

CHAPTER 4

Monographs

By now, it is trite and clichéd to note that the scholarly monograph is in crisis. Indeed, several papers given at a conference in 1997, now seventeen years ago, questioned whether the rhetoric of crisis was better framed as ‘chronic illness’ as the state seems perpetual.¹ It is also fair to say, as Robert McPherson notes, that there are disciplinary differences in the nature and/or severity of the crisis.² Nonetheless, because humanities departments exist within budgetary constraints set throughout the institution and not in isolation, the economics of monograph purchasing are intrinsically bound to the forces determining journal finances and are, therefore, rarely stable; the rhetoric of crisis is here to stay.³ This crisis, though, is not singular; it is in fact the same phenomenon that we saw with journal publishing wherein the term ‘crisis’ denotes two paradoxical supply-side and demand-side crises. Nobody ever complains of having too little to read, as Richard Fisher, the managing director of Cambridge University Press’s academic division, has put it at many conferences. Yet, most humanities academics feel the need to publish books for their jobs and, more importantly, simply to disseminate their findings. This chiasmic formulation was challenged by an MLA committee in 2002, which asked: ‘On a practical level, how can ever-increasing demands for publication as a qualification for tenure and promotion be sustained when scholars find it harder and harder to publish their books?’⁴ It is, of course, a rite of passage for new academics to publish their Ph.D. theses as reworked monographs, a fact that often hampers the imposition of OA mandates on doctoral work.⁵ However, this ‘need’ to publish in a quasi-trade market has also led to claims of the

erosion of esoteric research in favour of populist agendas and an impact of finance upon the type of scholarship that is conducted.⁶

In this chapter, I turn my attention to open access and monographs. I begin by asking whether there is a fundamental difference between monographs and other forms of scholarship. I then undertake a survey of different projects that seek to bring an open-access ecosystem to scholarly monographs. Finally, I look at the economic models that could support open-access monographs. Before proceeding, however, there is one aspect of terminology that must be clarified. In this chapter, I use the term ‘monograph’ to refer to scholarly books on a single, specialised subject with coherent thematic unity, authored by one or more persons, but that are not edited collections of disparate essays. In this way, the term ‘monograph’ is distinct from ‘book’, with the latter term encompassing monographs, edited collections, scholarly editions and other forms. This is a conscious decision intended to limit scope for the purposes of meaningful discussion: an enabling constraint. It is also helpful because the types of labour involved in the academic production of different types of ‘book’ are so diverse as to make discussion within the practical bounds of a chapter almost infeasible. This chapter will, therefore, primarily concern itself with monographs, although in some instances the argument may also apply to other forms of books, particularly so in the final section when I will venture into discussion of scholarly editions, as these are often bound up with the business models of learned societies. I would also like to note that, where possible, I have tried to avoid becoming too embroiled in a historical study of the emergence of the scholarly book. Such a task would constitute at least another work in its own right and sits beyond the scope of this text. Finally, anyone wishing to know more on this topic would do well to consult Ellen Collins’ excellent literature review for the OAPEN-UK project.⁷

WHY ARE MONOGRAPHS DIFFERENT?

It is often remarked that monographs are different from other, shorter types of academic publication. For instance, as covered in more detail below, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has a strong OA mandate for its next national

research assessment evaluation but has deliberately chosen to exempt 'monographs and other long-form publications' from the open-access requirement.⁸ However, regardless of the number of times such a truism is reiterated, without a definitional framework for *why* the monograph should be thought of differently, it is impossible to consider its role within an open-access world. Beyond the challenges, then, of how to read long-form material in a digital format (let alone open access), which comes with well-documented problems, it is first necessary to ask *what* the monograph is for; *how* it is produced; and *why* it should be seen as different from other forms.⁹ The first part of this chapter is dedicated to such an unravelling as the answers to these questions must inform any perspective on open access.

The purpose of the monograph

To ask what the monograph is (used) for is to invite the preliminary question: by whom? Indeed, in a 2010 report on 'user needs' regarding digital monographs for the OAPEN project, Janneke Adema and Paul Rutten identified at least four groups that each have a stake in the monograph: scholars, publishers, libraries and funding agencies.¹⁰ Furthermore, even within the scholar subset there is a large degree of disciplinary variance in the use, and authorship, of monographs.¹¹ To consider another group, briefly – to demonstrate the problems in thinking about a single 'use' of the monograph – for libraries the current use is to be purchased, to be catalogued, to take up shelf space and to slowly degrade over hundreds of years, even with acid-free paper. However, these functions are changing. Although no current digital solution exists that can replicate the functionality of the material codex, making it unlikely that the print monograph will disappear in the near future, a mixed environment is emerging in which researchers use print for end-to-end reading and digital for search and other functions.¹²

Given this heterogeneous set of uses, it may instead be better to ask what scholars want and need from the monograph. Although Adema and Rutten identify four groups of stakeholders, and although it is true that the object called a 'monograph' depends upon publishers and funders, it is clear that without scholars there would be no need for that long-form object to exist. Scholars, or

academics, are writers, citers, submitters, readers, editors, reviewers and quality-control accreditors.¹³ That scholars are often the only primary target audience as a readership for these objects is lamentable but also renders their involvement all the more central. Collins notes that most studies of the monograph to date have ‘focus[ed] upon researchers’.¹⁴ I contend that there is good cause for this.

The fundamental idea of the monograph is that it provides the necessary greater space to work through, and in which to present enough evidence for, an argument than is possible in a journal article. The standard has evolved to the 80,000 word mark in many disciplines because it is a well-known fact that academics must be told when to stop speaking. However, various experiments with the form’s length have been undertaken in the last thirty years. For instance, Ken Wissoker notes that Duke University Press published a range of short-form books in the mid-nineties at the behest of book shops, who felt that ‘somebody who wasn’t an academic might read something that was 125 pages while they wouldn’t read the 300 page version’. Wissoker then extends this line of thinking to note that ‘Presses have been interested in having shorter forms – and having a variety of forms – for a long time. And with the digital, if you take out the production part, you should be able to accommodate a whole range of lengths, including much longer things than would fit into a book.’¹⁵

It is in this historicised light that Palgrave Macmillan has also recently launched its ‘Pivot’ programme, featuring original research at approximately the 30,000 word mark (but not described as a monograph). This programme, according to Hazel Newton, ‘seeks to challenge the assumption that research could only be published at these [80,000 word] lengths’ and is made possible by developments in technology that eliminate the previous constraints of ‘the practicalities and costs of printing, binding and paper’.¹⁶ This is, in many ways, fascinating, because it demonstrates how the commercial histories and constraints of technology may continue to bear upon the way in which ideas are communicated between scholars, even in the age of the internet. We are, after all, historically conditioned subjects. Taking this to an extreme and depending upon how one thinks about the interaction between writing and thinking, there is also the possibility that such space constraints – engendered by historical

limitations of technology – could also impinge upon the very possibility of thought. To return to the topic at hand, however, it is clear that digital technologies, XML-first workflows¹⁷ and print-on-demand are already transforming the scope, potential and even *definition* of a monograph. What the monograph is ‘for’ (in the sense of ‘what scholars need’) is communicating ideas at greater length, but even that scope is under attack, for where do we place the cut-off point for ‘long-form’ if mid-form titles are also counted as ‘monographs’?

When speaking of value and use, it is also worth finally noting that the current monograph/book supply chain bestows greater value on items that are bought at a price and that are material, both of which are the opposite of pure open access (although print for a price can co-exist with OA). Indeed, at least one commercial study has correlated the print form with readers’ ‘emotional connection’ to books, and particularly those with ‘classic’ status.¹⁸ There is, furthermore, an understanding that pricing should be correlated with perceived value.¹⁹ While a zero-price exponentially increases demand for a product and damages competitors’ offerings disproportionately in most fields of commodity purchase, book readers are used to finding best-sellers in book shops and may be suspicious of the supposed lack of investment by a publisher if there is no option to purchase.²⁰ In other words, value ascription to books is often shaped within social spaces and by commercial entities (book shops and publishers) in such a way that readers are accustomed to paying. Part of this payment is to ensure that a reputable intermediary will filter out the ‘nonsense’ through which the reader would otherwise have to trawl if anyone could place their book in a book shop and if everything was free. While this is being challenged in the trade world through new self-publishing paradigms, in the realm of monographs there remains a problem with trade crossover titles. If academics desire to be as widely read as possible, then, at present, the ultimate goal is to reach the general public with one’s book (ideally with a tie-in television series etc.). However, present mechanisms of discovery for the general public do not include searching for high-quality academic titles online, to be read free of charge. Indeed, it seems likely that this would cast suspicion on a volume: ‘why is it free?’ As will be seen below, it is possible to have open-access models in which

print partner volumes can be sold, which is probably the best answer to this problem. However, it is notable that this paradox exists and that, hypothetically, it is conceivable that a shift to pure open-access monographs could reduce the reach of some academic work because the public would neither find the book, nor value it outside of those socio-economic trappings.

How monographs are produced

Involvement in monograph production represents an academic's exposure to both the most commercially crass and also the most procedurally sophisticated and nuanced portions of any academic publication process. As John Thompson puts it:

On the one hand, publishing organizations in these fields [the academic book market] are concerned with questions of quality and scholarship – indeed, for most university presses these questions are paramount. But publishing organizations are also driven by commercial concerns.²¹

The economics of this commercial system are paramount because, as Jennifer Crewe has put it, 'the crisis in scholarly publishing is essentially a numbers problem'.²² In other words, as budgets contract but costs remain the same or rise, the economic viability of the monograph is continually threatened. Although, in the current age of 'impact', academics are encouraged (or forced) to think about their audience and the potential changes engendered by their work, there is at the same time a belief that scholarship should not be determined through markets masquerading as democracy, as seen in earlier discussions of utilitarianism and higher education. However, authors are also all used by now to completing the 'marketing' section of a book proposal, specifying its audience, assessing its commercial viability (or otherwise) and thereby its potential appeal to a press. This is not to say that all books are published by academic presses for profit. Far from it; many presses, and especially university presses, formally exist to circulate academic excellence and deploy massive cross-subsidy between their commercial success stories and their esoteric-yet-valuable monographs. Some presses are even subsidised by their host institution to achieve these goals (while others resubsidise their host institutions). Despite this, however, something

still rankles about the fact that the gatekeeper – whose blessing can, after all, determine whether an academic is hired or promoted and may condition how highly their work is valued by others – might here be deciding on the basis of commercial viability, however defined. Even within market logic, this is flawed. Who, for instance, can predict the future emergence of figures culturally neglected within their time? As with many forms of peer review, the scholarly monograph world is inclined towards a conservative model that privileges normative scholarship: work that will sell at the time of publication.

This, however, is merely the most negative sharp end of the book publication gatekeeping system. In the current setup, the form of editorial curation that takes place before peer review in the case of monographs, conducted by those with extensive experience in publishing, albeit not necessarily specialists in the field, also has a discoverability function. This is because a well-curated list at a press is supposed to exhibit coherence and quality. It is supposed to be a space wherein a reader will find a selection of the latest and greatest material on the particular subject at hand. This function, which is inextricable from the commercial aspect, is key to many presses' successful online book bundles (the University Publishing Online system, for example, or Oxford University Press's 'Oxford Scholarship Online'). As will be noted below in Chapter 5, this function could be changing. Although it in no way requires it, open access does offer a moment in which to re-evaluate other publication practices, such as peer review. While I will leave a full discussion of these aspects until later, it is worth noting, at this point, that the value of discovery through a coherent list may be diminished through digital mechanisms. For instance, as full-text search and online ranking mechanisms mature, the community might be able to rate good material internally while burying the bad. This is not to say anything of the value of curation by quality, however, which should mostly be handled by the academic peer-review process anyway. Monograph selection nonetheless continues to differ from its journal counterparts in one final way. It is expected, with monographs, that a good non-academic editor or copyeditor will work with an author to improve the work. This view can be incredibly useful as

those locked within a disciplinary discussion often cannot give the same perspective as a voice with expertise in publishing and argument, but less immanently placed with respect to the subject.

In the realm of technical production, there are differences between monographs and journals, but these are predominantly now the result of legacy systems. There is no reason why books should not feature the same XML-first workflow that is widely used in journal production. After all, the technology behaves in the same way when dealing with 8,000 words or 80,000 words. There are, however, as I have implied, some differences. Most notably, monographs are distributed through aggregation channels with comparatively long lead times and this explains the ways in which the same marketing copy arrives at all the various different outlets (Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Waterstones etc. all get their data from the same sources). Likewise, this digital-first²³ format now gives an easy route to print; print on demand (POD). This advance in technology has enabled the total unification of technological processes for print and digital.

If, then, production differences between monographs and journals are primarily of scale, rather than of kind, there are nonetheless difficulties that come with such a scaling, predominantly in the legal realm. Within a monograph there is a far greater scope for copyright infringement as more space is granted and a greater number of sources are deployed. While open licensing of scholarly works could help in this regard (as seen earlier in Chapter 3), obtaining permission to reproduce images and texts that are under copyright can be an incredibly expensive process. This cost is massively increased within a gratis open-access environment since, basing their calculations off a legacy model of 'print runs', an openly accessible, digital reproduction is often treated as though it were an *infinite run*. The logic behind this is that if something is distributed gratis on the internet, the ability to exchange it at a financial price point is lost, which again ties in well with this work's previous analysis of the tension between the open-access work and the commodity form. As will be seen below in my discussion of business models, new ways of thinking about this are needed if open access for monographs is to succeed.

Why should the monograph be seen differently?

In the contemporary technological landscape, several factors that differentiate the monograph from journals are destroyed. The core technological and labour differences that remain are larger scales of typesetting, copyediting and proofreading. That said, differences of distribution channel remain, at least for now. Instead, it is clear that the differentiating factors for the monograph are social: they involve publisher expertise and list gatekeeping. Many hard-line advocates of OA would disavow that even these functions are necessary and that they will be eroded over time. For now, however, regardless of such speculation, there are significantly more barriers, both social and technological, to entry into book publication than into journals.

These barriers to entry are simultaneously a reflection of the differences in scale noted above and also a result of a lack of transition strategies for new start-up publishers. In the journal sector there has already been a small but growing degree of publisher disintermediation (in which academics adopt a do-it-yourself approach to publishing, removing the intermediary) through the development and use of freely available tools, such as the Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal Systems: the software that hosted almost 5,700 active journals at the end of 2013. Until very recently, no such alternative has been available for monographs, although this is now changing with the launch of Open Monograph Press. Because platform development – an effort replicated over and over by many presses who seek a unique online presence – requires a large degree of initial organisational capital investment, there is a greater monetary barrier to entry.²⁴ At the same time, however, scholars are less willing to commit their monographs into unproven hands. Writing a monograph is a substantial commitment of a magnitude many times greater than that of producing a journal article. For this reason, scholars expect a commensurate return on their investment, largely in the form of reputational capital. This will not be provided by new presses until they have a significant number of high-quality titles under their brand, regardless of how experienced the team members may be. It will, however, be harder for new presses to attract high-quality submissions because they do not yet hold prestige; this is a chicken and egg situation. In both cases, these are, again, merely

differences in scale. The people who perform the labour of publishing, however, move about between jobs and set up new companies, as in any other field. That the same individuals, with the same skill-sets, could have different reputational appeal to scholars based upon brand illustrates, once more, the idiosyncrasies of prestige as it currently stands.

The differences between books and journals, in these respects, are often over-stated. There is a nonetheless pressing need to ensure that the transition to an open-access model preserves those aspects of the monograph that are of use to scholars. On this front, even if hardliners believe the differences between books and journals to be overstated (because they are 'merely' differences of scale), they should nonetheless see the commensurately larger responsibility to ensure that the work of scholars during a transition period does not become collateral damage. Monographs may merely take longer, or they may never come to open-access fruition. This is not to say, though, that experiments are not under way and it is to an examination of current projects that I will now turn.

OPEN-ACCESS MONOGRAPH PROJECTS

There are, broadly speaking, two types of open-access monograph project currently in existence. The first of these consists of social scientific research projects investigating economic and academico-structural changes engendered by open-access monographs. The second grouping is a band of publishers and business model intermediaries, who are either already publishing open-access books, or facilitating such action. In this portion of the chapter I will detail the first group of these projects and the contribution that they make to the field. The second group will be explored under the section 'Economic models for monographs' below. As a preliminary and crude observation: the field is changing incredibly quickly and some of these projects have had the ground shift beneath them even as they proceed. As with all social science, this is the risk; social environments are incredibly complex phenomena and academic publishing is no exception. Finally, for this section's introduction, it is important to note that, while I have tried to include as many as possible, the list of projects below is not comprehensive. Instead, it is hoped that

named initiatives are seen as representative of specific types of project (and no slight is intended upon those not listed).

Studies of the OA monograph

The leading studies of the open-access monograph, at present, are: the OAPEN-NL project; Jisc Collections' OAPEN-UK initiative; and the HEFCE Open Access Monographs investigation. The first of these (OAPEN-NL) concluded in 2013. The OAPEN-UK study is ongoing and will end in 2015. The HEFCE panel is currently also ongoing but due to end in 2014 (some time near to the submission of this book's manuscript). All three studies feature involvement from publishers, libraries and researchers but each has slightly different aims and objectives. This section will give a brief summary of each and, when possible, the findings. It is worth noting, before proceeding and in the interests of fair disclosure, that the nature of early OA studies is that they are often run by those with an interest in seeing open access come to fruition. Furthermore, while there are some strong headline findings from various projects, these must remain provisional and some publishers are sceptical of their real-world applicability (or at least are not willing to be the first to take the two-footed jump into the unknown).

OAPEN-NL

The OAPEN-NL project – headed by Eelco Ferwerda, Ronald Snijder and Janneke Adema – was based on a broader OAPEN (Open Access Publishing in European Networks) project, originally established in 2008, with a shared aim between the investigations to explore the business model implications for OA books. From the project's description:

OAPEN-NL was a project to gain experience with Open Access publication of monographs in the Netherlands. Between June 2011 and November 2012, 50 Open Access monographs in various subject areas were published in [gold] Open Access by 9 participating publishers. For every Open Access title, the publishers provided a similar title that was published in the conventional way . . . Data were collected about usage, sales and costs, to study the effect of Open Access on monographs. OAPEN-NL consisted of

a quantitative and a qualitative research component, measuring the effects of Open Access publishing and the perceptions and expectations of publishers and authors.²⁵

This concept of 'similar titles' is difficult to pull off. As many publishers will attest, no two books are alike in their sales profile or content and there is no such thing as a 'typical' monograph. Faced with such difficulties, for the OAPEN-NL project, similarity was defined in terms of publication date, number of pages, price and subject area. The OAPEN-NL project was finished in 2013 with data returned from Koninklijke van Gorcum, IOS Press B.V., Springer Science & Business Media, Techne Press, Wageningen Academic Publishers, Koninklijke Brill NV, KITLV Press and Amsterdam University Press.²⁶ This resulted in a sample size of fifty books with a total expenditure of €239,615.85 by the project at a maximum of €5,000 per book paid to publishers.²⁷

The project's headline findings from its quantitative data used a statistical technique called Analysis of Variance between groups (ANOVA) that is designed to ensure minimal risk that the result was derived by chance. From this analysis, the OAPEN-NL project concluded that 'no significant effect of Open Access on monograph sales could be found' but that there was significant increase in digital usage (the number of times a book was viewed on Google Books) when it was OA. There was no observed citation benefit to a book being open access, a result that contradicts several studies in the journal sphere.²⁸ Finally, the project also examined the costs of publishing and concluded that an OA edition is approximately 50% cheaper to produce than the total cost of a conventional, print monograph, although I have heard non-participating publishers exhibit scepticism towards this finding in particular (and there is the temptation to believe, once more, that the intangible digital object should always cost less, regardless of the labour invested).²⁹

For OA advocates, there are two positive outcomes in these findings and one unexpected negative result. However, a sequential and sceptical look at these findings reveals that each can be interpreted differently. The first result of the project, that open access does not act to the detriment of other sales, can be viewed sceptically if one considers the fact that the open-access route is not so well embedded within researcher-specific discovery channels as traditional

books. This could mean that those who might have been dissuaded from purchasing the book were it open access ended up buying the monograph purely because they were unaware that they could get it for free. Although the study notes that discoverability of monographs was generally increased (the second finding) through one particular route (Google Books), it is not clear whether this is the discoverability route of those who are academic monograph purchasers. Furthermore, during and since the period of the OAPEN-NL study, open access has exploded in international recognition, even in the monograph sphere, through funder mandates such as Wellcome. It is entirely possible that acquisition librarians – one of the core audiences for academic monographs – are now more on the lookout for OA editions. Finally, however, the lack of a citation boost is unexpected (and certainly contradicted the expectations of the book authors surveyed in the study, 94% of whom expected to see a rise in citations).³⁰ In the same spirit of contradiction, however, it is entirely possible to explain this result through the long publishing cycles in the humanities against the relatively short run-time of the OAPEN-NL study. The citation findings were due to be reviewed in August 2014.

Clearly, these early results showed promise for open-access monographs, but were not fully cemented; an extremely interesting and valuable starting point, even if not conclusive. Indeed, what seemed necessary was an extension of this monitoring experiment as, in some cases, it was simply too early to tell. To that end, enter OAPEN-UK.

OAPEN-UK

The OAPEN-UK experiment is, in many senses, a continuation of the OAPEN-NL project, except that it introduces the concept of ‘matched pairs’, in which profiled books are designed to be compared with one another. In contrast to the OAPEN-NL project, OAPEN-UK contains ninety titles, forty-five of which constitute the experimental gold open access group, while the other forty-five remain as a traditional, purchased control group.³¹ The publishers involved in OAPEN-UK are Routledge, University of Wales Press, Liverpool University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Berg Publishers and Oxford University Press. The disciplinary range of the monographs included

spans international criminal law, classics, literature and history, through to marketing, among many others. As the OAPEN-UK project is still running, no definitive results from the quantitative portion of the experiment/control study are yet available. That said, the project has already released some extremely valuable findings from various case studies and focus groups as part of a structured qualitative research programme.³²

The first round of OAPEN-UK focus groups was held between November 2011 and February 2012 and consisted of institutional representatives, publishers, researchers, funders, learned societies and eBook aggregators. The core issues raised in these fora, among many others, were: quality and prestige; dissemination; versioning, preservation and archiving; and costs.³³ While the matter of 'costs' will be dealt with shortly in the section below on economic models for monographs, among the most prominent remarks to emerge in this portion of OAPEN-UK's investigation was that:

Most commentators identified a perception that OA content is, per se, lower quality than books published in more traditional ways, although not all agreed that this is necessarily the case. The prestige of print publication was recognised as very important to researchers, and there were concerns that they would be slow to adopt OA, as both authors and readers, although the researchers themselves did not mention this as a potential problem.³⁴

While this view on OA as lower quality ties in well with my earlier remarks on perceived value and pricing, it is also clearly false. Open access is supposed to refer to peer-reviewed research and there is no reason why it should be lower quality. As awareness of OA grows and as traditional publishers expand their efforts, this view will probably become less common.

Another area in which there was some consternation surrounded the official version of record. In a green OA environment for monographs, where copies are to be distributed among repositories, for instance, there was a fear that a proliferation of different versions would cause trust in the monograph to decline.³⁵ This was also linked to the supposed challenges for perpetual access to OA content. While this is an important area and shouldn't be taken for granted and to reiterate a point made in the introduction to this book, Kathleen Fitzpatrick also does much to challenge such repeated

mantras through two chiasmic statements: ‘The first is simply to note that [hard-copy/print] books are often far more ephemeral than we often assume. Bindings give way and pages are lost . . . Second, and by contrast, bits and the texts created with them can be far more durable than we think.’³⁶ Fitzpatrick explicitly notes that she does not by this ‘mean that we can be cavalier about their preservation’,³⁷ which is crucial for continued access, but that it is a red herring to believe that it is impossible or that such mechanisms do not exist. This is not to say that such systems are not complex, as Donald J. Waters notes, but rather to point out that the digital revolution has been long anticipated and efforts are already fairly advanced.³⁸ For instance, the CLOCKSS, LOCKSS and Portico systems are all digital preservation systems that are capable of preserving open-access books as they currently stand by distributing copies of the same book to hundreds of locations worldwide. Of course, if one really wished to push this, one could arrive at the logical conclusion that we depend on electricity for any kind of digital preservation and imagine a situation where such a resource is no longer available. In that eventuality, however, the systems of environmental control that preserve our print works would also fail.

The second piece of interesting material published to-date by the OAPEN-UK project is their ‘humanities and social science researchers survey’ results. Running from March to May 2012, this survey solicited 690 usable results from a self-selecting respondent group (meaning that the results may be skewed towards those with preconceived ideas on the subject). Interestingly, the largest group of respondents was Ph.D. candidates, perhaps showing that an upcoming generation of scholars have been more aware of these issues for longer than those already in academic employment (or simply that the reward incentives of Amazon vouchers were more keenly sought by this group!).

Of the respondents, 53.8% classed themselves as ‘aware’ of OA, against 38.7% who said they were ‘familiar’ and 7.2% who had ‘never heard’ of open access. Interestingly, given that a large number of publishers are commercial and shareholder-driven entities, only 20% of researcher respondents felt that it was acceptable for publishers to make a profit and to do with this what they wished, as opposed to supporting the discipline and/or future publication.³⁹

Finally, and perhaps most usefully at present, the OAPEN-UK project conducted two case studies of learned societies (the Royal Historical Society [RHS] and the Regional Studies Association [RSA]), as groups who have, in some instances, objected to the new business models proposed for gold open access. While OAPEN-UK is a project examining monographs, this particular part of their qualitative research situated its work on learned societies within the broader journal landscape, hence there may be some slippage in the below section between the formats. In the case of the eminent RHS, business models were clearly a concern, despite ‘all interviewees . . . stating their firm support for the principle of open access’. However, interestingly, at the point of this case study, ‘the financial issues were not the main concern for most interviewees’ when considering OA. Instead, it was ‘the effect on volunteer networks, and the academic freedom of Society members’ that were deemed the most problematic. As the latter issue of academic freedom has already been covered above, I will not reiterate those arguments here. The former argument is more difficult to place, however. One interviewee ‘suggested that removing profits from publishing would also remove the “fun”’, by which it was meant that part of the reward to society volunteers (upon whom much depends for their labour) was in ‘seeing their effort and passion turned into book sales, especially when the book performs unexpectedly well’, an aspect that was intensified when the profits went back into supporting the discipline. Conversely, though, ‘another interviewee suggested that explicitly putting a price on the work done to publish a book, through an APC or similar, would anger academics who give their time for free to undertake peer review’.⁴⁰ This is a curious statement because, while it has been estimated that the unpaid non-cash costs of peer review undertaken worldwide by academics is £1.9 billion per year, many book publishers do pay reviewers for their time, given the proportionately larger degree of labour involved.⁴¹

The OAPEN-UK case study of the Regional Studies Association took a slightly different tack, with the primary concerns being ‘the effect upon scholarship for their members, and the effect upon the Association’s business models’. The former of these points was linked both to ‘ensuring trusted brands [and especially the Society’s brand] are not undermined’ and to an emphasis on maintaining high

standards of peer review. There was also concern in this area over 'the new ways that work could be used and cited, and the loss of control over their own work that academics might experience', presumably referring to conditions of open licensing covered above in Chapter 3. As a positive counterbalance, however, Society members suggested 'quicker publication speeds and more open discussions around articles, benefits for policymakers and practitioners, and the ability to disseminate different types of content' as among the benefits of OA.

Secondly, on the financial front, it was noted that 'income from publications makes up a significant proportion of the Association's budget, and it is subsequently used to support conferences, dissemination, research projects, overseas networks, early career researchers and all the Association's other activities'.⁴² It is unclear what a shift to gold open access would do to the Society's finances. Interestingly, however, the RSA's journals (*Regional Studies*, *Spatial Economic Analysis*, *Territory, Politics, Governance* and *Regional Studies, Regional Science*) are published by Routledge, an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an organisation that is in turn owned by the Informa group, the extremely healthy profits of which were discussed earlier in Chapter 1. In fact, the RSA's journals seem to have always been enmeshed with commercial publishers, unlike some societies which originally produced their publications in-house. The first issue of *Regional Studies*, for instance, was published in 1967 by Pergamon Press, now owned by the largest international commercial publisher and hate-figure for uncompromising advocates within the Open Access movement: Elsevier. This is not to deprecate the claims that there may be financial challenges for associations and societies in any transition to open access. It is, rather, to note that calls to protect society revenue models are often inextricable from calls to protect publisher profits; the two are interwoven. This rhetoric of economy and sustainability, it must also not be forgotten, will always make one group's sustainability possible only at the expense of another: usually the library. Hard-line OA advocates would call, therefore, for the learned societies to forgo their revenue in the service of knowledge dissemination. Hard-line Society figures would argue that the services supported by publishing revenue are more important. Perhaps the moderate ground that we need is to find the point of sustainable balance?

HEFCE open-access monographs investigation

HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council for England) is a quango (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation) in the United Kingdom that translates the government's higher education budget allocation into usable funds. Some of this goes in a teaching grant for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects (this funding has been withdrawn for the humanities subjects), while other portions of the budget are devolved to the major UK research councils. Aside from specific project funding, the other major way in which HEFCE funds research is called quality-related (QR) funding. This is awarded to institutions on the basis of an assessment exercise known as the 'Research Excellence Framework', which was preceded by a series of 'Research Assessment Exercises', which in turn have their root in the 1986 'research selectivity exercise'.⁴³ These exercises now take place approximately every five years and are, it is fair to say, widely hated by UK academics who often consider them as bureaucratic exercises in quantification.

Of interest to the subject at hand, however, is that, in April 2014, HEFCE announced that eligibility to submit to a post-2014 Research Excellence Framework (presumed to be 'REF2020') would depend upon an open-access component: a mandate. Specifically, authors must deposit the accepted version of their articles at the time of acceptance.⁴⁴ However, as already mentioned in passing, it is notable that monographs ('and other long-form publications'), edited collections, non-text outputs and data are all excluded from the mandate.⁴⁵

From the rhetoric deployed by HEFCE and the Research Councils, some academics have surmised that these bodies would like to mandate monographs for a future exercise; after all, why should one form be deemed different from others in their eyes when both are supported by QR funding?⁴⁶ However, in recognition of the additional barriers (and researcher sensitivities) surrounding open-access monographs, HEFCE has instead opted for now to mount an investigation into the subject, the first national-level funding council investigation of its type. The investigation is being led by Professor Geoffrey Crossick, an ex-Vice Chancellor of the University of London and a Distinguished Professor of History. Crossick's findings were expected to be released in the late summer/autumn of 2014.

These, then, comprise the majority of the social scientific studies of open-access monographs. However, there are also a number of presses who have simply decided to try publishing monographs in an OA format. In the next section, I want to draw attention to several projects with innovative aspects that show signs of emergent and viable economics for OA monographs. It is, of course, impossible to gain full coverage of all the exciting new projects working on OA books but this will give a flavour of the experiments that are under way.

ECONOMIC MODELS FOR MONOGRAPHS

As of mid 2014, a small number of presses, such as Amsterdam University Press, allow green open access deposit for monographs, usually with an embargo of 18–24 months. The central model emerging for gold open access monograph publishing, conversely, is one of book processing charges (BPCs). The current rates requested by established presses under such a system are high and pose real, possibly insurmountable, challenges for unfunded research: \$2,450/chapter from de Gruyter; €640/chapter from InTech; £5,900 from Manchester University Press for books of up to 80,000 words; £11,000 from Palgrave; and approximately €15,000 from Springer, to name but a few.⁴⁷ Each of these presses does, of course, offer a different service: although not exclusively limited to the more expensive presses, the higher end tend to allow more liberal reuse rights by default (CC BY) while others have more restrictive criteria and may not allow ePub downloads (a format for mobile reading devices). One of the central drivers of the introduction of this model has been the strong open-access mandate of the Wellcome Trust, which, in contrast to HEFCE, includes ‘scholarly monographs and book chapters authored or coauthored by Trust grantholders that arise as part of their grant-funded research’.⁴⁸ The first Wellcome-funded OA book was released in late 2013.⁴⁹

Despite the emergence of the BPC as the model of choice for many publishers, several other economic models are appearing (some of which are experimental), including: print subsidy, freemium and consortia. These models remain immature and unproven but are showing signs of working at the present time within specific contexts.

This final section will sequentially detail some of these projects in order to think beyond a purely BPC-driven market. As with OA journals, it is also worth noting that some open-access book efforts are scholar-led and subsist entirely on volunteerism, a model that certainly will not scale to cover the entire field but does seem to work within niche contexts.

Print subsidy

Among the most common forms of alternative revenue streams for open-access monographs has been print subsidy. In this model, the open, online version is available free of charge but the revenues from the sales of print – or specific alternative digital versions – are retained by the publisher. Such a model relies on the continuing desire for print or for formats that can be read exclusively by digital reading devices. In other words, this rests on what Gary Hall has termed a ‘paper-centrism’, a phenomenon wherein the hard-edged format of paper is transferred to a digital medium, seen most clearly in the persistence of the paginated PDF.⁵⁰ In this model the confidence in sales as a revenue stream is based upon a belief in continuing desire for the features of print that are currently hard to replicate in an online environment. There is no guarantee that this will continue to be the case but, for now, it looks an appealing model; the codex is an enduring form. This model can also, of course, be used alongside other forms, such as a BPC.

Although there are many projects that utilise this model – such as the University of Adelaide Press and Monash University Publishing, both based in Australia – the case study I have opted to focus upon for this model is Open Book Publishers (OBP), a new small press based in Cambridge, UK and headed by Alessandra Tosi, a fellow of Clare Hall, and run by Rupert Gatti, a fellow of Trinity College. OBP has a strict emphasis on strong peer review with the mantra that, if a book doesn’t meet the highest of academic standards, it will not be published. Using a streamlined workflow, they hope to be able to outperform traditional publishers, publishing material of an equal quality faster and cheaper. As of mid 2014, OBP have published forty-three open-access books. The press has several routes to funding, the first of which (although only constituting 25% of their

current income, according to Gatti) is to ask authors to request a BPC payment from their institutions. Lack of funding does not preclude publication, however, because there is an additional revenue stream from the demand side. Titles are available through high-quality print-on-demand. It is unclear, at present, whether this model will prove sustainable but, as mandates come into force, OBP will emerge as a strong market contender when other presses are charging thousands of pounds per book, although it is unclear at what scale they might eventually operate.

Institutional subsidy

OBP's loose affiliation with various Cambridge colleges also raises another potential funding source for open-access monographs: institutional subsidy. Under this type of model, universities or other types of institution pay to support the publishing operation because it is in their economic and strategic interests to do so. This move was given additional credibility in mid 2014 when the Association of American Universities and the Association of Research Libraries issued a joint proposal for an institutionally funded first-book subvention, noting 'the inability of a market model to adequately support research monograph publication based primarily on scholarly merit'.⁵¹ One of the more prominent examples of this type of project is the Open Humanities Press (OHP) initiative, established by Gary Hall, alongside Sigi Jöttkandt. This project has strategic partnerships with the University of Michigan Library's Scholarly Publishing Office, UC-Irvine, UCLA Library and the Public Knowledge Project, the former of whom is 'subsidizing the production and distribution costs and providing its services in kind, in keeping with its mission to provide an array of sustainable publishing solutions to the scholarly community'.⁵² OHP also intends to cover costs through the sale of print-on-demand copies and ePub versions.

In a similar vein, some institutions have directly affiliated OA book components. Purdue University has a subsection of its libraries entitled 'Purdue e-Pubs', the name of which is unaffiliated to the ePub file format. This service offers open access to a selection of books published by Purdue University Press in the PDF format.⁵³ A similar scenario, wherein a university library cooperates with an

associated press, has also been put into operation at Pittsburgh on a two-year embargo model.⁵⁴

These types of project may implement alternative sources of funding such as a print subsidy scheme, for example. However, this model is not the same as a *grant*. It is, rather, a long-term financial arrangement with a continual flow of cash from institution to press. There have been several projects funded by start-up grant, such as the MediaCommons initiative – a scholar-run setup started by Kathleen Fitzpatrick and Avi Santo – that began with a grant from the US National Endowment of Humanities, but these are not the same as permanent institutional subsidy arrangements.⁵⁵

Freemium

The next most obvious way of finding revenue for open-access publications is to create a version of the monograph that has functionality and features above and beyond those provided for free by the open-access edition. A French platform named OpenEdition, with a component called ‘OpenEdition books’, adopts this approach in which the HTML versions (those read online in a web browser) are available freely and openly to read while the PDF version (a paginated typeset edition that corresponds to a print counterpart) is accessible only to those who pay.⁵⁶ Other features available for a charge through OpenEdition include enhanced technical support for the digital items, more metadata (including machine-readable formats for libraries), statistics on usage and a governance stake for subscribing libraries. Likewise, the open-access Athabasca University Press in Canada sells ePub format versions of its free books.⁵⁷

This approach does, of course, have the downside that the open-access version must inherently be the poor relation of its purchased counterparts. Conversely, it does offer a breath of fresh air in an otherwise painful transition to supply-side funding mechanisms. There are also some other assumptions upon which this model is predicated. As formulated by Moshe Y. Vardi and Richard Baraniuk at Rice University in 2012, the model requires a cheaper system to make up for lost sales, one in which ‘most authors would prefer to forgo income in order to maximize dissemination’, with the goal being purely to cover the expenses of publishing, rather than

including 'large profits'.⁵⁸ Many publishers would deny, however, that the 'large profits' to which Vardi and Baraniuk refer actually exist in the sphere of research monographs. All of which is to say that it remains unclear as to whether additional services with premium features ('value added' in management terminology) will cover the costs inherent in monograph production.

Collective funding

The final model that I want to discuss here is one of collective, or collaborative, funding. The most substantial cost for monograph production in a digital or print-on-demand environment is getting to the first copy; the costs of subsequent reproductions in the digital domain are comparatively slim and warehousing/inventory management concerns are substantially lessened.⁵⁹ Back in 2010 – an age ago in digital publishing terms – Hugh Look and Frances Pinter proposed a model for collectively underwriting the risks and costs based on 'aggregating demand in the form of a consortium and paying publishers for getting to first copy stage'. Look and Pinter continue:

if, say 1,000 libraries paid into a fund that 'bought' the non-commercial open access rights to a book that carried, for the sake of the arithmetic, a 'getting to first copy' cost of \$10,000, then each library would contribute \$10.00. The average monograph today costs approximately \$80.00. This would not only get libraries eight times as many titles online, it would be truly contributing to making knowledge accessible globally. If, say 5,000 libraries subscribed to the scheme (although we feel this is unlikely) the cost would be \$2.00 a title, representing a 97.5% reduction on the current print or eBook price.⁶⁰

While Look and Pinter acknowledged the difficulties of establishing new models in the midst of extant markets, this proposition came to fruition in 2014 under the auspices of Pinter's 'Knowledge Unlatched' (KU).⁶¹

Knowledge Unlatched's pilot collection consisted of twenty-eight new books from thirteen renowned scholarly publishers (Amsterdam University Press, Bloomsbury Academic, Brill, Cambridge University Press, de Gruyter, Duke University Press, Edinburgh University Press, Liverpool University Press, Manchester University Press,

Purdue University Press, Rutgers University Press, Temple University Press and the University of Michigan Press). The basic premise of the pilot was as Look and Pinter described, albeit at a smaller scale. While Pinter had earlier proposed 1,000 libraries, for the KU Pilot a more achievable 200 were sought, with almost 300 libraries eventually participating. This included 137 from North America, 77 from the United Kingdom, 27 from Oceania and 55 from elsewhere.⁶² The amount requested from each library was capped at US \$1,680, which was an average of \$60 per book with 200 libraries participating. As the eventual goal of 200 libraries was superseded by almost 50%,⁶³ this was eventually closer to \$40 per book, which is substantially cheaper than the cost of most academic books when bought outright, let alone for those that can now be distributed ad infinitum for free.⁶⁴

Interestingly, although this model for making material open access depends upon the internet for its success, it has been traced far further back by Sandy Thatcher. Indeed, Thatcher notes the affinity with the description furnished by Adrian Johns of seventeenth-century practice: 'another option, of increasing importance after 1660, was to publish by subscription . . . It involved persuading a number of prosperous individuals to invest enough money in the proposed publication that the project would be sufficiently capitalized to proceed to completion.'⁶⁵ Other projects to implement a model of this kind include the Gluejar initiative, which is designed to enable 'individuals and institutions to join together to liberate specific ebooks'⁶⁶ and my own Open Library of Humanities project, which works slightly differently as the predominant funding is for journals, but working to cross-subsidise monographs.

Concluding thoughts on monograph economics

While book processing charges are the predominant form of current implementation for open-access monographs, they are not to be considered the be-all and end-all. A diverse range of experiments are under way to establish alternative bases upon which gold open access monograph publication could be possible. It is clear that not all of these will succeed and that they should be considered experimental. It is also fair to say, though, that publishers' revenue models

will have to change if any forms of national mandate for monographs come into play. While savvy publishers are already thinking ahead to such a scenario and beginning to experiment, others are only on the very cusp of understanding the implications of infinite, free, digital dissemination for their practice. Humanities academics, likewise, are playing catch-up against the science-driven journal market from which mandates have been derived. While, then, more time is needed to develop models that will circumnavigate the dreaded steep publication charges, it is worth ending with one final observation. The panic over the potential limitation of monograph publication in the switch to a supply-side economy (in which it is feared that one may not be able to publish because of the high cost borne by the institution publishing) is to some extent only an unravelling of the simultaneous crises of supply and demand in the scholarly publication market.

While green open access can now be secured for the vast majority of journal publications with no changes to the current system, even this level of access in the monograph world remains a harder goal. This is because the economic structures for monograph production are tightly bound into editorial and gatekeeping functions, yielding a high cost to reach first copy. This, in turn, leads to greater publisher anxiety over the long-term sustainability of a green model alongside a pay-to-purchase system. There are, however, many projects emerging that either study the ways in which monographs can be made open access or attempt to implement one of the proposed models. Furthermore, there are a variety of experimental ways in which gold open access book production can be funded that do not rely solely on recourse to publication charges.