

ESF Humanities Spring Manifesto Document: Changing Publication Cultures in the Humanities (joint publication; convened by Professor Margaret Kelleher, on behalf of European Science Foundation Standing Committee for the Humanities), for circulation in March 2012. Please include these publication details in any citation of this preview document.

## Introduction

(Margaret Kelleher, Chair of ESF Working Committee for Humanities Spring 2011)

The ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH) plays a central role in coordinating existing and emerging transnational networks of scholars and institutions in the humanities. Its stakeholders are national and international research funding bodies looking for new contributions to their discussions on strategic choices and ways forward.

With the ‘Humanities Spring’ events, the SCH wishes to mobilise the creative potential of the next generation of leading Humanities scholars to inform European-level coordination and foresight processes regarding research activities in the humanities. Earlier topics include ESF Humanities Spring 2007: ‘Disciplines and Borders: Humanities research in an age of interdisciplinarity’, ESF Humanities Spring 2009 I: ‘From Learned Societies to Knowledge-Based Society: Towards a European Young Academy?’, and ESF Humanities Spring 2009 II: ‘New Perspectives for Asian Studies in the Humanities’. The topic chosen for the 2011 early career researchers forum was ‘Changing Publication Cultures in the Humanities’.

Building upon the work of the ESF SCH strategic workshop in Hungary in November 2009, the aim of the 2011 forum was to invite a group of early career researchers to address the opportunities and challenges facing them consequent on changes in publication cultures in the humanities. A working group from the ESF SCH was constituted, comprising Margaret Kelleher (National University of Ireland Maynooth) chairperson, Barbara Baert (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), Rūta Marcinkevičienė (Vytautas Magnus University), Hanne Ruus (Copenhagen University), Naomi Segal (University of London), and Eva Hoogland (ESF).

A group of 19 early career scholars<sup>1</sup> was selected by open competition to attend a three-day workshop hosted by An Foras Feasa Humanities Research Institute, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. In applying for a position at the workshop, applicants were asked to submit a short essay giving their views on one or more of the following issues: engagement with new modes of publication; impact of new modes of publication on research cultures; language diversity; the future for publication cultures. Applications were assessed on scientific track record and scientific potential, and on the originality of prospective thinking as expressed in the essay and publications.

The successful candidates were from a diverse range of disciplinary backgrounds, including archaeology, comparative literature, cultural studies, digital humanities, film, history, information studies, literature, linguistics, oriental studies, philology and philosophy. Eleven countries were formally represented, with many others represented in the international educational and research experience of the participants. (See appendix for list of participants.) Four senior colleagues provided introductions to the four thematic discussions, all of whom are included in this volume: Dr Karen Skovgaard-Petersen (Danish Royal Library, Copenhagen) on the theme of *engagement*; Professor Poul Holm (Trinity College) on the theme of *impact*;

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants were required to have a PhD, with a successful viva completed by the time of the workshop but no more than 10 years previously.

Professor Péter Dávidházi (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) on the theme of *language diversity*; and Professor Gudrun Gersmann (German Historical Institute, Paris) on the theme of *future* developments.

The text provided below comprises the thematic summary produced by each workshop, with each participant playing the role of member of a drafting group or rapporteur. The issues discussed are those chosen by the early researchers, and indicate clearly their diagnoses of current problems and opportunities. In addition, a more detailed analysis of new practices and concerns for digital research interactions was produced by Dr Graeme Earl and Dr Orla Murphy, two of the participants. In the closing day of the workshop, the groups moved to an identification of recommendations targeted to the following groups of stakeholders: publishers; funding agencies; universities and higher education institutions; research policy makers; and other early career researchers.

The Humanities Spring 2011 researchers identify a confident and proactive, rather than reactive, role for the humanities, one which can meet and address societal challenges. Their vision of a new publication culture in the humanities emphasises openness, including a strong endorsement of an open access approach that would ensure the dissemination of high quality research. The models proposed here are horizontal and dynamic, with research communities based on networking and interaction, and natural mechanisms of quality control operating as guides to members of a research community. Their vision of new publication media illuminates the enhanced and newly collaborative research interactions made possible by new forms of electronic publication, including the wider dissemination of research processes and accompanying resources as well as research results. Inter-, trans- and multidisciplinary research is firmly to the fore here, linking a wide range of disciplines and potential audiences, while the challenges of achieving multilingual research practices, supported by translation facilities, are sharply observed. Their detailed recommendations, shaped by their experience (including the professional and career vulnerability of early-stage researchers, many in short-term contract positions), make for enlightening and inspiring reading.

## **Thematic Summaries**

### **Theme 1. Engagement**

Key areas in the theme of engagement include the issues of professional reputation, open access, and the stability and longevity of humanities scholarship.

We consider it important to promote open access, to democratise access to content, and to make visible our role as public intellectuals, expanding the audience for research to the largest number of stakeholders. We encourage scholars to choose open access and to take advantage of the opportunities it offers. This choice must be recognised and rewarded by funding bodies and national boards.

The potential of the web environment as a research network also plays a critical role in developing new ways of collaborating. Here we are thinking in particular about an

online interactive discourse – a networked community of scholars. Our vision of a networked collaborative action is one in which we as early career researchers help to drive the field rather than our remaining neutral bystanders to this key dimension of research publication.

The question of reputation is critical; however, there is a tension between the existing hierarchical, vertical model of publishing and the emerging networked, horizontal model of collaboration which furthers interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. The conventional model of obtaining recognition through publication in a particular acknowledged periodical is still esteemed in some subject fields.

We are at a cusp moment in academic publication where the digital mode is superseding current printing practice. New models of writing, publishing, distributing, accessing and reading material are emerging. Active scholars are at the forefront of engagement with these models.

However, there are fundamental, strategic, infrastructural issues for Open Access. Who pays for Open Access? Who maintains the stability of data and URIs (uniform resource identifiers) once established? The issue of sustainability is particularly crucial for the humanities where scholarship longevity is a vital aspect of quality work. Funding agencies and sponsoring bodies must acknowledge these key aspects of humanities research, and an important role exists in this regard for national libraries.

## **Theme 2. Impact**

When discussing impact it is important to distinguish between two different meanings of the term:

- In the bibliometric sense, i.e. ‘impact factors’, how to evaluate and assess academic impact;
- The wider sense of Knowledge Transfer/public engagement including impact on policy, economics and business amongst other constituencies and audiences.

In the light of changing academic cultures and practices we feel, as representatives of the European Humanities, that we must take ownership of this term and its implications.

The dominant bibliometric databases are developed from within the natural sciences and thus are not representative of the humanities. For example, in the humanities there is greater variation of publication formats and publication languages. Furthermore, just as in the natural sciences, impact in the humanities is not solely determined by research outputs, such as publications. Consideration should be given to bibliometric data only in tandem with other criteria such as research projects, teaching, public and media engagement, impact on graduate students, professional service, interdisciplinarity and collaborative working.

Existing bibliographic data are currently insufficient. We need an alternative model that is both more comprehensive and more integrated. By this we mean: it should be

Europe-wide, it should integrate and enrich current national databases, and it should include all publication formats. Any metrical data that are gathered should be utilised within their individual disciplinary contexts, rather than across the humanities as a whole.

However, we also want to emphasise that metrics is not the final word in measuring impact. Any academic should be assessed on a variety of impact criteria, as outlined above, and there must be diversity in assessment beyond the simply numerical.

Whilst, then, there is some scepticism regarding the usefulness of bibliometric data, there is a more enthusiastic response amongst early career researchers to the second meaning of impact, that of public engagement. We are all passionate about our subjects and wish to see them kept alive in the public sphere. We wish to engage with a variety of audiences, such as educationalists, cultural practitioners, students, archives, business leaders, and the media, in order to make our subjects relevant and visible.

Finally, we acknowledge that whilst the academic climate is currently difficult and uncertain for many early career researchers, it is important that we are proactive, rather than reactive to the changes implemented at government and EU level. We need to be more effective in the way we communicate, and thus have impact upon, national and transnational bodies. As early career researchers, we should work with our senior colleagues to raise a collective voice to ensure the humanities is both visible and heard.

### **Theme 3. Language**

Language should be considered a key element in a new publication culture. Language is an especially important asset for the humanities because in the humanities the form and the content are inseparable: in the humanities, language is not simply the medium but also the topic and subject of research.

We emphasise the importance of a balance between different national and linguistic research traditions since we live in a multicultural world. If a subject of research is of national relevance, it involves a specific language or languages, irrespective of the fact that the languages might be national or international. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that using an international language has both benefits and constraints. We see as benefits the following: a wider audience, better quality control, possibilities for networking and collaboration, and stronger impact. The potential constraints are the following: resulting lack of expertise in other languages, the impoverishment of the national academic discourse and research tradition, the danger of miscommunication of an intercultural nature, and the loss of national impact for a researcher.

The influence of the English language is overwhelming but we should continually aim at using other languages which best reflect the interests, competences, terminology and historical development of various disciplines and communities of scholars. The language issue is closely related to the notion of impact. If the work is truly relevant and important to specific audiences, the new forms of publishing will facilitate its translation and dissemination. Such new formats of publishing can further existing

forms of networking and collaborating, ensure a wider audience and enable better feedback from the audience. Thus new possibilities in electronic publishing can enhance, sustain and support the idea of multilingual research.

While also aiming for multilingualism, we should preserve linguistic diversity in humanities research. Diversity has to do with creativity, which is a precondition for the humanities. A key instrument of diversity is translation. More extensive self-translation would require us as scholars to command linguistic skills in several languages and to use them to disseminate our research outcomes. If we act as translators of our own texts, we lessen the risks inherent in transferring research information into a different language; otherwise we should resort to a specialised translator within specific fields of the humanities.

Promotion and career opportunities in humanities research should not be dependent on publication in a dominant language. Real-life situations may force us to perform in a unilingual context; nevertheless we should try to preserve the balance of single language and multilingual research for the sake of the benefits that result from both, and we should work to develop more nuanced models of multilingual practice.

#### **Theme 4. Future**

As young scholars, we are driving change rather neutrally observing it.

The future of scholarly publication culture is digital and open access. Digitality is a phenomenon that pertains not only to the form and media of publications, but also to the dynamics of scholarly work and collaboration. Being digital affects the realities and expectations of the rapidity of publishing process. It reshapes the ways in which research outputs are made available, accessed and preserved.

However, digitality cannot change the fundamental tenets of humanities research. Humanities research pertains not only to topics within contemporary societal and cultural trends but also often to topics outside them. The humanities embrace a longer time span than most other fields of scholarship. Ideas may ripen more slowly within the humanities, and the scholarly process cannot be measured or planned in short temporal cycles.

A key aspect of the future publishing culture in the humanities is to develop new opportunities to catalyse positive change in prevalent modes of institutional authority. It is necessary to facilitate access to the scholarly community in order to democratise participation and collaboration between peers because innovative scientific work takes place in numerous contexts outside traditional scholarly genres. Authority is best attained and maintained through transparency and fairness. The peer-review process should be directed towards transparency, collaborative assistance and support instead of a focus on gate keeping. But, while aiming for openness, it is important to keep in mind that this does not necessarily eliminate power structures: power structures may become more flexible, contextual and invisible, but they will not disappear.

The role of peer review should move from being a gatekeeper to being a guide, helping scholars to negotiate the ever-growing mass of scholarly output. Instead of a gatekeeper deciding in advance which publications are allowed to enter scholarly discussion, we need guides that evaluate and assess an unconstrained stream of publications after the fact. As well as traditional editorial boards, emergent online communities can provide guidance; longer-term community building can be achieved through fostering contact between smaller dispersed groups of people with similar interests.

The reshaping of scholarly publishing in humanities will inevitably change the roles of institutions and individuals. The role of publishers will change from providing content to providing services to the authors and users of scholarly information. As content will increasingly be available in raw open access form, the challenge for the publisher is to provide suitable access and flexibility, assisting scholars to find, select, enrich, recombine, and cite the work of others. The repositories themselves should be maintained by public institutions capable of guaranteeing open and equal long-term access to the results and resources of the scholarly work. The role of scholars as a global community is to provide the source of new scholarly knowledge and a guarantee of its high intellectual quality.

## **New Practices and Concerns for Digital Research Interactions**

As a community of early-career researchers, we believe that the future of scholarly publication culture is digital and based on the principle of open access. Digital practice here refers not only to the form and media of publications but also to the dynamics of scholarly work and collaboration.

Current and emergent scholarship is enhanced by digital mechanisms for communication, collaboration and documentation. Modes of asynchronous interaction with research have received considerable attention, most recently in scholarly communications and debates surrounding open publication models. Here the ability to disseminate publications and then to receive comments, and the potential of this process to form an evolving peer review, have been discussed. Blogging, wikis and micro-blogging open up new possibilities for scholarly discourses where the times between publication and response, and the characterisation of the 'author' can vary. They facilitate access to scholarly proceedings, and reveal and record the scholarly community at work in dynamic ways. Synchronous technologies similarly deserve increased attention, in particular the potential to capture and repeat dialogues over skype, IM and specialist conferencing software.

Whilst capture of such information is increasingly possible, the publication, structuring and remixing of this content require further attention. As research conversations and formal publication of results merge, and increasingly occur in a wholly digital environment, it is imperative that where possible these processes and interconnections should be captured and represented in a way that is semantically rich and can offer an experiential as well as data-rich encounter with the original research process 'recorded'. In terms of organisational practice, this extends beyond publication, into the underlying research processes. For example, augmenting official

minute taking of a collaborative research seminar (e.g. an ESF event) by digital media allows live-linking, live contextualisation, conversations with scholars not in the room, questions from beyond the floor and also beyond the timeframe of individual discussions.

Digital scholarship creates virtual research environments (with and without formal VRE systems) where scholars gather to discuss ideas, using methodologies that (while rooted in particular academic conversations) invite further participation both from the knowledge community and the general public. Such scholarship enables real-time publication and invites dialogue, generating discussion beyond each given event – whether conference, meeting, or other. These further interventions challenge, augment and enrich the research environment, generating an engaged participatory culture.

We believe therefore that it is vital that the ESF take a lead:

1. *In addressing core concerns such as the true nature of 'knowledge democratisation' and questions of publication authority and quality.* ESF researchers provide the perfect constituency to consider and address the inequalities of digital access, whether practical, social or educational, and to lobby for pan-European initiatives to support a new, inclusive European digital economy.
2. *In promoting and critiquing new forms of interaction and developing new digital research literacy amongst European researchers.* While we do not presume a benefit in all new media technologies we propose that it is only through the engagement of as broad a range of ESF researchers as possible that we will be able to move digital research practice forward. In this we need expertise in narrative, text and image and in the social and cultural implications of digital practice, as much as Web technologies. This engagement will require academics to develop new digital skills.
3. *In managing, integrating and exposing the consequences of such interactions.* New media technologies are creating an ever-expanding corpus of research data which provides significant potential for contextual analysis and for the incorporation of multiple voices. However, without means to link information in a way that is meaningful to the computer and to the reader, we will miss opportunities for identifying new avenues of research at the humanities/science border. Similarly, we risk moving much of our research development into spheres such as micro-blogging where the information has unknown longevity and access can change rapidly.

The interconnectedness, sharing, openness and critical engagement across borders – that characterise and are facilitated by emerging techniques – reflect the core concerns of all scholars, whether they choose to create knowledge and to communicate it in digitally innovative ways or to continue in more established veins. It is our belief that the ESF provides the most suitable environment to move forward digital research practices that reflect the best of its humanities and science constituencies. We would like to encourage the ESF community to develop a series of collaborative research projects to drive forward this agenda.



## Recommendations

### Recommendations to Publishers:

- To facilitate open access.
- To embrace multilingual submissions.
- To enable translation/editorial assistance for submissions of first-rate content whose expression falls short in standards of written English.
- To allow for a multiplicity of publications forms, including electronic appendices and multimedia.
- To facilitate dialogue and enhance scholarly networks through openly available manuscripts with online commentary.
- To instigate changes in the function of peer review towards a more constructive, transparent and open process.
- To separate, within peer review, the functions of individual or specific assistance to the author from open discussion of the content and quality assessment.

### Recommendations to Funding Agencies:

- To recognise as indicators of prestige varied publication formats and mechanisms e.g. open access monographs, films, blogs.
- To require submission of research data produced by funded projects, along with documentation of their genesis and development, and to require provision for open access publication where appropriate and in compliance with data protection and/or embargoes.
- To fund, via a pan-European platform, maintenance of and access to the heterogeneous research infrastructures that will result from this broad range of humanities publication.
- To support translation of any European research publications from any and into any language, via a specific funding scheme.
- To implement protocols that actively encourage long-term career provision for early-stage researchers (e.g. matched funding) and recognise a diverse range of criteria to assess an individual's academic performance.
- To support costs of publication generated by golden path (publication in open access journals) and green path (parallel publication in research archives) requirements.

## **Recommendations to Universities, Research Centres, Higher Education Institutions:**

- To support and encourage junior researchers in their engagement with new media and alternative output initiatives (i.e. beyond the traditional monograph).
- To provide support, including financial support, to staff working outside their native language in terms of editing and translation (in English or other languages) to improve dissemination of their work to a global audience.
- To take into account, particularly in relation to recruitment and promotion, a diverse range of criteria to assess an individual's academic performance, particularly when addressing the question of 'impact'.
- To improve institutional IT infrastructure and technological support in order to build, expand and sustain, on a permanent basis, new digital and online initiatives, such as networks, websites, databases, electronic publications, self-publication platforms, and repositories.
- To provide training as part of the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum to enhance students' critical skills in utilising digital and online resources intelligently and scrupulously.

## **Recommendations to Research Policy Makers:**

- To support Open Access publishing and to help to increase its real and symbolic value.
- To apply a multilateral and diverse approach to impact assessment for research in humanities and to avoid a bibliometric or other approach based on one or few criteria.
- To support the multilinguality of research publications combined with international dissemination of results via translation.
- To support research infrastructures relating to new publication cultures and to help to build research communities in these areas.
- To support multidisciplinary research throughout all its stages, starting with match-making activities enabling researchers from different fields to come together, via special assessment procedures up to facilitated publications and dissemination of results.

## **Recommendations concerning the Professional Development of Early-Career Researchers**

### **To Early-Career Researchers:**

- To make professional choices that reflect the change you wish to see in your field, regardless of existing institutional reward mechanisms.
- To write in your own national language or the language that is most appropriate for your research, or in the publication medium that most suits the values of your work.

### **To Senior Scholars:**

- To support the choices made by younger researchers regarding language or publication forum.
- To reward those choices that contribute to reimagining the future of the field in terms of language diversity and new media.
- To take the lead in increasing public awareness of the value of humanities research.
- To work towards Europe-wide standards for objective and merit-based publication and review practices.

### **To ESF:**

- To institute a National Junior Representative who could act as advocate for the interests of early career researchers.
- To institute through its Standing Committee for the Humanities regular strategic activity in the area of changing publication cultures and to lobby for strategic funding of Europe-level activity in this area.

## Appendix

### List of participants in Humanities Spring 2011

ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities Working group:

**Margaret Kelleher**, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Ireland (Chair)

**Barbara Baert**, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

**Rūta Marcinkevičienė**, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

**Hanne Ruus**, Copenhagen University, Denmark

**Naomi Segal**, University of London, UK

**Eva Hoogland**, ESF Science Officer

Chair of the ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities:

**Milena Zic-Fuchs**, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Guest speakers:

**Karen Skovgaard-Petersen**, the Danish Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark

**Poul Holm**, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland

**Péter Dávidházi**, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

**Gudrun Gersmann**, German Historical Institute, Paris, France

List of grantees:

**Jessica Aliaga-Lavrijsen**, University of Zaragoza, Spain

**Gerd Bayer**, University of Erlangen, Germany

**Urszula Bugaj**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

**Cristian Ciocan**, Romanian Society for Phenomenology Al. I. Cuza Iasi, Bucharest, Romania

**Michael Cysouw**, Ludwig Maximilians University, München, Germany

**Graeme Earl**, University of Southampton, United Kingdom

**Denis Fomin-Nilov**, The State Academic University for Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Mike Frangos**, Umeå University, Sweden

**Gabriela Glavan**, West University of Timisoara, Romania

**Isto Huvila**, Uppsala University, Sweden

**Nicholas Melvani**, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens, Greece

**Ana Mendes**, University of Lisbon, Evora, Portugal

**Orla Murphy**, University College Cork, Ireland

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**Catriona Pennell**, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

**Jelena Sesnic**, University of Zagreb, Croatia

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**Alexandra Trachsel**, University of Hamburg, Germany

**Anicee Van Engeland**, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

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