Toward the Design of an Open Monograph Press

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Abstract

This paper reviews and addresses the critical issues currently confronting monograph publishing as a matter of reduced opportunities for scholars to pursue book-length projects. In response, it proposes an alternative approach to monograph publishing based on a modular design for an online system that would foster, manage, and publish monographs in digital and print forms using open source software developments, drawn from journal publishing, and social networking technologies that might contribute not only to the sustainability of monograph publishing but to the quality of the resulting books.

The cellulose-based engine of academic life in the humanities and social sciences, otherwise known as the monograph, is being increasingly displaced not by MacBooks or FaceBook but by its long-standing junior companion, the journal. After playing a supporting role for centuries as a place for trial runs, interim reports, reviews, and updates, the journal article has become the principal measure of academic achievement in many disciplines. The journal does bring a measure of precision to the academy’s reputation economy, with the ISI Web of Science calculating journal Impact Factors to three decimal places, while the article’s relative brevity is well suited to annual assessments of merit and achievement. The journal also has a networked mobility and search capacity that lends itself to ready consultation and citation anywhere, anytime.

On the other hand, journals are not any sort of financial bargain for the academic community, and that, too, has hurt monographs. Well before the rise of online access, journals were increasing their share of university library budgets though both growing numbers of titles and steep price increases, reducing the proportion that could be devoted to monograph purchases (Steele 2008). As the monograph market has declined, university presses are finding monographs a risky business, which makes them, in turn, risky for scholars to undertake, and more’s the pity, intellectually speaking.

For while much of the concern today over the monograph has to do with the economic consequences for university presses, it is what the monograph means for scholarship that surely matters. The monograph provides researchers with the finest of stages for sustained and comprehensive—sometimes exhaustive and definitive—acts of scholarly inquiry. A monograph is what it means to work out an argument in full, to marshal all the relevant evidence, to provide a complete account of consequences and implications, as well as counter-arguments and criticisms. It might well seem—to risk a little hyperbole—that if the current academic climate fails to encourage scholars and researchers to turn to this particular device for thinking through a subject in full, it reduces the extent and coherence of what we know of the world. But then I am not the first to raise such concerns about scholarly responsibilities for the scale of thought.

In response to the declining prospects of monograph publishing, with more on its exact dimensions below, I am proposing a most un-book-like apparatus. The device in question, which I call Open Monograph Press, is a software system designed (and currently under development) to support the publishing of peer-reviewed scholarly monographs (as well as edited volumes and scholarly editions) whether in print or online or both.
As an open source software project, the system would be freely available to the academic community, and
designed to reduce clerical costs and supplies, as well as overhead, with libraries becoming involved in
hosting the system and scholars able to play a more active role as series editors in the review process.
Such a system will hardly address all that currently troubles university presses and traditional forms of
monograph publishing, especially in light of how hard the current economic downturn has affected the
publishing industry more broadly (Rich 2008a). But it does hold out the possibility of at least testing what
digital forms of scholarly communication and collaboration can contribute to book-length scholarly works,
after so much of the focus, in my own case not least of all, has been on advancing the journal, often to the
detriment of the monograph. [2]

Before explaining how the Open Monograph System will work, let me
set out in more detail why the present and future prospects for the
monograph call for new approaches to scholarly publishing. Nothing
speaks more plainly to the declining presence of the monograph in
scholarly life than a review of library expenditures over the last two
decades. From 1986 to 2004, the number of books purchased
annually by the leading U.S. research libraries increased by only 1%,
a figure which needs to be compared to a 51% increase in the
number of journal titles purchased by these same libraries (ARL
2007). That the market is unchanged for books over the last two
decades adds up to far fewer opportunities for the scholarly
community as a whole to write books, given the increase in faculty members over that period. [3]

While price is always an issue, the book has seen a modest increase, up 78%, compared to the 180% increase in journal
prices, resulting in a further loss of the book’s place in the library budget (ARL 2007). The shift in spending on
books is also reflected in how libraries spent twice as much on books as they did on journals in 1969, while
by 2006, journals were gobbling up three times as much of the library budget as books for these same

In terms of individual title sales, Eileen Gardiner and Ronald G. Musto, directors of the ACLS E-Humanities
Project, report that between 1980 and 2000, a monograph’s average library sales plummeted from around
2,000 copies in 1980, to 1,000 in the late 1980s, to 500 in the 1990s, to a little more than 200 in the early
years of this century (2004). Affirming these numbers, John Thompson declares that this two-decade
decline in monograph sales, “more than any other single factor . . . has transformed the economic conditions
of scholarly publishing” decidedly for the worse, in terms of this genre’s future (2005, 94).

The monograph retains, fortunately, some pockets of strength. Sanford G. Thatcher, former president of the
American Association of University Presses and director of Pennsylvania State University Press, notes that
in the 1990s, at least, monograph sales were still strong in women’s studies—“in part because scholars in
this field support each other by buying their colleagues’ books”—classics, medieval studies, and
philosophy, “where aspirations to build personal libraries of all the core books in the field remain strong as
they traditionally have been” (1997). Yet Thatcher concludes that the inability of the university presses to
serve publishing interests across the disciplines “augurs ill for the healthy and balanced development of
scholarship in the future” (ibid.). [5]

A decade later, Margaret Steig Dalton found that historians, for whom the monograph is as much a way of
life as it is for any scholarly discipline, were all too aware that university presses were not as interested as
they once were in publishing monographs, with the result, as she sums it up, that “certain areas of history
are experiencing difficulties in getting their work published” (2008, 218). The limited economic viability of the
monograph puts the university press in a position of restricting, in effect, what is studied and, as such, acts
as a check on academic freedom and scholarly judgment about what historical work is needed. Or as
historian Patrick Manning has put it, “the profession needs greater breadth in its monographic research in
order to reproduce itself and thrive” (2004). Historians may strongly prefer to see monographs come out in
print, as Dalton not surprisingly found, but they were also beginning to sense that what may be at issue is
the future of the monograph as an intellectual form in whatever format.

In looking into monograph publishing costs, one gains a sense of why there may be a need for a radical new
approach. Marlie Wasserman, director of the Rutgers University Press, helpfully laid out the press’s expenses in 1997, beginning with a basic $18,000 per monograph to cover overhead expenses, including “salaries, staples . . . promotion” (1997). Whether the book is print or digital, Wasserman pointed out from the university press perspective, “you will still need managers, acquiring editors, copy editors, designers, marketers, permissions experts, computer gurus, customer service staffs, and accountants” (1997). The point is affirmed by Colín Day, former director of the University of Michigan Press, who has described digital publishing as largely “cost-shifting” although he did allow for a 20–25% cost reduction with online delivery (1997). Wasserman provides a further sense of cost by outlining how the press spends, for a 200-page book with a run of 600 copies, $1,300 for copyediting, $2,964 for printing, and $1,804 for order processing (clerks, warehouse space, materials). Wasserman calculated that even if the complete print run sold out (minus promotional, author, review, and examination copies), the press still faced a loss of $13,628 per title, which the university’s subsidy to the press managed to cover with little enough to spare.

In the face of these expenses, university presses have been led by “fears about the future of the scholarly monograph” to explore digital publishing through a number of experiments (Lonsdale and Armstrong 2000, 31). The presses have also investigated issues of digital rights management, authentication and certification, and archiving and preservation, in pursuit of an “ability to create an inviolable and secure publication-of-record for archival and research purposes” (Lonsdale and Armstrong 2000, 37). Lonsdale and Armstrong conclude that “we are on the threshold of a new, exciting and important perspective of electronic publishing,” and so it might still seem today, nine years later (39).

In 1999, Robert Darnton, then president of the American Historical Association, announced “a program for reviving the monograph” based on a prize competition for history dissertations in areas “where university presses have found it particularly difficult to publish monographs” such as colonial Latin America and Africa (1999). In explaining this initiative, one of a number of in digital publishing funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, he noted that “economic pressures on university presses are making it nearly impossible for scholars to publish in certain fields, and the difficulty is greatest for those with the greatest need to overcome it—that is, the recent PhDs who must convert their dissertations into monographs to get tenure, or the adjunct teachers who must publish a book to break into the tenure track.” Although its subscription price for access to its books was $195 in 2002, the project failed to prove sustainable, even as the interest among authors who would consider publishing with this project was less than expected. In 2007 the project’s publisher, Columbia University Press, decided to offer the books free on an open-access basis, while adding its titles in 2008 to the monograph subscription service of the more successful Humanities e-Press, thereby using two of the principal economic models for digital monograph publishing (Howard 2008, A12).

Others have explored setting up a whole new press program for digital publishing. In 2006, Rice University Press was reborn as “the nation’s first all-digital academic press.” It employs the open-source e-publishing platform Connexions, which automatically formats, indexes, and adds high-resolution images, audio and video, and Web links, to produce books that can be viewed freely on the Connexions site or printed on demand. In reviewing the state of the monograph, Colin Steele notes the success of four distinct e-publishing programs at Australian universities, which reflect those universities’ embrace of “scholarly communication programs” as a means of contributing to both the continuing availability and quality of monographs (2008).

At the same time, a number of libraries have becoming increasingly involved in digital publishing, returning to an earlier tradition when university presses in North America arose out of “library gift-and-exchange programs” that were used to share faculty research (Pope 1997). To take one example of this rediscovered capacity, the University of Tennessee Libraries has recently launched its digital imprint. Newfound Press, which is committed to “peer-reviewed, open access digital publishing” supported by “a combination of existing library infrastructure, the allocation of state or endowed funds, partnerships, and grants” (Newfound Press 2008, 1). The Scholarly Publishing Office at the University of Michigan Library, to take another instance, has published “a handful of monographs, image collections, and other digital projects” and “encourages open-access publishing but publishes subscription-based resources” (Hawkins 2008). SPO also represents a library–university press partnership in the spirit of the Ithaka report University Publishing in a Digital Age, which advises university presses to “team up with libraries to pursue a powerful coordinated
This isn't going to add up to cost-free publishing, by any means, and the quality of the work will always depend on the content being published.

For its part, Open Monograph Press, the development of which is being managed by Simon Fraser University Library, is designed to work within the context of library systems, reducing overhead and production costs. It is another in a line of open source solutions that universities are turning to, including online courseware management systems such as Sakai and Moodle, with facilities provided for seeking help and proposing and developing upgraded features (Young 2008). This ability to develop portable systems that can operate as affordable, cooperative alternatives to proprietary software taps into what Yochai Benkler calls “the wealth of networks” (2006).

A critical aspect of this network system is its journal-like lightness of publishing apparatus. The machinery exists online, making it easy for editors to steer a manuscript through the review, editing, and publishing process. The press is always available to everyone involved, from author to copyeditor, with all the steps neatly laid out and documented. This lightness of being is also sustained by the open-source software, which is freely distributed, collaboratively developed and upgraded (through the oversight provided by the Public Knowledge Project working with Simon Fraser University Library), and carefully designed for those who, with few technical skills, are keen to learn traditional scholarly publishing processes in an online setting, enabling libraries, groups of scholars, and scholarly societies to become more involved in the publishing process.

This isn't going to add up to cost-free publishing, by any means, and the quality of the work will always depend on the content being published, as well as on the skills and dedication of those using this system. As to matters of press prestige and reputation, so critical to the value placed on the published work, it will remain more a matter of who is using the software than of how the peer review has been coded. As things currently stand, well-established presses, such as Harvard University Press and University of Michigan Press, have expressed an interest in being part of Open Monograph Press’ development. As well, new sorts of academic publishing groups are embracing it. Open Humanities Press—“the international open-access publishing collective in critical and cultural theory,” as it identifies itself—is perhaps the most notable of these, given it has assembled a stellar editorial board, with Jonathan Culler, Stephen Greenblatt, Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and others. The goal is to let the board members’ well-earned reputations address the questions sometimes raised by tenure-and-promotion committees about works that are not published in the traditional manner by the very best university presses.

Then there are simple steps, which the software can help with. The books can be printed, as well as distributed electronically, given the systems output-format flexibility. The system will also ensure that the monograph is immediately indexed in Google Scholar, so that who and how many cite the work begins to accumulate. As well, the Open Monograph Press will offer a post-publication platform (as explained below), which will keep the monograph present within the social networking traffic of academic blogs and forums, as well as reviews, commentaries, and citations, that serves to map the work’s contribution in ways that can be readily documented. By the same token, the system has an incubation stage, prior to the submission and formal review of a monograph, designed to provide authors with preliminary feedback and response to help them better shape and focus their work. None of this can salvage a poorly thought out work, and nor should it. But it can help good work keep from so readily slipping from sight in the onrush of the new, and ensure more authors a chance to see their ideas played out and taken up, as more than a matter of the extremely limited prospects of publishing with just the right press.

How does open-source software like this work? In the case of the Public Knowledge Project’s (PKP) Open Journal Systems, for example, an editor or librarian downloads the software on a local Web server and runs the installation script, which creates a Web site for generating any number of journals. An individual journal is then set up by a journal manager or editor, who fills in templates that establish a journal’s Web site, with a workflow for seeing manuscripts through review, editing, and publication (Willinsky 2005a; 2006).
The Design of an Open Monograph Press

The design is being shared at this point to test interest in, and the feasibility of, this approach to increasing opportunities for monograph publishing. The software for Open Monograph Press will lead editors, authors, reviewers, copyeditors, and others through the traditional steps followed in scholarly publishing. It provides access to structured workspaces with the technical resources and necessary information for selecting reviewers from a pool, conducting reviews of the manuscript, preparing and integrating figures and visuals into the manuscript, managing the copyediting and proofreading, designing, and indexing the book. The software is designed to simplify and, at times, automate filing, recording, posting, and retrieving information associated with traditional publishing processes. It reduces the cost and energy invested in clerical activities, from looking up addresses to preparing standard e-mails, while extending opportunities for editor, author, and others to contribute to the quality of the work.

The system is intended to serve a new generation of presses and independent groups of scholars looking for an alternative to current practices, in the fashion of the small press movement that was a vital force in twentieth-century literary publishing (Lavin and Minksy 1976). From the outset, Athabasca University Press, an innovative new press committed to increased and open access, has been closely collaborating with us in the initial design and now in the programming. As noted, we are also working with the newly formed Open Humanities Press, as they seek to form a series of library partnerships in moving journal and monograph publishing forward on a new, open basis. We also expect, based on our experience with the other publishing systems, that this new system will have some appeal to academic communities in low-income regions of the world, where scholarly publishing in any form poses serious challenges. And we have seen instances where this approach has proven to be an effective means of addressing issues of academic freedom (Willinsky, Murray, Kendall, and Palepu 2007).

Our technical approach to monograph publishing involves one substantial change in software development over the approach used previously by the Public Knowledge Project. After building dedicated systems both for conferences and for journals, we are merging the software from these systems into a series of common modules that can be recombined in various forms to produce systems for journals, conferences, and monographs. The systems will share modules, and take advantage of a common platform for purposes of upgrading the software, adding translations, and other developments.

One module will enable users to upload submissions and documents (see Table 1). Another will provide the means to conduct different sorts of review. A module will ensure that those involved in a given publishing stage sign off on the completed work. The manuscript will be worked on using a production module. The press will also provide a financial module for different sorts of transactions. The entire modular publishing process will take place within a larger press module, which is essentially a Web site that allows the press to set up various instances of the publishing modules, in the form of one or more journals, for example, or a series of books. The press site will also incorporate a schedule module for organizing who has access to what when, to enable a highly coordinated approach to moving multiple books through the publishing process.

To demonstrate how this modular approach can work, I have drawn closely on the publishing process employed by Athabasca University Press. Once the software has been completed and tested, the plan is to offer out-of-the-box or default versions designed for journals, conferences, or monographs; the system also gives users the opportunity to custom-build their own applications. Readers with an interest in a particular application of this software should imagine the ability to swap out, rearrange, or drop modules in the design of their own ideal press.

Table 1. PKP modules for scholarly communication and publishing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>USES</th>
<th>COMPONENTS</th>
<th>FUNCTIONS</th>
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</table>

[12]

[13]

[19]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upload</th>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Marketing plans</th>
<th>Author contracts</th>
<th>Metadata templates</th>
<th>File uploads</th>
<th>Version control</th>
<th>Serves a library function for uploading and managing of various file types, with customized metadata templates, instructions, and access rights.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Internal review</td>
<td>External review</td>
<td>Multiple rounds</td>
<td>Reviewer selection</td>
<td>Review forms</td>
<td>Prepared emails</td>
<td>Ability to rename process, create review forms, customize prepared emails, establish iterative review process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign Off</td>
<td>Editor/author</td>
<td>Editor/marketing</td>
<td>Copyeditor/author</td>
<td>Prepared emails</td>
<td>Designate users</td>
<td>Add names</td>
<td>Ensure notification and sign-off among designated roles, with multiple-rounds option (e.g., with revisions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Copyedit</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Markup</td>
<td>Naming options</td>
<td>File management</td>
<td>Web publication</td>
<td>Enables workflow steps across multiple file designations as required for publishing processes (original, XML, PDF, doc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>Editorial staff</td>
<td>Authors, Readers</td>
<td>Reviewers</td>
<td>Naming options</td>
<td>Table items</td>
<td>Enroll/un-enroll, etc.</td>
<td>Database of roles and info; with reviewers, for example, affiliation, rank, identification expertise, no. of reviews, period of time taken, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction</td>
<td>Subscription</td>
<td>Item purchase</td>
<td>Delayed access</td>
<td>Credit card entry</td>
<td>Membership list</td>
<td>Price list</td>
<td>Enable readers to go through website to order and purchase POD, chapters, with options for membership, delayed OA.</td>
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</table>
But before I present the Open Monograph Press model, I need to introduce a few pieces that are necessary to make this approach work. We plan to supplement the modules with a number of open source components or plugins (Table 2). Foremost among these is Lemon8-XML, developed by M. J. Suhonos, which automates the conversion of text documents in Word or other word processing programs into XML. The XML tagging of the entire document enables it to be automatically and accurately rendered according to various style sheets that differ by genre (medical article or literary criticism) and format (PDF, HTML, and Blackberry). This tagging facilitates not only the layout design of the page, but citation checking and correction as part of the copyediting function.

A second plugin planned for the Open Monograph Press is PKP’s Reading Tools, which enables readers to annotate the work before them, for their own purposes or as part of a larger community. The Reading Tools plugin also provides links to related resources that extend the context a reader can bring to a scholarly work by drawing on other research, newspapers, government resources, instructional materials, Wikipedia, and other sources popular and scholarly. A third plugin is PExOD, developed by PKP’s partner, the Canadian Centre for Scholarly Publishing at Simon Fraser University, is a supply-chain fulfillment service designed to manage the relationship between press and distributors (such as bookstores, as well as Amazon). The Index plugin, also developed by PKP, ensures that the bibliographic information can be picked up by a number of related indexing services. This open modular approach also enables users to introduce third-party software into the publishing system, software such as CommentPress, Dataverse Network, and Google Analytics, to suggest three potentially useful resources that are available without charge (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. PKP Web Services and Plug-ins</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lemon8-XML</td>
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<td>Reading Tools</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>PExOD</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indexing</td>
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</table>

**Table 3. Third-Party Software and Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOFTWARE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CommentPress</td>
<td>Institute for the Future of the Book <a href="http://www.futureofthebook.org/commentpress/">http://www.futureofthebook.org/commentpress/</a></td>
<td>Enables readers to provide paragraph-by-paragraph comments on authors’ drafts in the process of being written (open source software).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dataverse Network</td>
<td>Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University <a href="http://thedata.org/">http://thedata.org/</a></td>
<td>Enables data sets and other research sources to be treated as citeable, trackable items with metadata for locating on the Web (open source software).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Putting the Pieces Together**

For the purposes of presenting this model of Open Monograph Press, I have divided the publishing process into six stages, each of which is made up of various combinations of the modules and plugins (Table 4). This model utilizes a number of publishing roles, from editor to marketing and sales, from director to designer, all of which are in the software to assign access privileges and define realms of responsibility and tasks. A press, however, will be able to use this software without having to have someone in each role. We have found with our journals that “one [wo]man in his[her] time plays many parts,” and as such “they have their exits and their entrances” with the software, much as with life itself (As You Like It, II.vii.149–50).
Table 4. Sequence of stage in publishing process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLICATION STAGES</th>
<th>USER ROLES</th>
<th>DOCUMENTS</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Incubation</td>
<td>Editor (or series editor), author (or volume editor), communities of interest</td>
<td>Articles, chapters, working papers, bibliography, sources, data sets, blog</td>
<td>Optional testing ground that editors can use, enabling authors to try out potential book ideas, found within papers, blog, and interactions with editor, as well as invited or broader communities, potentially leading to book prospectus and draft submission to Assessment stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assessment</td>
<td>Editor, author, director, editorial committee, external reviewers, funding coordinator</td>
<td>Prospectus, author publicity form, internal reviews, author responses, funder report, author contract</td>
<td>Author submits prospectus, chapters, or complete draft for editor to have assessed through internal and/or external review, with revision opportunities, with manuscripts that are accepted moving to the Preparation stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preparation</td>
<td>Editor, author, copyeditor, marketing and sales, graphic designer, technical support</td>
<td>Catalog copy, copyright permissions, transmittal report</td>
<td>Manuscript is copyedited, visuals are prepped, layout is designed for multiple formats; manuscript is approved and sent to Production to be turned into a book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Production</td>
<td>Production editor, author, indexer, layout editor, designer, marketing and sales, production manager, technical support</td>
<td>Marketing plan materials, sales strategies, printer quotes</td>
<td>Book is designed and laid out, with graphics and other features, for designated formats, based on marketing plans and sales strategies developed at this stage, with accompanying advertisements, posters, bookmarks in preparation for Publication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Publication</td>
<td>Author, marketing and sales, technical support, readers</td>
<td>Interviews, reviews, data mash-ups, funders’ report</td>
<td>Book is published in a networked environment that allows the work to be linked into reviews, responses, blogs, the original incubation materials, and indexes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I should also point out that the software does not determine the economic model used by the press. Certainly, we have been developing systems designed to support open access, but we have learned that to encourage increased access to research and scholarship, we have to build systems that are financially ecumenical, if not agnostic. We do have a module for financial transactions that allows for delayed, partial, and other forms of open access. The system will support the process currently used by AUP, which makes digital copies of its books free to download from the press Web site, as well as making print editions available for purchase through their Web site or a distributor such as a bookstore. To get started with this online management system, the systems administrator running the Web server associated with the press would install the software for Open Monograph Press, after downloading a free copy from the PKP Web site. Once it is installed, the production manager for the press would follow the instructions and templates for setting up a site for the publishing process, which would include a catalog of published works, an (optional) transaction module, a copy of PEoD to manage bibliographic data, and a tool to generate a workflow for
each prospective book (Figure 1). The press site would include a library of standard document templates (review forms, contracts, marketing plans), and also enable the press to upload their own versions or edit the ones provided. These templates or forms would be available for editors and others to use at the appropriate stages in the publishing process, allowing further editing to meet the specific needs of the book.

For a press that wishes to sell its books through print runs, print on demand, or digital copies, the press site would assist in managing relationships with book distributors using PExOD, an open source bibliographic management system. PExOD adheres to industry standards for bibliographic data and provides distributors (such as Amazon) with what they need to know about the press’s book. The transaction module would manage the actual orders, and the press would link it to a printing service, that would see to the fulfillment of the order (in the case of print books). The transaction module would also be able to support library subscriptions to electronic and print editions for a series of books or the complete catalog.

This site would also provide editors and series editors with the means to initiate a book project with an author or a potential volume editor. A press editor or a series editor (with editor used to cover both) might approach an author or a potential volume editor (with author used to cover both) at an early stage, after reading a paper or attending a panel of papers, and suggest entering an “incubation” stage for pulling together related work that might form a book and garnering further responses to its potential as a book. An editor may also, if approached with a complete manuscript, or a book prospectus plus a number of sample book chapters, go directly to the “assessment” stage, where decisions are made about initiating a formal review process. In creating a production site for a book project, the editor would be able to use a scheduler to set up a tentative timetable for the project in relation to other projects planned and under way by the press. This will involve initiating the formal publishing process for the book and scheduling the various people involved in the production of the book, taking into account their other commitments. It will also enable the press director to gain an overview of, and access to, all existing projects in their various stages.

If the editor and author agree that an incubation stage is warranted for the project, then the editor would initiate this stage, and the two would sign off on the terms (no publishing commitment on either side, for example), the period of time this stage would run, and who would be invited into this process, from the editor alone, to a small network of colleagues, to a community of researchers, to anyone who is interested (Figure
2. The author would upload various relevant parts of work underway, and could start a blog (or link an existing blog to this page), to explore the project. Readers could be invited to consider the potential for a book, with RSS notifications as the work develops on the site. They could also use a set of “reading tools” to annotate the work (privately or publicly), look up related works, explore themes in the media, and on government sites. The workspace would allow co-authors to collaborate on aspects of the book through a wiki, again with access to this wiki controlled by the authors.

The site would also provide ways of including visualization of data-sets and other multimedia materials, as well as source texts and other materials that form part of the monograph’s scholarly inquiry. The author would also be to import work done on other sorts of software, such as CommentPress, which allows readers to contribute a paragraph-by-paragraph commentary on the work, and have the work grow through this exchange. The author would also be able to use Text Encoding Initiative standards in preparing the texts that are to be analyzed in the course of the book. Or an author may want to link various parts of the book to a Dataverse Network which they can set up to ensure the preservation and accessibility of their data, as well as to ensure that its use is properly cited, crediting them for having assembled and curated the data.

The goal of the incubation stage is to realize the possibilities of a book by engaging with interested and encouraging readers. This puts social networking to a new kind of test: whether it can guide work into the form of a book, or a better book, than might otherwise be written. The incubation stage is entirely optional and easily skipped by authors or publishers who prefer to work with completed and polished drafts. Yet it may allow the scholar to gather a greater sense of what is valuable and needed with a particular project than can be given in those final moments after a presentation or in e-mail after an article is published. It builds on the existing ability of online networks to link communities of shared interest, which are willing to contribute to the work of others while that work is in progress or has reached a working-paper stage. This community of interest is not necessarily indicative of the size of future audiences, but may be extremely capable of providing what is needed at the outset, which is an understanding of where a scholarly book might best fit. Authors and editors could decide whether this stage would involve just a few colleagues or a larger circle; the author could decide to open or restrict that circle as the work begins to take a more definite shape.
Editors could decide how actively they wish to participate in the incubation stage. They could do little more than invite the potential author to set up shop, and stop by in six months to see what has unfolded. In a climate where the book represents something of a financial and intellectual risk on everyone's part, it seems worthwhile taking stock of potential interest using Web 2.0 social networking technologies. At some point, the editor and author would sign off on whether to close the incubation stage for this book project or leave it open and running, or to proceed to the assessment stage with a formal submission to the press. In taking this next step, the author may wish to maintain the blog as a way to continue to reflect on the topic, as well as build the community of interest around the book.

In the assessment stage, which includes the formal submission process, the author uploads a prospectus, a complete draft, or possibly sample chapters (figure 3). In the case of a monograph, the author would typically upload the complete book as a single file. For an edited volume, the volume editor would upload the chapters individually, along with the names and contact information of at least one author for each chapter. The model shown here for the assessment process, based on the one used by AUP, involves an initial review by a senior editor, followed by a report to the editorial committee, two of whom are then asked to review the book before it is sent out for external peer review. The editors, authors, and reviewers may upload not only the manuscript but also a series of related documents (such as author profile, related correspondence, permission forms, etc.) that are maintained as part of the record of the process, as well as resources for use in marketing and in maintaining a scholarly record for historical purposes.

![Figure 3.](image)

Assessment stage for formally evaluating and revising book manuscript, prior to publication decision.

While internal and external reviewers can be sent printouts of the manuscript, one incentive for reviewing online may be the Reading Tools, which support a more thorough analysis of the text, as they help readers more readily conduct searches of research, government, and media databases for related and relevant materials. As well, the editor, possibly in consultation with the author and reviewers, is able to set the degree of blindness and openness that applies to the review process. The reviews may contribute to reports for
press committees and potential funders. These production modules bring together the relevant materials about the books, as well as reviews, boilerplate about the press, forms, and information about agencies.

The review process can also be iterative, as the manuscript goes through a series of reviews, author’s responses, revisions, and further reviews. At some point, the editor (and perhaps the director of the press as well as the marketing director) must arrive at a decision about publishing the manuscript. This becomes the final sign-off for the assessment stage, and includes the notification of the author, and possibly the signing and uploading of a publishing contract. As well, APU prepares a report at this point seeking funding for the project. For those manuscripts that are accepted, the next stage is the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

In the preparation stage, the elements of the manuscript, including any figures, tables, and visuals, are assembled by the layout editor (Figure 4). The author or the press’s designer will need to prepare the figures and photos so they are “camera-ready” in terms of, for example, photo resolution and file type, standardized formats, captions, and credits (which includes obtaining and uploading any required copyright releases). At this stage, a preface or foreword by another author may be added, and, in the case of the AUP process, the catalog copy for the book is prepared and uploaded to the book’s document library.

![Figure 4. Preparation stage that moves the book manuscript into a publishable state.](image)

Once the text is complete (although still awaiting an index and a cover), it is copyedited. This typically involves an initial round by the copyeditor, followed by a review by the author (to approve changes and respond to queries), and a final round by the copyeditor. In the case of edited volumes, the chapters are sent to the contact author of the chapter for review. The copyediting will be assisted by the use of Lemon8-XML, a piece of software that we have developed for converting Word and other document formats into XML through a process of parsing and tagging the text. This enables the text to be rendered in various publishable formats. (More on this below.) One advantage of XML tagging is that the references in the book can be compared to those in well-maintained and open databases, such as PubMed, in the case of the life sciences; ERIC, in education; and OCLC WorldCat. Through an automated process, the references can be matched to entries in these databases, corrected, or if necessary presented to the copyeditor or author for look-up and correction. [10]

The manuscript is now judged to be complete, and a formal transmittal report is prepared by the editor for
sign-off by the author and, potentially, marketing and sales, all affirming that this is the book that should be published. The manuscript is then ready to move into production. At this point, the bibliographic data for the book, which has been automatically accumulating in PExOD, can now be made available to distributors along with a projected date of publication. In the case of existing presses, the system would need to be able to plug into current fulfillment services.

During the production stage, overseen by the production editor, the designer uploads the book’s cover and promotional materials, and the indexer uploads the index. The layout editor completes the integration of elements and selects a style sheet from a library of designs (or custom builds one). Different versions of the style sheet may be selected for each format in which the book is to be published, from eBook reader to iPhone (Figure 5). While this process of generating XML and rendering the pages is largely automated, although the layout editor may intervene at either stage to improve the final design. The book’s indexer or author can use the galleys to produce an index for the book, and the author and proofreader can use them for final proofreading, making corrections in the XML version of the manuscript. The layout editor corrects problems with the layout, and places the prepared index into the book, enabling corrected galleys to be rendered and rechecked.

Once the book has been proofed, the production manager, editor, designer, and author sign off, affirming the book is ready to be published. The cover image can be used in the catalog entry for the book, as well as in promotional materials such as posters and advertisements. The promotional materials are prepared at this point by the marketing and sales people, as outlined in the marketing plan, which forms part of the document upload for this stage, along with the sales strategies (which might include trade discounts, course adoptions, library sales and rights sales). The manuscript receives any further pre-press treatment required for printing by a commercial printer. The digital version is published in the designated formats (typically PDF and HTML) and made available on the book’s public Web site.

In the publication stage, readers are able to read and download the book; the publisher may require that they purchase access rights through the transaction module (Figure 6). A printed and bound copy can also be ordered through the transaction module. The publication stage also reintroduces the Web 2.0 networking principles that were critical to the incubation stage. Readers may comment on or discuss the book with one another on the Web site. With publication, the book thus becomes part of the public space of the Web, enabling readers to readily find it through feeds and links, as the book’s Web page accumulates related
Some readers may have signed up for notification by an RSS feed of books in this subject area. They may have initially read about the book, or continued to follow the book’s progress, on the author’s blog, as the blog can be sustained throughout the whole publication process. Readers are able to contribute to the book’s Web site by utilizing the Reading Tools to post comments, as well as share (or keep private) annotations on the text (which other readers can call up or ignore). They can remain informed about how the work is cited by other authors elsewhere on the Web. The published reviews of the book will be linked to the book’s page, and author interviews can be uploaded, as can copies of print reviews, and readers’ “data-mashups” that bring together results from this book and other works.[17]

The book’s author may respond to reviews and comments, as well as continue the original blog from the incubation stage. The author may also decide to make some of the other incubation materials available, such as the original and complete data set or sources used for the book, or the FaceBook or other social network tie-in. To also increase the global presence of the book on publication, the bibliographic data is exposed for harvesting (by Google Scholar, for example) and, at the discretion of the press, sent to the relevant indexing services. These services, as well as the ability to link to what the book cites and what cites the book, help keep the book actively circulating among those working in this area and allow others to happen upon it. For the editorial committee, as well as any funders of the book’s publication, the press will be able to prepare a report using data from Google Analytics on downloads and other activity associated with the publication of the book, as well as from the transaction module and PExOD.

Conclusion

What we largely talk about when we talk about the troubled state of the monograph is the university press. Open Monograph Press should be able to help those university presses interested in moving more of the management and production of the monographs online to reduce overhead, clerical support, and supplies, as well as increase publishing options and perhaps even improve the quality and impact of the resulting monographs. It may also, following the example of Open Journal Systems, enable backlists to be imported and gain a second life, both as part of the press’s Web site and as part of Google Book Search (Rich 2008b). And while any press can of course use such a system to publish any book, Open Monograph Press is designed to support new players entering the monograph publishing sphere, to provide a means of publishing what is otherwise being squeezed out of a reduced monograph market for the wrong reasons.
We are also working to reduce the risk of readers being overwhelmed by increased publication. The proliferation risk is real enough, much as cheap spray cans leads to graffiti, and Bic pens to bad poetry. Those of us working on this project are comfortable with the risk, given that the ability to publish worthwhile research does not nearly extend evenly or fairly across the global academic community (Canagarajah 2002). And we are also working to reduce the risk of readers being overwhelmed by increased publication, as we seek to improve the indexing of this work, by working with Google Scholar, for example, to increase the accuracy in finding what one is looking for in terms of identifying and assessing topics, sources (peer-reviewed), and quality measures such as citation counts.

Open Monograph Press, like the other software the Public Knowledge Project has been involved in developing, is part of an experiment in this larger twenty-first century e-research phenomenon. In a word, it amounts to another step in the openness of knowledge. Consider the particular convergence of open-source software, open access to research, and open data initiatives (Willinsky 2005b). Increasing the openness with which knowledge circulates is a thread running through the history of science, dating back to Early Modern Europe (Eamon 1994; Long 2001). Still, I can appreciate how Pollyanna-ish (if not plain Panglossian) it seems to now turn the truly threatening monograph crisis into an opportunity for another technologically enabled chapter in the great opening of research and scholarship. Blame my hopes, if you will, on the inevitable sense of techno-utopianism that follows on working with the talented and dedicated developers that open-source software projects seem able to attract. At the same time, I am realizing, as well, how my own scholarly habits are being changed, and not necessarily for the better, by the cite-as-you-write quality that follows from having abstracts and references on tap and merely a fingertip away.

As this article goes to press, work continues on Open Monograph Press on a number of levels and with a number of partners. Given that we have not until this point gone public with our designs for our various publishing platforms, it will be interesting to see how the work benefits from it. The first point of judgment, if I may so presume, will likely be on whether such systems can support the most human of acts—as one (editor) encourages another (author) to exceed both of their expectations in the reach and depth, the coherence and insightfulness, of the author’s scholarly inquiry. Is it feasible or just fanciful, or even worse, merely a distraction in the urgent struggle to refinance the traditional and trusted structures of scholarly publication? Is Open Monograph Press a case of over-extending an approach that has worked well in assisting journal editors and conference directors moving to where they were already headed? Or will such a system restore some measure of the monograph’s vitality and viability, as well as the intellectual scope of scholarly work in fields where it may be said to have been diminished by the rise of the article; could it boost the monograph’s contribution to the larger opening of the academy and its work?

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Knowledge Project at Stanford, the University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University. Much of his work, including his book, *The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship* (MIT Press, 2006), winner of two outstanding book awards, as well as PKP's award-winning open source software for journals and conferences, is free to download through the project’s website ([http://pkp.sfu.ca](http://pkp.sfu.ca)).

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Notes

1. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the very introduction of the scientific journal in the seventeenth century saw a similar complaint directed at how periodicals were bringing on “the decadence [that] letters have fallen into in France,” as Pierre-Daniel Huet put it in 1698; the problem was that journals out of Paris, Rotterdam, and Leipzig were publishing abridgements of books and thus were thought to be undermining, in this way, the bibliographic cornerstones of the great republic of letters (cited by Broman 2000, 225).

2. The plans for this software grow out of my work with the Public Knowledge Project, a research and development initiative, founded in 1998, and currently situated at Stanford University, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia and Arizona State University ([http://pkp.sfu.ca](http://pkp.sfu.ca)). This collaboration of programmers, librarians, and faculty members has created Open Conference Systems and Open Journal Systems, which is being used by over 2,500 journals at this point, with somewhat more than half of the titles coming from the developing world.

3. To give an indication of the growth in higher education, in 1970 the U.S. census counted 306,147 postsecondary teachers, a number which had risen to 1,261,000 by 2007.

4. For comparable United Kingdom patterns, see Thompson (2005, 103–107). For a historical perspective on how books were once used, circa 1970, for substantial and clearly defined purposes (general information for scientific solutions and data-analysis techniques) by scientists and social scientists in relation to journals and others sources, see Garvey (1979, 256–79).

5. Thatcher (1997) also observes how the university presses missed out on the post-war journal boom that might have been used to support monographs, as this business opportunity was left to enterprising commercial publishers, using as his example Robert Maxwell’s Pergamon Press in the 1950s.

6. In 2001, Lonsdale and Armstrong were ready to conclude that there was “a slow acceptance of nearly all digital textual resources other than journals” (2001). The American Association of University Presses lists 37 “major digital initiatives” under “electronic publishing at university
7. The Humanities E-Book, launched in 1999 with a $3 million grant from the Mellon Foundation, is administered by the American Council of Learned Societies, http://www.humanitiesebook.org/. The subscription model for book publishing was picked up by scientific periodicals decades after it was introduced for books in the early seventeenth century (Kronick, 2004, 194).


9. I would note that the Public Knowledge Project represents a partnership among academics and librarians (principally at Simon Fraser University Library) devoted to developing just such tools and programs.

10. Open source publishing systems are a way of addressing Cathy Davidson's otherwise reasonable perception, borne out by the initial, one-off experiments in digital publishing, that “if we want it all—all the standards of scholarly publishing's professionalism and all the dexterity of online publishing—then the result will cost far more, not far less” (2008). Thompson also calls “the key problems” for putting books online economic (2005, 368).

11. See Christopher M. Kelty on the nature of open source software: “Free Software (a.k.a open source software) is public in a particular way: it is a self-determining, collective, politically independent mode of creating very complex technical objects... It is a practice of working through the promises of equality, fairness, justice, reason, and argument in a domain of technically complex software and networks, and in a context of powerful lopsided laws about intellectual property” (2008, xi).

12. On the importance of cost reduction for publishing, a recent Mellon report on the scholarly electronic monograph has cautioned in its conclusions that “presses are motivated by new revenue generating opportunities more than by cost saving ones” (Griffiths and Rascoff 2005).


14. Thompson: “The best way to maximize the added value of delivering scholarly book content online is to treat individual books as part of a scholarly corpus or database which has scale, selectivity and focus” (2005, 369).

15. Rowland Lorimer, director of the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, notes, for example, that “in my view there are insufficient enticements to encourage scholars with books in progress to publish parts of their work, prior to the publication of a complete monograph, in journal-article form” (2000). Our incubation stage would enable authors to take a half-step in that direction of reaching out for feedback.

16. Using this same principle, M. J. Suhonos is planning to extend the capacities of Lemon8-XML in the coming years so that it is able to (a) match the names in the text and in the reference list for both completeness (a reference for each citation) and accuracy of spelling; (b) check the accuracy of quotations for materials on the Web, and (c) check for potential instances of plagiarism, outside of quoted material.

17. In 2000, Lonsdale and Armstrong identified the potential for “added value” with electronic book publishing (although more than half of the books in their survey were in CD-ROM format rather than online): “Links to resources (possibly outside the publisher’s site); links to reviews of the monograph or textbook; the facility for editorial and reader feedback; links to employment sites (where relevant); links to related journals; exercises and questions; links to companion web sites; links to authors (possibly via e-mail); author biographies; links to bookshops; links to professors and related curricular materials; and simulations or animations” (2000, 35). Pope (1997) makes a similar case for the value of online editions: “Creating permeable boundaries of this sort between one's own work and online work would tempt lots of scholars to make extensive use of electronic books, providing a critical additional incentive, beyond the initial web attractions of immediacy, searchability, and hypertextuality.”

18. Putting these proliferation concerns into historical perspective, Alexandra Halasz speaks of “the learned man's anxiety” of the late sixteenth century over pamphlet profligacy (“pamflettes, trifles and vaine small toies”) and unregulated printing presses (1997, 27).

19. I would only add to that image by confessing to having drawn up additional plans for how this press could be used to produce scholarly standard editions and support archival exhibitions, possibly in conjunction with each other. In another promising form of extension, Thompson looks at the possibilities of greater swap-over between the journal and the book, although largely the edited book with its article-like chapters (2005, 373).
20. The project status of the Open Monograph Press can be summarized as (1) the Reading Tools with annotation are underway (University of Victoria); the modularization of existing OJS/OCS components is partially completed (SFU), with support from Athabasca University, while other development partnerships being supported by the University of Technology Sydney.

Request PDF on ResearchGate | Getting the best out of data for open access monograph presses: A case study of UCL Press: Getting the best out of data for OA monograph presses | This study of UCL Press sought to identify the extent to which data available to open access (OA) monograph presses can be combined with low-cost analysis tools to provide insight into development and strategy. An additional goal was identifying practical steps that monograph... This study of UCL Press sought to identify the extent to which data available to open access (OA) monograph presses can be combined with low-cost analysis tools to provide insight into development and strategy. The design of the software is inspired by exchanges and debates with scholars from a Hall, Gary, ‘Towards a New Political Economy: Open Humanities Press and the Open Access Monograph’ (presented at the OAPEN 2011: The First OAPEN (Open Access Publishing in European Networks) Conference, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany, 2011) www.garyhall.info/journal/2011/5/30/towards-a-new-political-economy-open-humanities-press-and-th.html [accessed 29 March 2014]. Willinsky, John, ‘Toward the Design of an Open Monograph Press’, Journal of Electronic Publishing, 12 (2009) http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0012.103. Winn, Joss, ‘Helplessness’, Joss Winn, 2013 http://josswinn.org/2013/07/helplessness/ [accessed 29 January 2014]. Toward a Transparent Methodology. Nancy L. Maron, Christine Mulhern, Daniel Rossman, Kimberly Schmelzinger. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.276785. Studying the costs of publishing nearly 400 monographs across 20 university presses, provides a descriptive account of how university presses of different sizes and with different missions account for the costs of monographic publishing. Such an understanding is also important for libraries and other stakeholders who care about the preservation of a vibrant monograph publishing ecosystem, since relying on numbers based on evolving and idiosyncratic business models risks undermining long-term sustainability. Presses see design as a key differentiator and of real appeal to both authors and audience.