, peer review, editing, production and publication to be streamlined, automated and documented. Publishing platforms and multi-media capabilities found in online publishing make possible inclusion of audio, visual and audio-visual content—both as data and as scholarly forms of expression—as integral parts of scholarly publishing and therefore, recognized as important parts of scholarly inquiry. This inclusion also serves to move through language barriers, in terms of what it is possible to communicate when working beyond the boundaries of national languages. At the same time, although the digital divide must not be underestimated, the economics and technologies of online and open access publishing are able to remove barriers to entry that permit more authors, readers and publishers to participate in scholarly exchange than is the case in print-based publishing.

These changes, individually and together, result in changes in discourse and in scholarly discourse and publishing communities. Ultimately, it becomes clear, when looking to discourse theory, that changes in the technological, economic and geographic changes in science of human and social science publishing have far reaching implications for academic discourse and epistemological understandings both within and across the disciplines, as perhaps best exemplified in the digital humanities.