



ISSN (Print) : 2320 – 3765
ISSN (Online): 2278 – 8875

International Journal of Advanced Research in Electrical, Electronics and Instrumentation Engineering

(A High Impact Factor & UGC Approved Journal)

Website: www.ijareeie.com

Vol. 6, Issue 9, September 2017

Access to Research in the Humanities inside a Digital World

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ABSTRACT:Contract law coexists in the publishing world with copyright law and often blur the lines between writers and publishers in the dissemination of scholarly research. Technology has further blurred the traditional publishing model and creates difficulties for academics as complexities emerge about access to their published work. In publishing their scholarly work, writers strive to make an impact, contribute to global dialogue, and disseminate information to others. Research being made accessible through open access (OA) can help to increase the dissemination of research, thereby potentially increasing its effects. OA work is generally more embraced and established in science, technology and medicine as a publishing model, but evidence indicates less so in the humanities. The creation of digital humanities represents a possible means by which OA in general can become more commonly accepted as a humanities publishing model. This paper discusses the role of open access in scholarly publishing, and its effect on contract publishing and authors' copyright.

KEYWORDS:Open access, Digital format, Revolutionary measure, Copyright law, Humanities, Literature

I. INTRODUCTION

It created more than one revolution in digital technology. Let's call this the revolution of access. Much of the open access debate focuses on the literature on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in electronic format and its availability to researchers through open means, with less emphasis on accessing literature on humanities in the same open way. By comparison, the area of 'digital humanities,' which unites humanities and computing in science, has arisen in many universities with the creation of digital humanities programmes [1]. Significant technical advancements have encouraged this development in accessing research that brings into question authors' rights, in this case academic writers, and their role in making their work accessible to the public through electronic means [2]. Digital format access to information measures the relationship between copyright holders and consumers that includes consideration of licensing arrangements and alternative business models.

What is Open Access?

Open access (OA) is described simply as "digital, online, free and free of most restrictions on copyright and licensing." The first part of the concept could also be extended to toll access (access to information through a subscription), as both digital media and the Internet have allowed the broad dissemination of research literature allowing for dissemination in print format which is not possible. For this context, however, 'free of charge' is for the user to access the information instead of toll access where the user charges a fee, usually via a subscription. To date, the most suggested OA fee structure provides for the author, institution or research funder to pay an article-processing fee (APC) to cover the publisher's 'front-end' costs for the publishing process, particularly for journals [3]. This is recognised as 'Gold' open access and was supported in 2012 by the UK Government and Research Council UK, advised by the work of the National Working Group on Increasing Access to Published Research Results, chaired by Professor Dame Janet Finch, as the preferred method of OA publishing. The OA model called 'Green' open access applies to content which is freely made accessible in an online archive, usually directly by the scholar. Permission barriers (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2010) apply to limitations imposed by the licensing conditions agreed by a contract



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between the author and the publisher for access to the electronic content. The copyright of creative output in the digital environment is decided by contract law [4].

The open access campaign has, to date, largely applied to scientific journal articles in the STEM fields because of the urgent need to prioritize the dissemination of STEM studies. Additionally, funding mechanisms are in place to support funding for STEM work towards an OA model, while such funding support is less applicable to the humanities [5]. The discussion has so far only applied tangentially to monographs and "although the possibility of open access for books and essay collections is often overcome with excitement, no practical steps in this direction are likely to take place in the immediate future."

II. COPYRIGHT AND LICENSING

Digital content can be widely disseminated and made accessible through technical advancements and Internet growth. The new climate has facilitated the growth of open access to give writers alternative publishing models for conventional publishing. Contract law and copyright law are an important part of the publishing system, taking the form of licenses in the digital world that allow the rights holder to set access rules that are often arbitrary and difficult for the user to understand [6]. Within the online world however, many argue that the rights holder's economic interests outweigh those of the public interest. John Willinsky describes it as, "The protection of copyright by the author argues that ownership requires, in many jurisdictions, a legal claim to the work aimed at preserving its dignity which, in the case of science, requires its status both as a personal work of the author and as a public good". Authors often pass their copyright to publishers in order to publish an article in a journal, but publishers need only 'first publishing rights' to secure the role of their journal on the marketplace as the first place to publish Private agreements between rights holders and consumers created from such contracts balance copyright constraints in the open environment positively [7].

The six licenses established by the Creative Commons are the most prevalent licensing model suggested for open access, providing legal, human readable, and machine readable codes. The licenses vary from the most accessible CC-BY license endorsed by open access due to its insistence on full content use distribution, to the most stringent license allowing only copying and uploading with attribution, and the content cannot be modified or commercially used. Susan Corbett explains that CC licenses presume that the owner of the work's copyright wishes to alter, not surrender, their statutory copyright rights by providing a voluntary license for such stated uses of the work [8]. Therefore, this form of license (Ibid), as governed by UK copyright law (Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, 48, Section 29), does not affect copyright-legislated practices such as fair dealing. The CC model could be suited for social knowledge production combining collaboration with updated output development, such as community contributions for online reviews. An outstanding example is the collaborative approach of Kathleen Fitzpatrick to peer review in putting her book 'Anticipated Obsolescence' online for public peer review.

III. BIG CULTURAL DATASETS

Massive cultural digital objects include large-scale corpus such as the millions of books scanned by Google and those produced through numerous other digitization initiatives, the millions of photographs and micro-messages shared on social network services, giant geographic information systems such as Google Earth, or the ever-expanding networks of academic papers citing each other. Such interconnected items are too large to be read or viewed, either digitally born or replicated via digitization pipelines. Confronted with one text, the conventional 1:1 ratio of a single scholar cannot cope with such abundance. In fact, their limits are often blurry, their meaning is partially uncertain, and is likely to be constantly increasing. Despite the surface resemblances, these features make them fundamentally distinct from the corpora historically studied by scholars in the humanities [9].

Confronting such "huge" items demands fundamental questions. What can be extracted from these enormous datasets and what conclusions can be made from those extractions? Can we know better by reviewing ten million books that we can't read individually, or by carefully reading five? What role do algorithms play in mining, shaping, and depicting these large digital objects?

Growing phase of the data processing pipeline can be correlated with technological as well as epistemological questions [10]. Find the mass book digitisation projects distribution system. Digital books must be transformed into



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images (digitization step) which are then transformed into texts (transcription step), from which various patterns can be identified (pattern recognition step such as text mining or n-gram approaches) or inferred (simulation step) while preserving and curating them for future study (preservation stage) [11]. This way of approaching the challenge of research relies on the idea that data is never given, but taken and transformed. The technological complexity of the involved pipelines clearly shows that decisions are made and assumptions are introduced at each stage of the data processing. Understanding these pragmatic choices is key to the advancement of new theories of perception.

IV. DIGITAL CULTURE

Some skeptics are afraid that this form of licensing would create the presumption that all works of art will be available for free access that monographs do not actually have. When a work has already been made available free under such a license, a commercial publisher does not want to enter into a commercial contract, and the author has to consider possible future uses of a work [12]. With regard to RCUK policy in the United Kingdom, concern has been expressed by the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) group over preference for the most liberal CC-BY license for Gold OA publications and the CC-BY-NC for Green OA. Some may consider the CC licensing scheme as inflexible, as the author cannot place any additional conditions on the license. Collective speeches (blogs, data journalism, interactive wiki-style writing), omnipresent digital media (auto-completion algorithm, search engine), and multinational players (Google, Twitter, GLAM, Universities).

Consider the millions of pictures Facebook posts every hour. In this situation, both the massive digital objects and the collective discourses about massive digital objects are generated by broader populations. They do so by mediating algorithms created by one giant web-based IT company. Retroactively, public discourses about the images play a shaping role in these cultures' development and structuring. Furthermore, as collective discourses rapidly reach a critical mass (e.g., millions of messages or status updates) they continue to become huge digital objects themselves, to be archived and analysed by different approaches to text and data mining. Comprehension of sharing a photo implies understanding the complexity of this interaction network [13].

More broadly, work on digital culture can be segmented into subdomains that relate to groups of relationships between some of the institutions we discussed. This structuration outlined in Figure 1 distinguishes five domains: the domain of processing, the discursive domain, the domain of social shaping, the domain of algorithmic mediation, and control. This classification articulates Big Data Digital Humanities' relationships with conventional disciplines of the humanities and social sciences differently, considering not just digital history, digital sociology, etc., but a modern segmentation of domains.

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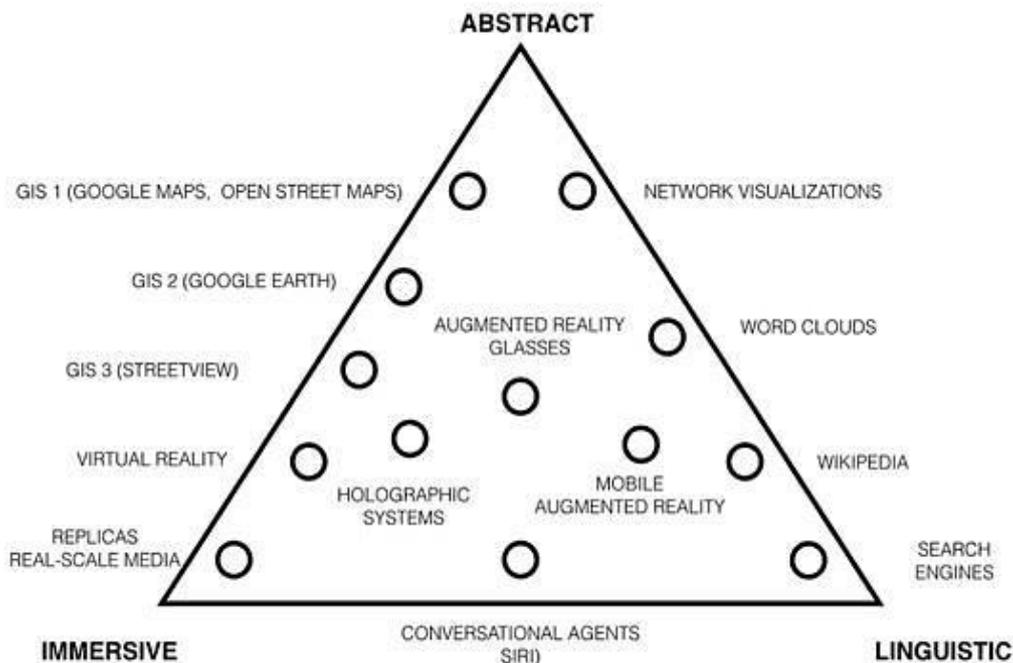


Figure 1. The different forms of interfaces explored by Digital Humanities

We discussed the relationship between pipelines for data processing and broad cultural datasets. In a wider context, however, data processing and analysis exists, which we may call Digital Culture. The study of this specific sense can be regarded as the second study topic for digital humanities studies. One way to organize this domain is to replace the relationship between software and data (focus of the first circle) in a network of relationships between new entities like large groups (classrooms of MOOCs, contributors to Wikipedia etc.).

V. MONOGRAPHS

The monograph as described by Williams et al. is 'a printed book-length analysis of a research-based subject, typically but not always written in accessible digital form or other electronic format by a single academic author from their own primary research or its equivalent.' In comparison to the usual 'one author' monograph, there are also large numbers of authors listed on the journal articles. The fact that the monograph requires more time to write and publish will make it less appealing for STEM academics who want their work to be disseminated as soon as possible. Humanities research is perhaps less time-sensitive than research in the STEM disciplines which enables academics of humanities to use monographs as their primary tool of dissemination. Nigel Vincent reveals the preference of scholars in humanities for monographs using data from the UK 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) showing that 40 percent of the English, French and History disciplines have written monographs, 25 percent book chapters and the remaining third journal papers. Monographs can be seen as a popular alternative for journal articles, as their longer format and shelf life best lends to the discipline of humanities. Although it remains to be seen if academics of the humanities would continue to choose monographs to publish their scholarly work, the selling of monographs to libraries has already declined significantly.

This reduction in revenue is exemplified in the literature stating that it will now sell about 200-500 monographs, which would have sold 1500 copies in the 1970's. Libraries are purchasing fewer monographs to meet declining budgets and afford the newspaper subscription rates called the 'serial crisis.' Publishers have their subscription bundles packaged, Licensed by librarians as a 'big deal,' resulting in libraries charging higher rates to obtain more titles While libraries struggled to handle their clients' needs and balance their budgets, they had limited their monograph budgets, focusing on humanities. Look and Pinter note that the situation is likely to worsen with a further decline in monographs as a



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result of their lack of viability, many publishers will no longer print these. Open access is being questioned as a possible solution to the traditional publishing model. A report by Houghton et al. to the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) estimates the average net selling revenue per book title for UK publishers (prices for 2007) to be £10,000 to £20,000. The total cost of each title, including vendor discounts, is divided into: £22,500 for toll access print, £14,715 for e-book toll access, and £7,380 for open access e-books. The statistics illustrate two things that need to be addressed – print-format monographs cost twice the price of e-monographs, but also that open access e-monographs are not free to produce.

VI. OA E-MONOGRAPHS

Academics do not publish their work to make money-to refer to it, they disseminate the knowledge to other academics. Most scholars in the field of humanities "agree that reputational capital greatly outweighs financial incentives as the key reward hoped-for by publishing their work in book form." Academics are paid by their institutions and often receive external funding to enable them to publish for effect rather than royalties, but scholars in humanities are less likely to receive external funding such as those in the fields in STEM. The burden on scholars of humanities is high from the metrics levied by their universities, and from the exercises of government funding. Chris Wickham supports this view by pointing out that while humanities and social science academics account for 50% of all academics, arts and humanities receive just 10% of research council funding in the United Kingdom, leaving the remaining portion to come from the government's metric-based research budget.

It may be difficult to assign an OA humanities publication to any single funding agency when considering an OA funding model because a publication may be the result of multiple outputs not specifically due to the current funding. The discussion about the publishing of OA monographs in the humanities is still undeveloped. Although the OA journal publishing model is likely to be a framework for potential OA publishing, it cannot automatically be extended explicitly to monograph publishing, and it is likely not to be completely implemented in the UK in the next funding period up to 2020. In May 2013, Wellcome Trust included monographs and book chapters in its open access policy, although the announcements limited reference to the medical humanities narrows down the intended emphasis. The customer does not buy the book under the conventional e-monograph model but instead licenses it for use as defined by the rights holder who is normally the publisher.

The e-monograph model provides new distribution and marketing incentives for authors and publishers, resulting in several contract renegotiations for older publications. Unless the contract was signed before digital technologies became available, the publisher cannot digitize the work (adapt it according to copyright law) and make it available without the author's consent. Nevertheless, whether the publisher offers additional features such as text, pictures, hyperlinks, or social media allowing an adaptation to an e-book, this may theoretically be considered a new cultural commodity called 'hyper-books' (Ibid). Such modern electronic formats are important for their hyperlinkage and the combination of text and images thereby producing an unlikely medium by traditional means.

VII. DIGITAL HUMANITIES

"Digital humanities can be described as the use of digital technology as an aid in the fulfilment of the fundamental tasks of humanities to preserve, recreate, distribute and interpret human records." Humanities scholars use physical and digital information differently than science scholars, as they need a broader variety of information in terms of date and type of publication, and do not intend to answer a research problem, but to reinterpret the sources and revise the results of others by identifying similarities and setting up a structure. Hence the rise of digital humanities, where scholars in the humanities welcome the advantages of online publication and the search capabilities of primary text archives.

Any record of human experience is a source of data for a scholar in humanities with publicly available sources through libraries, archives, museums or private-open or not. Some type of digitization is now taking place in most libraries; digitization is the cornerstone of digital work on the humanities. Due of their service-oriented culture and their role in promoting digital services, digital humanities have become aligned with libraries, though the relationship has yet to be thoroughly explored. It is a natural collaboration as librarianship as a profession embraces emerging technologies; technology in today's knowledge climate (Ibid) is the baseline for the academic discipline of knowledge studies. With regard to the intellectual property rights of sources for research in humanities, researchers have less influence over the



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sciences that generate their own records, since they also need permission to replicate them, putting more constraints on publishing work in digital humanities than other disciplines.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Since OA journal policies cannot be easily applied to books, monographs are temporarily excluded from the OA policies of major UK funding agencies such as the Finch Report, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, Research Councils UK and the Higher Education Financing Council for England (Vincent, N. 2013). Moreover, they are developing and researching other market models to see if the e-monograph publishing concept can be mastered. Projects such as 'Open Book Publishers' (Open Book Publishers.com information), 'Open Humanities Library' (Information on www.openlibhums.org) and 'Information Unlatched' (Information on www.knowledgeunlatched.org) are ongoing and are proving viable vehicles in moving access to e-monographs. While OA e-monograph policies will not be decided in the immediate future, the OA journal formula does not resolve many of the concerns that are unique to the humanities' scholarly performance, and the discipline needs to be part of the discussion to ensure an informed outcome. The advancement of the field of digital humanities meets the humanities' study needs in the management of scholarly data and information illustrating the difficulty of humanities study in the digital world.

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