

Call for Participants in an Open Access Faculty-Library Publishing Partnership Development Grant

Open Humanities Press/Public Knowledge Project

September 23, 2008

Open Humanities Press and the Public Knowledge Project invite interested libraries to join us in developing a grant proposal to form an international faculty-library publishing partnership. Ideally this will serve as a model for other scholar-led, open access (OA) monograph publishing in humanities and social sciences disciplines.

Open access distribution is increasingly recognized as a viable solution to today's crisis in scholarly communications. Libraries have been one of the most vocal and effective advocacy groups in promoting OA to faculty. In addition to establishing institutional repositories in support of the "Green Road" to OA (i.e. author-deposited pre- and post-prints of scholarly materials), libraries are also beginning to explore possible new roles as academic publishers through OA journal hosting and digital book publishing (the "Gold Road" to OA).

Our proposed Open Humanities Alliance aims to build on these developments by defining an innovative role for libraries as joint providers of an open administrative and production infrastructure for international, self-organizing, scholar-led open access publishing projects. This project thus envisions a role for libraries not simply as custodians of content but as active participants in the global market for ideas, partnering with faculty in the publishing process and facilitating the actual practices by which scholarly materials in the humanities are typically created: scholars in specialized areas of interest from different national and international institutions collaborating to oversee the editing of peer-reviewed monographic series.

As part of a grassroots effort to effect a cultural shift in faculty attitudes in favor of open access, this project is envisaged as a demonstration aimed at fostering other scholar-led OA initiatives in the humanities and social sciences through 1) the development of sustainable, open source software that reduces publishing and infrastructure costs, and 2) the leadership provided by [OHP's advisory board](#) (which includes some of the most influential names in the field) whose members will oversee the selection and editing of a number of high-profile monographic series. This initiative is a response, in part, to what is currently the restricted market for scholarly monographs, which severely limits the number of quality titles university presses are able to take on, as well as the sales of those that are published by traditional means. There is a decided need for new ways for authors in the humanities and social sciences

to work on book-length scholarly projects, rather than see this important form continue to lose out to the growing economic dominance of journal publishing.

We invite libraries to explore with us the roles the library community might play as publishing partners in such an enterprise. Among others, we are interested in finding innovative ways to cover copy-editing and production costs, collaboratively developing production work-flows and processes that can be shared across a number of OA publishing initiatives, and forming an international alliance of institutions supporting the publication of high-quality monographic series in the humanities.

We envision the outcome of this project as an extensible and transferable model for how libraries and faculty might collaborate to spearhead and streamline a shift to open access in disciplines where the book-length argument is likely to remain the preferred form of scholarly communication.

The public archives of our planning discussion to date can be read at <http://lists.ibiblio.org/pipermail/ohp>. Please contact Sigi Jöttkandt (sigij [at] openhumanitiespress.org), Marta Brunner (martab [at] library.ucla.edu) or John Willinsky (john.willinsky [at] stanford.edu) for more information.

Open Humanities Press is an international open access publishing collective specializing in critical and cultural theory. Launched in 2008, OHP was formed by academics to overcome the current crisis in scholarly publishing that threatens intellectual freedom and academic rigor worldwide. OHP journals are academically certified by OHP's independent board of international scholars. All OHP publications are peer-reviewed, published under Open Access licenses, and freely and immediately available online at <http://openhumanitiespress.org/>

The Public Knowledge Project is a research and development initiative directed toward improving the scholarly and public quality of academic research through the development of innovative online publishing and knowledge-sharing environments. Begun in 1998, PKP has developed Open Journal Systems and Open Conference Systems, free software for the management, publishing, and indexing of journals and conferences, as well as Open Archives Harvester and Lemon8-XML to facilitate the indexing, formatting, and archiving of research and scholarship. This open source software is being used around the world to increase access to knowledge and improve its scholarly management, while considerably reducing publishing costs.

Located at the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and Stanford University, PKP also sustains an active research program on the impact of increased access to knowledge, with the resulting publications, dating back to 1998, available from <http://pkp.sfu.ca/node/1410>