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Encouraging Digital Scholarly Publishing in the Humanities: White Paper



Abstract

This project, led by the University Press of North Georgia, and funded by a Digital Start-Up grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities focused on exploring the peer review process and increasing its usefulness to presses and scholars publishing digitally. By exploring this issues we have made recommendations for best practices in digital publishing, specifically for small academic presses. Through surveys and a workshop of key stakeholder groups (press directors, college administrators, humanities faculty, and library/technology center directors), we found a strong investment in the “gold standard” of double- or single-blind peer review. Working within the current academic publishing structure (including publishing in print) was a priority, even to presses and faculty members who were actively exploring digital publishing and open access models. On closer inspection, we realized that the various stakeholders valued the current peer review process for different reasons. And we found that the value of peer review goes beyond vetting the quality of scholarship and manuscript content. Based on these findings, we considered ways to obtain these benefits within the current academic structure through innovative peer review processes. At the same time, we looked for ways of offsetting potential risks associated with these alternative methods. We considered cost effective ways to accommodate the needs of the disparate constituencies involved in academic publishing while allowing room for digital publishing. While our findings focus primarily on small academic presses, they also have significant implications for the open access community.

Encouraging Digital Scholarly Publishing in the Humanities: White Paper

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Introduction

This project developed based on discussions that began among the members of the Consortium for Open Access Textbooks at the Association of American University Presses in June 2011. Dr. Bonnie Robinson, project director, and director of the University Press of North Georgia, found that other academic presses were struggling with issues related to the transition to electronic publishing. She utilized this existing group to query other press directors about their procedures and practices related to peer review and electronic publishing. Members of the consortium expressed strong interest in developing a model to share resources related to the peer review process. Based on these initial conversations, Dr. Robinson applied for and received a Digital Start-Up grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The funded project focused on examining peer review and electronic publishing of single-author digital monographs. Monographs are detailed scholarly studies focused on a single subject and usually offering new, original research.

Why Monographs?

Monographs are a particular area of interest for both academic presses and institutions. These carefully researched texts have a small audience, resulting in short print runs of 1,000 copies or less; nevertheless, they have a significant scholarly impact due to their original theses and pioneering contributions to their respective field of knowledge.

Presses and institutions also often share the costs and labor related to publishing monographs. Technological changes facilitate the short runs characteristic of monographs. By drastically reducing production and distribution costs, digital born monographs can make publishing scholarly monographs economically feasible for small presses.

Peer Review and Digital Publishing

We began by exploring the peer review process to find ways to increase its usefulness and reliability to presses and scholars publishing digitally. We hoped to identify best practices for presses incorporating innovative peer review processes to support digital publishing. The cost savings of digital publishing motivated our focus on supporting small presses in increasing their digital offerings. We discovered a strong resistance to digital-only publishing from both presses and scholars.

- Although content is king for presses, delivery methods constantly change and their longevity is suspect.
- As long as readers demand print, presses need to continue publishing in print in order to remain competitive.
- Scholars need to meet administrative tenure and promotion expectations where traditional print publishing remains the standard.

We considered ways to accommodate these needs cost effectively while allowing room for digital publishing.

Project Design

We started by thinking about questions we wanted to answer and identifying key stakeholders. We decided to use surveys and a face-to-face workshop that would bring together these key stakeholders to gather more information. We developed an initial survey directed to a small number of university press directors participating in an open access textbook consortium; the survey questions focused on digital publishing policies and peer review. From the results of this survey, we derived questions to consider at the workshop. Participants at the workshop included press directors, faculty, administrators, and IT personnel. Workshop discussion identified concerns and possibilities that warranted further examination and that shaped our second set of surveys disseminated to administrators, faculty, publishers, library/technology center directors, and IT personnel.

For further description of the project design, see Appendices A-E

Conclusions

Print or Digital?

Initial survey results indicated that presses use the same peer review process for both digital and print monographs, but 43% of scholars still believe that the process differs.

Half (50%) of scholars believe that if a scholarly monograph is peer reviewed, then its delivery method does not matter. 84% of scholars think that digital born monographs should count toward promotion and tenure. But 90% of scholars, and 84% of publishers strongly agree or somewhat agree that promotion and tenure committees prefer print over digital born publications. 64% of scholars are affiliated with institutions that require peer reviewed (blind or double blind) publication for promotion and tenure.

Just over half (52%) of publishers believe that monographs need to be published in print, but 70% think that if a monograph is peer reviewed, then its delivery method does not matter. Of the scholars responding to this question, 20% prefer print only; 4% prefer digital only; and 76% prefer both. None of the librarians said that scholarly monographs need to be in print.

The Peer Review Process

We discovered a strong resistance to changing the “gold standard” of double- or single-blind peer review from presses, scholars, and administrators. In other words, we soon realized that there existed a real interest in maintaining the current academic publishing structure—even among presses who were exploring digital publishing and open access models.

On closer inspection, we realized that the various stakeholders valued the current peer review process for different reasons. We found that the value of peer review goes beyond vetting the quality of scholarship and manuscript content.

- Scholars value the current peer review process in terms of improving the manuscript’s quality (argument, structure, and clarity).
- Presses value the competitive edge that the peer review process (and gatekeeping role) gives them in academia.
- Institutions (and their administrators) value the quality control of this gate-keeping in terms of building prestige.
- Scholars value the prestige of their work being placed at top tier, well respected presses.

Based on these findings, we considered ways to obtain these benefits within the current academic structure through innovative peer review processes. At the same time, we looked for ways of offsetting potential risks associated with these alternative methods.

Leveraging Shared Interests

Libraries, presses, faculty, and administrators each form what Kathleen Fitzpatrick in *Planned Obsolescence* (2011) calls “communities of practice.” The areas where their independent goals overlap present the best opportunities to change views and expectations regarding digital born monographs.

I. Collaboration

Economics drive the need for small presses to collaborate to share costs. To quote from a workshop participant: “Scholarship is not commercial. We can’t draw a direct line from scholarship to dollars.” Workshop participants and follow up survey respondents saw opportunities for certain types of collaboration, i.e., marketing and distribution; however, most did not see how collaboration would reduce the heaviest direct costs. To quote from the first survey: “Cost sharing would work logistically for some portions of our operating costs, just not the most substantial ones—editorial and production. Many presses remain in competition with each other for the best authors, grants, and publicity, so it’s not a normal state for publishers to work together in collaborative ways.”

The workshop participants pointed out that we need to collaborate in cost- and labor-effective ways. They asked, “Can you reduce the whole system (for both presses and institutions) costs down? Or are the costs there, and can you move them around?” One means of reducing costs is to cut out the middlemen. Of the services provided by a press that are seen as valuable, editing/copyediting, production, and marketing and distribution are related to high direct costs. These services would therefore seem potentially rewarding for collaboration. Some survey respondents do outsource marketing and distribution services to larger presses and/or vendors. A highly valued service that has low (or potentially low) direct costs is peer review, a process performed and/or facilitated by faculty boards and scholar reviewers.

- a. **Editing/copyediting** seems a viable area of collaboration. Yet 83% of publishers do not share editors among presses. To quote from a survey respondent, “Editors build lists at single presses.” If they do share editors, it is for copyediting.
- b. **Production** is seen as a valuable service provided by a press. The follow up survey asked publishers if they shared production activities among presses. 74% said no. “But we work with vendors who certainly serve other presses.” And, “We share digital activities but not printing and binding activities.” Most publishers do not collaborate in that area due to branding.
- c. **Faculty boards and peer reviewers** are intrinsically collaborative. Workshop participants pointed out that faculty and university presses already collaborate through faculty boards and peer reviewers. Could those resources be used to further assist small presses with limited resources, i.e., through shared reviewers or a faculty board consortium?

Some survey comments on this latter possibility included the following: “it depends on the board, its reputation, where the publication will circulate, etc.,” and, “I wouldn’t submit to a press if I weren’t sure I’d get good quality specialist readers.” Also, publishers in the survey commented that, “Such consortia have no sense of responsibility, and historically have shown themselves willing to approve nearly anything put in front of them.” And, “Faculty boards are not as critical as good reviewers.”

These results indicate an area for collaboration through faculty boards, providing that common concerns – accountability, credentialing, legitimizing specialists – were addressed.

II. Peer Review

Few publishers see opportunities for collaborating in terms of peer reviewers or the peer review process. To quote from the survey: “Editorial programs are what really distinguish presses from each other. Shared reviews would break that down. And in the case of negative reviews, they would be unduly harmful to authors. No one or two reviewers should be able to kill a project at multiple presses.”

What is valuable in the peer review process for published monographs? 30% of the survey respondents believed it helped with their research or expanded their research methods; 85% believed it strengthened the argument; 40% thought it helped in revising the structure; 42% found it helpful as copyediting; and 10% found it no help at all – except with preparing “blurbs” (which could be useful for marketing).

In terms of innovative forms of peer review, the survey responses reveal what stakeholders value about peer review itself. Frankness and lack of bias are values. Because of that, most publishers find open peer review, for example, a disincentive for potential reviewers: “Academia can be a uniquely political and contentious venue;” “For overall quality assessment, public reviews bring too much pressure on the reviewers to be less frank in judging a work...we live in a litigious society.” Respondents doubted that blog discussions, webmetrics, and crowdsourcing could provide “sustained attention, including many specific criticisms as well as assessment of a work’s coherence as an argument overall.” The data and information provided through these methods were valuable, depending upon who used them and how

they were used. A sample response: “Ideally, we care whether scholarship is getting read and used. Metrics is a good system for determining these things. They should count, but the data needs to be analyzed carefully.”

These responses indicate an inclination to diversify the peer review process towards hybridity and transparency, providing that what is valued in traditional peer review is preserved in these new processes.

But publishers prefer/like traditional peer review also because it gives them a competitive edge over commercial presses, since “peer review is a default to promotion and tenure committees.” So publishers might resist change here.

III. **Digital born publishing**

When asked in the survey whether digital born monographs should count towards tenure and promotion, 43% of scholars and administrators responding to the follow up survey said no. A sampling of their responses revealed their perception that digital born monographs would not undergo rigorous peer review. To quote: “Peer review is an important part of good scholarship; if it were to change for digital monographs, I would need more information about how it would change.”

Workshop participants noted that publishers see a number of ways that digital advances have not yet had as big an impact in publishing as possible because their specific target audiences have not fully-embraced improvements in: digital review copies, electronic peer review, permissions, agreements, and digital born (identified as e-only) publications.

Our survey to press directors revealed that publishers use the same peer review process for digital as for print products. In other words, there is no difference between the two. As one respondent wrote, “Content, not format, is [the] object of reviews.”

Recommendations for Small Presses

1. Assure scholars and administrators that double blind peer review will remain in place, while at the same time encouraging innovative models. Assuring scholars and administrators of the quality of digital born products is essential to encourage their growth. Since double or single blind peer review is highly valued, focusing editing and copy editing efforts on that process has a very strong return on investment. According to our survey, most peer reviewers consider their work as service to their field; many do not receive or expect an honorarium. If small presses could encourage reviewers to forego honoraria, then the main cost of traditional peer review is in management. Management costs themselves can be further reduced if reviewers are encouraged to use electronic manuscripts. Coinciding with this traditional review process, small presses can explore blogs, comment communities of discipline-specific scholars, and other digital forms of collaborative review that enhance the quality of a manuscript at little cost.

2. Continue to use a hybrid (digital and print) publishing model, while anticipating a digital-only future. Digital publishing can comprise the majority of a press's products, and print copies of scholarly monographs can be made available through Print on Demand. Altering perceptions of digital born products would be a means to lessen the need for print products. With current perceptions, publishing still needs to be hybrid. Small presses have an advantage in their agility in adapting to and adopting this hybridity. Their overhead is comparatively small. And they can collaborate with various entities and constituencies; besides libraries, small presses can partner with learned societies, discipline-specific scholars, etc.
3. Consider collaborative models for the peer review process. Concerns for sustainability and cost recovery drive this interest in potential collaboration and partnerships. Viable options include collaborating in the peer review process itself with faculty board consortia and/or learned societies and discipline-specific scholars/reviewers. Small presses, however, need to be very careful to leave potential sources of cost recovery entirely out of the manuscript vetting/peer review process itself, for example, in author fees and/or required subsidies.
4. Ensure the quality of digital or hybrid products through rigorous and transparent peer review processes. Small presses need to explain how and why they choose peer reviewers; what questionnaires or rubrics, if any, they require their reviewers to use and with rubrics, whether or not comments are encouraged; what review/assessment system, if any, they use; how they interpret their reviewers' comments and implement any requested revisions; what related communication, if any, occurs between the reviewer and the project editor; whether and/or how often they re-use reviewers and whether or not their reviewers are financially compensated. All their peer reviewers need to be experts in the field, who are able to evaluate high level scholarly work and to write focused reviews. Archive all records of draft versions, revisions, and accompanying comments.
5. Allocate resources wisely. Small presses can allocate most of their resources to those branding activities that are both highly valued and comparatively low cost, such as double or single blind peer review and design/production. Small presses need to enhance their reputation by assuring the high quality of their publications, so they should allocate their resources towards the activities that achieve the most valued outcomes of the traditional peer review process. In other words, small presses should take greatest advantage of elements in the traditional peer review process scholars believe enhance the quality of the monograph: micro and macro sustained analysis that strengthens the argument, revises its structure, or improves its clarity. Small presses can also encourage those innovative peer review processes that promote these particular goals.
6. Consider using innovative practices at strategic points in the review process. Think about using new methods at different points of the peer review process (pre, during, and post publication). For example blogs can foster sustained scholarly conversation over a period of time. These contributions can be collected and can assist a work's development phase. Collaborative peer

review with different reviewers focusing on different aspects of a text can also assist a work's development. And open peer-to-peer review or review within a closed community of scholars (who do not dissipate/disseminate a scholar's research) can assist at the revision and editing stages. Digital publishing and post publication review also especially facilitate quick and responsive revision/editing.

Our Next Steps

By identifying potential concerns and new possibilities in peer review and digital publishing, our project is moving this conversation forward and encouraging change. We will continue to contribute to the ongoing conversations about digital publishing in the humanities through blogs, newsletters, journals, and conferences. For example, we will align our findings with the discussions and recommendations of the recent Jisc Collections and OAPEN Open Access Monographs in Humanities and Social Sciences Conference. In addition, the recently released white paper from Ithaka S+R focusing on "Campus Services to Support Historians," shows how issues related to digital publishing and the promotion and tenure process are playing out in a specific discipline within the humanities.

We will continue to disseminate sample policies, best practices, and ideas for new possibilities in peer review and digital publishing to small presses to enable their greater leadership in and impact on digital publishing. And, we will continue to reach out to the academic and publishing communities (both nationally and internationally) to encourage collaborations to increase the digital output of small presses. We are specifically interested in supporting faculty board consortia and acquisitions editors.

Collaboration with the open access community is a priority to us. The "sanctioning" by academic presses of scholarly monographs through peer review can be a goal in itself, and this vetting process can be transferred to open access publishing. Some project findings that apply to open access publishing include: finding ways to maximize high impact factors like quality-control, production and design, and marketing while minimizing risks (i.e. loss of prestige and respect, plagiarism, longevity, inaccessibility). This is the most promising convergence we have discovered among the common interests of our various constituencies.

Appendix A: Initial Survey

The purpose of the initial survey was to explore common and unique practices among university presses of disparate size and individualized editorial programs in terms of the peer review process, publishing costs, collaborations and methods of cost recovery, and digital publishing policies and practices. The survey was sent to a targeted group (n=12) of university press directors that were part of the Consortium for Open Access Textbooks. This group of university presses formed to share costs and profits in the development and marketing of peer reviewed open educational resources. The response rate for this survey was 50%. Through this survey we gathered valuable information to guide the conversation at the workshop. We learned that few operating costs were shared through partnerships with other presses, presses compete with each other for manuscripts and readers as well as with commercial presses, peer review gives university presses a competitive edge over commercial presses, the same peer review process is used for print and digital products, end users determine media format, and scholarly end users distrust the quality of digital born publishing.

Initial Survey Questions:

- In which forms – digital and/or print – do scholars prefer to publish monographs?
- Did peer review improve/enhance a published monograph before its publication?
- Do you think peer review of digital born monographs differs in any way from the peer review of print scholarship?
- What is the role of university presses?
- Do scholarly monographs need to be published in print?
- Does digital-only content have longevity?
- Could blogs be peer reviewed in the same manner as scholarly monographs?
- Can the peer review process be crowd-sourced?
- Is the future of peer review open peer review within a closed community of credentialed scholars?
- Has digital publishing increased the usefulness of peer reviewed shorter forms of scholarship, such as shorts, essays, web pages, and blogs?
- Do promotion and tenure committees prefer traditional to new models of publishing?
- If a scholarly monograph is peer reviewed, does its delivery method matter?
- If a scholarly monograph is peer reviewed, does its place of publication matter?

Appendix B: Workshop Description

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together a group of key stakeholders (press directors, administrators involved in the promotion and tenure process, scholars, and IT professionals) to focus on the peer review process, digital publishing, and the role of academic presses. Specifically, the group was tasked with developing focused questions for the follow-up surveys, and outlining next steps.

Key issues discussed at the workshop included the following:

- What is the role of the press in scholarly communications?
- Are innovative and traditional forms of peer review mutually exclusive?
- What is the value of print over digital publication (and vice versa)?
- What are the purposes of peer review?
- How do we persuade promotion and tenure committees of the value of digital born scholarship?
- How can university presses collaborate in order to reduce costs and so encourage small presses and start up presses?

The workshop discussion elucidated the view that many factors besides peer review, or vetting the quality of scholarship, “branded” a monograph as itself of high quality. Such “branding” also involves the author’s credentials, expertise, and recognition; the author’s affiliate academic institution’s reputation; the publisher’s reputation; and the monograph’s production layout and design, front and back matter, etc. Scholarly communication involves disparate skills among various entities and is labor intensive.

Those involved in branding scholarship as high quality include academic institutions, who compete with other academic institutions for an international audience; university presses, competing with each other for authors, titles, reviewers, and reputation; libraries, building collections; learned societies, indexing discipline-specific scholarship; and professional publishing societies, determining best practices.

Within these entities, publishers see their role as devising a type of peer review for born digital scholarship and communicating that to academic institutions. 1-5% of publishing costs goes towards peer review itself. Yet peer review is an important (though not the sole) factor in what determines quality content and facilitates the additional branding elements of editing, production, etc.

Publishers prefer blind (double or single) peer review because it assures scholars the freedom to analyze and evaluate manuscripts without fear of retaliation; reviewers have the option for anonymity; candid reviews are thereby ensured. Blind review supports presses by giving university presses a competitive advantage over commercial presses; it enhances a press’s reputation because it is important for a press to ensure the integrity of the scholarship. Publishers use the same peer review process for print and digital products.

Innovative forms of peer review, such as biblio- or webmetrics, can be useful for post-publication review. Their reliability is open to question since they can be “gamed.” Most publishers do not use open

pre-publication peer review because it remains a disincentive for potential reviewers who fear backlash and subjectivity. Open review seems unreliable in terms of credentialing reviewers. Also, promotion and tenure committees trust blind review over open peer review.

Open peer review can be useful for those authors who are looking for revision guidance. Open peer review might be useful once a press decides whether or not to publish a manuscript. Some presses believe that peer review will become more and more transparent in the next years and that reviews will become more available to public scrutiny.

The publishers at the workshop believed that we have already moved beyond the need to build respect for digital scholarship and that the larger questions are related to cost savings and collaboration. They also believe that the same factors that brand print scholarship as high quality do so for digital born scholarship, with peer review being the key factor and “gold standard.” The administrators and faculty workshop participants confirmed the view that we have moved beyond the need to build respect for digital scholarship, providing that the content undergoes peer review. If a work is peer reviewed to ensure its quality, then its publishing format does not matter (i.e. in terms of promotion and tenure).

Appendix C: Workshop Agenda

Agenda: Encouraging Digital Publishing in the Humanities Workshop (11/16/12)

General review of preliminary survey responses (power point presentation)

Guiding Questions to consider:

- What is/will be the role of the press in scholarly communications?
- What is the value of print over digital publication (and vice versa)?
- What are the purposes of peer review?
- Is the value of rigorous, traditional peer review available to innovative forms of peer review?
- How do we persuade tenure-and-promotion committees and college/university administrations of the value of digital born scholarship?

Examine/Discuss focused concerns:

1. Print vs Digital
2. Innovative/Peer Review Processes
 - a. Double and single blind
 - b. Open/peer-to-peer
 - c. Transparent: reports/annotations shared
 - d. Collaborative: community of scholars
 - e. Flexible bibliometrics
 - f. Combining values/determining best practices
3. Stakeholders (who need to be considered in determining value)
 - a. Non-tenured faculty
 - b. Tenure and promotion committees
 - c. College/university administrations
 - d. Expert reviewers/scholars
 - e. University presses
4. Adapting collaborative models (that technology/social media, etc., encourage)
 - a. Open access
 - b. Digital platforms/sharing/production
 - c. Pre-publication availability
 - d. Competition
 - e. Peer review management systems
 - f. Sustainability models for peer review processes and for publishing
 1. Partnerships with scholarly societies (MLA, AHA, etc.)
 2. Partnerships with press groups (AAUP)
 3. Scholarly websites

Brainstorm next steps; Draft plan of next steps; Develop questions and recipients for next surveys

Appendix D: Workshop Summary

Participants:

- Thomas Bacher (Director, University of Akron Press)
- Dr. Tanya Bennett (Professor of English, Department of English, North Georgia College & State University)
- Mick Gusinde-Duffe (Assistant Director of Acquisitions, and Editor in Chief, University of Georgia Press)
- Dr. Markus Hitz (Professor of Computer Sciences, Department of Math and Computer Sciences, NGCSU)
- Jane Hoener (Director, Wayne State University Press)
- Alex Holzman (Director, Temple University Press)
- Dean Chris Jespersen (School of Arts & Letters, NGCSU)
- Meredith Morris Babb (Director, University Press of Florida)
- Dr. BJ Robinson (Director, University Press of North Georgia and Department of English, NGCSU)
- Dr. Denise Young (Assistant Vice President, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, NGCSU)

Working Questions (focusing on monographs/digital born monographs):

- What is/will be the role of the university press in scholarly communications?
- What is the value of print over digital publication (and vice versa)?
- What are the purposes of peer review?
- Is the value of rigorous, traditional peer review available to innovative forms of peer review?
- How do we persuade tenure-and-promotion committees and college/university administrations of the value of digital born scholarship?
- How can university presses collaborate in order to reduce costs and so encourage/assist small and start up university presses?

Main categories for discussion: collaboration, digital vs print publication, peer review, and stake holders

Goals: New questions and ideas; outline next steps; identify stake holders; develop focused questions for data- and information-gathering; develop possibilities for NEH Digital Start Up Level II funding application (in terms of actual digital products, like website)

Collaboration

Presses and universities/academic institutions have much in common, in terms of valuing peer review and scholarly communication. Both are concerned with finding/making and ensuring quality contributions to scholarship. Both are concerned with profits and/or cost recovery – which involve “leveraging the brand.” Both want to protect/enhance their reputation and competitive edge.

Presses and institutions share the following “participants” in publishing/published monographs: scholars/faculty, faculty boards, libraries, readers, and costs (since universities subsidize presses). The cost of scholarly communications is growing. Presses need to establish leadership within their parent campus community. The collection of expertise in a university press, combined with library expertise (presses know about costs while libraries know about prices), can really do something.

Besides vetting the quality of scholarship (trusted venue for high-quality scholarship), “branding” a monograph involves author’s credentials/expertise/recognition; affiliate academic institution’s reputation; publisher/press’s reputation plus the monograph’s copyediting, production layout and design, front and back matter, etc.

Scholarship is not commercial. Scholarship is the commons of human culture. We can’t draw a direct line from scholarship to dollars. We ought to return scholarly outcomes to the public. We need to find a way to synthesize disparate skills in scholarly communication. We should consider engaged scholarship as a form of service learning because scholarly communication is labor intensive.

Question: Can you reduce the whole system (for both presses and institutions) costs down? Or are the costs there, and can you move them around? One means of reducing costs is to cut out the middle-men.

Mission critical question: what would stakeholders be willing to do without in order to get a scholarly (digital born) monograph published?

Question: who does the “branding” of scholarship?

Answer (complete?): Academic institutions (competing with other academic institutions for an international audience); university presses (competing with each other for authors, titles, reviewers, and reputation); libraries (building collections); learned societies (indexing discipline-specific scholarship); professional publishing societies (AAUP)?

Summary: The publishers see opportunities for collaboration in the following areas: editing, production, and marketing. They consider the costs of peer review almost ‘negligible’ (consisting of honorarium to external reviewer). Largest (indirect) costs are personnel in all departments and production, so sharing those costs would be helpful.

Few publishers see opportunities for collaborating in terms of the peer review process itself: “Editorial programs are what really distinguish presses from each other. Shared reviews would break that down. And in the case of negative reviews, they would be unduly harmful to authors. No one or two reviewers should be able to kill a project at multiple presses.”

Possibility: content consortium for open access digital projects. Offer publication services (book packaging) consortium/publishing coalition. Need to monetize the disparate skill sets. Synthesis itself is a contribution: editors, scholars, librarians – pull together.

Digital vs Print publication

Digital publishing reduces costs in the following areas: printing, distribution, warehousing, overhead. It allows for enhanced content, discoverability/searchable content, additional modes of content, pre-publication availability, quicker access to content once the work is published, easier collaboration among presses, and easier transition to multiple/open peer review processes. Digital also helps the author integrate external reviews, thus improving developmental editing/revision.

Publishers see a number of ways that digital advances have not yet had as big an impact as possible because their specific target audiences have not fully-embraced improvements in: digital review copies, electronic peer review, permissions agreements, and e-only publications.

The end-users determine formats. Art, archeology, and anthropology, for example, work best in print (due to complex layout). Presses could create a content addendum website for such discipline-specific monographs. The material on such content addendum websites could be made available for open peer review.

Publishers expressed concerns over longevity of digital platforms and later conversions. Also, publishers note that many promotion-and-tenure committees in the humanities still regard printed books as the “gold standard.” Quality print on demand publishing could/should therefore partner with digital publishing since scholars can be satisfied with as few as ten print copies of their monographs.

Question: Can a press be all-digital?

Answer: Peer review is the biggest obstacle to this possibility: “We send manuscripts and receive reviews electronically but do not use an electronic review platform because we have too low a volume to make that cost efficient.” Also, “60 new monographs a year do not provide sufficient volume to make a peer review management system effective.”

Summary: Most presses publish in multiple formats because “Content is king.”

Possibility: add to “book packaging” publishing services consortium the possibility of cloud storage – distributed all over the world; eliminate storing redundancies

Peer Review

Publishers see their role as coming up with a type of peer review for born digital scholarship and communicating that to academic institutions.

1-5% of publishing costs goes toward peer review.

Yet peer review is what determines quality content. “We still rely on peer review to determine the quality of the scholarship, regardless of its media format.” Publishers use the same peer review process for print and digital products.

Publishers prefer blind (double or single) peer review for the following reasons: assures scholars the freedom to analyze and evaluate without fear of retaliation; reviewers have the option for anonymity; ensures candid reviews; helps keep out bias. “For all its faults, blind review is still the best way to get an honest, forthright assessment of a project.”

Blind review also supports presses in the following ways: it gives university presses a “competitive advantage over commercial presses;” enhances a press’s reputation because it is important for a press to ensure the integrity of the scholarship: “Peer review is about quality control...digital and print both warrant making sure they are quality publications. Presses want to be assured of the scholarly integrity of what we publish and place our imprint on.”

Single blind review can at times penalize younger scholars, though, if the reader is a senior scholar who might be negatively disposed toward controversial work (if a writer is junior).

Peer review processes in the form of bibliometrics can be useful for post-publication review. Important caveat concerning their reliability: they can be gamed.

Most publishers currently do not use open peer review because it remains a disincentive for potential reviewers: “Academia can be a uniquely political and contentious venue.” Also, “For overall quality assessment, public reviews bring too much pressure on the reviewers to be less frank in judging a work...we live in a litigious society.” Also, open review seems unreliable in terms of credentialing the reviewers. And promotion-and-tenure committees trust blind review over open peer review: “P & T committees get skittish with new models.”

Open peer review can be useful for those authors who are looking for revision guidance. Open peer review might be useful once a press decides whether or not to publish a manuscript.

Some presses believe that peer review will become more and more transparent in the next years and that reviews will become more available.

Question: If print and digital publications undergo the same processes of blind peer review, then why do promotion-and-tenure committees prefer print? If content is king, then why does media/format matter?

Answer: We have already moved beyond the need to build respect for digital scholarship. The larger question is on cost savings and collaboration.

Question to administrators/deans/department heads/promotion-and-tenure committee members: if a work is peer-reviewed to ensure quality, does its publishing format (or even place of publication ie personal website) matter in terms of promotion and tenure?

Answer from representatives at workshop: no.

Question: are presses themselves the middle-men that can be eliminated? Can what presses offer indeed be likened to “book packaging”?

Summary: Blind review is a trusted means of ensuring quality scholarship. Its sustainability is open to question. Presses foresee a need to combine/layer means of peer review.

Possibility: Learned and professional societies could host an institutional repository for credentialed/quality scholarship ie AAUP could host a ‘deluxe,’ branded, trusted institutional repository of digital born scholarship/open access material for collaborating presses, universities, libraries: Brand the quality of scholarship, then “convert” everyone else (“If content is king, then good metadata is the workhorse”).

Stakeholders

University Press Faculty Boards are often overlooked, especially in terms of the peer review process. Faculty Boards are a check in the process. Faculty Board members are appointed by the press’s parent institution’s president or provost. They are also recommended by past board members. Members comprise names that have been evaluated by colleagues – diverse representation that includes a sort of institutional history. They are themselves a type of community of scholars (open peer review). They are a gateway to good scholarship. Engaged boards understand research, appreciate good writing.

Peer reviewers themselves need more attention. Presses often use the same reviewers over and over. Presses have their own roster of peer reviewers (closed community of scholars?). Institutions generally believe that senior scholars have an “obligation” to do peer review. Many publishers value reviews from full professors only. There is a move to accept reviews from associate/assistant professors: “junior” professors are very close to new research.

Summary: stakeholders include faculty, promotion-and-tenure committees, academic administrators, libraries, learned societies, Information Technology departments/committees, Distance Learning departments/committees, Digital Scholarship Centers, university presses, editorial boards, acquisition editors, students

Possibility: develop a consortium faculty board (shared faculty board ie academic council of educators). Such a board could be a national editorial gateway (university-administration driven). In order to develop such a board, need to plan for exceptions/voting bias/rewards. Collaborating presses must exercise due diligence (including clearing participation with department heads who see it as valued service).

Possibility: develop consortium advisory editorial board that is a hybrid of faculty from other universities plus expert laypeople plus publishing professionals.

Besides surveys, investigative ‘next steps’ include examining the technologies/infrastructures of the following:

NetGalleys (put up content; open it up to reviewers, or have editors make requests for reviews. Editorial control through netgalley peer review. Online assessment system. Embedded rubrics. Rubrics that you follow); EHistory/Historyebooks.org (HEB advisory board and title review board); BePress peer review management system.

Big Idea Possibility: develop a website/clearing house of external peer reviews/reviewers (AskAnExpert.com; directories in specific areas). Develop a means for an open exchange of reviewers, where electronic publishers can 'bid' for reviewers (ecommerce; quality rankings; paid value of peer review; credentialing; managing). Website can be a means of sharing reports once a publishing decision is made. *Such a website could expose/display the peer review process itself as well as ensure quality scholarship of digital born monographs.*

Important Step: Need to talk to stakeholders ahead of time: making a case for it vs just putting it out on the web. Process must include dialogue/discussion. Broadcast some articles and information on the clearinghouse's peer review to allow for user testing.

Appendix E: Follow-Up Survey

Using the information developed at the workshop, we designed the follow-up survey. The purpose of this survey was to solicit the views/attitudes/perspectives on and concerns about peer review and digital publishing among a larger number of stakeholders; we intended to gather the information needed to shape recommendations to small presses for best practices in digital publishing and peer review. This survey was sent to a larger group (n= 4,179), that included administrators, faculty, publishers, library/technology center directors, and IT personnel. The response rate was around 6%. We benefitted from the survey results by learning that a significant number of respondents value digital born publishing, innovative peer review processes, and new publishing models; we benefitted also by learning that constraints, concerns, and perceptions (versus reality) inhibited receptivity to changes in delivery methods and peer review.

The combined interests in sustainability and adaptability identified in the workshop discussion shaped our subsequent surveys. In addition to our original focus on the peer review process and innovative ways to facilitate publishing digital born monographs, we expanded our survey to include questions related to cost recovery and sustainability.

We sent the surveys to the three main stakeholder groups (faculty, presses, and library/technology center directors). From the results/data gathered, we learned that:

- Some of our questions needed clearer grounding/preparation due to the diversity of knowledge about peer review processes and digital publishing among the recipients.
- We could have asked for clearer self-identification in terms of background knowledge of/experience in digital publishing.
- We could have targeted more specialized groups within the larger constituencies; i.e., digital humanities scholars, centers of scholarly communication, etc.
- We could have delineated more clearly the nuances among the various categories of questions addressing digital publishing, cost recovery opportunities, and peer review.

Survey Response Rates

When	Who	Response Rate
Pre-Workshop (5-7-12 to 6-7-12)	Directors of University Presses (n = 24)	50% (n=12)
Post Workshop; Follow-Up (2-28-13 to 3-21-13)	Editors at University Presses (n=959)	5.63% (n=54) ; 1.04% partial completion (n=10)
	Faculty in the Humanities (n=3,171)	5.68%(n=180); 2.05% partial completion (n=65)
	Library/Technology Center Directors	8.16% (n=4)

Faculty included 9% instructors, 15% assistant professors, 34% associate professors, 34% full professors, and 9% none of the above. We included Deans in the survey but did not request in the survey differentiation between their scholarly and administrative roles. Similarly, we included digital technology center directors in the library directors but did not request in the survey differentiation between the two.

Follow-Up Survey Questions: Questions for Faculty

Which of the following describes your rank?

a. Instructor; b. Assistant professor; c. Associate professor; d. Full professor; e. None of the above

Branch: As an _____, do you feel obligated to peer review scholarly work?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Why do you agree to write peer reviews?

a. Financial compensation; b. Professional responsibility; c. Access to current research; d. Other?

Would you peer review scholarship in order to earn a reduction on a learned society's dues? a. Yes; b.No

What do you think are the role(s) of learned societies (check all that apply)?

a. Networking; b. Research opportunities; c. Conferences; d. Publishing opportunities; e. Setting of professional standards

If a learned or professional society, collaborating with a consortium of presses, sponsored a site for discoverable open access materials, would you make your scholarly work available on such a site? a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

As an author, would you consider publishing your scholarly monograph with a press that requires subvention, that is, your own monetary support, ie grant awards, etc.?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Would you serve as a peer reviewer for a press that shares peer reviewers among a consortium of university presses?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

As an author, in which of the following forms do you prefer your scholarly monograph to be published?

a. Print; b. Digital; c. Both

Have you published a scholarly monograph that has an addendum website?

a. Yes; b. No

Branch: If you published a scholarly monograph that has an addendum website, was the website peer reviewed? a. Yes; b. No

Branch: If an addendum website to a scholarly monograph was peer reviewed, then in what manner was it peer reviewed?

a. Open; b. Closed; c. Other (please explain)

If you have published a monograph with a scholarly press, do you know how the press selected the manuscript's peer reviewers?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

If your monograph has undergone peer review, did the published text benefit from the peer review process in any of the following ways (please check all that apply)?

a. Research or expanded research methods; b. Strengthened the argument; c. Revised its structure; d. Copyediting; e. Other (please explain)

If your scholarly work has undergone peer review, with which of the following do you have more general experience in terms of the reports? –

a. Reports were balanced and effective; b. Reports were limited; c. Reports were biased; d. Other (please explain)

If you have peer reviewed a scholarly work, did you generally make an effort to be balanced and objective in your report?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

If you have peer reviewed scholarly work, did you write the report with any of the following in mind (please check all that apply)?

a. The author; b. The press; c. The potential readers

If you were to write a peer review report on a scholarly monograph, in which of the following forms would you prefer to read the manuscript (please check all that apply):

a. Print; b. Digital file (ie .pdf, .doc, etc.)

If you were to write a peer review report on a scholarly monograph, would you be willing to use a system similar to netgalley's, that is, a site that's hosted by a consortium of university presses from which you can download a manuscript/galley?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

If you were to write a peer review on a scholarly monograph, would you be willing to work with an online assessment system (ie online) rubrics?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Have you ever worked with an acquisitions editor?

a. Yes; b. No

Branch: If you have ever worked with an acquisitions editor in publishing your scholarly monograph, did the acquisitions editor assist you in revising your manuscript?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

In order to get your scholarly monograph published, what would you be willing to do without, in terms of services from a university press (check all that apply)?

a. Peer review; b. Editing; c. Copyediting; d. Production (layout & design); e. Marketing

For Faculty and Administrators

How much do you agree with this statement: In emerging fields, sometimes the junior professors are the most informed scholars?

a. Completely agree; b. Somewhat agree; c. Neither agree nor disagree; d. Somewhat disagree; e. Strongly disagree

How much do you agree with this statement: University Presses should ask only full professors for peer reviews?

a. Completely agree; b. Somewhat agree; c. Neither agree nor disagree; d. Somewhat disagree; e. Strongly disagree

Do you think that peer reviewers should be financially compensated? – a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Do you think that writing peer reviews should be considered expected professional activity?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Should authors suggest people to review their own work?

a. Yes (please explain); b. No (please explain)

Do you think that the peer review process can be crowdsourced?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Does your university credit peer reviewed work that has not been published through a university press?

a. No; b. Yes (please explain)

Does your university credit non-peer-reviewed publications towards promotion and tenure?

a. No; b. Yes (please provide examples)

If your university requires peer reviewed publication for promotion and/or tenure, then in which form is the scholarship required to be reviewed (please check all that apply)?

a. Single blind; b. Double blind; c. Open

Do you think digital born monographs should count towards tenure and promotion?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Do you think the peer review of digital born monographs differs in any way from the peer review of print scholarship?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Do you think that a university press's faculty board is the equivalent of a community of scholars?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

If a university press offered publication services such as editing, peer review, layout & design, and web hosting for open access materials, would you pay for the service?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Branch: If your scholarly monograph were published by a university press that offered for-fee publication services, including peer review, and if your monograph's peer review reports were made available to a tenure and promotion committee, would your university credit the monograph towards promotion and/or tenure?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain); c. Don't know

If an author could pay a press to do a double blind review on a monograph that the author then made open access rather than published through a university press, **would** the monograph be credited for promotion and/or tenure?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

If an author could pay a press to do a double blind review on a monograph that the author then made open access rather than published through a university press, **should** the monograph be credited for promotion and/or tenure, in your opinion?

a. Yes (please explain); b. No (please explain)

Does your university credit service learning/engaged scholarship towards promotion and tenure?

a. Yes; b. No

Have you ever served on a university press faculty board?

a. Yes; b. No

Branch: If you have ever served on a university press faculty board, were you appointed to the service?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain how you joined the faculty board)

Branch: If you have ever served on a university press faculty board, was there a term limit to your service?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Branch: If you have ever served on a university press faculty board, what were your reasons for doing so (please check all that apply)?

a. As an honor; b. To build your reputation; c. To build your resume; d. As a position for distinguished; e. faculty; f. As service/appointment

Which of the following do you think should serve on a university press faculty board (please check all that apply)?

a. Full professors; b. Associate professors; c. Assistant professors; d. Expert lay people; e. Library staff

If your university has a university press, do you know any, or all, of its faculty board members?

a. Yes; b. No

Branch: Do you know the role of a faculty board in your university's press?

a. Yes; b. No

Branch: Do you have contact with the faculty board of your university's press?

a. Yes; b. No

Branch: Do you know how the faculty board of your university's press is selected?

a. Yes; b. No

Questions for Faculty, Administrators, University Press Editors, and Library/Technology Center Directors

How well do you agree with the following statement: The purpose of University Presses is to disseminate scholarship, not necessarily administer peer review for peer review's sake.

a. Completely agree; b. Somewhat agree; c. Neither agree nor disagree; d. Somewhat disagree; e. Strongly disagree

Should scholarly monographs be funded through any of the following means?

a. Library subscription fees; b. University subsidies; c. Both; d. Neither (please explain)

Should scholarly monographs be funded through subventions, that is, money supplied by the author, ie through grants?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Do monographs need to be of a certain length (ie up to 500 pp)?

a. Yes (please explain); b. No (please explain)

Do you think that a single-author monograph is the highest form of scholarship in the humanities?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Do monographs need to be published in print?

a. Yes (please explain); b. No (please explain)

Do you think the advent of digital publishing has increased the usefulness of peer reviewed shorter forms of scholarship, such as shorts, essays, web pages, blogs, etc.?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Does blogging lend itself to constant, in depth scholarly conversation?

a. Yes (please explain); b. No (please explain); c. Maybe (please explain)

Could blogs be peer reviewed in the same manner as scholarly monographs?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Who are the consumers of scholarly monographs (check all that apply)?

a. Libraries; b. Faculty; c. Both equally; d. Other (please explain)

How much do you agree with the following statement: The future of peer review is open peer review within a closed community of credentialed scholars?

a. Completely agree; b. Somewhat agree; c. Neither agree nor disagree; d. Somewhat disagree; e. Strongly disagree

How much do you agree with the following statement: promotion and tenure committees prefer traditional to new models of publishing.

a. Completely agree; b. Somewhat agree; c. Neither agree nor disagree; d. Somewhat disagree; e. Strongly disagree

If a scholarly monograph is peer reviewed, does its delivery method (ie print, digital) matter?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

If a scholarly monograph is peer reviewed, does its place of publication matter?

a. Yes (please explain); b. No (please explain)

Would you accept work published at a press that uses a national faculty board, that is, a faculty board with members from a consortium of universities?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain)

Digital publishing allows for tracking views, downloads, and trackbacks. Do you think this type of information should influence promotion and tenure?

a. Yes (please explain); b. No (please explain)

With new formats constantly appearing, do you think that digital-only content has longevity?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain); c. Maybe (please explain)

Do you think that cloud storage (with all its redundancies) has a role in the long-term preservation of digital monographs?

a. Yes; b. No (please explain); c. Maybe (please explain)

For Publishers and Editors

Do you share editors among presses? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Do you share marketing among presses? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Do you share production activities among presses? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Do you share distribution activities among presses? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Would you use an editorial management system (such as bepress offers)? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Questions for Administrators and Librarians

Do you think that libraries determine the quality of published scholarship? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Do you know what an acquisitions editor does? (Yes/No)

Do you know an acquisitions editor? (Yes/No)

Have you worked with an acquisitions editor? (Yes/No)

Would you consider allocating library funds to subsidize press publications? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Branch: If your library allocated funds to subsidize press publications, would you require that publication to be open access? (Yes/No/Please Explain)

Questions for Library/Technology Center Directors

If you work for a library at a university with a press, do you know its faculty members? (Yes/No)

Branch: Do library staff serve on your university press's faculty board? (Yes/No)

If collaborating university presses developed a cloud consortium, would your library sign up for it to access material? (Yes/No/Please Explain)