DEBATING OPEN ACCESS

Edited by Nigel Vincent and Chris Wickham

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It is hard to believe that the long and complex open access debate hit the radar, for most of us, only a year ago, in June 2012, with the publication of the Finch Report.[1] The parameters and travailed history of that debate are chronicled by Rita Gardner in her essay below. There are signs, however, that we have entered into a period of relative calm, now that committees of the House of Lords and House of Commons have both heard a remarkable quantity of evidence (and, more often, opinion) on the subject, which as a whole amounts to some thousand pages,[2] and now that we are entering a period in which the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) digests the responses from its pre-consultation on the problem. This relative calm will not last very long, but it seems to the British Academy a good moment to publish a set of contributions to the debate that aim to explore some of the issues involved in more detail.

Introductions like this one often summarise the articles that follow and offer a synthesis of them. Each article here has an abstract attached, and we refer the reader to them, rather than setting them out here. But a simple synthesis is in any case impossible. We decided at an early stage when thinking about putting these papers together, in January 2013, that we needed to have as contributors people who thought open access was a good thing, the way forward; people who thought it was a good thing but fraught with practical problems which were ill-understood by some of its advocates; and people who thought it was a bad thing in principle. This is what we have indeed commissioned. We have not got the full spectrum of views about open access, for sure, which would have required very many more articles (we have for example an advocacy of Gold open access, by Stuart Shieber, but not a matching argument for Green, the main alternative form of open access publishing[3] – see Appendix 1 for definitions), but we certainly have a wide range. There is also diversity in the contributors: academics and publishers, representatives of learned societies, natural and social scientists as well as historians and literary critics, although the important perspective of university librarians is one that is missing. Our authors therefore often do not agree on much at all, which makes any synthesising attempt pointless. For the same reason, it would also not be right to try to fit them into the British Academy's own public position on open access, which fits squarely into the second group,

the group which focuses on practical problems, at least as they apply to the Humanities and Social Sciences, the community whose views the Academy seeks to represent. What we offer in this introduction is therefore simply a setting out of some of the terms of the debate, as a framing for what follows. These will be very well-known to many readers, but in our experience readers often only read half the debate, not the other half, and a brief recap of both sides will not go amiss. Appendix 2 provides a compilation of some of the key dates and documents in the recent debates on open access.

The open access movement has taken off in the very recent past, it seems to us, for two main reasons (see in this volume above all Stuart Shieber and Stephen Curry). One is ethical: all knowledge should be freely available to everybody. This view, which is an old one, and often phrased in all-or-nothing idealistic terms (as any googling of the words 'open access blog' will show very fast), has recently been taken up by governments and major research providers, with the added argument that, since research in the UK is publicly funded, funders should be able to require that its results be available to the community at large – any interested reader, anywhere. The argument that project funders (such as the research councils in the UK) should be able to determine the rules for the dissemination of the knowledge they fund is a recognisable one. But the added argument that, since virtually all academics in the UK (and in the EU; not always, however, in the United States) are paid salaries which come from public funds in one form or another, they have the same obligation to make their work available free, is a newer one, surprising to many, and also one which not by any means all academics easily accept (see Robin Osborne in this volume). It has a current force, however, which is not only moral but now political, with Conservative politicians in effect lined up with unequivocal egalitarians (Martin Eve here, for example, explores the argument that even peer review needs to be considered very critically in an open access world, as unacceptably elitist and unaccountable). It has also gained the strong support of those scientists who need to have access to large electronic data-sets, unrestricted by paywalls, in order that their search engines can generate the meta-analyses which are often the only way to make sense of the uncontrollable mushrooming of information in disciplines such as the Biosciences.

This is given added urgency by the second main reason, the fact that library budgets in universities are currently spiralling out of control, as a result, almost exclusively, of the vastly increased costs of journal subscriptions – which makes even the virtually unlimited access to knowledge taken as normal by users of very large university libraries something which will soon be impossible to guarantee anywhere. Something has to change here, then, somehow; and open access, at least for journals, is the solution now proposed by many people. It was not by chance that the only institutional responses to the Parliamentary enquiries this year which were unequivocally in favour of open access (apart from those of government and quasi-government bodies) were from libraries and their representatives, and Harvard's very large but justifiably worried Widener Library has played a particular vanguard role here worldwide.

Whatever we think of Finch and the compromises which have followed (tracked here with different emphases by Gardner and Shieber), the library issue is one which will not go away; and anyone who wishes to resist the current proposals for open access, whether in the UK or worldwide, will have to find an answer to the problem of spiralling journal subscriptions. (Some are on offer, but to discuss them in detail would be out of place here.) But it has seemed to large sections of the UK academic sector, all the same, that the solutions offered by government and the research councils are flawed in a variety of ways. Some have almost nothing to do with the pro-open access arguments set out above, such as the issue of the generous CC-BY reuse licences that the research councils wish to impose on Gold open access articles. These may well be justified in the natural sciences, particularly the Biosciences, where the size of the data-sets and the sheer number of published papers mean that they cannot be searched and analysed without the aid of computational tools. The same need is not evident in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, where instead the risk of plagiarism looms large. We do not try to deal with this very technical argument here, but nothing else in wider debates really hangs on it. Some concerns, by contrast, are very general indeed, such as 'why mess the whole research ecosystem up for a dream?', which is indeed quite widely felt, even if seldom articulated in quite such blunt terms. We can, all the same, single out four main practical issues, which have been particularly

important in forming critical responses to the whole OA agenda on the part of practising academics. They have for the most part resonances right across the disciplinary spectrum (particularly that concerning learned societies), but we will here concentrate on the way it is seen in Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS).

The first is Gold vs Green open access. The Finch Report was – it was one of its strengths – concerned about the sustainability of journals if the information in them was available free, and proposed a Gold means of paying for the information, via article processing charges (APCs) directly to the journals concerned. This did not please those who favoured sweeping away the entire current journal system, but it was at least sustainable. The problem was that such payments would inevitably be made alongside subscription costs, as long as the rest of the world did not adopt Gold open access, which there is little sign that most of it will; so that someone – the UK government? Research councils? Universities? – would have to be paying twice for indefinitely long periods.

In a period of great financial stringency, it was never likely that all of the money would be made available that was estimated to be needed for all the Gold open access publishing which would result even just from research council grants, still less all article publishing in UK universities; and so it proved. In the middle of the year 2012-13 it seemed that reduced money for APCs meant that university managers might have to be the people who would determine what articles got published, a very threatening move to academics, but an equally terrifying one to universities who saw that they would have to pay for that decision-making process too. The APCs proposed for Gold open access were also, it seemed to many (not all) HSS journal editors, very low, given the high costs of organising the reviewing and copy-editing of relatively long articles in journals with often very high turn-down rates. The log-jam was broken when the research councils finally conceded that Green open access, which simply depended on embargo periods, was an equally acceptable (although still non-preferred) publishing procedure. It seems to us, for reasons outlined in several articles below, that Green is going to be by far the main route for HSS open access publishing now. But the confusion soured much of

the sector, and many who were initially persuaded of the merits of open access are beginning to have doubts, at least as far as the version proposed by the funding bodies is concerned. And the debate has left no consensus between the funding bodies and academics, in HSS in particular, about the length of embargo periods.

The second issue is the role and indeed the survival of learned societies, one particularly close to the Academy's concerns as in effect it is a learned society itself (even if one nearly entirely funded by government). Learned societies are disproportionately, especially but not only in HSS, dependent on journal subscriptions; and their very considerable contribution to the academic ecosystem in the form of scholarships, travel grants and the like is thus itself dependent on people and institutions continuing to buy journals, or at least pay (if Gold open access continues to be relevant) for the articles contained in them. The Finch Report nodded to the particular needs of learned societies, but did not discuss in any detail how they were to be supported; and subsequent government-led debate paid little attention to them, until the societies concerned began to organise themselves.

The problem here is that, to a supporter of open access in principle, journals are the problem to be solved, because of their cost and the way they lock up data; but most such supporters are natural scientists, where journals are not only overwhelmingly the main way of publishing, but also often eye-wateringly expensive. In HSS, the situation is different; the type of journal which first comes to people's mind is by no means the huge and costly science and medical journals (Elsevier's *The Lancet* costs £1,000 a year to institutions, Macmillan's *Nature* £6,700 to medium-sized institutions, ratcheting up or down dependent on size; and these are only the best-known, not the most expensive, journals) but the journals of each learned society, often held not only in respect but affection, where £200 a year is commoner, and often rather less. Journal publishers (mostly the larger presses, even in the case of learned societies) are often seen as enablers, as Ziyad Marar puts it here, rather than as profiteers. The library-cost argument thus seems less biting to HSS academics, and the issue of the survival of such journals rather more important. The government

realised that this was a key issue sooner than the research councils did (if indeed they yet do); but, again, the debate here hangs on embargo periods, and how long they need to be in each discipline (for not all HSS disciplines are the same in this respect) for their subscription-base to survive – at least until each of them adapts to a different funding system, if one exists. Funders find it hard – in some cases impossible – to imagine that a 24-month embargo period would allow research to become available fast enough outside subscribing institutions to remain relevant; whereas to many HSS academics an article published in 2010 still seems pretty recent, not to speak of a book published in the same year. Indeed many of us still reference seminal work published in 1910. This issue, as already stated, has not been resolved, and nor will it be without more research; both sides have in its absence often been content to reiterate their beliefs rather than argue on the basis of data.

A third issue is the ability of UK academics to publish abroad. The discussions of the last year have resulted in many (but certainly not all) UK journals becoming what the research councils call 'compliant' with their requirements; but non-UK journals have fewer reasons to do so, and in HSS very many have no intention of so doing. The prospect of UK academics thus being cut off from an international intellectual culture has, it is fair to say, not been as much on the horizon of the debating parties as are the first two of these concerns, but it may end up as being one of the most problematic, not least because international excellence has always been the benchmark for the UK's national research evaluation exercises (RAE and REF). We simply list it here rather than discuss it; it is introduced and discussed by Chris Wickham in his article below. It, too, badly needs data to make clear how serious the issue really is.

The fourth issue is simply that the whole open access debate, above all the ethical element of it, depends on the assumption that all publishing is now online. In HSS, this is not the case. Books, whether monographic or collective, are usually only available in hard copy. Journals, it is true, are usually online in HSS as elsewhere, although even here it would be wrong to assume that without checking, especially in non-anglophone countries; but in the Humanities only a few disciplines publish more

than 40% of their research in journals, and in Social Science only a few over 70%. (The advocates of immediate public availability for publicly-funded research also do not recognise, it must be added, that some of this research may not be published in English.) How to fit books into an open access structure is a very hard task indeed, as Nigel Vincent explores here, and it is therefore not one which is on the immediate horizon either; but it is one which is constantly invoked as a future desideratum by open access advocates, even if rather vaguely, so academics can scarcely be blamed for worrying about it. This too has soured the debate, and needlessly.

The essential final point, it seems to us, is this. The position that open access is ethically necessary and/or inevitable, and the position that it has so many practical problems attached to it that it risks being pointlessly destructive unless they are resolved, each seem the obvious starting-point to substantial groups of researchers: so obvious, indeed, that it is often not necessary to take seriously the other position at all. As editors, we have strong personal views ourselves; but it also seems to us essential to set out as many differing views as possible, expressed in relatively calm tones for the most part, so that readers can see what alternative viewpoints consist of. We therefore urge readers, of whatever persuasion, to read all the articles here, not just those they agree with. As we stated at the start of this introduction, synthesis is impossible here; but a solution needs to be found to solve the questions posed by each side. If practitioners do not create a solution for themselves, others will continue to do it for them. No solution will be able to satisfy all parties entirely, but solutions which satisfy no one at all are very much to be avoided. There is no alternative therefore to us working out our own solutions. We hope that this collection may be one of the tools which allow that to happen.

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Notes

1 *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications. Report of the Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings*, www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Finch-Group-report-FINAL-VERSION.pdf. For the origins and earliest statements of the open access principle in the so-called Budapest initiative of 2002, see www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org

2 See, respectively, www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/science-technology/Openaccess/OpenAccessevidence.pdf and www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmbis/writev/openaccess/contents.htm

3 A good example is the extensive work of Stevan Harnad, who advocates immediate Green self-archiving in institutional repositories – for which see, for instance, his blog, openaccess.eprints.org

Open access and learned societies

Rita Gardner

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- Learned societies are a fundamental part of the research ecology, providing a substantial intellectual, public and reputational good, at minimal cost to the UK public purse.
- Learned societies' 'not-for-profit' work in support of their disciplines is typically funded, in part, from overseas income derived from publishing; their journals also directly contribute to the international standing of UK research.
- Most existing learned society journals in HSS are likely to become hybrid.
- Green OA is likely to be dominant for the HSS disciplines in the current transition framework, for reasons of funding limitations and the more restrictive forms of CC-BY licensing preferred by HSS authors.
- The insistence by RCUK on a policy with short Green OA embargo periods is unsupported by evidence; learned societies must continue to work together to pursue an appropriate balance between access, excellence and sustainability.
- The current dearth of evidence needs to be overcome if societies in HSS are to argue their case(s) more effectively during the transition period.
- Societies increasingly recognize they will need to adapt their publishing and other strategies in the new and uncertain publication environment.

I have been quite deeply involved in the open access 'journey' – as it is described by officials from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Research Councils UK (RCUK) – for the past two years. My point of departure was the Finch Working Group, where I was one of three representatives from learned societies. As the only society voice from a discipline (Geography) with strong roots in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), and in a process that was being driven largely by experience in the Bio and Life Sciences, I found myself akin to how I imagine Livingstone felt crossing Africa – a long way to go, negotiating very many different cultures each with their own language, outlook and agenda, and not a map in sight.

That the multitude of stakeholders represented on the Finch Group[1] managed to reach a consensus after a year of tough negotiations, a compromise that was agreed by all involved and fully endorsed by BIS, is still, I believe, a remarkable achievement. It came at a cost to every sector involved in those negotiations. That it was achieved at all was due to the fact that everyone was able to sign up to two statements that guided the process. The first concerned the three underlying principles that should underpin 'how' to achieve open access in scholarly publishing: access, excellence and sustainability. At no point were they assumed or drafted to be anything other than equal. The second concerned the concept of a 'mixed economy', whereby Gold and Green routes to publishing were both seen as part of the open access landscape for a good time to come. The stated 'preference' for Gold, thus giving immediate access to readers to the published article, was predicated on there being sufficient money in the system to pay for article processing charges (APCs) at rates that were sustainable for publishing businesses, including learned societies' publishing.

For learned societies[2] in their role as publishers of some of the most long-standing and highly rated international journals, *excellence* underpinned by rigorous peer review was already a given. Most learned society journals were also already offering open access, in various forms and to varying degrees, beyond the published articles that sit behind subscription paywalls. Most leading journals had offered a Gold option for some years; though take-up rates in HSS had been uniformly very low. It was quite common for pre-publication versions of accepted papers to be able to be lodged in institutional repositories; some journals enabled a portion of articles to be placed online with immediate free access; and many were part of philanthropic programmes that enabled free or very low cost access to institutions in the poorer nations of the world. A minority of societies already had full open access journals, supported either as a non-income-generating collective, or operated with commercial publishing partners. In short, many learned societies were already cognisant and engaged in open access.

There are wider debates around how to ensure excellence and quality in the future, and how that relates to highly ranked journals. The Finch

Working Group did not accept, nor do I, that community sourced, post-publication peer review can readily replace traditional pre-publication peer review. The assurance of quality in the article at the time of publication will continue to be essential for those who use the content, whether in business, professional practice, in policy or public realms. There is also little doubt in my mind that the majority of scholars will continue to wish to publish in highly rated journals with well-developed international reputations and rigorous peer review, despite assertions by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) that journal status is irrelevant in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) process.[3]

I have come across no learned society that does not believe in, and support, open *access* in principle. Equally, I have come across none that do not see *sustainability* as the key principle for the future operation of open access in their context. This is sustainability in two ways; firstly in terms of sustaining the continuity and excellence of their journals which, in many instances, have built international reputations for their disciplines over decades and centuries, and which act as flagships for the standing and status of UK scholarship and academic leadership internationally. It was no surprise, with the recent ESRC/AHRC International Benchmarking Review of Human Geography in the UK, in which the subject was ranked as world leading, to see the international standing of 'British' journals and the range and number of leading journals edited by UK academics, as one of the criteria taken into account.[4]

It is also sustainability in terms of their publishing business models and reasonable expectations of income; neither Green nor Gold comes for free. The Gold model relies on the APC income meeting the full range of publishing costs and enabling profit margins; Green is underpinned by a traditional subscription business model but with papers being made available to all after an agreed embargo period. The greatest risk to the combination of excellence and financial sustainability in publishing therefore lies in insufficient resources to pay for Gold, which could be for any one of a variety of reasons, or Green embargoes that are too short and thus undermine subscriptions, with libraries simply waiting until the material is available for free.

My view is that in HSS the Green route is likely to be the dominant one, both because there is insufficient money in the system to pay for Gold and because there are concerns about the least restrictive CC-BY licence that goes with it owing to the amount of money in the system and the preferences of authors regarding licences. Some 50% of academics returned to the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise were in HSS and yet only about 10% of RCUK funding was awarded to those disciplines; and this is before we take account of the fact that only 30 universities currently qualify to receive open access publishing funds from RCUK. The many calls on QR funding that already exist will probably limit the extent to which institutions will support Gold APCs via that route. Furthermore, from some of the calculations that I have seen, the APC levels that existing leading journals in HSS with high rejection rates and lengthy papers will genuinely need to charge, if they are to remain profitable, most probably price them out of the effective marketplace as full Gold journals. Moreover, authors in receipt of RCUK funds or submitting their articles to REF 2020 and who do not wish to subscribe to CC-BY licences requirements, can choose to publish in the Green route where, under current guidance, more restrictive licences are possible. In a recent JISC-sponsored survey[5] 79% of academics preferred the CC-BY-NC-ND (non-commercial and non-derivative) licences.

Most learned societies in HSS are likely therefore, in the new open access context, to convert their established journals to hybrid journals, combining Gold and Green routes and still retaining some papers fully behind paywalls. The main income will still arise from institutional subscriptions and this will then enable the journals to offer Gold APC charges at a more affordable and competitive rate. In this scenario the embargo period is critical: short enough to give reasonable open access and long enough not to undermine subscriptions. No one yet knows where this balance in embargo periods lies for HSS, or even if it needs to differ between different disciplines within HSS. We do know that in many instances HSS journals have half-lives for citation and readership of three to four years, or longer, but whether this is a good predictor of embargo lengths for sustainability is an open question. On the other hand, recent studies have shown that 6 month embargoes would definitely undermine subscriptions.[6] This issue

was recognised in the Finch Report, which identified the need for longer embargoes in HSS, proposing up to 24 months in a transition period and possibly beyond. To many societies this seems a not unreasonable trial embargo period at least until more evidence of impacts has been collected. In the Humanities, in particular, calls for 36 month embargoes persist.

Why does publishing sustainability matter so much to the learned societies? Put simply, they use their publishing income to help support the breadth of their work for the academy. Learned societies taken together across STEM and HSS generate well over a hundred million pounds sterling of income per year from publishing and invest the surpluses from that in supporting UK scholarship and in helping to ensure that UK research has a strong international presence. Thus, learned societies play a key role in the research ecology of the UK, supporting disciplines and their practitioners, advancing and sharing knowledge and, in some cases, engaging schools, policymakers and the wider public beyond the academy. A number also offer professional accreditation to sustain standards in the practice of their disciplines. Their work complements that of other agencies and reaches tens of millions of people each year. The HSS alone has more than 200 learned societies and subject bodies.[7]

Learned societies differ widely in their size and range of activities, from turnovers of less than £100,000 per year and a volunteer workforce, to turnovers of £40m plus with hundreds of staff. Those in HSS (either wholly or in part) tend to be at the lower end of that range, the largest having a turnover of *c*. £11m per annum and more than 100 paid staff. Income sources include membership subscriptions; publishing; events and activities (e.g. conferences); enterprise activities (e.g. consultancy and room hire); and in some cases, fundraising and legacies. Publishing activities are a significant income source (>30%-65% total gross income) for many learned societies. On average publishing generates around 50% of total gross income for a sample of 53 leading (non-medical) learned societies in the UK; the range being 4.4% to 97.5%.

The majority of the income from journal subscriptions (between 80% and 90% in many cases) comes from overseas subscribing institutions.

So the suggestion made in some of the recent debates that public money in the UK (i.e. university subscriptions to journals) is, and should not be, underpinning learned society activities is pure nonsense. Further, indirect income is also tied to publishing, notably practitioner members who subscribe to societies in order to receive the journals, income from reprints, archived collections or collated themed volumes. The net income generated is reinvested to support learned society activities since the majority are charities and operate on a not-for-profit basis.

In short, learned societies are a key part of the research ecology of the UK and provide a very substantial intellectual, public and reputational good, at the heart of which is support for their discipline and its practitioners in the UK academy. They achieve that with income generated, often in large part, by successful publishing of scholarly journals that earn subscription income mostly from overseas; and in the process they do not place a drain on the UK public purse. Their journals also directly contribute to UK reputation and international standing. Their ability to absorb risk and to invest in new ventures is limited, unlike that of their globalised, commercial publishing partners. Learned societies, with the possible exception of the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Institute of Physics, tend to lack the scale, business acumen, borrowing capacity or cross subsidisation possibilities present in the large commercial publishers. Hence they are more vulnerable to change than the commercial publishers. This is why the principle of sustainability is vital to learned societies and why they have responded with such vigour to the RCUK policy implementation proposals.

Why was there a stand-off? In July 2012, following hot on the heels of the Finch Report publication, RCUK announced its policy and guidance for implementing open access publishing in relation to the research it funds; a policy updated from that introduced in 2005, which had been largely ignored. In a number of key respects the 2012 policy diverged from, and was tougher than, the recommendations in the Finch Report. Unwittingly learned societies suddenly found themselves caught, largely powerless, in the crossfire of a battle between an evangelical RCUK/Wellcome Foundation and the commercial publishers over rising costs and profits;

a battleground informed almost entirely by experience in the Bio and Life sciences, fuelled by changes in digital technology and presented outwardly as an argument about public access to scholarship and public benefit from public expenditure.

At the heart of this battle, for the learned societies, was sustainability and principle: sustainability in terms of Green embargo periods and principle in terms of licensing requirements. The Finch Report had referenced non-commercial licensing (not commercial licensing), RCUK demanded full commercial reuse for Gold published papers and data. RCUK policy was, and still is, uncompromising on demanding embargo periods of one year or less in HSS after a transition phase during which there is more relaxed guidance. Their initial guidance failed to recognise a key Finch Report recommendation that if a journal offered a Gold route and a scholar did not have access to Gold funding, then the journal could implement a longer embargo period of up to 24 months. This was critical for learned society sustainability in publishing in the HSS, as indeed it also was for science, where policy embargoes are 6 months and transition arrangements should have allowed 12 months but did not.

Nine months later, after an inordinate amount of wrangling in public, and two revisions from RCUK in the first quarter of 2013, there is finally RCUK guidance in place for a transition period of five years from April 2013 that is consistent with the Finch Report and BIS endorsement of it. The HEFCE consultation process is ongoing but it has stated that in terms of embargo and licensing it is likely to follow the lead of RCUK.[8] The fact that it has taken Select Committee inquiries in both the House of Commons[9] and the Lords[10]; innumerable meetings with officials, special advisors and ministers; a considerable advocacy campaign; and more than five conferences (British Academy, Academy of Social Sciences, Society for Biology and the Royal Society, Wiley-Blackwell and the Foundation for Science and Technology) to draw attention to the issues being faced by learned societies and to, effectively, end up back where Finch Report started from, indicates the scale of the problem. The amount of time, energy and effort that has been spent to achieve a position that should never have been in doubt in the first place, is hugely frustrating.[11]

At best, the last nine months has resulted in a transition policy/guidance that, together with the long lead time in journal production and sales, will probably ensure sustainability of most current journals for five years. It has removed the most contentious elements of RCUK initial guidance, notably reference to market forces and convoluted routes by which researchers were encouraged to seek cheaper Gold journals or Green journals with short (not 24 month) embargo periods if they could not afford their first choice Gold journal. It has clarified the fact that it is the researcher who decides where to publish, and that if APC money is not available to him/her, for whatever reasons, from their institution, they may in Humanities and Social Sciences choose a Green route in a journal with a 24 month embargo period provided that journal also offers a Gold route option. It has also given time and an extended review process over the transition in which to collect evidence of implementation, impact and unintended consequences. The fact that RCUK has already produced its final policy indicates they have a clear end point in mind. Vital for the learned societies will be agreeing and collecting systematically, evidence to help inform any arguments to be made to change that policy.

I am, nevertheless, no clearer as to what are the real motives driving RCUK policy seemingly towards access, excellence and yet potential unsustainability for existing publishers, especially learned societies and perhaps especially in Humanities and Social Sciences. However, without understanding the true underlying motivation, it remains difficult to understand how best to respond. One thing is clear though, RCUK are making every effort to influence other research funders worldwide, through Science Europe and other fora, in favour of their policy with its Gold preference and short Green embargoes. I am not alone in finding this immensely worrying, not least because the rest of the world, where it has stated a preference, seems to be favouring the Green approach. As the Chief Executive of ESRC has said publicly, a very worrying scenario for Humanities and Social Sciences would be a global response to open access that is focused largely on a Green route and with short embargoes (i.e. 12 months or less in Humanities and Social Sciences, and 6 months in other discipline areas). Science Europe has already set out a policy statement, similar to that of RCUK, citing a 12 month maximum Green embargo for

Humanities and Social Sciences[12] journals and changes they would wish to see in hybrid journals, among other points. This reinforces the question – what is the real motivation to pursue such seemingly aggressive and speedy change linked to non-precautionary policymaking?

It is easy to draw a simplistic conclusion that the last nine months was just about money, especially as publishing revenues will have increased significantly in the past ten years or so for most societies. Of course money came into it, but so too did the wider roles of learned society publishing, and the manner in which learned societies in Humanities and Social Sciences felt they were being treated.

Concerns that the learned society sector was not being sensibly consulted, understood or valued by policymakers were keenly felt, as was the failure to welcome, in terms of policy, the fact that 'one size does not fit all' in relation to publishing practice, citation and readership. The inexplicably pressured rush to policy formulation and implementation in an uncertain, risky and poorly-evidenced environment, and with little consultation, especially in relation to Humanities and Social Sciences, had no rationale for the societies; and was indeed also questioned in the Lords inquiry. Learned societies also voiced concerns over implications for equity and access for academics, especially in Humanities and Social Sciences, to Gold APC funds, in another of their roles in representing the interests of scholars in their disciplines.

In all, many societies were left reflecting on behaviours that sought to place the UK in a leadership position globally, with associated high financial risks (and possibly reputational gains?) of being 'out in front' of the rest of the world, and which gave every appearance of being ideologically driven and unwilling to seek compromises to carry UK stakeholders, especially learned societies, in the process. Many in the Humanities and Social Sciences societies felt unappreciated and dispensable. Undoubtedly the research councils will have different perceptions of this difficult period and of the Humanities and Social Sciences learned societies' positions.

It is arguably in its indirect effects that the learned societies' advocacy, across the sciences as well as Humanities and Social Sciences, has been

of greatest importance in the longer term. I believe there is now greater awareness of the issues the societies face and of the influence that the societies can bring to bear from among their contact networks. There is also understanding and support for their cause among university leaders and among the House of Lords. That is not to say, however, that learned societies do not in part bear some responsibility for the tensions between funders, universities and publishers. How many societies have asked that subscription increases year on year be kept to a minimum, or even debated that with their commercial publishing partners? How many have turned down inclusion of their titles in consortia bundles? That said, society journals tend not to be among the most expensive of journals.

Nor can societies afford to be complacent. We have been suddenly catapulted into a high risk environment, especially those for whom publishing revenue is a major source of income. Societies have low risk appetites, as charities, and tend to have little in the way of either financial resilience or trustee/staff expertise in strategic planning for a very different future. So, how do we adjust our activities in the medium term to lower publishing income levels, since this is likely to be the case even if a sustainable future beckons for our journals? How do we garner more income from existing sources or make savings on running costs – increase membership subscriptions, pursue legacies, merge or share services? How do we identify new income sources? If there had been untapped great ideas out there, then the more innovative of the societies would already have been on the case. How do we reduce or spread future risk in our publishing? Societies more than ever need to be attentive to the needs of their authors and reviewers, and to sustain the multiple relationships we have with the academic and practitioner communities through our activities – as volunteers, subscribers, beneficiaries, advisors – in order to retain membership, gift and legacy income.

The current economic environment is not conducive to growth in most of the learned society income sources; the one exception has been the increase in publishing revenues in recent years. In the context of an extended economic downturn, introducing new uncertainty and risk over the very source of income that has been the most resilient and which

is often among the two highest earners (the other being subscriptions) for learned societies is ironic. The best that many can hope is that total income can be sustained at current levels in real terms for the transition period, thus giving some breathing space for planning and evaluation. What will happen in the longer term, as a new equilibrium in publishing evolves, is unpredictable at present since there are simply too many unknowns. Issues over policy in relation to Green embargo lengths and licensing styles, are compounded with uncertainty over when and how the rest of the world will respond, how consumers (authors) will change their behaviours, the extent to which institutions will use APCs as a marketplace, what the end point will look like globally in terms of balance between Gold and Green routes to scholarly publishing, and how the commercial publishing partners will adapt. These all influence the risk to journal continuity and income and ultimately to society activities for the academy.

In the evolving open access debate, it has become quite clear to me that some stakeholders do not understand what learned societies do, how effective they are and the value for money they offer. Societies have been both surprised and frustrated to discover this. It can be explained perhaps, in part, by societies differing so widely in size and scope; partly though it speaks of complacency on all parts and the need for better communication and listening. As well as making the cases for their disciplines, learned societies need to make the case for themselves. Of course, they have rarely had to before since they are not in direct receipt of government funding. The challenge for learned societies is to demonstrate their 'added value' in ways that have meaning and that can be measured, hence the new project at the Academy of Social Sciences (funded by ESRC) to undertake a systematic assessment of learned societies' funding and activities and, where possible, to assess benefits and costs. This will complement activity and data collected by others, notably from those who attend the British Academy's bi-annual meetings of HSS learned societies and subject associations.

Above all, there will be few quick fixes either to adjusting publishing futures or to managing change. Learned societies will need time to adjust

and other stakeholders need to be understanding of that. It is not to say learned societies are inept or idle, far from it, but lasting adaptation to progressive change takes time. I know from my own experience, that for the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) it took more than ten years of strategic and sustained effort, in an economic upturn, to grow and diversify income sources, to extend work to new audiences and to develop a reputation in new areas of activity.

It is not difficult to see the challenge and threat that a rushed, inflexible and non-precautionary transition to open access, or an unsustainable policy end point globally means for learned societies in the short and long term. Equally, in a digital world it is easy to see that the nature of publishing is changing and will continue to change. Learned societies will have to continue to adapt to and manage that change.

Looking forward

Learned societies have proved remarkably resilient, many celebrating centenaries or even approaching bicentenaries. One might have thought that in the digital world their rationale could be lost, but far from it, they appear to be no less in demand or needed than before. While the current open access experience for learned societies is a risk, and potentially a future hazard for many, I firmly believe that there will be some positive outcomes to recent events too. This is in addition, I hope, to the evolution of open access policies and implementation to meet, effectively and equally, all the agreed criteria of excellence, access and sustainability.

The wider legacy will come, I suggest, in six areas. First, the shock effect has awoken some societies to the need for longer term, strategic business and financial planning, a position that the larger and more active societies tended to reach a few years ago. It was not, however, the ideal way to come to that realisation.

Secondly, adapting to and mitigating external changes are a fact of life in the 21st century, and it is a rare organisation that can successfully turn its

back on change. The societies who are well-placed to do so are already establishing new fully open access journals, bringing their reputation and ethos to bear in offering good quality open access at relatively affordable rates. Regardless of whether the rationale is in hedging bets or offering new opportunities, the move is a low cost, sensible one for keeping options open under uncertain conditions. On a broader scale, learned societies are part of the UK's knowledge economy and they can expect to see the pace of change and external competition increasing, so having a forward-thinking, adaptable and change-welcoming culture is important to their future survival.

Thirdly, the collective action referred to previously has demonstrated the power of the contact networks that reside in individual societies, and the impact that the collective sum of independent actions of advocacy can have. Greater awareness of sister bodies and of how we can collaborate across, as well as within, different sectors has been forged through dealing with perceived adversity. Effective collaboration between individual societies has also been enhanced.

Fourthly, the learned societies, in HSS as well as in STEM, have raised their profile in government and with policymakers as a result of this issue. With some notable exceptions, their profiles have tended to be relatively low, perhaps understandably so, as they are not organisations that campaign publically on issues or seek to capture headlines with PR-led campaigns.

Fifthly, most learned societies are deeply embedded within, and supported by, their academic communities, and are seen to provide a disciplinary 'home', an independent and trusted voice and arbiter of quality, contact networks and advocacy, with some of the longest-standing and most highly regarded journals and international conferences. There are early, welcome signs that communities are rallying behind the societies in support of their journals, further strengthening the embedded relationships.

Finally, the societies are fully aware of the need to monitor impact on their publishing activities over the transition period. Agreed guidelines

as to what that means need to be established between the different sector groupings of learned societies so that we can approach the task in a 'joined-up' manner. This is particularly important given the difference in views between sectors as to what approaches to learned society open access publishing may be sustainable for each in the future.

One thing is for sure, the learned societies must be armed in 2014, 2016 and 2018 with the evidence about embargo periods, licensing, realistic APC values, and 'customer' behaviour that was so needed and yet so lacking in 2012; they should have data on their worth and added value; and they will be better able to act collectively and use constructively the power of their contacts and constituencies to help make objective and evidence-led arguments. They will be persistent in doing so. Many may also already be embracing the opportunities that open access might bring, and most will have greater clarity over the potential impacts and probabilities of different risks to publishing in their disciplines and how best they might mitigate them.

What most risks undoing the progress that has been made is, in my view, active lobbying by RCUK internationally such that, even if only inadvertently, it results in unsustainable open access policies in the rest of the world where the lobbying power of learned societies, with perhaps the exception of the USA, is considerably less than in the UK.

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UK and globally. The Society's work engages 3 to 4 million people each year and its 16,800 members and Fellows are drawn from some 160 countries.

Recent wider involvement includes a Non-Executive Directorship of the British Antarctic Survey; Member of the BIS Working Group on Open Access to Scholarly Publishing; Chair of the Steering Committee for the International Benchmarking Review of UK Human Geography; Chair of the Academy of Social Sciences Working Group on Open Access Publishing. Appointed as non-political advisor for Geography to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, 2006-2010, she continues to be closely involved with the Department for Education on Geography curriculum matters.

Prior to joining the Society, she had an academic career as a physical geographer in London University at Kings College (1979-1994) and Queen Mary College (1994-1996). Educated at University College London (BSc) and the University of Oxford (D Phil), she holds the Busk Medal for her research on environmental change in the tropics. She was awarded a CBE for 'Services to Geography' in 2003, and holds Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Gloucestershire and Southampton, and an Honorary Fellowship of Queen Mary, London University.

Notes

1 Representatives were drawn from BIS, RCUK, HEFCE, independent funders (Wellcome Foundation), libraries (British Library), JISC, universities, learned societies and commercial publishers. See Appendix A of the report for full details, www.researchinfonet.org/publish/finch (accessed 13 May 2013).

2 This paper specifically concerns learned societies and not the National Academies, who are funded differently; many of the comments are also relevant to professional bodies.

3 See HEFCE's FAQ on REF (June 2012) www.ref.ac.uk/faq/all (accessed 13 May 2013).

4 The full report can be found at www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/Human-Geography-Benchmarking-Review-Report_tcm8-25257.pdf (accessed 13 May 2013).

5 Summary results of the OAPEN-UK HSS Research Survey Results are reported at: http://oapen-uk.jiscebooks.org/files/2012/07/OAPENUK-Researcher-Survey-Results.pdf (accessed 13 May 2013).

6 The potential effect of making journals free after a six month embargo. A report for the Association of Learned, Professional and Society Publishers [ALPSP] and The Publishers Association, May 2012 www.publishingresearch.net/documents/ALPSPPApotentialresultsofsixmonthembargofv.pdf. See also *Logos* 23:3 (2012), pp.16-27.

7 A directory, which is not fully comprehensive, is provided by the British Academy www.britac.ac.uk/links/uksahss.asp

8 HEFCE's consultation on REF 2020 launched on 25 February 2013, www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/news/news/2013/open_access_letter.pdf (accessed 13 May 2013).

9 BIS Commons Select Committee on Open Access: www.parliament.uk/BIS (accessed 13 May 2013).

10 House of Lords Select Committee on open access, www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/science-and-technology-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/open-access (accessed 13 May 2013).

11 Approximately a quarter of the responses to the calls for evidence for the House of Lords enquiry were from learned societies, and they were instrumental in both the enquiries being held. Of particular note towards the culmination of the process were the summit meeting held by David Willetts to try to resolve the differences between RCUK, BIS and the learned societies, and the tenacity of Lord Krebs as Chair of the Lords Science and Technology Select Committee in not only producing a speedy and critical enquiry report but in following through with comments on RCUK revisions.

12 Science Europe position statement: Principles for the transition to open access to research publications. April 2013, www.scienceeurope.org/uploads/Public%20documents%20and%20speeches/SE_OA_Pos_Statement.pdf (accessed 13 May 2013).

Ecumenical open access and the Finch Report principles

Stuart M. Shieber

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- The principles underlying the Finch report – access, usability, quality, cost and sustainability – are broadly to be commended.
- However, the report's specific recommendations are short-term prescriptions that may lead to a limited increase in the amount of OA at a very high cost.
- In particular, it equates open access journals and hybrid journals, offering support to both.
- But the hybrid model entrenches the dysfunctional subscription model to the exclusion of the competitive and sustainable open access model.
- A preferable approach is to require authors to provide open access, but to be ecumenical about how that is achieved – through self-archiving or open access or hybrid journals – while providing support only for true open access journals.

The Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings first convened in 2011 at the behest of David Willetts, the UK Minister for Universities and Science, to 'examine how most effectively to expand access to the quality-assured published outputs of research; and to propose a programme of action to that end.' The group consisted of representatives of various of the stakeholder communities related to scholarly publishing, and was chaired by Janet Finch. Their final report[1] makes concrete policy recommendations for UK research funders to implement, and has been the basis for the policies being set by the Research Councils UK (RCUK).

There is much to like in the Finch Report on open access. The primary recommendations have to do with directly providing for open access to scholarly articles funded by UK research agencies.[2] The report appropriately outlines four desiderata that need to be optimised to this end:[3]

Access: The report takes as given the importance and desirability of open access to the scholarly literature.

Usability: It highlights the importance of a broad range of use rights, not just the ability for researchers to read the articles, but all other kinds of reuse rights as well.

Quality: The scholarly publishing system must, in the eyes of the Finch committee, continue to provide the vetting and filtering for quality that is the hallmark of the peer review system.

Cost and sustainability: It recognises that there are costs in publishing the literature, that the funders of research should take on those costs for the research they fund, and that the mechanisms for doing so must be sustainable.

Based on these principles, the report adduces certain conclusions. The access principle militates for articles being provided openly, so that the pure subscription revenue model, where revenue is based solely on limiting access to those willing and able to pay, is deprecated. The quality principle is taken to argue for journals that themselves provide open access to their articles, rather than relying on authors or institutions to merely provide supplementary access through article repositories. The cost and sustainability principle leads to the idea that funders might pay directly for the costs involved in journals' processing of articles, these payments substituting for the deprecated subscription revenues. The usability principle entails that when articles are paid for in this way, they ought by rights to be usable as broadly as possible, for instance, through Creative Commons attribution licences.

Now for the bad. The concrete recommendations that the Finch Report outlines do not present a prescription for optimising these principles *in the long term*. Rather, they pursue short-term prescriptions that will likely provide merely incremental access gains at a very high cost. The primary problem in the Finch Report that leads to this unfortunate consequence is the conflation of two quite different market models as one: full open access and hybrid.

1. Three market structures

To understand why this is so, we must look to the underlying economics of article publishing, which governs the incentives of the participants in the market. There are three revenue models for journals that are at play in the Finch Report: subscription journals, open access journals and hybrid journals.

1.1. *The subscription journal market.* The current predominant market structure of the scholarly journal industry is based on reader-side payments, limiting access to those willing and able to pay subscription fees for the journals. This market structure is manifestly dysfunctional. The reader-side market has led to a well-attested decades-long spiral of hyperinflation of journal prices,[4] causing libraries to have to cancel subscriptions, causing publishers to further raise prices to retain revenues. This vicious cycle has two bad effects: the *costs* to research libraries (and the funding agencies that provide their underwriting through overhead fees) have grown substantially and unsustainably in real terms, while cancellations mean less *access* to the articles themselves. It is this access problem that the Finch Report strives to address, subject to the cost and sustainability problem as well.

The reasons for the market dysfunction are, by now, well understood. First, the good being sold – access to articles – is a monopolistic good, based on the monopoly right of copyright, and as such is subject to monopoly rents. Second, subscription journals are not (in the economists' parlance) substitutive goods; access to one journal does not decrease the value of access to another, and in fact may well increase the value (as journals cite each other), making them complementary goods. Complementary goods do not compete against each other like substitutive goods do. Third, journals are sold under conditions of moral hazard; the consumers (readers) are not the purchasers (libraries), and hence are insulated from the costs. As with all moral hazards, this leads to inelasticity of demand and overconsumption. Finally, consolidation of multiple journals under a few large publishers insulates these publishers from economic pressure from cancellations, since they can adjust prices on the remaining journals to compensate for lost revenue.

The subscription market structure thus violates both the *access* and *cost and sustainability* desiderata of the Finch Report. Clearly, any long-term strategy for broadening access to articles must move away from this market structure, rather than providing it further support.

In the shorter term, the access problems with the subscription market (though not the sustainability problems) can be greatly alleviated by providing supplementary access to the articles – so-called *Green open access* – by posting copies of article manuscripts in subject-based or institutional repositories. Funding agencies have managed to generate tremendous access gains to their funded research by mandating such supplementary access, beginning with the 'public access policy' of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), which requires posting of author manuscripts in NIH's PubMed Central repository no later than 12 months after publication. Although there is no evidence that immediate Green open access has detrimental effect on publisher sustainability or even revenues,[5] embargoes such as those allowed for in the NIH policy (or the more widely used six-month embargoes found in essentially every other funder policy) further reduce any pressure on subscription revenue at the cost of delaying the access. But even if Green open access did have an effect on market demand for subscriptions, this would be no argument against mandating it, so long as there were a viable alternative market structure for those journals to use.[6]

1.2. *The open access journal market.* And indeed, there is an alternative market structure, one that is in fact highly preferable in that it does not have the same frailties as the reader-side subscription market structure, namely, an author-side market structure. In this system, the good being sold is not access for readers but publishing services for authors – the management of peer review (generating valuable feedback to the author); production services (such as copy-editing, typesetting, graphic design); and most importantly to academic authors, imprimatur of the journal. This market is seen most directly in *open access journals*[7] that charge a flat article processing charge (APC), paid by or on behalf of authors. The APC spreads the costs of operating the journal plus a reasonable profit over the articles it publishes.

This market structure doesn't have the same market dysfunction exhibited by the subscription market, both in theory and in practice. First, publisher services are not a monopolistic good; any publisher can provide them to authors. Second, from the point of view of an article author, journals are substitutive goods, not complementary goods, since submission to one journal does not increase the value of submitting to another journal. In fact, because an article can only be submitted to one journal, journals are *perfect* substitutes in the author-side market. Third, if authors pay APCs, there is no moral hazard, and if funders or employers pay on their behalf, moral hazard can be mitigated by introducing limits or co-payments.[8] Finally, bundling doesn't apply to the good sold in the open access journal market as it does in the subscription market.[9]

For these reasons, one would expect strong market competition and price control in the open access journal market in theory, and in practice, that is exactly what we see. Not only is there no evidence of hyperinflation, there are signs of strong price competition, with new models arising that can deliver publishing services at a fraction of the cost of subscription journals.

1.3. *The hybrid journal market.* A third market structure, the *hybrid journal*, plays a frequent role in discussions of open access and in the Finch Report in particular. Hybrid journals are subscription journals that also allow authors to pay an APC to make individual articles available open access. This model has been around for over a decade, and has been taken up by essentially all of the major subscription journal publishers. It has been touted as a transitional mechanism to allow journals to transition from the reader-side payments to writer-side payments. The theory goes that as more and more authors pay the APCs, the subscription fees will be reduced accordingly, so that eventually, once a sufficient fraction of the articles are covered by APCs, the subscription fees can be dropped altogether and the journal converted to full open access. Confusingly, both open access journals and hybrid journals are sometimes included under the term 'Gold open access', despite the fact that from an economic point of view they are quite distinct.

In particular, the hybrid model is not an appropriate transitional model to true open access. First, hybrid journals have not seen a major

uptake in voluntary payment of hybrid APCs in practice. This is not surprising. There's very little in it for authors, since they typically have a far less expensive alternative method for achieving open access to their articles through Green open access. (In this way, the hybrid model disincentivises publishers from allowing Green open access, another perverse effect of the model.) There's very little in it for universities too, who are unlikely to underwrite these hybrid fees on behalf of authors. Although paying the hybrid fees is supposed to lead to a concomitant reduction in subscription fees, it is extremely difficult to guarantee that this is occurring, and in any case any such reduction is spread among all of the subscribers, so provides little direct benefit to the payer. Of course, payment of hybrid fees could be mandated by a funder. (Getting ahead of ourselves a bit, this is essentially what the Finch Report promotes.) But even if this practice were widespread and most articles had their hybrid fees paid, journals would still have no incentive to switch to the full open access APC-only model. Why would they voluntarily give up one of their two types of revenue? Finally, hybrid APCs are not subject to the competitive pressures of open access APCs and would be predicted therefore to be higher. This is exactly what we see in practice, with open access APCs shaking out in the $750–2,000 range and hybrid fees in the $3,000–4,000 range.

2. Comparing recommendations

Put together, these three facts – that the subscription market is inherently dysfunctional, that the open access market is preferable and sustainable, and that the hybrid model entrenches the former to the exclusion of the latter – it becomes clear what the ideal recommendations should be for funders to provide open access in the short term *while promoting a long-term transition to the preferable open access market structure*:

1. Require that funded research articles be made openly accessible, either through publication in an open access or hybrid journal or through Green open access supplementary to publication in a subscription journal.[10]

2. Support the open access journal market by providing underwriting of reasonable APCs, so long as they allow for full reuse rights.

3. Do not support entrenchment of the subscription model by underwriting hybrid APCs.

In terms of the four Finch Report desiderata, this approach provides essentially universal open *access* to UK-funded research (as the NIH policy has in the US for NIH-funded research); preserves *quality* by allowing authors to publish in subscription, open access, and hybrid journals alike; works towards broader *usability* by guaranteeing that APCs provide for full reuse rights; and provides *sustainability* by supporting a competitive market mechanism and avoiding the high costs and counterproductive nature of paying to entrench the current dysfunctional mechanism. By avoiding payment of hybrid APCs, it forces journals to choose between (i) charging on the reader side and retaining the ability to limit access and (ii) charging on the writer side and allowing full use and reuse rights. Journals would not be able to retain their subscription revenues and pick up additional APCs as well, at least at the public's expense.

Crucially, these recommendations recognise the difference between the two quite different market structures that are inappropriately lumped together under the rubric 'Gold open access'. Willingness to pay APCs for open access journals is consonant with the idea that publishers ought to be compensated for their work and recognises that open access journals cannot be compensated by virtue of their limiting access to those willing and able to pay, nor would we want to do so. Willingness to pay APCs for hybrid journals provides open access to that single article, but disincentivises publishers from moving journals from the subscription market to the open access market; it is myopic.

By contrast, the pertinent Finch Report recommendations are different.

1. Require that funded research articles be made openly accessible through publication in an open access or hybrid journal.

2. Pay for the costs of that open access through underwriting of APCs, whether at open-access journals or hybrid journals.

The change seems small. Instead of underwriting only open-access journals, it underwrites hybrid journals as well. And once both are underwritten, it is not necessary to allow for the admittedly less desirable Green open access option.[11]

Again, we evaluate the recommendations in terms of the four desiderata. By its silence on the matter (outside of mention of 'providing access to research data and to grey literature'), the report implies that Green open access is to be eschewed even in the short term. However, the requirement to publish in journals providing for payment for open access is likely to lead to broader *access*, at least for those articles for which funds are available to pay the APCs, and its concentration on publication in open access or hybrid journals recognises their ability to provide *quality* control that repositories alone do not. With regard to *usability*, the report is a bit equivocal in requiring broad licensing in return for APCs, but does say that 'support for open access publication should be accompanied by policies to minimise restrictions on the rights of use and re-use, especially for non-commercial purposes'.

The policy fails primarily, however, in the area of *cost and sustainability*. It provides no mechanism for controlling the dramatic cost increase in covering both subscription fees and high hybrid APCs. (By definition, open-access journals don't receive both kinds of fees, and their APCs are subject to market competition in a way that hybrid APCs are not, as discussed above.)

Similarly, in the short term, APCs will predominantly be paid to hybrid journals rather than open-access journals, as the hybrids constitute far more of the journal market. Journals will have no incentive to switch to the open-access model, and in fact, will be incentivised not to. Research libraries would still have to maintain their subscriptions in order to cover the substantial body of articles in hybrid journals that are not covered by APCs (because, for instance, they are not UK-funded). The total

costs would be greatly increased, while still not solving the underlying market dysfunction.

In fact, the RCUK implementation plans for the Finch Report admit as much. It has become clear that there will be insufficient funds to cover all of the hybrid APCs, so that universities will be taken to be in compliance even if only a fraction of their articles are made available open access by the journals themselves, so long as the remaining fraction are available through Green open access. In fact, the RCUK implementation of the Finch Report proposal even allows for longer embargo periods in case the Green route is used because of insufficient APC funding.[12] The Finch recommendations thus embed their own negation: they envision having to use Green open access to implement a system that denies the utility of Green open access.

The alternative, requiring open access ecumenically – through open access journals, hybrid journals, or Green supplementary access – while being willing to underwrite fees for a market structure that work sustainably in the long term – true open access journals – is simultaneously effective in providing access as well as in providing an impetus to a future of the kind of accessible and sustainable journal publishing system that the Finch Report aspires to.

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His work on open access and scholarly communication policy, especially his development of Harvard's open access policies, led to his appointment as the first director of the university's Office for Scholarly Communication (osc.hul.harvard.edu), where he oversees initiatives to open, share and preserve scholarship.

Notes

1 For the Finch Report, published 18 June 2012, see Appendix 2 of this publication.

2 The report also provides a series of recommendations for increasing access within public libraries, strengthening the operations of institutional article repositories, gathering and analysing pertinent data, reviewing how learned societies might be better supported, adjusting tax policy for journal publishers and so forth. Many of these recommendations are reasonable and appropriate, but my main concern is the primary recommendations that relate to the market structure of journal publishing.

3 Finch Report, p. 17.

4 For instance, *Library Journal*'s annual Periodicals Price Survey reported a 6% average price increase for 2013 during a period in which inflation increased at 1.7%, continuing their tracking of a multiple decades-long trend of serials price increases at several times the rate of inflation. Stephen Bosch & Kittie Henderson, 'The winds of change: Periodicals price survey 2013', *Library Journal* (25 April 2013) lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/04/publishing/the-winds-of-change-periodicals-price-survey-2013

5 Elliot Maxwell, *The Future of Taxpayer-Funded Research: Who Will Control Access to the Results?* (Committee for Economic Development, 2012), www.emaxwell.net/linked/DCCReport_Final_Feb2012.pdf

6 See the discussion by Peter Suber arguing that we should 'weigh the demonstrable degree of harm to publishers against the demonstrable degree of benefit to research, researchers, research institutions, and taxpayers. . . . In short, we needn't let fear of harm serve as evidence of harm and we needn't assume without discussion that even evidence of harm to subscription publishers would justify compromising the public interest in public access to publicly-funded research.' Peter Suber, 'Tectonic movements toward OA in the UK and Europe', *SPARC Open Access Newsletter*, 165 (2 September 2012), http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:9723075

7 The term 'open access journal' covers any journal that makes its scholarly article content freely and openly available online. However, we use the term here (as in the Finch Report) to refer to journals using a revenue model based on APCs. Although at present only a minority of OA journals charge any APCs, for the purpose of discussion of revenue models, the APC approach is the most plausible one for sustaining open access journals in the long run. Already, it is used nearly universally by the major open access journal providers.

8 Stuart M. Shieber, 'Equity for open-access journal publishing', *PLoS Biology*, 7:8 (2009), http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1000165

9 I have previously provided a fuller discussion of these issues of the difference between the subscription market and the open access market, especially in the context of scholarly society publishing programs. Stuart M. Shieber, 'Why open access is better for scholarly societies', *The Occasional Pamphlet* (29 January 2013), blogs.law.harvard.edu/pamphlet/2013/01/29/why-open-access-is-better-for-scholarly-societies

10 The treatment of hybrid journals we propose is appropriately subtle. Though authors are free to provide for the required open access by publishing in a hybrid journal (1), the funders would not underwrite the associated fee (3) as they would for a fully open access journal (2).

11 Although there are subscription journals that are not hybrid journals, the major publishers are uniformly moving in the direction of providing for hybrid fees, and smaller publishers are likely to follow suit over time. The Finch Report is silent on what to do about articles published in non-hybrid subscription journals. In the RCUK implementation documents, they allow Green open access just in that case.

12 RCUK policy on open access and supporting guidance. Report, 8 April 2013. www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/RCUKOpenAccessPolicy.pdf

Open access in the UK and the international environment: the view from Humanities and Social Science

Chris Wickham

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- Since HSS disciplines receive only a small percentage of RCUK funds, HEFCE's policy on the admissibility of work for future REFs will be the most important determining factor.
- Other countries do not have RAE/REF equivalents to drive them down the Gold route; hence they are more likely to stay with Green and with longer embargo periods.
- Some leading international journals, particularly in the Humanities, have set their face against Gold OA and the introduction of APCs.
- UK scholars in HSS thus face a dilemma. If they publish in non-compliant international journals their work risks being ineligible for future REFs; if they don't publish in these venues they risk falling off the international pace.
- A particularly intense variant of this dilemma threatens those whose professional community does not operate in English.
- Future REF criteria will need to reflect these discipline-specific circumstances.

I strongly share the desire for open access as an aspiration for the future availability of research; who wouldn't? But I am very concerned about its practicalities, and about the unintended dangers which imposing some forms of open access on the academic community will have on the research landscape as a whole. There are many concerns, all of which I cannot deal with here. In this article I will concentrate on the effect current proposals in the UK risk having on the standing of the country's research in the world, particularly in Humanities and Social Science.

The UK government and Research Councils UK (RCUK) have taken quite a gamble, in fact two: that the growing worldwide interest in open access will end up with a system of procedures which will privilege Gold open access and not Green; and that this will, in its turn, encourage (or force) journals outside the UK to become compliant with UK policies. At the time of writing (March 2013), neither of these bets seem at all likely to pay off; we will come to the latter in due course, but, as far as the former is concerned, European research funders, and not only they, are for the most

part indicating that Green open access is their major interest.[1] What follows from this? I will come back to this crucial question after I have set out some basic elements in the current picture, ones well known to those who have followed the debate, but not necessarily to all readers.

Humanities and Social Science (HSS) do not, in fact, derive most of their funding from RCUK. The total budget of the Economic and Social Research Council and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) combined is only 10% of Research Council funding; and HSS academics are, taken together, some 50% of all academics.[2] The Research Councils plan to set aside enough money for Gold open access, but these figures mean that their funding for it is going to be fairly restricted for most HSS disciplines; which will almost certainly mean that Gold open access as a whole will have a relatively restricted role in this half of the sector, and that Green will be much more important. The impact of research council rules as a whole on research and publishing strategies is also relatively limited for HSS, for the same reasons; instead, the great bulk of HSS funding comes through QR, the government research budget which is distributed according to RAE[3] scores, and, in future, REF[4] scores. What the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and its sister councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland[5] decide will be the rules for submission to REF2020 therefore matter much more for HSS academics than do the views of RCUK. Research Council rules, in fact, matter above all in that it is unlikely, on the present showing, that HEFCE's eventual position on requiring open access for journal articles submitted to future REFs will be very different from RCUK's. Both HEFCE and RCUK are currently consulting on this matter: HEFCE in a more open and identifiable way, with a wide-ranging proposal, interesting in that it does not appear to have all the answers already decided, out for consultation since 25 February 2013;[6] the research councils in a rather less clear manner. HEFCE's policies are liable to change quite substantially across 2013, depending on this consultation; RCUK, for their part, have committed themselves to a wide-ranging review at the end of 2014. My reactions are therefore provisional, and are restricted to what are currently the proposals of the main public funders.

Currently, the view of the research councils is that Gold open access is definitely their preferred model, but they recognise that funding constraints make it currently impossible to pay for the article processing charges (APCs) necessary to fund full and instant open access. Green open access, by contrast, involves free access to articles published in journals after an embargo period with no need to pay APCs; how long this embargo period will be allowed to be is thus of intense interest, for HSS in particular – but, actually, for Natural Science and Medicine too. RCUK intends to make this embargo period 12 months (6 months for the STEM[7] subjects), coming down to 6 in the end for all subjects, but, as they have now made clear, only in the future. For the moment, for a period of five years, 24 months will be acceptable (12 months for STEM – except Biomedicine, where 6 months is established now), as long as the journal in question offers Gold open access to anyone who can pay APCs for it. Some disciplines may well be able to argue for longer than 24 months, although it is not yet clear how they will argue this and to whom. HEFCE have indicated that they are minded to follow this pattern, and it is also the pattern favoured by the Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts MP.[8]

There has been quite a swirl of politics around this set of proposals in recent months, which is by now of mostly historical interest. It is, however, important to recognise that RCUK came to this position only after having forcefully advocated shorter embargo periods, which are still favoured by many people in that body; what happens after the five-year 'journey' remains to be seen. The problem with embargo periods shorter than 24 months for HSS is that most journals, including most journals published by learned societies, would not be able to sustain anything resembling their current business models, and would risk rapid failure.[9] That is not the focus of this paper, so I will not develop it further; but it is important to stress that a 12-month embargo period is very widely feared by the sector, whereas a 24-month period is regarded by many (although not by any means all) HSS disciplines as acceptable on a long-term basis.[10] RCUK and government, too, accept that a 12-month embargo period is very dangerous for journals, but believe that the solution is Gold open access funded by APCs, which would give back money to journals; whether or not that is true, it is beside the point for HSS journals if very few Gold articles appear in them.

One other caveat is necessary to add here: current proposals only concern journal articles. Although the prospect of open access for books and essay collections is frequently canvassed with enthusiasm, no sustainable moves in that direction are likely for the immediate future, and certainly not in the next REF cycle, up to 2020. Most Humanities disciplines publish less than 40% of their work in journal-article form; most Social Sciences publish less than 70% in journals.[11] The impact of this whole debate is therefore incomplete in HSS, especially in most Humanities disciplines. But this does not mean that it is unimportant, by any means. How we come to agreement about open access journal publishing is very likely to be a template for future rules around all publishing, however hard this may be in practice to achieve, as Nigel Vincent discusses in his own essay.

Many non-UK funding bodies, led by the European Commission and the US government, have recently advocated, and sometimes demanded, the restricted 12-month (for HSS) embargo period now temporarily abandoned by RCUK.[12] This is certainly very worrying in itself, for journals would not be then sustainable in most areas, a concern shared by everyone in the UK, including, as already noted, government and RCUK. Whether this short embargo period ends up set in stone remains to be seen, however; a significant straw in the wind is the unease expressed by the French Minister of Higher Education, Geneviève Fioraso, about it in February of this year.[13] But if countries do fall into line behind the European Research Council (ERC) here, the effect on international journals will not be at all the same as the UK rules will have inside the UK.

HSS abroad is no more often dependent on research grants than it is in the UK; for example, only a little over 1% of the money from the ERC's/European Science Foundation's current FP7 research programme has gone to HSS projects since it began.[14] So the main way in which the ERC rules would affect standard HSS research practices, and standard journal publication, would be if research valuation projects equivalent to the RAE/REF became major funding drivers in other countries, *and* if these valuation projects adopted the rules for open access proposed by the ERC as a requirement for submission to them. No such trend is remotely visible. The USA has no such valuation project (indeed, it would be inconceivable

in a country dominated by private and state-funded – i.e. not federal – higher education institutions). France has recently closed its evaluation agency for a rethink, and anyway did not use it as a vehicle for funding. In Germany, the valuation project currently under way is explicitly one which does not have funding attached.[15] In Italy, the valuation project under way, which does have funding implications, favours publication in high-ranking journals, which, however these are determined – the decision-making process has been controversial – will do nothing to force such journals to comply with open access procedures.[16] So, overall, the major force which might move HSS journals in other countries in an open access direction is the rules of project-orientated research funders, who fund very little HSS research.

Non-UK HSS journals, therefore, not surprisingly, have been slow to adopt open access guidelines; and, when they do, they have certainly been slow to adopt the open access guidelines of a different country from their own. The research to determine exactly which HSS journals have adopted (or plan to adopt) which guidelines, across all disciplines, has not been done yet – it is vitally necessary, but will be arduous – but the information on the SHERPA/RoMEO website (www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo), which collects this data, although in a different format and often in out-of-date forms, shows very little take-up of short embargo periods (and virtually no take-up of Gold open access) in France or Italy. Germany shows more interest in open access, but there, too, not across the board.[17] Some major journals – I here choose as examples History journals, which I know best – most publicly the *American Historical Review*, have formally set their face against Gold APCs. Among others, *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* has no Gold, and a long Green embargo period (four years in this case) which is far from any research funder's demands, and does not intend to get anywhere near 24 months. For *Historische Zeitschrift* the embargo period is actually eleven years, and, although that is longer than for many German History journals, for almost none is it less than three.[18] Gold open access indeed has little resonance in most countries (although some German publishers do offer it[19]), and it is, indeed, not easy to see why it would have if the only research funder which favoured it and was prepared to put substantial money behind it was in one country, the UK – which, although punching well

above its weight, which is 4% of the world research population, still only publishes some 6% of journal articles, leaving 94% to follow whichever rules they (or their host countries) choose. UK journals are likely all to offer Gold as an option, which will allow them to have 24-month (or sometimes perhaps longer) embargo periods for Green open access, but non-UK journals which do not offer Gold may turn out not to be 'compliant' if they do not have a 12-month embargo, which not many do. This will change; publishers may well extend to HSS the journal strategies which they will develop for STEM journals, where ERC rules matter more – where they can, at least; learned societies will resist this abroad as much as they do at home. But, to repeat, there is no reason to think it will change quickly, and still less completely. And, it is necessary to add, if journals do move, they are by no means necessarily going to offer other more detailed elements of the new UK rules, such as the need to house articles in institutional repositories (rather than the author's personal website), and generous CC-BY licences for reproducing and refashioning the work of others.

A problem thus appears. UK academics will be faced with a situation in which UK journals are 'compliant' with RCUK (and, probably, HEFCE) rules, but very many non-UK journals will not be. What happens then? The Research Councils and HEFCE have so far been resistant to the argument that there should just be a blanket exemption for non-UK publishing; they argue that no one would then publish in UK journals at all. (If this is their real belief, it does at least show a recognition of the unpopularity of these proposals.) But the alternative is far worse: it is that no UK scholar would be able to publish outside the UK, except, as it currently seems, in a restricted percentage of journals. *This is the crux*. There are plenty of countries in which scholars do not publish outside their borders; but they are not, any of them, major international players. (There are, however, very few countries where they are actually *prevented* from so doing; in fact, I have not found any.) The UK is a major international player; but if it cannot publish in the major international journals, it will soon cease to be. The country will have shot itself in the foot.

I am of course aware of the argument (expressed, among many other places, elsewhere in this collection) that open access is of such obvious

benefit that, if journals do not adopt it, so much the worse for them. No one needs to publish in a prestigious journal (or in any peer-reviewed form at all), as long as they publish; also, if their article is fully available now, it will even increase their visibility, for the alternative would be to sit behind a paywall for 24 months. That last point does not actually fit my experience of googling; one has full visibility of the existence of the article, even if one cannot, at the moment, read it gratis outside a large academic institution. But the argument also does not take into account standard elements of academic sociology. For a start, there are many disciplines which rely on citation indices and impact factors; if one is publishing in a UK journal with a relatively low impact factor, one will simply be less visible. There are also disciplines with a very evident international pecking order. Political Science, for example, has a clear international hierarchy of journals, which hardly changes from country to country, at least in the English-speaking world.[20] All but four of the top fifteen are US journals (the exceptions are three UK and one Europe-wide journal); their open access policies are various, but only six accept Gold open access at present.[21] If one were to maintain a strict view of RCUK policies, most of these journals would be simply 'non-compliant', and one would have to look elsewhere; but to abandon these signs of international excellence, whether or not they are good ones (I am not at all sold on them myself, speaking personally), requires either a lordly insouciance, typical of people who are at the top of their field and do not need them any more, or a hostility to hierarchies which one tends to find in far-left political groups; it is strange to find the Coalition government in either company.

The need to publish abroad is also not just because an academic wants to focus on the top US journal at all costs. Many disciplines in Humanities have large sectors which have to publish abroad – and often in foreign languages – to get any international attention at all. French literature can stand for all of the modern languages here; obviously, experts in it will do much of their publishing in French, in journals of record such as *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, whose open access policy is a five-year embargo period.[22] History, too, where some 37% of journal articles were published abroad in the current REF cycle[23] (above all in the USA and,

not far behind, the EU), is very internationally divided.[24] A historian of the USA is inevitably going to need to publish much of their work there; no one can risk one's work not being found by other scholars in the same field because one is not publishing in the right country; that, however, is even truer of historians of Russia or Spain, whose colleagues in those countries also may not read English at all well, and so will not seek out the excellent articles (as they would need to be, to be accepted) in *English Historical Review*. Archaeology is equally divided; to use an example close to my own work, *Archeologia medievale* is the undisputed journal of record for medieval Italian archaeology; one could not be a player of any kind in the field if one could not publish there, and that would be the case whether or not one's excavation was funded by the AHRC. *Archeologia medievale*'s current and planned access policy is entirely non-open access; its online copy, for all its back numbers, is only available for payment.[25]

On good days, I cannot envision this blocking of an international presence actually happening. But it is there in current policies, and all players, academics and funders, need to be aware of the dangers, as they do not always seem to be. The issue has not, for example, been a prominent part of the arguments submitted to the House of Lords Science and Technology subcommittee or the House of Commons BIS Select Committee.[26] It would be easily possible to think of ways around it. One could indeed have a blanket exclusion for non-UK journals from UK rules, which would certainly, at least, act as a recognition that in moving towards open access – as is widely recognised for other international issues such as climate change – one has to move internationally, or nothing happens at all. If, for example, most US academics continue to publish behind paywalls, the cause of open access will not be advanced, whether or not the UK has been an early adopter, a first mover. It would also be possible for the rules for deciding which journal to publish in to contain explicit statements that publishing abroad in a 'non-compliant' journal will often be appropriate to the discipline concerned, and that, if it is, then the rules will not have to be the same. REF2020 sub-panels (or their REF2014 forerunners) might, for example, be asked to make discipline-based decisions here. I commend these variants to government and the funding bodies. And, if they do not like them, I urge them to think of better ones. For something will have to

be done here: if the international standing of UK scholarship is not to be damaged, deeply and perhaps irreparably.

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Notes

1 sparceurope.org/analysis-of-funder-open-access-policies-around-the-world (accessed 19 February 2013). See below, pp. 121 for definitions of Gold and Green open access.

2 Following HEFCE figures for submission intentions for REF2014, Main Panels C and D (Social Science and Arts/Humanities) as a percentage of the total, www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2013/name,76316,en.html (published 15 January 2013, accessed 18 March 2013): the exact figure is 49.6%.

3 Research Assessment Exercise – see www.rae.ac.uk

4 Research Excellence Framework – see www.ref.ac.uk

5 Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Scottish Funding Council and Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.

6 www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2013/name,78750,en.html (accessed 18 March 2013).

7 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

8 The most recently revised RCUK statement is at www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/RCUKOpenAccessPolicyandRevisedguidance.pdf (accessed 6 May 2013). The five-year transitional provision is at 3.6.iii of the text). For David Willetts' view, see among other statements his submission to the House of Lords Science and Technology Subcommittee at www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/science-technology/Openaccess/OpenAccessevidence.pdf, p. 97 (accessed 21 March 2013). For the history of all of this, and for the impact of it on learned societies, see Rita Gardner's essay in this collection.

9 So would current journals, perhaps faster, if they adopted all-Gold business models, but these are very unlikely to affect more than a tiny minority of HSS journals.

10 History, in particular, have argued strongly for 36 months, and a large and solid set of the UK's main History journals have committed themselves to this, www.history.ac.uk/news/2012-12-10/statement-position-relation-open-access (accessed 24 March 2013).

11 Figures from Russell Group submissions to RAE2008, thanks to Nigel Vincent for this information. See further N. Vincent, 'The monograph challenge', in this publication. Social Anthropology has publishing figures analogous to Humanities; Philosophy to Social Science. Only Economics, of the disciplines surveyed, publishes around 90% in journals, which is closer to the STEM norm.

12 European Commission, europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-790_en.htm (accessed 21 March 2018). US government, www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf (accessed 18 March 2013). Note that this latter, so far provisional, policy allows for possible variation according to the 'challenges and public interests that are unique to each field and mission combination'.

13 www.openaccess-shs.info/communique (accessed 21 March 2013).

14 ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/index_en.cfm?pg=budget (accessed 21 March 2013).

15 Germany: www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/germanys-research-rating-will-make-quality-its-own-reward/2001451.article (accessed 21 March 2013). France: www.lemonde.fr/sciences/article/2013/01/03/fin-de-vie-pour-l-aeres_1812620_1650684.html (accessed 21 March 2013).

16 www.anvur.org/sites/anvur-miur/files/gev/documento_accompagnamento_criteri.pdf (accessed 21 March 2013).

17 www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/journalbrowse.php (accessed 21 March 2013). For more up-to-date information on a substantial minority of journals in France see: www.openedition.org/168 (accessed 18 March 2013). A joint British Academy-HEFCE research project, partly focused on this issue, has now been agreed, which will by the end of 2013 make the data here much more firm.

18 For *American Historical Review* (or, to be exact, its parent learned society, the American Historical Association), see blog.historians.org/news/1734/aha-statement-on-scholarly-journal-publishing (accessed 21 March 2013); for *Annales*, information kindly supplied by Étienne Anheim; for *Historische Zeitschrift*, information kindly supplied by Andreas Fahrmeir, supplemented by www.digizeitschriften.de/searchcol/?tx_goobit3_search%5Bextquery%5D=DOCSTRCT%3Aperiodical&DC=900.history (accessed 24 March 2013). Thanks to Lyndal Roper and Sandro Carocci for their help.

19 E.g. De Gruyter's 'open library' policy: www.degruyter.com/dg/page/560/de-gruyter-open-library;jsessionid=412DF4E460950406FE0EA4D5CB042E46 (accessed 21 March 2013).

20 See J. C. Garand et al., 'Political science journals in comparative perspective', *Political science and politics*, 42 (October 2009), 695-717. Note that the ranking varies slightly according to the questions asked. I have taken table 2, 'political scientists' subjective evaluations', and have included the top ten journals in each of the UK, USA and Canada, which amounts to 15 journals altogether. But the very top journals are fairly similar in each table all the same. Thanks to Iain McLean for his help.

21 Information from SHERPA-RoMEO, as at n. 17.

22 www.puf.com/Revue_d'histoire_litt%C3%A9raire_de_la_France (accessed 21 March 2013). Thanks to Richard Cooper for his help.

23 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2013.

24 A. Dilley and K. McClay, *History UK (HE): Open Access Publishing survey results*, March 2013, available at: tinyurl.com/c5tt28z (accessed 21 March 2013).

25 Information from Sauro Gelichi, the responsible editor, and the publisher, All'Insegna del Giglio, Florence, 4 March 2013. All'Insegna del Giglio, it is worth adding, is a very small publisher indeed, whose revenue stream is largely dependent on this one journal – a scenario which is still common outside the UK, and which will further delay open access moves.

26 See above, n. 4 for the Lords and www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmbis/writev/openaccess/contents.htm (accessed 15 April 2015), for the Commons; the 419 pages of oral and written evidence for the Lords and the 546 pages of written evidence for the Commons do, of course, contain discussions of this, but they tend to be relatively brief.

Political, cultural and technological dimensions of open access: an exploration

Stephen Curry

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- The issue of OA is technically, culturally and politically complex and deserves careful engagement by all scholars.
- Through RCUK, the UK has adopted a transitional policy that favours Gold OA but needs to remain alert to worldwide developments in OA.
- The concerns which have been expressed about predatory publishing in the wake of the move to OA are excessive.
- PLOS (Public Library of Science) has demonstrated that a sustainable OA model is consistent with effective peer review and high standards of publication.
- Questions of publication prestige may be different for science and HSS disciplines but need to be resolved by eliminating the culture of dependence on journal impact factors, which OA can facilitate.
- On balance OA encourages academic freedom.
- Concern about learned societies, although real, is unlikely to derail the OA project.

Introduction

The trouble with open access is that it is too much like quantum mechanics: the central idea has a beguiling simplicity but its ramifications are complicated and far-reaching. Feynman famously declared 'I think I can safely say that nobody understands quantum mechanics.' Were he alive today the Nobel prizewinning physicist might say the same of open access. Everyone has a grasp of the basic concept but its implementation penetrates every fibre of the body academic and no one has yet figured out exactly how it's going to work.

Partly because of the complexity of the topic – but also because it remains contentious – the literature on open access is expanding at a rate far greater than the rise of open access publishing itself. A Google search for the term 'open access' returns over 2 billion hits. No wonder people coming to it for the first time are baffled. For the majority of scholars who probably still class themselves as neophytes, I can recommend Tony Hey's recent series

of blog posts[1] and Peter Suber's book, *Open Access*[2] (which is due to be made freely available as an open access publication in June 2013).

I hesitate to add further here to the morass of words on open access. Although I have been thinking and writing about it for over a year, I still feel a relative newcomer. I am also a scientist; worse still in some eyes perhaps, I am based at Imperial College, a university noted both for the power of its Science, Technology and Medicine research, and for the fact that it does not teach degrees in the Arts, Humanities or Social Sciences (AHSS). Nevertheless, I want to use this article to continue my exploration of the issues surrounding open access. Having heard the growing rumble of discontent from the AHSS community at what they see as a science-driven initiative to reshape scholarly publishing, I am keen to learn more about that perspective and to foster dialogue.

Never mind the mess, keep your eyes on the prize

Most people agree that open access[3] – making the scholarly literature freely available on the Internet (to give the barest definition) – is a good idea. Open access is touted as a way of providing faster and freer exchange of information within the scholarly community and with the public; as an opportunity for the academy to prove its worth to the taxpayers who largely fund its activities; as a mechanism for bolstering democracy by enriching public discourse on the fruits of research and scholarship; as a solution to the serials crisis that has stretched library budgets to breaking point; as a route, through text and data mining, to richer yields from government investment in research; as the means to include scholars from poorer countries[4] in the global research effort (at least in the first instance as readers with access but ultimately also as authors and contributors); as a natural progression connecting scholarly publishing with the Internet zeitgeist.

But the noble ideals enshrined in this multi-dimensional vision are mired in reality as the various stakeholders grapple with implementation. The drift towards open access has been steady over the past decade but the

arguments over the rights and responsibilities of scholars have intensified in the past year, ignited by the boycott of Elsevier at the start of 2012.[5] In the UK, publication last summer of the government-sponsored Finch Report[6] prompted the announcement of a new open access policy by Research Councils UK (RCUK, the body that coordinates the seven UK research councils). These key developments have focused attention on the practicalities and problems of what is seen as a major perturbation of our system of scholarly publishing.

Policy in the UK

The new policy[7] has a clear preference that RCUK-funded researchers should opt for Gold open access (publication in a journal that permits immediate access) supported where required by funding to cover the article processing charge (APC) levied by the publisher. However, researchers can also comply by taking the Green route to open access: publishing in a journal that permits deposit of the author's final peer-reviewed manuscript in a repository. Commonly, but not necessarily, this entails a delay of several months before the manuscript is made available.

The policy, like the Finch Report before it, is a great British fudge and has attracted criticism from all sides – scholars, open access advocates and publishers. The speed of introduction also drew fire from the House of Lords.[8] In recent months RCUK has been trying to clarify its policy[9] and to consult on its revised guidelines for implementation.[10] The present plan is for an incremental roll-out of the policy over the next five years, subject to a review next year and probably also in 2016 and 2018.

The review process is sensible but has inevitably generated a degree of uncertainty, into which has poured a plethora of reaction and opinion. While some commentators have raised valid concerns,[11] others have generated more heat than light.[12] All sides can agree on the scale and significance of the changes that are in train but no one is served by arguments that are selective or muddied. We scholars should at least be scholarly in our approach to the subject.

One source of confusion is the use of the term 'government policy', which, some publishers have argued,[13] places clear obligations on authors. But where is government policy on open access defined? Certainly, the present coalition has tried to set the overall policy direction for publicly-funded scholars in the UK, articulating its vision in speeches by David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, and in the response of his department to the Finch Report. However, it is important to remember that the Royal Charters under which the research councils operate put them at arm's length from government. They therefore occupy a space between government and the scholarly community. In part this arrangement is designed to preserve a measure of academic freedom but it also explicitly recognises that the government does not reserve for itself the power to configure scholarly activity. I am not party to the conversations between ministers and the Chief Executives of research councils but it seems to me this arrangement gives them, and RCUK, valuable wriggle room.

The details of open access policy in the UK are therefore determined by RCUK; at present it favours Gold open access but remains somewhat fuzzy around the edges. To my mind this fuzziness derives from an experimental pragmatism that I hope might be exploited creatively to influence the review process.

A sanguine view – though it is probably only shared by a minority of scholars – might be that the RCUK open access policy is helpfully disruptive; it enshrines a realistic acknowledgement of the facts that publication is an intrinsic component of scholarship, and that its costs are non-zero and should be met from research budgets. Although Green open access is sometimes seen as a 'free' route to open access, this is only from the perspective of the individual scholar and ignores the fact that the actual costs are largely paid for by institutional subscriptions, effectively from another component of the public funds made available to researchers.

The policy is more incremental than some realise. Research councils have supported open access since 2005, making funds for APCs available to grant holders; the present scheme should be more effective in raising open access output since the funds will be allocated as block grants to research

institutions and will now support payment of APCs for work published beyond the end of the grant that paid for the research. (This reorganisation nevertheless raises important concerns about how funds should be allocated within universities, a point I address below.)

That said, the overall policy environment remains complex. Although RCUK policy applies only to researchers in receipt of grants from the research councils, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has announced that it is likely to only consider open access publications in the Research Excellence Framework post-2014. Though HEFCE is unconcerned whether publication is via Gold or Green open access routes, this move obliges all research-active staff in universities and research institutions to consider their publishing options and obligations, a development that raises particular challenges for scholars who are not supported by RCUK grants. Seismic shifts in university funding caused by the hike in student tuition fees add further uncertainty: to what extent now should university-based scholars consider themselves to be publicly funded?

A zone of transition

The only thing that seems clearer these days is that the UK has entered a zone of transition, beset by currents that are technological, cultural and political. Unfortunately, the far shore remains out of sight and there are questions to be asked about the sustainability of the UK's Gold-favouring approach to open access, especially given that most other countries appear to be hitching their stars to Green open access.[14] This approach has scored some notable successes. In the US, for example, the mandate operated since 2006 by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which requires deposition in the National Library of Medicine within 12 months of publication, has achieved a compliance rate of around 75%.[15] The NIH is now aiming to achieve full compliance[16] and the White House recently announced[17] that similar mandates should be put in place by all federal agencies spending more than $100m annually on R&D. Policy developments in the UK have to remain alert to developments worldwide.

The Global Research Council met in May 2013[18] to 'agree on an action plan for implementing Open Access to Publications as the main paradigm of scientific communication' but it remains to be seen if this will achieve effective coordination or what impact any agreement will have on other disciplines.

If open access appears to be spreading primarily though the adoption of Green open access mandates, this seems likely eventually to generate instability in the scholarly publishing market. Extensive free access should lead to cancellation of the subscriptions that currently support the publishing process; although there is presently no evidence that Green open access mandates have led to subscription cancellations, this is probably due to the relatively low *overall* uptake of open access. Nevertheless strong advocates of Green open access, such as Stevan Harnad, foresee[19] that the global impact of mandates will create irresistible pressure for publishers to flip their payment models, thereby releasing subscription funds to pay APCs. He may well be right but there is as yet no consensus on that vision of the transition process.

For some, it is simply a matter of letting a free market play out. But policymakers at RCUK are betting on a more orderly transition. The UK has opted to pump prime the transition by allocating funds to cover the excess costs for that period during which APCs and journal subscriptions will have to be paid. If I have interpreted David Willetts' recent pronouncements correctly, there is a curious note of pragmatic altruism[20] in his strategy. However, it has yet to win the hearts and minds of the scholarly community in this country, and whether the UK has the will to see it through or the clout to make other nations follow remains to be seen.

Questions of culture

International policy matters aside, there are cultural and technical questions that open access also has to overcome within both the scientific and the AHSS communities of scholars. It is commonly asserted, for example, that the payment of APCs undermines quality by placing the

rigour of peer review in conflict with the commercial interests of open access publishers. Certainly there are concerns about the standards operated by some so-called predatory open access journals that have emerged to take advantage of the willingness or capacity to pay APCs. However, I sense these concerns are overstated, particularly since policing measures are already in place and becoming more widely known.[21] Moreover, as the culture of assessment shifts – as it desperately needs to do – from the pernicious influence of journal impact factors[22] to focus more on article-level judgments of quality, significance or utility, those guilty of exploiting open access publishing for the sake of their own vanity will be easier to detect.

Another concern for some[23] is the PLOS ONE model of peer review, which eschews any pre-publication assessment of significance and seeks only to determine if the research reported is novel and has been performed competently. This approach, which results in an acceptance rate of around 70%, has made the PLOS stable of journals commercially sustainable but again raised questions about quality. However, it is far from clear the effect has been detrimental. Indeed the opposite seems to be the case given that PLOS ONE has emerged as the largest biomedical journal in the world, with an impact factor of 4.4, far higher than a slew of subscription-based journals.

The PLOS model, in which the profits from one mega-journal can support more selective journals (such as PLOS Pathogens or PLOS Medicine) also shows how the introduction of open access doesn't have to be at the expense of 'prestige' journals. This potentially addresses the fear expressed in some quarters that the RCUK policy may inhibit the freedom to publish in the most high profile titles, for example, in cases where publication in a particular journal requires an APC for which no funds are available (RCUK allocations being cash limited). Such concerns are not trivial but they too often overlook the point that the most important goal for scholars is to publish high quality work. The problem arises because we lack the confidence that good work will be noticed unless we chase after high impact factors – and because decisions on grant and promotion applications remain so dependent on them. This is a deep-

seated and largely self-inflicted cultural problem[24] within the scholarly community and one that will take a concerted effort from leading scholars, universities, funders and even publishers to eliminate.

The lure of high prestige journals is commonly seen as a positive attribute, enhancing the quality of the literature by giving the most ambitious scholars something to aim for. There is a measure of truth in that – scholars are no strangers to competition – but it remains problematic because the title or impact factor of the journal where one publishes is the wrong measure of achievement: the significance of papers within even the best journals varies by orders of magnitude. A more honest approach would be to let the community of scholars make their assessment of each paper by citation, reuse and commentary – processes that can only be enhanced by making the work available to the widest possible readership through open access publication.

I am bound to concede that the prestige problem is some way from being resolved. The fact of the matter is that scholars have to deal with the situation as they find it, and it has become increasingly evident that scientists and AHSS scholars do not necessarily see the same things in our current predicament. Concerns that the RCUK policy might affect the choice of publication venue have been interpreted in the AHSS community as an infringement of academic freedom, something I have not heard expressed by my scientific colleagues. In part this reaction stems from the fear that universities might seek to manage their open access funds by controlling *who* will have access to APC monies or *where* their faculty members may publish. Although some are worried that administrators might be party to such decisions, I detect no enthusiasm at universities for such an arrangement. Perhaps it is still too early to judge and scholars need to be on their guard but, given their obsession with the REF, universities are more likely to want to maximise the publication output by their staff.

It is nevertheless reasonable for funders and universities to seek value for money in disbursing funds for APCs and healthy for scholars to participate in discussions of the costs and benefits of open access. That should create the transparency needed to foster a functioning market in APCs, so as

to apply downward pressure on costs. It may not resolve the problem of academic freedom – to which there is no easy solution – but surely scholars need to balance their rights as academics with their responsibilities as spenders of public money? In any case the question of a scholar's right to publish in a venue of their choosing is less acute in an interconnected world where online publishing enables instantaneous dissemination. Curt Rice's perceptive analysis[25] is that, on balance, open access enhances academic freedom. The primary concern of academic freedom after all is that scholars should be able to publish what they like; publishing where they like, especially when publicly-funded, is a secondary consideration. Even so, some of these fears might be allayed if RCUK were to offer explicit reassurance to scholars on the value they place on academic freedom and to exercise flexibility in their assessment of how universities manage their compliance with the new open access policy.

The AHSS community has also been more vocal in its concerns over the Creative Commons licences embedded in the RCUK policy, which demands CC-BY for Gold open access publications. This allows liberal access and re-use of the content of papers, even by commercial organisations, as long as proper attribution to the original authors is made. According to RCUK, under Green open access papers should be published under a CC-BY-NC licence, which restricts re-use to non-commercial (NC) organisations. This is seen in some quarters as a possible infringement of the 'moral'[26] or 'intellectual property'[27] rights of the author – and has sometimes been stated in rather strident terms.[28] I have not heard similar concerns within the scientific community (although there is some evidence of a preference for more restrictive licences[29]) and wonder if the divergent views reflect differences in the nature of their primary scholarly activities. While scientists are generally reporting observations from the field or the laboratory, often writing as a member of a large team of researchers, AHSS scholars may be more personally invested in their research, writing alone or in small groups to produce a synthesis and interpretation of other sources. No doubt that is an over-simplification of what happens in practice but the cultural differences would be interesting to explore in more depth as the policy is reviewed. The topic of licensing deserves cool, precise consideration, of the type recently provided by Heather Morrison[30] and Jon Wilbanks.[31]

Learned societies and innovation

All scholars can agree on the serious challenge posed to learned societies by a shift to open access publishing since many of them rely on journal subscriptions, often sourced from overseas, to support the work they do to protect and promote their disciplines and researchers. I cannot offer very deep insights into this problem – it is a question that deserves an article of its own – but suspect grimly that it is not one that the flow of history is likely to permit to derail the open access project. In the long term the worldwide flipping of funds from subscriptions to APCs offers an escape, but no one knows how long that will take and the pressing question for societies is whether they can survive through the transition. It will take imaginative thinking, and time to experiment.

This should come as no surprise since transitions in modes of communication, especially those driven by technological changes, always appear also to require revolutions in thought. As art historian Kenneth Clark observed in his excellent television series 'Civilisation' humankind is often slow on the uptake. In particular he noted that following the invention of the printing press in the 15th century:

> the first printed books were large, sumptuous and expensive. The printers still thought of themselves as competing with the scribes of manuscripts. Many of them were printed on vellum and had illuminations, like manuscripts. It took preachers and persuaders almost thirty years to recognise what a formidable new instrument had come into their hands, just as it took politicians twenty years to recognise the value of television.

We find ourselves in the midst of a similar technological transition. As Michael Eisen, a founder of PLOS, has recently pointed out,[32] we have so far been largely preoccupied with migrating a 350 year old journal-based publishing system to the online world but have yet to fully realise the transformative power of the web, for example, by enabling new forms of peer review or developing richer connections between the paper (or monograph) and the information or data from which it is derived.

The technology makes change inevitable and we are already seeing its first fruits, not only in the sciences with ground breaking journals like PLOS ONE (www.plosone.org), PeerJ (peerj.com) and F1000Research (f1000research.com), but also in the launch of the Open Library of Humanities (www.openlibhums.org/, deliberately modelled on PLOS), the Social Sciences Directory (www.socialsciencesdirectory.com) and moves to develop affordable models[33] of open access monographs.[34]

The uncertainly of change remains a concern but across all domains of academia impressive efforts are being made to face the future of scholarly publishing with open minds. No one can be sure what it will look like but I hope the community of scholars might be able to work together to build something of which we can be proud.

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A founder member and now vice-chair of the Science is Vital Campaign, Curry is also a member of the board of directors of the Campaign for Science and Engineering. He is an advocate of open access scholarly publishing and has taken a keen interest in recent, successful moves to reform the libel law of England and Wales. He can be found on twitter as @Stephen_Curry.

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Before the law: open access, quality control and the future of peer review

Martin Paul Eve

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by the British Academy

- OA is not about abandoning peer review but it does provide the opportunity to rethink its role and our methods.
- 67% of existing OA journals do not charge APCs and yet academics have tended to steer clear of them.
- People opt for recognised outlets because of the (erroneously) perceived emphasis on publication venue by accreditation structures such as RAE/REF/tenure.
- In the print world peer review was historically linked to page limits; these do not apply in the electronic realm.
- Double blind review is a misnomer and even then preserved anonymity can be problematic.
- The alternative is to publish everything that meets a certain threshold of academic soundness and to let readers decide what should last; in effect a kind of post-publication, or peer-to-peer, review.
- This modification of peer review could lead to more collaboration and less insistence on an individual finished product.

Introduction

As Peter Suber notes in his commendable book, open access is not about circumventing peer review.[1] In fact, the *only* aims of the Open Access movement that can be stated with conviction are the removal of price barriers and the lowering of permission barriers.[2] These elements are to be achieved through an adaptation of scholarly publishing practice to the mutations in technology that allow for non-rivalrous commodity exchange of works upon which the authors do not rely for income; the ability to disseminate perfect copies of academic material to anybody who can get access to the Internet at an extremely reduced, even if nominally non-zero, cost.

Given that this is the case – and you will note that there is specifically no mention of peer review practice in the above definition – why is it necessary to debate peer review at all? I would suggest that there are two

reasons why peer review must not remain the unmentioned elephant in the room when we talk about open access. Firstly, it is a frequent accusation of detractors that the changes introduced by open access models will lead to a slippage of standards in one way or another, an aspect that must be dispelled. Secondly, these shifts in practice at the reader-side allow us the space to rethink peer review and to ask whether there are analogous changes, facilitated either socially or technologically, that could be worth exploring at this time of transition. In fact, just as one of the arguments for open access is that it is culturally elitist and untenable to presume that a broader audience can neither understand nor appreciate scholarship, there are, I would argue, parallels in peer review practice that could reflect this same principle on an intra-academy basis.

The primary reason behind this assertion is that, at a fundamental level, the gatekeeper model – that is, the system of deciding on permissibility before publication through both publisher policies and peer-review practice – also works on a series of unspoken ideological assumptions that are never wholly objective and apolitical, but rather based on a series of exclusions and marginalisations in exactly the same way as the elitism argument pre-defines its audience. Indeed, while the argument-by-elitism, as it could be called, contends that it requires tuition and process to navigate the labyrinth of scholarship and disregards John Willinsky's comprehensive arguments for technical solutions to this, exemplified in the 'reading tools' component of his OJS software,[3] what of the students who graduate from this process and who are then still financially excluded from it? Does not the argument-by-elitism purport to teach critical thinking but then deprives those taught of the material with which to critically engage once they leave the university? What about those institutions who cannot afford subscriptions but whose staff are perfectly capable of understanding scholarly research and its production contexts?

Likewise, however, within our own academic circles, a gatekeeper model pre-defines its audience and disregards a series of important questions. For example, how can we wholly know the value of the material that we are pre-excluding given that we exist within ideologies that are not always explicitly clear from our immanent positions? How do we know what *will*

be of value in the future? What do we make of the exclusions and other spaces that, under the gatekeeper model, we cannot even know at present? Without wanting to seem Panglossian, for moves to open access should not be naively utopian, if we mark some aspects of the move to open access as challenges, the arguments for open access also present new opportunities in the realm of peer review as in the counterbalanced increased access to readers.

Quality, prestige and labour

In order to understand the potential routes of the future, it is important to understand the future's roots in the present and the past. It is also important to note, up front, that I am dealing primarily here with the state of the Humanities as this is the area with which I am most familiar. Turning then to the current state of peer review, it is worth noting that, as it stands, in many disciplinary spheres, academic publishers believe themselves to be responsible for the quality of the academic material that appears within their titles. This has been the case traditionally and continues to be the norm in the open access sphere with SAGE Open declaring their journal an ideal venue for 'Authors who want their articles to receive quality reviews and efficient production'.[4] What is worth exploring, as a preliminary rebuff to those who simplistically equate open access with a decline in standards, is the way in which prestige is actually formulated.

The first and most important aspect to grasp (and one that seems incredibly obvious once articulated) is that the gatekeeper model, in which material is pre-screened for worthiness, relies upon (almost always uncompensated) academic, not publisher, labour. Validation is performed through a hidden but nonetheless presumed process whereby academics confer acceptability upon the piece in question. In many of the Humanities and Social Science systems, this process is undertaken on a double blind basis, meaning that, in theory at least, neither the author nor the reviewer(s) are aware of each other's identities. In any case, though, the system that is erected here is one wherein academics cyclically confer prestige upon a journal twofold by submitting their

pieces to the venue that they believe to be the most prestigious and by reviewing with strict (even if unformulated) standards for those same destinations. Furthermore, reviewer selection is often the task of an academic editor who knows the field as, unsurprisingly, they are nearly always better placed to know the most appropriate reviewer than commercial publishers. In short: the gatekeeper process, from reviewer selection through to submission and review itself, all of which are the only parts of publishing that confer authority upon academic worthiness, are voluntarily undertaken by academics.

It should be clear, from the above, that there is, therefore, theoretically no reason why a Gold open access venue (which, remember, does *not* necessarily mean an 'author pays' article processing charge (APC), no matter how frequently less informed commentators uncritically repeat this assertion) could not accumulate substantial academic credibility, should it attract the prerequisite submissions and reviewers. The one caveat that I will add, however, is that it is imperative, if a journal does follow an APC model that review and ability to pay are strictly separated. This is not always guaranteed to be the case and aspects of an author pays model could lean towards unethical practices, as Jeffrey Beall's list of 'predatory open access publishers' demonstrates.[5] Although I readily see the danger of review corruption in the APC model (of which I am not a fan in any case), two objections can be raised, however, to the restriction of this predatory mode to open access: 1) does not the 300% above inflation increase in journal subscription costs since 1986 smack of an overarchingly predatory field in the first place?[6] 2) it is easy to spot these publishers through either Beall's criteria,[7] or simply their lack of academic credentials, non-membership of publishing ethics organisations such as COPE or lack of explicit policies for separation of finance from review, just as it is in non-open access venues.

Given the freedom, to date, of academics to act as the king-makers of their publication venues, it is surprising, for an optimist, that open access venues have not fared better. After all, at present, 66.7% of open access journals in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) do not implement APCs, so they carry no financial cost either to publish in or to

obtain.[8] Indeed, despite the inability of university library budgets to keep pace with subscriptions, academics have, for the most part, continued to invest their academic capital in traditional (and expensive) journals, thus perpetuating these venues' prestige (and cost). There are, however, other mechanisms that have stifled the uptake of open access that relate to quality control, the most notable of which for the UK is the 'peer review of peer reviews' that is the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and its Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) precursor. The repeated assertion of REF panel members that publication destination will *not* be used as a criterion has often been treated with scepticism by universities and researchers. This has led, in conjunction with hiring and firing procedures, to a strongly conservative disciplinary mechanism that, itself, in part, restricts academic freedom; researchers publish where they feel will do the most for their REF return (regardless of the truth of such statements) or employability and, in many cases, fledgling open access journals are not believed to fulfil these (imaginary) criteria.[9] While the current consultation by the Higher Education Funding Council for England looks set to mandate Gold/Green open access for any post-2014 REF, the fact that this is being considered after the Finch *fait accompli* of making Gold open access synonymous with APCs means that the moment for radical (and beneficial) economic transformation through academic agency in conferring validation through peer review has, once more, almost passed.

The current problems of peer review

Leaving aside now the issues of whether open access must intrinsically disregard, or experiment with, peer review (there is no reason why it should, in either case), I want now to turn to an analysis of the current workings of peer review within Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines, the potential pitfalls of the extant systems and to give some examples and suggestions for ways in which the system might be re-worked. It is worth stressing that I believe that there is no necessary causal need for open access to tinker with peer review but I wish to also state that the born-digital medium of open access publications may lend itself to new modes that were impossible under the model of its print predecessor.

In order to think through peer review in the present moment, it is necessary to briefly lay out the mechanism that propelled the gatekeeper model to dominance: print economics. Historically, one of the key functions of the gatekeeper has been to reduce the quantity of permissible material. This was not only an effort to avert what we now call 'information overload' and what are perceived as low standards, but also because each issue of a print journal had a specified page budget. In the world of print and physical commodities, there is a need to restrict the quantity of output because there is a material cost for each page that is printed and distributed. This is, clearly, no longer the case but persists through a culture that Gary Hall calls our 'paper-centrism'.[10]

While, therefore, we most often like to think of peer review via the gatekeeper as an issue that pertains strictly to academic standards, there is also an economic history of which it is easy to lose sight. This, though, is not the sole problem of the gatekeeper system, especially as it applies to the double blind review system in many Humanities disciplines. Indeed, the first question that springs to mind is whether it is right that a mere two academics, in most instances, although sometimes only one, have the private, unaccountable, final word on an article's acceptability. For Early Career Researchers (ECRs) this private decision can be the difference between a lifetime of employment in academia or a lengthy period of re-training. Furthermore, to repeat, looking outside the academy briefly, one of the arguments made against open access is that there may be no need for public access to scholarship; perhaps, it is claimed, the public won't understand or value our contributions. The problem with this argument, again citing Peter Suber, is the question of how anyone can 'know in advance the level of demand for peer-reviewed work among lay readers'.[11] The same argument can be made for an 'informed' audience, though. How can one accurately pre-judge, within one's own temporal, geographical and disciplinary immanence, what may be of worth to scholars free of these constraints? This lack of accountability and, as will be explored below, logic in the admissibility of papers is a problem that is exacerbated by the traditional double-blind system.

Taking a slightly different tack first, however, it is worth querying the exact extent to which the double blind method might actually be a misnomer. Theoretically, the author should be unaware of the identity of his or her reviewers and *vice versa*. The benefits of this are easy to articulate: it is designed to encourage an impartial assessment of the work, rather than the author. Furthermore, reviewers are supposed to be protected from professional repercussions in cases where, for instance, the author is a prominent figure in their field. Often, however, this is utopian. In many small fields where work may have been presented in early versions at conferences, where authors are known for adopting a specific stance, or simply through flawed meta-data erasure and/or slips of self-citation, the identity of the author can be ascertained. While it is less often that slips occur the other way around, it is often possible to guess the most likely reviewer of one's work simply by dint of their expertise.

Furthermore, anonymity can be problematic. The lack of accountability of reviewers can lead to harsh, penalising reviews, rather than feedback that, while rigorous, intends to work in community to elevate a work to a publishable standard. Additionally, there is also something strange about the perseverance of anonymity after publication. Universities and academia function, as Martin McQuillan put it to me, on genealogies of validation; that is, on hierarchies of prestige that trace the flow of academic 'capital' and authority through publications. As explored above, journals are only as valuable as the genealogies that validate their work as high quality, through submission quantity/quality and rejection rate, underpinned by the labour of peer review. However, in the current way of working, what remains is a situation where, instead of the process of review being *visible* in order to *validate* the work, the quality of the review process and the prestige of the people doing the review must be inferred from the perceived post-publication quality of the publication.

To rephrase this: there are, under current practice, only two ways, both flawed, in which the quality of the review can be ascertained. The first of these is through trust in nominal journal brand. While there are some good practical arguments for this (i.e. when a journal continually publishes good material, then it's probable that their review process is solid) there are also

some problems, most notably that a 'journal' seems too wide a measure of quality. As aspects of the journal change (for instance, editor resignation, editorial board changes, financial problems), the quality of output could decline but awareness of this will always be outdated as it takes a long while for a drop in quality to register in the general perception of scholars. During this period of unawareness, the journal (based on historical prestige precedent) would continue to attract high quality submissions and would, therefore, find it easier to recover; just one further instance that demonstrates the way in which academic prestige is a top-loaded, non-trickle-down economy.

The second way in which journal quality is crudely measured and the one that surely most affects scholars' perceptions lies in the duplication of labour when reading a paper; a type of second review in which academics bring their own evaluative skills to bear on already published work. Clearly, this is inherent in the act of reading an academic paper but the blame for poor quality is put down to either the author or to the journal brand. This is interesting; what seems to have failed is actually the peer review, gatekeeping function, but this is not, in a mode of journal brand, the way in which it is perceived. While in some ways this is a fair appraisal, there could be ways in which the journal could signal the degree of delegation and trust that has been relied upon and to which I will now turn my attention.

What is to be done?

The most obvious way in which we might begin to address these problems at the moment of transition to open access is to rethink anonymity in the review process, as has already happened in many scientific disciplines. However, it is worth saying up front that each of the various combinations of the review anonymity matrix comes with its own problems and it may be the case that none are, in the end, as satisfactory as blind review, except, perhaps, for at least being more honest about the potential flaws. The first of these potential changes would be to remove the author's anonymity while maintaining the anonymity of the reviewers, which seems to

add very little. Reviewers could judge solely on the past reputation of the author, rather than the merit of the piece alone while remaining unaccountable for their actions.

Conversely, we could take the opposite stance and remove reviewer anonymity (at various stages in the process, but primarily after the review and regardless of outcome) while retaining the author's veil. This mode brings absolute accountability upon reviewers while protecting the author from pre-judgements. It also gives a clear genealogy of validation and militates against corruption to some degree as any conflicts of interest would be immediately clear. The disadvantages of this approach are also obvious, though. Any system that brings unbalanced extreme accountability will result in a conservative situation of strict, normative appraisals, thereby potentially ruling out a whole body of useful work that may be barred by the gatekeeper. While some may see this as an advantage – a tightening of review standards – given the historical parallel to page budgets and evolutions in social and technological filtering processes (see below), the argument for this may be less solid than might be thought. Finally, although this approach in some ways helps spot corruption through transparency, the extreme burden to 'make the right call' could encourage reviewers to seek the author's identity. This tactic exposes reviewers and makes a thankless task perhaps even more risky.

What, then, about completely removing all anonymity from the process? There are some advantages in this case (as outlined above) but there still remains no counterbalance to the elements of conservatism that could arise as a result of exposing reviewers. Conversely, reviewers would surely also be prone to appraise the authors' identity in this case.

Evidently, in each of the cases where anonymity is removed, during the review process itself, there are problems that seem, to some degree, worse than the flaws in a double blind setup. However, this only applies when we assume that we are dealing with a gatekeeper model in which a paper only sees the light of day so that the journal may be associated with the most exclusive papers in order to protect its brand. Other, more radical,

experiments in the sciences have worked to change this. For instance, the review criteria of PLOS ONE reads as follows:

Too often a journal's decision to publish a paper is dominated by what the Editor/s think is interesting and will gain greater readership – both of which are subjective judgments and led to decisions which are frustrating and delay the publication of your work. PLOS ONE will rigorously peer review your submissions and publish all papers that are judged to be technically sound. Judgments about the importance of any particular paper are then made after publication by the readership (who are the most qualified to determine what is of interest to them).[12]

At first, in a knee-jerk reaction, this standard of publishing all papers that are 'technically sound' appears to have no analogue in the Humanities. As a hypothesis, though, a 'technically sound' paper in the Humanities could evince an argument, make reference to the appropriate range of extant scholarly literature, it could be written in good, standard prose of an appropriate register that demonstrates a coherence of form and content, it could show a good awareness of the field within which it was situated, it could pre-empt criticisms of its own methodology or argument and it would be logically consistent. While this is just a cursory stab at a definition and not meant to be finalised, implemented criteria, many of the problems of the review system as it stands could certainly be addressed through the formation of explicit consensus as to what constitutes an acceptable barrier to entry in the Humanities, so as to remove the Kafka-esque situation from which this paper takes its name: at present it can seem as though we each have our own personal gatekeeper with impenetrable logic.

Secondly, though, the inversion that PLOS ONE effects upon the original goal of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* to assess on the 'importance or singularity of their subjects' could leave it open, as was the *Transactions*, to John Hill's 1751 critique of the inclusion of 'trivial and downright foolish articles'.[13] The difference in situation to the contemporary, however, lies in the economic situation and technological filters at our disposal. In 2013, we have sophisticated full-text and social

search mechanisms that can bury unpopular material on the furthest pages of results but without removing such items from the economy altogether. The advantage of this, as with the arguments for open access more generally predicated upon an anti-elitism, is that we dismiss our own arrogance of knowing what will be important for all time and replace it twofold with the mechanism to ensure that what is relevant now is found and valued while also allowing those papers in niche fields or in areas that have yet to gain any prominence to be found, *if and only if* the seeker desires. In this mode of post-publication review, everything will be assessed, but it will be done after the fact and the exclusion of material will not be a permanent pre-silencing, but rather a process of continuous community consensus. Of course, there is no guarantee that the peer-review criterion of 'technical soundness', however translated, will be free of abuse in itself, but this could be a step in the right direction.

This raises an aspect that I've left until the close of this piece to explicitly articulate under the bipartite logic both that it is Kathleen Fitzpatrick who deserves the most honourable and prestigious place on the topic, but also because it closes the loop of necessity of reform alongside technological innovation with which I began. In her seminal book on the subject, *Planned Obsolescence*, Fitzpatrick systematically interrogates Humanities' peer review practices in the age of the digital and concludes that we require a mode that is less certain of the merits of 'the stability that we've long assumed in the print universe' and one that is more adaptive to generative possibilities.[14] What Fitzpatrick addresses, in essence, is the problem of the fundamentally anti-collaborative nature of Humanities research in most cases. At present, review is not usually a community endeavour but rather an activity that expects to see a final artefact in which no traces of the construction remain visible. Experiments such as McKenzie Wark's collaboration with the Institute for the Future of the Book on his 2007 *Gamer Theory* suggest, however, that while an online collaborative model currently solicits sub-optimal levels of participation, there can be merit in the process.[15] Most importantly, though, I want to use my final words to reiterate, but modify, my opening gambit. Fitzpatrick astutely notes that, in this case (and others), 'the system that needs the most careful engineering is less technical than it is social'.[16] Bearing this in mind, we must be careful

never to succumb at any point to a techno-fetishism but always consider whether the technological facilitates desirable social changes. We have built, over many years, systems for appraising the individual rather than acknowledging the way in which knowledge is collaboratively produced and, for the first time in many years, we may have an opening through which to address this. Open access does not *require* us to change our peer-review practices any more than the codex meant that readers *had* to abandon their palaeographic antecedents. There might, however, be practical ways in which a moment of technological change could enable us to see, with apologies for inverting Churchill's well-known aphorism, that perhaps our review practices are not so wholly democratic, not so entirely objective, fair, or community-based; that they may not be the best that have been tried, apart from all the others.

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Notes

1 Peter Suber, *Open Access*, MIT Press Essential Knowledge Series (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2012), pp. 20–21.

2 Throughout this piece I am using the term 'open access' to denote the principles and reserving the capitalised 'Open Access' for the movement calling for/demanding/advocating on behalf of those precepts.

3 John Willinsky, *The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship*, Digital Libraries and Electronic Publishing (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), pp. 160–168.

4 Sage Publishing, 'SAGE Open: About the Title', *SAGE,* www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal202037?prodId=Journal202037&ct_p=manuscriptSubmission (accessed 6 May 2013).

5 Jeffrey Beall, 'List of Publishers', *Scholarly Open Access,* http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers (accessed 6 May 2013).

6 This figure is a trans-disciplinary breakdown from the ARL and may not reflect the reality solely within a Humanities environment. However, while most Humanities journals have a far lower absolute cost than many of their STEM counterparts, Library Journal's 2013 'Periodicals Price Survey' seems to show an analogous proportional increase. Stephen Bosch and Kittie Henderson, 'Periodicals Price Survey 2013', *Library Journal*, 2013, lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/04/publishing/the-winds-of-change-periodicals-price-survey-2013 (accessed 6 May 2013).

7 scholarlyoa.com/2012/11/30/criteria-for-determining-predatory-open-access-publishers-2nd-edition

8 'Journals by Publication Charges', *DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals,* www.doaj.org/doaj?func=byPublicationFee&uiLanguage=en (accessed 6 May 2013).

9 An interesting further aspect, which sadly I did not have space to consider here, would have been the methodological practice of meta-review frameworks, such as the REF; could, for instance, publication venue be shielded from REF panel members so as to allay researcher fears?

10 Gary Hall, *Digitize This Book!: The Politics of New Media, or Why We Need Open Access Now,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), pp. 59–61.

11 Suber, p. 117.

12 PLOS, 'PLOS ONE Journal Information', www.plosone.org/static/information (accessed 6 May 2013).

13 Willinsky, p. 203.

14 Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy,* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), p. 196.

15 Fitzpatrick, pp. 110–112, 192.

16 Fitzpatrick, p. 192.

Creating scholarly knowledge in the digital age

Ziyad Marar

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- Open movements focus on the consumption of information but neglect to focus on its mode of production.
- In a world where increasing amounts of information and knowledge are available, what matters is the ability to create and attend to that which is good and relevant.
- In the world of scholarly knowledge 'good' means not popular but authoritative. We must not lose sight of the values and mechanisms that sustain authority in favour of the blunt and measurable traffic of information as commodity.
- Some form of pre-selection and quality control of claimed new knowledge is therefore required and this is what publishers of journals and books provide.
- Selection mechanisms necessarily differ from discipline to discipline because scholarly knowledge is not homogeneous and the routes to it are various.
- Knowledge in HSS is more closely linked to the individuals who have produced it than in the large team-based projects of the natural sciences.
- Early career authors need to build their reputations and thereby their claims to authority; publishers have a crucial role to play in this process.

A great theme of our digital age is around openness with the corollary motto: 'information wants to be free'. The untimely death of hacktivist Aaron Swartz has led to only the most vivid flare-up of this apparently democratic call to arms. The examples hardly need rehearsing: thanks to the rise of Wikipedia, the blogosphere and Twitter, YouTube, the open access and open data movements, and now MOOCs (massive open online courses), we cannot doubt that an extraordinary technology-driven revolution towards the frictionless transmission of ideas is under way.

As we watch the disruption of various creative, cultural and knowledge industries from music to journalism, and increasingly publishing and higher education, we are retold this motto with the warning that anyone

who just doesn't get it should get out, or wait to be swept out, of the way. The verdict of commentators at the 2013 World Economic Forum at Davos was that the whole higher education system is under dramatic change and many institutions will, and should, fail. [1]

Undoubtedly we have all benefited wonderfully through access to information and knowledge that was previously inaccessible. And there is indeed something democratising about unfettered access to vast stores of information alongside immensely increased levels of participation in our digital culture. The titles of best-sellers like Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everybody* and James Surowiecki's *The Wisdom of Crowds* capture the spirit. Shirky in fact introduced the idea of 'publish, then filter' long before it appeared in his 2008 book. As far back as 2002, he told a BBC audience the following:

> The order of things in broadcast is 'filter, then publish'. The order in communities is 'publish, then filter'. If you go to a dinner party, you don't submit your potential comments to the hosts, so that they can tell you which ones are good enough to air before the group, but this is how broadcast works every day. Writers submit their stories in advance, to be edited or rejected before the public ever sees them. Participants in a community, by contrast, say what they have to say, and the good is sorted from the mediocre after the fact.[2]

It seems to me, however, that there is a missing, or at least under-reported, aspect of these debates. The consumption of information obviously only makes sense as a sequential step after its production. Yet an overriding focus on how knowledge can be consumed without constraint can obscure from view, and possibly distort, how it is produced in the first place. And here I am talking about novel or significant contributions to scholarly knowledge. Wikipedia by contrast is expressly designed not to introduce original ideas; it does a different job and does it extremely well. But how does original, high quality information and knowledge get produced to start with? And might some features of the new media paradigm impede that creation in some way?

The first thing to say is that as data pour in without the right filters, attention becomes the scarce resource – along the way the emphasis shifts from careful, considered, thoughtful, deep work to high impact newsy items vying for attention and popularity. Where does authority feature in this landscape? Here is LSE law professor Conor Gearty on his own writing experience:

> The old-fashioned hard work – quiet; library-based; thoughtful – that made the writer/speaker an expert in the first place gradually drifts off the daily agenda. At first because of time constraints and then – well – because it's boring, like returning to decaff coffee after an espresso. Twitter/Blog erodes our confidence in the deeper stuff without which we would never have become experts in the first place.[3]

What is happening to the incentive structures – currently secured through the reputation conferring mechanisms of significant journal and publisher brands – that enable the effort required to create authoritative knowledge claims alongside the concentrated attention needed to consume them? The speedy shifts we are seeing in the digital age, while delighting us as consumers, might well, as Gearty says, erode existing mechanisms through which people become experts in the first place, without offering an adequate alternative.

The related but more profound problem on which I would also like to focus in this essay is that the free and open movements and hacker communities tend to presuppose that knowledge is to some extent commoditised. This 'intellectual property is theft' movement argues as though knowledge is out there ready-made and waiting to be found and set free. This perspective understandably encourages sharing and discourages hoarding. If the world of ideas is a mere discovery process, a bit like mining, then we should simply truffle out nuggets of knowledge and circulate them as rapidly as possible to where they are needed most.

No wonder the digital debate focuses on how to make that communication process yet more frictionless and the vested interests more redundant. In

the new world why would we bother with publishers, learned societies, journals, even universities at all? Let the crowd do its work. As I will argue in the rest of this essay, this view underestimates the hugely divergent ways knowledge claims are produced in different fields.

One size does not fit all

The rush to openness and its tendency to elide key differences between types of knowledge is not just a feature of the supposed wisdom of digital crowds, and their hunger for information. It is sometimes embedded within the scholarly establishment itself. Take one obvious example: when the Research Councils UK (RCUK) originally implemented its mandate requiring open access publishing from 1st April 2013 it did so equally for all and any scholars who receive funding from research councils – on the assumption that one size fits all whether in sociology or medicine. This undifferentiated approach, for example, mandates publication under a CC-BY licence (the most permissive licence enabling derivative reuse of the author's work). It was greeted with enthusiasm by scholars in the Biological Sciences and deep concern from many in the Humanities and Social Sciences.[4] Why should this be?

In general it should go without saying that ideas, information, data and knowledge cannot be lumped together into an undifferentiated mass. While light bulbs or pound coins are, in economic terms, fungible – that is to say interchangeable without loss – in many cases this cannot be said for high quality intellectual property. The pub-owner who buys books by the yard to adorn the walls and make a cozy club-like atmosphere treats a random yard of books as equal to any other. For the rest of us there is, or ought to be, a huge difference: there are good and bad ideas, interesting and trivial ones, subtle and simple, prosaic and poetic, technical and commonplace, all produced with varying degrees of care and authority and published as outputs ranging from books, chapters, journal articles, conference papers and posters, through to newspaper and magazine journalism (long and short form), essays, blogs and tweets. Layered on to this in the realm of academia we see a diverse ecosystem of scholarship

with varying norms and working practices in disciplines ranging from high energy Physics to History. The differences should be obvious but in the 'information wants to be free' environment they start to sound like undifferentiated bits and bytes that just need to be uncaged.

New ideas in this homogenising view can tend to be seen as found rather than made, and at its most simplistic can be caricatured as the sculpture that is revealed merely by hacking away the extraneous stone. While this view is a crude distortion of reality and understates the hugely creative process that is involved in creating science, it does indicate something about the varyingly fungible nature of what is ultimately produced.

One can see how this view can be reinforced. Natural scientific knowledge claims that work to some extent become exchangeable: facts, to a degree, disconnected from their original authorship, in order to become subsumed into the work of future scientists. Like Newton standing on the shoulders of giants (and then Einstein on the shoulders of Newton if you like) the new invention is subsumed within the old, and succeeds by flowing into a settled stock of knowledge. And while the scientists concerned may become legendary names, in their own right, there is no scientific reason to read their original works. One can extract their innovations and improve on them without needing to go back to the original knowledge claim. The analogy in economic terms is of the commodity which has full or partial fungibility; that is, the market treats its instances as to some extent equivalent with little regard to who produced it. As Karl Marx put it 'from the taste of wheat it is not possible to tell who produced it, a Russian serf, a French peasant or an English capitalist.'[5]

In this way, once an original claim reaches the status of fact, it can be circulated uncontroversially to provide more shoulders for others to stand on. No one disagrees that the speed of light is around 186 thousand miles per second or that the definition of energy is mass multiplied by the speed of light squared, and, now that Einstein has handed his discovery to the world, $E = mc^2$ has lifted free of his original 1905 paper and can be used as interchangeably as a pound coin. This view of discovery which settles arguments is of course challenged in many scientific fields but has become

so established as an ideal that some physicists are genuinely worried that they will have nothing to do after the discovery of the Higgs boson completes the standard model. As Professor Marc Sher, who has devoted his entire professional life to theoretical description of the Higgs Boson put it 'Now, we're like the cat who has stalked a mouse for 35 years', he continued. 'We finally catch the mouse … and now we're wondering what to do with it.' [6]

Of course I am simplifying the processes of scientific creativity. In many scientific fields there is plenty of room for unsettled, disputatious, controversial debate, and many fields don't settle very well at all. Even so when we move from analysing the natural to analysing the human world we complicate the story at a much deeper level. This is because in the Humanities and Social Sciences facts and values blur and the data under scrutiny are particularly unruly. The philosopher Bertrand Russell once observed 'the fundamental concept in Social Science is Power, in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics.'[7] And while physicists can define energy with enviable unanimity the same cannot (and will never) be said for sociologists exploring the nature of power.

In the Humanities and Social Sciences, knowledge claims are highly contextualised by the unruliness of the phenomena they seek to explain. The reason that sociologists can't agree on the nature of power in the way that physicists agree on the nature of energy is not because they aren't smart enough, nor is it that they need the crowd to come in with its assessment. For one thing the outputs of social analysis can change the very nature of what is being analysed: this is known as the problem of reflexivity.[8] This is not true, in the same way, of the natural world. In addition, the very concept, while incredibly relevant and important to our lives, is messy and ill-structured. Many scholars are dealing with what have been called 'wicked problems' which don't submit in an orderly way to scientific analysis.[9]

It is relevant here to distinguish 'wicked' from 'tame' problems in the digital age because it is only in the case of the latter that the wisdom of crowds or automated mechanisms of assessment can more aptly provide

good solutions: as programmers like to say 'given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow'. But a bug in a piece of software is a tame problem, the nature of power in society is not. Tame problems like estimating the height of a mountain, like fixing a computer programme, will more easily respond to a crowd-sourced, 'publish, then filter' solution, as contrasted with what political scientist Robert Horn called 'social messes' which as he says are so 'resistant to analysis and, more importantly, to resolution'[10].

For this reason a lot of important theoretical work does not issue in law-like generalisation, clear-cut prediction and fungible claims. An expert analysing messy, wicked systemic phenomena like terrorism, inequality, well-being, crowd behaviour, democracy or the French Revolution is able to gain influence by having taken the trouble to apply rigorous care and a familiarity with the scholarly literature, which in turn gradually comes to mark this analysis out as worthy of attention.

Rather than standing on the shoulders of giants these thinkers are more like a network of astronomical bodies with differential gravitational force orbiting around each other. The more gravitational force – let's call that force authority – the more the idea has influence over others. So with the concept of power we have interventions from Gramsci, Foucault, Giddens and Steven Lukes to name just four. These innovators (or even innovating synthesisers) produced their knowledge claims under specific conditions. And as those claims took hold they were themselves picked up by qualified critics engaged with the same problem domain and thanks to whom their reputations were secured over time. They and their critics published papers and books, talked at conferences, in order to rework authoritative predecessors and debate credible contemporaries. But for every one of them we have heard about there were many, many who tried and failed to build their own action at a distance (Russell's own book on Power, quoted above, is not widely cited these days). Authority, prestige, reputation, credibility (pick your term) in a given domain is crucial to the production of scholarship while only being achieved by a minority.

Scholarly knowledge should not be seen as an undifferentiated lump because the values and mechanisms for innovation common among

physicists differ from those of sociologists, economists, historians or anthropologists. Each of those disciplines among others has its distinctive way of creating contributions that inform debates and its varying relationship to the concept of authorship. At one end of the spectrum scientific and technical knowledge is increasingly being produced by large international teams publishing the output of a hugely funded research project and focuses less on individual authorship (of a single authored article or a book). Many scientific articles are published these days with hundreds if not thousands of contributors.

This disconnection from authorship and consequent increased fungibility of knowledge claims in parts of the natural sciences makes them easier to trade in the attention economy, and should be contrasted to some degree with ideas in Humanities and many of the Social Sciences, which are far less separable from their authors, producing ideas (in articles or monographs) whose most valuable qualities are debased by the process of information commoditisation.

Authority, authorship and publishing

It is clear then that much scholarly knowledge, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, does not have a fact-like, or at least agreed upon, commonsensical quality and will not settle down in a way that can be parleyed easily into interchangeable nuggets of information without considerable loss. Nor will its importance seem obvious immediately. Rather, the significant work usually builds its influence over time and is often diffuse in its impact. More so than in the natural sciences it is created, recreated, contested, forgotten, reinvented, developed, distorted, amended by people with varying degrees of expertise and who, in winning arguments, build their credibility further. The crucial variable in this complex interaction is less to do with discovery and all the more dependent on the credibility, authority, or expertise of the author built up over time and standing as a proxy for underlying values to do with effective commitment to a discipline and a community. This fragile ecosystem depends on the many filtering and enabling mechanisms provided by publishers.

Speaking as a publisher, it is undeniable that many of the traditional functions around the dissemination of ideas have been increasingly displaced or transformed. We are all publishers now that new technologies have replaced many of those original barriers to entry. I should stress that the dissemination role of publishers is nonetheless still relevant even if we now talk of technology platforms and meta-data more than printing presses. But my purpose here is not to explore the role of publishers as disseminators. It is our role as enablers of quality knowledge production, by helping scholars secure their reputations, that I want to highlight and that has been obscured in the debate. It is easy to forget that a category of the most effective publishers in this regard are the learned societies, from the American Psychological Association to PRIO (The Peace Research Institute, Oslo), whose publishing activities will often provide the disciplines they serve with a crucial mechanism for career development and subsequent impact.

Of course once an author is well-established they can go to alternative sources to increase their impact, whether by blogging, tweeting, publishing in mainstream news media and so on. But how will they build that reputation, authority and prestige to start with? How will they *become* expert and build a robust reputation that stands the test of time? They currently do this by finding publishers or journals which select and shape their monographs or articles on some level, authorising and preserving their ideas so they can be introduced into the community. Most submissions do not make it through this filtering process (whether peer review or the slush pile) and most that do are neglected (deservedly or not), but some go on to create over time those gravitational fields of scholarly force. People need an authored version that has been selected, shaped, refined and validated in various ways so that it can have better claims to take its place in the network. This process too is contested and flawed but is better than a free-for-all.

This is not to say that *existing* publishing or journal brands need to survive. Leading publishers and journals which currently provide this kind of certification may fall by the wayside if they do not keep up with the times. But they will need to be replaced with equally reputation-

enhancing publishing brands if new scholars are to make their names. And these new brands, I predict, will need to confer authority through familiar mechanisms of pre-publication peer review for articles and equivalent academic filtering for books. Without those checks in an open environment we may have secured mechanisms for knowledge sharing and consumption, but we will have weakened the possibility of authoritative knowledge claims for the future, especially those made by early career authors.

There are moves afoot, thanks to the digital revolutions, to try and create new mechanisms for reputation building: article level metrics, usage factor measures and so on.[11] It is understandable that we should want to find alternatives to the much fetishised hallmark of scholarship known as citation indices and impact factors. The problem with these more automated approaches is that they tend towards eliding *popularity* and *authority* and that these have different underlying dynamics in the less tame and messier ends of the scholarly spectrum. Popularity measures might be sufficient for the business of making music; they are not for the business of making all scholarly knowledge. Impact factors, for all their many faults, at least address this distinction and are not distracted by measures of popularity. They try to preserve the concept that academic reputation lies in the careful eye of the *qualified* beholder.

A good reputation is one of the key rewards for committing time and effort to scholarship. It is a hard-won route to enabling a voice to be heard in the babel of other voices, and ought to be quite different from popularity and celebrity. The crowd and automation might help with measures of popularity but deal less easily with authority. Or more precisely when gauging the height of a mountain, popularity and authority may converge – the crowd may source a wise incrementally more adequate solution – but when dealing with a wicked problem the crowd may become an impediment. As the technology theorist and author Tom Chatfield helpfully puts it (personal communication), it is a category error 'where people are taking one sense of the word "authority" (arriving at a decent empirical answer to a clearly defined tame question, which online crowds are pretty good at) and then mistakenly applying it to all other

senses of the word "authority", even in fields where what it means to be authoritative is quite different.' As he goes on to point out, this category error is 'mirrored in the tendency of the attention economy to value all knowledge only in terms of its effectiveness at commanding attention, or becoming grist to the mill of aggregation'.

John Ruskin once observed that 'quality is never an accident, it is always the result of intelligent effort'. This is as true for commentary as it is for the pieces being commented on, and we need to ensure that there are incentive mechanisms which enable intelligent effort to be used to assess knowledge claims. For this reason peer review, which incentivises authoritative reviewers to read and comment with care and a sense of responsibility to the discipline before publication, still has a claim to the Churchillian defence of being the least worst system: in need of improvement, certainly, but far from broken as many claim. Chatfield goes on (personal communication) to summarise the problematic thus:

- Considerable time and effort are required for work in many fields if one is valuably to contribute to those fields
- A vigorous community of those investing such time and effort is also required for valuable work to be sustained
- Supporting and sustaining this community in turn requires dedicated 'enabling' mechanisms
- These enabling mechanisms should centrally involve the (1) filtering (2) publication/dissemination, and (3) debate of work in these fields
- The best such enabling mechanisms are not algorithmic or automated, but performed by members of this community
- The proper enactment of these mechanisms requires time, effort and a sense of responsibility to the discipline
- This brings us back to the start: there is no substitute for human time and effort in many fields.

What alternative mechanisms are offered that will do the job of producing work which is filtered and selected before being published under a reputation-enhancing brand which signals authority? Currently 2,000 academic publishers (ranging from university presses, learned societies,

independents large and small, through to the big conglomerates) do this through nearly 30,000 peer reviewed journals publishing around 1.5 million articles per year along with tens of thousands of academic monographs. But this scholarly output is only a drop in a vast ocean of information where 100,000 tweets are produced every minute, and attention is a much scarcer resource than information. When the attention economy is so overpopulated, it is easy for society to lose sight of the values and mechanisms that sustain authority in favour of the blunt and measurable traffic of information as commodity.

Knowledge may want to be free, but let us remember that not all knowledge is the same and that authoritative and lasting contributions in certain fields are sometimes produced under delicate, highly filtered conditions that enable and incentivise concentrated effort over time and a larger scale commitment to a disciplinary community. Let us not fall for an illusion like Immanuel Kant's light dove who in 'cleaving the air in her free flight, and feeling its resistance, might imagine that its flight would still be easier in empty space.'

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He is Global Publishing Director of one the world's leading independent academic and professional publishers, SAGE. Having joined SAGE in 1989, Ziyad has worked across all aspects of publishing. During his career he has built international programmes in psychology and politics across journals, reference books, textbooks and online products. He was appointed Editorial Director in 1997, Deputy Managing Director in 2006, and took on his current global role in 2010, in which he has responsibility for the overall strategic direction of SAGE's publishing.

In recent years at SAGE Ziyad has also focused on supporting the Social Sciences more generally by working with many learned societies and key organizations such as the British Academy. Alongside extensive use of social media such as socialsciencespace (www.socialsciencespace.com) and socialsciencebites (www.

socialsciencebites.com), he has spoken (youtu.be/C73V8q8ZWtw) and written (www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/blog/2013/apr/08/social-science-funding-us-senate) on this theme in various international contexts.

Ziyad is also the author of three books combining his interests in psychology and philosophy, The Happiness Paradox *(Reaction, 2003),* Deception *(Acumen, 2008) and most recently* Intimacy: Understanding the Subtle Power of Human Connection *(Acumen, 2012). He lives in London with his wife and three daughters.*

He can be followed on Twitter: @ZiyadMarar

Notes

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Why open access makes no sense

Robin Osborne

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- Academic research is different in kind from industrial contract research where the funder determines the activity and therefore is entitled to decide the use to which the results are put.
- The inspiration for research-council projects come from academics who therefore should retain the right to determine the form and location of the outputs.
- There is no clear dividing line between projects funded by research councils and an academic's daily activities of thinking and teaching. If there are fees for access to teaching there should be fees for access to research.
- Under the current system quality control is encouraged, and so is writing for a broader rather than a narrower readership.
- Under Gold OA there is a risk that the amount of work published increases and the quality decreases as publishers seek to maximise income from APCs.

The fundamental argument for providing open access to academic research is that research that is funded by the taxpayer should be available to the taxpayer. Those who have paid for the research, it is urged, should not have to pay a second time for access to the publication of that research. Proponents of what has come to be called 'open access' claim that this is simply obvious, but in fact this argument mistakes the fundamental nature of academic research, it mistakes the nature and process of academic publication, and it mistakes what is involved in providing access to academic research. I shall limit my claims here to research in the Humanities, but very similar arguments apply to research in the sciences also.

The argument about open access was first applied by research councils to specifically-funded research. Although it is the potential extension of the argument to cover all research done by those employed on contracts which require them to do research that has aroused greatest concern, the argument for open access does not follow even for research projects funded by research councils.

When I propose to a research council or similar body that I will investigate a set of research questions in relation to a particular set of data, the research council decides whether those are good questions to apply to that data-set, and in the period during which I am funded by that research council, I investigate those questions, so that at the end of the research I can produce my answers. The false assumption behind open access is that this is exactly parallel to what would happen if I were a commercial researcher. In that case a company would commission me to do market research; they would pay me on the basis that I spent my time doing that market research; I would carry out that market research during whatever period I was paid for; and at the end I would deliver my results to the company who had paid me.

The problem is that the two situations are quite different. In the first case, I propose both the research questions and the data-set to which I apply them. In the second the company commissioning the work supplies the questions and may supply or determine also the data-set to which the questions are applied. In the first case the researcher wants to do the work, and the research council is persuaded that that research has more claim on its funds than other research proposals it has before it. In the second case the company commissioning the research wants that research done and the researcher does it because that is what they are employed to do.

But the differences go further than this important question of who sets the agenda. Suppose that I have a project to investigate whether the overthrow of King James II in 1688 brought about less liberal attitudes among the population at large. This might involve my proposing to discover some evidence (how many crimes of what sort are mentioned in the Church Court records for 1687 in Berkshire, and how this compares with the number of crimes of similar sorts in January 1690) in order to investigate my hypothesis (that the Glorious Revolution of 1688–9 had consequences for popular toleration). Formally this looks to be much like the act of market research: the act of research involves assembling a database and sorting it. The result of the research can be expressed as a quantity, or as a 'yes' or 'no' answer to a simple question or series of questions.

If this were a piece of commercial contract research, those who commissioned it might want simply to know the answer. They would have directed me to the database, and my job would have been to tell them what I found in the database relevant to their concerns. They are unlikely to want my database, particularly since they have employed me precisely because I have analytical resources (skill, time) they don't have. What they want is my results, probably expressed in numerical form.

What is it that the research council wants from my publication? On the parallel of contract research they would not want me to publish my database (the list of all the crimes recorded in those records for those periods, sorted by type of crime); nor would they be asking me to publish my research decisions – an account of how I chose what to look at first, how looking at that led me to look at the next item, and so on. Rather they would want me to publish my results – a table showing how many crimes were mentioned in those records at those dates, what the degree of correlation was, and a short explanatory text. My proposal to do this research was framed in terms of my answering of certain questions, and so, on the parallel of contract research, publishing that research should mean publishing the answers to those questions.

But this isn't what publication of Humanities research means at all. Reporting a correlation may be sufficient for consumer research, but for Humanities research a list of correlated data would be essentially meaningless. What Humanities research expects to do is bring out the significance of correlations by putting them into a framework. That framework depends upon, and displays, the understanding that the researcher has achieved. Publishing research is a pedagogical exercise, a way of teaching others, not a way of giving others information which they are expected to handle on the basis of what they have already been taught.

To publish my understanding of crimes in Berkshire in 1687 and 1690 is to publish something of which the work I did while publicly-funded by the research council is a necessary but by no means a sufficient element. My understanding will partly be what I brought to the research in the first place, and the reason why I seemed a good person to do the research. And

while in part I may have come to it while collecting the data I was publicly-funded to collect, mostly it will be based on my wider understanding of the world. Some of my understanding is very likely to have been casually acquired – from something I read in *The Guardian* on a Saturday morning, from an idea an undergraduate pupil gave me when I was teaching them in the month after my research leave ended. Some of my understanding may actually not be mine at all, but the product of submitting a paper to a journal and having the anonymous referee point out to me that my own ideas were implausible and that the data I had offered were better understood differently.

Conversely, too, my research has an effect on my wider understanding. If my publication on crimes in Berkshire is to be reckoned publicly-funded research, then all my subsequent publications should be so reckoned also – for my understanding of the world will have been changed by my work on Berkshire crimes. My Berkshire research will be as much necessary for future publications as it was for this one. The only difference in this case is that this publication makes explicit use of the data on Berkshire.

Whereas the contract researcher is employed because they understand already a way of interpreting the sorts of data correlations they are being asked to find, and understand it because that way of interpreting such data correlations is well-recognised, fitting new data into an established framework, Humanities research collects new data with a view to forging a new framework of understanding. The researcher starts with a hunch that there might be a pattern in a particular data-set. The data-set is then formed, often from material that was not itself created in relation to the question the researcher is asking (the church court records were there before I ever thought of my question), but is a by-product of other activity. The publication of the database itself will tell others nothing at all without the framework which I supply – a framework which, if this is cutting-edge research, only I will be in a position to supply. It is my persuasive rhetoric (aka strong argument) that situates the evidence I have assembled into a context in which that evidence says something interesting, and that context is constructed on the basis of other material and of theories which were not collected during that funding period, or often of any funding period.

Giving open access merely to the data-set on Berkshire would be like giving access to a labyrinth without handing over a plan.

There is a logic to the current pattern of academic research. The debts I owe for any piece of research I publish are not simply, or even primarily, to the body that funded me to collect some data, nor indeed to the co-authors and collaborators who may be named at its head or in its first or last footnote. Under the long-prevailing pattern of research-funding and publication, I am given money for research (whether by a research council or by my own university as part of my salary) on the grounds that in the past I have shown that I can do interesting things with the data I have collected with due diligence. A granting body takes the decision that my applying my mind to further bodies of data and asking further questions is something likely to lead me to thoughts that will impress my academic peers. The reasonable expectation of the granting body is that I will not keep my research apart from the rest of my academic life – that I will employ the knowledge and understanding that I gain in my casual and less casual conversations with pupils and colleagues (in the lecture room, in the common room, in seminars) and that this knowledge and understanding will be found sufficiently stimulating by others that they want to be taught by me, encourage others to come and be taught by me, join my research group, invite me to conferences, ask me to advise on projects, and so on.

There is a logic too to the way in which we publish academic research. The granting body also has a reasonable expectation, policed by the publication plans that I am expected to declare when I apply for a grant and by the periodic research assessment exercises by which the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) check on what is done with their research money, that, beyond merely this more or less informal exploration of my ideas, I submit my ideas to the more formal scrutiny of publication. In doing so I invite others to engage with my arguments and to assess their cogency and expression. When I send in my paper or book I expect the journal or publisher to select appropriate readers, and those readers to engage with my material and claims. Those readers may have little to say; they may say a great deal. I may be invited to revise and resubmit. I may be rejected, by that journal or publisher and have to consider how

to reformulate what I am claiming before submitting to an alternative publication. When the publication appears it will have been shaped along the way by a great many inputs, none of them funded by those who funded my research.

Declaring that a publication would not have been possible without grant X or employment by University Y is easy. Attributing the publication itself to a particular funding body is simply impossible. Some of what is there should be attributed to QR funding (research funding distributed to universities by the four UK higher education funding bodies on an annual basis) some to a British Academy Small Grant, some to a research project grant, some to an earlier research project grant. Some of what is there needs to be attributed to the Arts and Humanities Research Council, who funded one of the graduates who offered a crucial example from their own doctoral research, some to the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst who were funding a visiting student who asked a sharp question, some of it to my college who funded the Junior Research Fellow whose own work on a quite different topic provided a model for one of the arguments. Much of it cannot be attributed to a funding body at all – the thoughts were had, and much of the substantive work done, not during hours when it might seem reasonable to reckon my time to have been bought by a research council, or indeed by my main employer, but in my own time (and not infrequently when I was in bed).

Currently the costs of making my research available to a wider world are borne by the wider world that wants to know where my research has got me, and that thinks from the title, place, and nature of my publication that my publication can teach them something they would like to know. A market operates. I publish my research in a great number of different ways, ways that are adapted to the needs of different readerships. By my choice of highly specialist journal, generalist journal, university press or a popular publisher, in a magazine for sixth-formers or a political weekly, I signal to whom I think I have made my research accessible. Those who, on the basis of those signals, expect that they will understand and are interested enough in what I think and what I have said, pay for access to my thoughts.

There is an entirely virtuous relationship here between my publication and others' research and publication. When I write, I build in expectations about my readership, about what they already know, about how they read my text, a text that is inevitably written in relation to other texts, some of which it will reference, some of which it will 'take as read'. If I write things that those who read find sufficiently accessible and sufficiently interesting they encourage others to read it, the journal or magazine finds itself in higher demand, the publisher sells more books, and those who have contributed in more or less unseen ways to my publication (referees, editors, etc.) find themselves rewarded, if not financially then by seeing their publications flourish and their contributions acknowledged. If what I publish is popular it enables other research to be encouraged; journals can take pieces they are less confident about because they know that readers will think this a good issue because it has my article in it; learned societies that own journals will gain more members because more people want to read my paper, and will recycle their income in more grants that will enable graduate students to go to conferences or young scholars to pay for expensive illustrations that will bring their own work to life; publishers are enabled to take additional titles because of the return they have had from my title. Under the current system quality control is encouraged, and so is writing for a broader rather than a narrower readership.

Imagine a world of so-called 'Gold' open access in which the costs of my publishing my research are borne by me or by my university. Purely Gold journals have no concern for satisfying subscribers or for the number of readers. Since payments are not dependent upon the nature of the journal, the quality of editorial input or the quality of the final product there is no incentive to take care over any of these. Since payments are being made for publication, the only limit on how much is published is how much is being paid for. Nor is there any concern for whether the research is, in intellectual terms, accessible. Accessibility has become a matter of there being no charge, not a matter of making oneself widely understood. The size of journals increases, the quality of journals declines, the papers become less widely readable, the job of editing becomes less rewarding – indeed the most important quality of the editorial department becomes its value for money, that is how many articles can be handled by how few staff.

The relationship here between my publication and others' research and publication has become vicious. At the end of the day the paper published in a Gold open access journal becomes less widely read – it has been less improved by editorial intervention and less required to be accessible. Since the more international the journal, the less the incentive to go over to open access, UK scholars who are obliged to publish in Gold open access journals will end up publishing in journals that are less international and, for all that access to them is cost-free, are less accessed in fact. UK research published through Gold open access will end up being ignored. Those who are really concerned with getting their views across to those they wish to influence will seek out journals and other forms of publication that are not open access, publishing their really interesting findings in those, and publishing in Gold open access journals token papers to satisfy research council or HEFCE stipulation.

There can be no such thing as free access to academic research. Academic research is not something to which free access is possible. Academic research is a process – a process which universities teach (at a fee). It is neither a database, nor the ways and techniques by which the database is manipulated. Just as my database is useless to you without your having the skills to manipulate it, so those skills are useless to you without the database. Research-funding pays researchers to enable them to form databases not previously formed in order to hone skills not previously sharpened. Like it or not, the primary beneficiary of research-funding is the researcher, who has managed to deepen their understanding by working on a particular data-set. The publications that result from the research project are only trivially a result of the research-funding, they come out of a whole history of human interactions that are not for sale. Not even in a slave society.

There is a gross misunderstanding in the open access debate about the nature of academic research and publication. Academic research publication is a form of teaching. Academic research publications deal not in sets of facts or figures but in understanding. But academic research publication is a form of teaching that assumes some prior knowledge. For those who wish to have access, there is an admission cost: they must invest

in the education prerequisite to enable them to understand the language used. Current publication practices work to ensure that the entry threshold for understanding my language is as low as possible. Open access will raise that entry threshold. Much more will be downloaded; much less will be understood.

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His list of publications is freely available at www.classics.cam.ac.uk/faculty/staff-bios/academic-research-staff/robin_osborne but you have to pay for his books.

The monograph challenge

Nigel Vincent

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- Monographs are an intrinsically important mode of academic production and must not be sacrificed on the altar of open access.
- Book chapters are also a valuable and distinctive type of output which could find their visibility, and hence their viability, enhanced by an appropriate OA policy.
- There are to date no agreed OA solutions in the domain of books.
- In developing OA models for books it is important that the peer review process as the guarantee of excellence is not compromised.
- Adoption of the untrammelled CC-BY licence is not appropriate for monographs and book chapters.

What is it with monographs?[1] Every time someone comes up with a new procedure for research assessment or dissemination, it seems to be monographs that do not fit the intended pattern. When the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) moved between 2001 and 2008 from scoring individuals to scoring outputs, monographs did not slot neatly into the new schema and mechanisms for double-weighting had to be introduced. As bibliometric techniques for research assessment internationally come to play a greater role, monographs risk being left out of the equation. And now it is monographs which present one of the most substantial challenges for the new commitment on the part of funders and government to open access publication. Where monographs lead book chapters tend to follow. In this essay I look at the reasons why monographs and book chapters pose the problems they do, with a special emphasis on the issue of open access. I look too at some of the ways in which it has been proposed to bring these forms of publication into line with articles in journals. As a preface to these discussions, I review the arguments for why, to express the fruits of certain categories of intellectual endeavour, these modes of publication are still the best we have. This is why they continue to define the international norms of excellence in those fields. It follows that, in the event of a conflict of interests, it is monographs and book chapters which must be retained and the principles which determine assessment and publication which must be revised to accommodate them, rather than the other way around.

Let's start with a definition. According to Williams et al., a monograph is 'a printed specialist book-length study of a research based topic, usually but not necessarily written by a single academic author from their own primary research or its equivalent in downloadable digital form or other electronic format'.[2] After a wide-ranging discussion of issues around the monograph, not all of which can be dealt with here, the authors conclude: 'despite financial, institutional and publishing constraints and changing opportunities provided by new digital models, the value of the monograph, as a print-on-paper record of substantial research, is still recognised and valued in the Arts and Humanities research community'.[3] Evidence of this value is to be found in the substantial presence of monographs within the submissions to research assessment exercises over the years in some discipline areas. For example, the data in the following table is taken from a partial survey of submissions to RAE 2008.[4] For each discipline half a dozen institutions were sampled, chosen to represent different sizes and types of university. The one property they have in common is that all were drawn from those that had scored in the top ten for the Unit of Assessment in question (measured in terms of overall GPA) since the intention was to focus on work that the panels had judged to be the best in the respective fields. The last line of the table displays as a control comparative data from Chemistry, a laboratory science where the only type of outlet is the journal article.

	Books (%)	Chapters (%)	Journal Articles (%)	Other (%)
English	39	27	31	3
History	40	22	37	1
French	37	23	39	1
Philosophy	14	20	65	1
Sociology	22	10	64	3
Law	18	15	65	1
Politics	29	9	62	0
Economics	1	2	89	7
Chemistry	0	0	100	0

Proportions of output types in a sample of RAE 2008 submissions

The pattern is clear: there is a group of disciplines, represented here by English, French and History, in which up to 40% of the outputs in the leading departments are in the form of books with up to a further 25% coming out as book chapters, and where only about a third of the work appears as articles in journals. For disciplines like Philosophy on the other hand some two thirds of the work is in article form, with about a fifth appearing as chapters and a small but still significant percentage as books.

Generalising even more we can say that data of these sort allow us to identify three broad classes of discipline: a) those which rely exclusively or almost exclusively on the journal article as the means by which the results of research are communicated to the world at large; b) those for which journal articles constitute two thirds of the normal scientific production; and c) those for which the journal article represents little more than a third, and sometimes even less, of research output. This informal survey of UK RAE data corresponds well with the patterns identified in the much more systematic analysis of work supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) reported in Mutz et al. (2012).[5] The comparison cannot be direct because the categories used in this study are grouped differently from those adopted in the RAE, but there are nonetheless clear parallels. In particular, their category of 'book and non-reviewed journal article' covers our monographs and book chapters (plus a small number of journals where contributions are invited rather than submitted) and their study shows how this category maps very closely onto Humanities and some Social Science disciplines.[6] And they too note that Economics, together with Psychology, is an outlier within Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) in terms of its publication profiles. For other disciplines within that broad category, they conclude: 'the Arts and Humanities really should be treated as an independent and relatively uniform area … Instead of counting only journal articles and their citations, however, it is important to include also monographs and anthologies' (p.14).[7] The importance of these modes of publication emerges too from the British Academy's internal survey of its highly competitive Small Research Grants scheme. Even on the relatively short projects – 6 to 24 months – funded by these awards, some 45% of the outputs are in book or chapter form.

It will be interesting to see how the submissions data for Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014, expected to be publicly available by mid-2015, will compare, and whether there is evidence for a downward trend in UK monograph production, as is sometimes claimed. For the moment however we should go with the conclusions of the data presented here and recognise that for core Humanities disciplines a substantial majority of the best work, as determined by peer review, appears between the covers of a book, whether that be a single-authored monograph or a collection of variously authored chapters. One may then reasonably ask: if these are the preferred output forms, why so? Is it simply a matter of habit that will alter as fields, technologies and assessment pressures change or are there intrinsic reasons for this preference? And if there are such reasons, as I believe there are, can the production of monographs be accommodated within the context of the move to open access?

Part of the answer can already be seen in the definition of a monograph quoted above which identifies the key concepts: 'a research based topic', 'usually … written by a single academic author' drawing on 'their own primary research'. This close connection between the individual(s), the research and the writing is at the opposite pole from what goes on in some areas of the natural sciences, where in the extreme case there may be hundreds of names of 'authors' attached to the paper or where the 'writer' of the paper is identified separately from other 'contributors', although all are credited with authorship in the sense of having their names attached to the paper.[8] Where 400 or 500 individuals are acknowledged in this way, it seems not implausible that some 'authors' have not even read let alone written the papers above which their names appear.

By contrast, in the Humanities and Social Sciences, particularly the former, the writing is crucial since that is usually the principal way, and in many instances the only way, that the argument is conveyed. This is not to say that clear, coherent writing is not to be found in all fields, but in HSS it will not generally be complemented and augmented by equations, tabulated data-sets and the like, nor will it be pre-organised into sections labelled 'results', 'discussion' and the like. Indeed, the supporting data may itself be textual rather than numerical – quotations, transcriptions of archival

material, letters and so on – and some of it may well be in languages other than English. The intellectually creative act lies as much in the formulation and composition as in the conception of the experiment or the connecting of hitherto independent pieces of data. It is for this reason that academics in the Humanities need the time and space of sabbatical leave or an externally funded fellowship in order to concentrate on writing rather than being able to (or wishing to) delegate the writing to someone else after the research has been conducted. It is also because of the importance of the writing and the formulation, and the absence in many cases of complementary data, that text mining and other data recovery techniques are much less easily applied; hence too the preference by many in these areas for CC-BY-ND forms of licence.

Of course, all the properties mentioned above also apply to book chapters and journal articles in these fields. The additional, in some ways defining, property of a monograph is its length, which is attributable to the greater breadth or depth of coverage to be found in such works.[9] It is precisely the scale of the enterprise conceived and realised in such works that entitles them to particular respect and recognition, and accounts for the prestige that they have in both the national and the international domains. Nor are they just things produced by senior scholars. A recent survey of holders of British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships demonstrated the central place that the monograph holds in a range of disciplines from Social Anthropology to English Literature. A number of respondents used the expression 'gold standard' in this connection and almost all reported that they believed their monographs to have been key to their gaining their first academic position or to subsequent promotion. In the words of one young scholar: 'There is no other medium that allows for the depth of research, analysis and sustained argumentation.'

And it is for this reason that research evaluation exercises like the RAE and the REF have gone out of their way to devise means such as 'double-weighting' in order to accommodate them. Such exercises are governed by two key principles: first, that work should be assessed by a uniform set of criteria that take as their benchmark internationally agreed standards of excellence (see the RAE/REF definitions for the levels 4*

to 1*), and the commitment to track research quality and not direct it. Thus: 'In all cases the sub-panel criteria seek to reflect rather than shape the research activity of the discipline in question' (RAE 2008 Main Panel M Criteria, §10). And again: 'The REF aims to assess all types of research without distorting the activity that it measures' (*Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions*, REF 02.2011, p.4). Taken together these principles mean that if the leading work in, say, Europe or the USA in a given field comes in book-sized chunks, then UK academics must also be accorded the opportunity to compete by producing similar chunks. To do otherwise would be to reduce UK research in these fields to a secondary status in the international forum.

The argument so far has been that the monograph is an essential mode of publication for certain types of enquiry, and that in some fields the best research has appeared and will continue to appear in that form. Can the same be said for the book chapter? The evidence from our table certainly suggests so, since chapters represent between a fifth and a quarter of submitted work in some fields. Book chapters have properties in common with both monographs and journal articles. They share with the former the tendency to be single-authored while in length they are closer to a journal article. Yet their fate hangs in the balance more immediately than does that of either of the other genres. In a persuasive blog post, the distinguished developmental psychologist Dorothy Bishop comes to the bleak conclusion that: 'if you write a chapter for an edited book, you might as well write the paper and then bury it in a hole in the ground'.[10] For her, the issue is not quality but visibility. A book chapter may be longer (though practice here varies), less about reporting new data and more about reflecting on the place and importance of existing results in the larger scheme of things. And, as the historian Peter Webster in his thoughtful response points out, book chapters may well have been more rigorously reviewed than a journal article since they will often have been read and commented on by other contributors to the volume as well as by independent referees selected by the publishers.[11] Webster also makes the case for the intrinsic merits of collected volumes which bring together fellow specialists, cast light on an issue or topic from different and complementary perspectives, and benefit from mutual cross-reading and commentary. Such carefully

focused works often add up to more than the sum of their parts and may in fact be as 'visible' as monographs.

The issue now is quality. What Webster describes is true of the best work in this genre but there are many sets of papers which do not conform to his model. I was recently asked to review for a publisher a proposed volume where each chapter would have been appropriate in a specialist journal but where there was only the flimsiest pretence of unity to the collection, no evidence that the contributors had read each other's chapters and hardly any bibliography cited in common. All too often conference collections can be like this and this accounts for the low standing they often have in the minds of research evaluation panels and promotion committees. At this point a move to open access may be a force for good. If chapters from collections are available on the web in designated locations, then the anxieties that Bishop expresses are greatly diminished. They will appear in web searches and can be accessed without the trouble of actually visiting the library. What had previously risked being invisible becomes visible again. Of course, the quality control issue remains but this is a general one which affects open access in a variety of ways, and we will return to it below.

So far we have argued that, just as the RAE/REF had to demonstrate flexibility in order to come up with a solution that would recognise and accord due status to monographs (book chapters in this context are less of an issue), any proposals for open access must take account of and find a way to accommodate books (whether monographs or collections). What then are the problems that stand in the way of applying open access models to books? The first is obviously financial. Books cost money; in the case of small print run specialist monographs often in eye-watering amounts. If such volumes are to be made available through open access, some way must be found to pay for producing them. Even if academic book production as traditionally known were to cease and be replaced by electronic publication and distribution, the fixed start-up costs (academic editing, copy-editing, typesetting) would have to be covered.

Second is the kind of licensing. We have already indicated that in outputs where much of the excellence and distinctiveness lies in the quality of the

writing, a simple CC-BY licence may not be appropriate, and a ND (non-derivative) licence will be required to protect the interests of author and to avoid the unauthorised use of third-party material. Publishers may in addition require a NC (non-commercial) licence in order to ensure that others do not derive financial advantage from their investment.[12]

A further problem posed by monographs is that they blur the boundary between specialist academic publications and what publishers call the general or trade list. Articles in journals are for the most part only accessed and read by fellow researchers (in universities and in government and industrial labs) plus journalists and science writers and the occasional interested citizen. There is nothing wrong with that – advanced research in any field is a specialist activity targeted at people with similar degrees of specialist knowledge and understanding. Such work can then be complemented by what bookshops market as 'general' or 'popular' science. Even when the scientist is also the author of such works, as with the successful books by the likes of Roger Penrose and Steve Jones, it is unlikely that they would be referenced in research articles or figure on undergraduate reading lists. By contrast, some monographs manage to cover both bases at once. They may contain excellent original research, fresh data, new arguments, new and important conclusions that suggest innovative approaches to policy, and the like but still be highly readable, and likely to appeal to some at least amongst the ranks of general readers. Works such as Ian Kershaw's biography of Hitler or Mary Beard's reconstruction of life in Pompeii are candidates for inclusion in such a cross-over category. No doubt the reader can think of others.

We end with a brief survey of some of the solutions that have been proposed.[13] One option is simply to exclude monographs and book chapters altogether from open access requirements. This might be temporarily acceptable while suitable business models are worked out, as indeed the Finch Report, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Research Councils UK, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England all agree, or permanently on the grounds that open access cannot ever apply to books in the way that it does to journals. Versions of this latter policy certainly have their advocates; see for example Robin

Osborne's contribution to this collection. However, there are also strong arguments against. In the first place if, as nearly everyone agrees, open access is in principle a good thing because it makes the fruits of publicly funded research available to that public at no further cost, it is hard to see why HSS should be excluded simply because the manner of publication is different. Second, there is the visibility question we have already touched on above in relation to book chapters. It is undoubtedly the case that work available in open access has higher rates of citation than other material (see for example the results reported in http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/268516/). The details of the argument may vary from discipline to discipline. In my own field of linguistics, for example, the case for open access is eloquently made by Stefan Müller in the first issue of the new online, APC-free *Journal of Language Modelling*.[14] However, whatever the field, it is certainly true that open access has the potential to bring with it the benefit of enfranchising a valuable form of research and publication that otherwise risks being downgraded or ignored, to the detriment of British scholarship at large.

So what are the alternatives? It is fair to say that there is as yet no one model which has gained general agreement. At the opposite extreme from simple exclusion is an approach in which books, multiple or single authored, are simply posted in PDF format on websites from which anyone interested may download them. They can be protected by the author's chosen form of licence, but access and further use are not otherwise constrained. Adopting a term that has gained currency in discussions of journal publishing, this could be called the 'Platinum' model.[15] The problems here are the same as face Platinum journals: the sustainability of the venture, the development of appropriate business models and the need to ensure quality and reputation and thereby to attract the leading authors in the field in question.

There are several models already in existence. For instance, Open Book Publishers (www.openbookpublishers.com) make available full book texts that can be read online, but which cannot be copied off the screen or downloaded; instead print-on-demand or e-book versions have to be purchased. In contrast, the Knowledge Unlatched consortium of libraries (www.knowledgeunlatched.org) proposes that publishers should offer

monograph titles for the consideration of the consortium. If the consortium likes a title, it will pay the publisher up front for all the start-up costs and the text is made available and downloadable online. The publisher can seek to generate additional revenue by selling hard copies through print-on-demand. The Open Library of the Humanities (www.openlibhums.org) draws its inspiration from the Public Library of Science (www.plos.org) and charges relatively low article processing charges (APCs) with additional funding derived via donations and sponsorship. Models such as these also rely on volunteer work by committed academics and on the use and development of open-source software to facilitate the preparation of the manuscript.

Alternatively, one can envisage the equivalent of full APCs for books. This is a costly route which would be beyond the resources of the many small grant funders who operate productively in the Humanities. It is for instance the approach adopted by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), which grants a lump sum of €14,000 for the publication of a book deriving from a project that it has supported (increased to €18,000 if there are translation costs involved). In return, the FWF lays down conditions on peer review, which can serve to address the quality problem mentioned above, and is intervening to develop appropriate repositories. The latter can serve to mimic in the world of the Internet the experience of the library browser who enters with the intention of consulting one volume and leaves enriched by the contents of other items that happened to share shelf space with it. A resource which moves in the same direction but encompasses much more than the electronic equivalents of traditional books is that promoted by the DARIAH project (www.dariah.eu).

The FWF model described above is in effect 'Gold' OA for books. A variant of 'Green' is not hard to imagine. This would entail a book being published in the same way as currently at a price sufficient to defray the considerable costs of copy-editing, indexing, formatting, proof-reading, marketing, warehousing and distribution and to allow the publisher a margin of profit. However, after an appropriate embargo period – the exact length to be determined but presumably longer than the 12 to 24 months currently being discussed for journals – an electronic version would be made available for

download from the publishers website or from a repository. The technology for this would not be problematic since electronic book publishing is already well established. Indeed, it could be argued that something akin to this already exists in the substantial price reductions academic publishers offer from time to time on items from their backlist. For example, as I write, Cambridge University Press are advertising selected items in Humanities and Social Sciences at 40% of their original cover price. Obviously, it would take time and care to work out the details of this or any other kind of solution, and publishers may not easily be persuaded to grant speedy access to titles for which they foresee sustained sales over many years And even so there could still be losers. Second-hand booksellers who specialise in academic books for example could see their market drastically undercut by any move to free electronic access after an embargo period. It is essential, therefore, that we do not charge into ill-thought-out policies and proposals in the way that has to date unfortunately characterised the discussion of open access in relation to journals.

In summary, then, the main conclusions to emerge from this brief survey of open access issues in the area of books and book chapters are:

- Monographs are an intrinsically important mode of academic production and must not be sacrificed on the altar of open access.
- Book chapters are also a valuable and distinctive type of output and could find their visibility, and therefore their viability, enhanced by an appropriate open access policy.
- There are to date no agreed open access solutions in the domain of books that can be canvassed in the focused way that the Gold vs. Green debate has developed in relation to journal publishing.
- Time should therefore be taken to develop and explore more precise models without hasty rush to a find a single unified solution for all modes of academic production.
- In developing such models it is important to ensure that the move to open access does not compromise the peer review process as the guarantee of excellence.
- The simple adoption of the untrammelled CC-BY licence is unlikely to be the right answer in the domain of books, whatever its merits

(which are in any case contested in the Humanities and Social Science disciplines) in relation to journals.

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Notes

1 Just as this collection was going to press the Wellcome Trust announced that they were extending their open access policy to include monographs and book chapters, a development which reinforces the need to find solutions that cover all modes of scholarly publication.

2 Peter Williams, Iain Stevenson, David Nicholas, Anthony Watkinson & Ian Rowlands, 'The role and future of the monograph in arts and humanities research', *Aslib Proceedings*, 61 (2009), 67-82, at p. 67.

3 Ibid, p. 80.

4 See www.rae.ac.uk/submissions

5 Mutz, Rüdiger, Lutz Bornmann & Hans-Dieter Daniel (2012). Types of research output profiles: A multi-level latent class analysis of the Austrian Science Fund's final project report data. *Research Evaluation*, online pre-publication, 4/12/2012.

6 We return below to the question of peer review in relation to book chapters.

7 By 'anthologies' here they mean what we refer to below as 'collections' or 'collected volumes'. The former term is best reserved for compilations of reprinted material, works which have an important place in teaching and reference but which by definition do not represent original research.

8 See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_authorship for a useful survey of practices in different disciplines (accessed 20 March 2013).

9 There are other large scale projects in the Humanities – for example, editions of lengthy or difficult texts or ones with complex manuscript traditions, commentaries, and the like – which fall under this same rubric and to which many of the same criteria and arguments apply. For sake of simplicity I use the term 'monograph' to cover all such endeavours.

10 deevybee.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/how-to-bury-your-academic-writing.html

11 peterwebster.wordpress.com/2013/01/14/on-the-invisibility-of-edited-collections

12 On the pro and cons of a plain CC-BY licence, see the exchange at: jlsc-pub.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=jlsc

13 There is not space here to cover all the views and approaches currently under consideration. See the AHRC's open access for monographs pages for many more links and a review of the relevant literature: www.ahrc.ac.uk/About-Us/Policies,-standards,-and-forms/open-access/Pages/OAPEN-UK.aspx. For the associated work being promoted by JISC see: oapen-uk.jiscebooks.org/?s=&search_404=1. In the international context, a number of alternatives were discussed at the ERC-sponsored event held in February 2013, erc.europa.eu/workshop-open-access-infrastructures-social-sciences-and-humanities

14 Stefan Müller 'A personal note on open access in linguistics', in *Journal of Language Modelling* 1.1, pp. 9-39 (2012) nlp.ipipan.waw.pl/ojs/index.php/JLM

15 I am aware that some people prefer not to proliferate these colour-coded categories, arguing that 'Gold' means 'immediately available' regardless of whether a charge has been paid or not; see openaccess.eprints.org/index.php?/archives/1003-Paid-Gold-OA-Versus-Free-Gold-OA-Against-Color-Cacophony.html However, it is useful to distinguish those ventures which require an APC from those which do not, and hence I retain here the labels 'Gold' vs 'Platinum'.

Appendix 1

Key terms, concepts and abbreviations

Debating Open Access, published 2013
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APC or article processing charge: the sum of money paid up front by authors or their institutions in order to permit Gold open access.

CC-BY: the licence which determines the form of reuse permitted to those who access articles or other publications. CC stands for 'Creative Commons' and BY or By means that the author(s) of the article must be appropriately acknowledged. More restrictive versions of the licence forbid commercial reuse (-NC) or the use of the article to construct derivative materials (-ND).

Embargo period: the period, ranging from 6 to 36 months or more, during which the article remains behind the journal's paywall and is only accessible to institutions or individuals who have paid a subscription.

Gold open access: refers to work that is immediately available free of charge at the site of publication to any member of the public. Post-Finch it is commonly taken to mean that such access is supported by author-side article processing charges (APCs) but in fact the majority of those listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (www.doaj.org/) charge no fee of any kind either to author or reader. The Finch Report also associates Gold open access with free reuse via an unrestricted CC-BY licence but logically and legally availability and licencing are separate issues.

Green open access: refers to work that is made publicly available in a repository, institutional or subject-based, after an embargo period. Variants of Green open access depend on whether what is made available after the embargo period is the author's final submitted text (or 'pre-print') or the article in its post-refereed form (or 'post-print').

Hybrid: the label applied to a journal which grants Gold open access to those who pay an APC but otherwise practises Green open access.

Repository: an archive maintained either by an institution or a discipline group which makes available the meta-data of all publications and, at the appropriate time, the full text. A widely cited instance of a subject-based repository is arXiv, which stores papers in Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science, Quantitative Biology, Quantitative Finance and Statistics (arxiv.org).

Other frequently used abbreviations

AHRC: Arts and Humanities Research Council [UK]
BIS: Department of Business, Innovation and Skills [UK]
ERC: European Research Council
ESRC: Economic and Social Research Council [UK]
HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council for England
HSS: Humanities and Social Sciences
RAE: Research Assessment Exercise
REF: Research Excellence Framework
NIH: National Institutes of Health [US]
RCUK: Research Councils UK
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Appendix 2

Key dates and documents

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March 2011 High level round table meeting hosted by the Rt. Hon. David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science. It was attended by academic representatives of the HE sector, research funders, the research community, scholarly publishers and libraries.

17 October 2011 The Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings (chaired by Dame Janet Finch) first meets.
The minutes of its five meetings (through to 17 May 2012) can be found via www.researchinfonet.org/publish/finch/wg

12 January 2012 British Academy panel discussion on 'Open Access: The New Future of Academic Publishing?'
www.britac.ac.uk/events/2012/OpenAccess.cfm

2 May 2012 Speech by David Willetts MP to Publishers Association on 'Public access to publicly-funded research.'
www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-public-access-to-research

18 June 2012 Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications. Report of the Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings [chaired by Dame Janet Finch].
www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Finch-Group-report-FINAL-VERSION.pdf

12 July 2012 Speech by Rt. Hon. Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills at the Royal Society on UK science, openness and internationalisation.
www.gov.uk/government/speeches/vince-cable-delivers-speech-on-uk-science-openness-and-internationalisation

16 July 2012 Responses to the Finch Report from:
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.
www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-open-up-publicly-funded-research

RCUK
www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/2012news/Pages/120716.aspx

HEFCE
www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2012/name,73613,en.html

26 July 2012 British Academy response.
www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/786

22 October 2012 Humanities and Social Sciences Learned Societies and Subject Associations Network forum on 'Open Access for Humanities and Social Sciences' hosted by British Academy.
www.britac.ac.uk/policy/hsslssa-open_access.cfm

29-30 November 2012 Academy of Social Sciences conference on 'Implementing "Finch".'
www.acss.org.uk/OAConfNov2012.htm

15 January 2013 House of Lords Science and Technology Committee session on 'Open access' (appearance by Dame Janet Finch).
www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/science-and-technology-committee/news/open-access

29 January 2013 House of Lords Science and Technology Committee session on 'Open Access'.
(appearance by David Willets MP)
www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/science-and-technology-committee/news/open-access-evidence-sessions

25 February 2013 HEFCE publishes call for advice on Open Access.
www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2013/name,78750,en.html

6 March 2013 RCUK published revised Open Access Policy and Supporting Guidance.
www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/2013news/Pages/130305.aspx

British Academy responses to the parliamentary inquiries, HEFCE call for advice and RCUK's revised policy, along with other statements and publications on open access are available at: www.britac.ac.uk/openaccess

16 April 2013 House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee session on 'Open Access'.
(appearance by Professor Chris Wickham, British Academy Publications Secretary)
www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=12961

14 May 2013 House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee session on 'Open Access'.
(appearance by David Willetts MP)
www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=13123

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