# Open-Access Monograph Publishing and the Origins of the Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing at Penn State University

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*This essay explains the background of open-access monograph publishing as developed principally by university presses, often in association with libraries. It begins with discussions at Princeton University Press in the early 1970s about how to deal with the crisis of scholarly monograph publishing and moves on to describe a joint library/press project in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) in the early 1990s. The failure of that project to be funded led the library and press at Penn State to launch a jointly operated Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing in 2005, which supported one of the pioneering programs in open-access monograph publishing. The CIC project, in particular, anticipated the proposal by the Association of American Universities / Association of Research Libraries, announced in June 2014, to subvent the publication of first monographs using an open-access model.*

*Keywords: open access, monographs, university presses, Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing (ODSP)*

Much has been written about 'open access' in scientific, technical, and medical (STM) journal publishing, especially since the term became popular after the announcement of the Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002.[1] However, there has been a less visible movement to apply that approach to monograph publishing, which began decades earlier. This article attempts to uncover this history in part by telling the story, not hitherto well documented, of how the Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing (ODSP) came to be launched at the Pennsylvania State University as a joint operation of the Penn State Libraries and Penn State University Press in the spring of 2005. It was the culmination of a long process of developing ideas about how best to confront the challenging economic

problems university presses had been facing for decades, especially with the publication of scholarly monographs in the humanities and social sciences.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Librarians have longed lived with the so-called serials crisis.[2] It probably first gained widespread recognition with the publication in 1975 of a now classic study funded by the National Science Foundation and written by Bernard Fry and Herbert White, which found that the ratio of book to journal expenditures in the largest academic libraries for the period 1969–73 had dropped from better than 2:1 to 1.16:1, with every expectation that this trend would only get worse—as, indeed, it did.[3] Fry and White's prognosis for university presses was particularly gloomy: their situation, they said, 'can be described, without exaggeration, as disastrous. Already heavily encumbered by operating deficits ... university presses appear ... to be sliding even more rapidly toward financial imbalance.'[4]

This precarious situation was viewed with alarm by university presses themselves at this time. As one who learned about this emerging crisis in scholarly publishing not long after joining the staff of Princeton University Press as a copyeditor in 1967, I became increasingly interested in how university presses might adapt to deal with the challenges they faced on many fronts, even more so after becoming acquisitions editor for philosophy and the social sciences in 1969 and a member of the Association of American University Presses (AAUP) Copyright Committee in 1972. Two of my colleagues at Princeton, director Herbert Bailey, Jr., and associate director and controller William Becker, were among the first to identify and analyze these challenges in a series of three articles published in *Scholarly Publishing* (later renamed the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*) based on successive surveys of presses covering the years 1970–4.[5]

The first article, titled 'The Impending Crisis in University Publishing,'[6] 'clearly indicated that presses were in the midst of a period of extraordinary financial stress, which posed a serious threat to the continuing survival of many of them.'[7] The next two articles bore the titles 'The Crisis—One Year Later' and 'The Crisis—Is It Over?' The somewhat encouraging conclusion of the last article in this series was that, 'except for the smaller ones, presses for the most part have managed

to survive their financial difficulties quite well by making a host of adjustments, including radically increased book prices, substantially lower discounts, economies achieved in book production costs, slashing staffs, publishing more books with sales potential and fewer which cannot pay their own way, special inventory sales, and so forth.'

But, the author wondered, how much more can such methods be used without becoming at some point self-defeating? Ominously and—as we can now see with the wisdom of hindsight—presciently, he ended by pointing to 'the increasing danger that presses will turn more and more to publishing books on the basis of saleability rather than scholarly merit.' And while noting the temporary mitigating effects that a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation to presses for publishing books in the humanities might have, he asked: 'But what then?'[8]

What then, indeed! In my new role as acquisitions editor, I began in the early 1970s to build a list in Latin American studies. Over time, it became a very distinguished list, but the evidence became clearer with every passing year that it was a field fraught with economic pitfalls. As I wrote in an article I published in the *LASA Forum*, 'back in the early 1970s ... one could still count on selling between 1,000 and 1,500 copies of most new monographs in the field. By the early 1980s this average had dropped to less than 1,000, and by the end of the decade it was moving closer to 500.'[9] In this article, I gave many examples of the sales of specific books to illustrate the trend, noting in particular the increasing divergence between scholarly value (as measured by book awards) and market value (as measured by sales) and also the growing inequities across subfields, with history being the lowest in sales and modern political economy the highest. The differences were sometimes quite extreme, with a book on nineteenth-century Brazilian history that won two awards having sales below 500 copies and one on multinational corporations in that same country having sales over 20,000.

Worried about the fate of Latin American history especially, Herbert Bailey, Jr. who coined the term 'endangered species' to describe such economically challenged fields, and I tried to persuade the Mellon Foundation to offer a substantial grant to help subsidize publications in this field, but Mellon, while receptive, decided it did not then want to support any one area studies field in this way. (I might note that the same foundation later supplied a generous subsidy to help Duke and North

Carolina university presses establish a joint program in Latin American studies, including a series of books by Latin American writers translated into English.) My departure from Princeton in 1989 led rather quickly to the cessation there of a publishing program in that field, partly, I feel sure, because of the pattern of sales that had developed.

When I became director of Penn State University Press in June 1989, I had to be even more concerned about 'the bottom line' and, therefore, was compelled to make some tough decisions about what kinds of books to publish. In an article for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in March 1995, titled, yet again, 'The Crisis in Scholarly Communication,' I explained why at Penn State we had to back off from publishing in the field of literary criticism.[10] My analysis of ten years of sales experience in literature, further supported by a survey I did of our authors in this field, persuaded me that we could not viably continue our program despite the favourable reputation it had attained. Of the 150 books we had published since 1985, 91 per cent had sold fewer than 800 copies and 65 per cent had sold fewer than 500. (However, just to underline the differences within the fields again, the analysis did show that we could continue to publish books in literary criticism that related to gender issues—or any books about Emily Dickinson!)

Experience at Penn State also confirmed for me the sharp disjunction between market value and scholarly value. My favourite example is a large book, supported by a subsidy from the now defunct National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) publication subvention program, on conversion to Islam in Central Asia over six centuries. Published late in 1994 simultaneously in hardback and paperback, it won four awards, including the prestigious Albert Hourani Book Award from the Middle East Studies Association, yet by 1997 had sold fewer than 200 cloth and 600 paperback copies. Could anyone doubt, from the lavish praise it had received (one reviewer calling it an 'epic book,' another 'a whale of a book, and not only because of its size,' and a 'truly groundbreaking study'), that this was a book that well deserved to be published—a foundation block for further scholarship in this field? Could anyone doubt, at the same time, that it made no economic sense to publish a book with such low sales? If further evidence were needed, I offered this information: between December 1996 and July 1997, ten books published by the press between late 1994 and late 1996 had won prizes. Excluding

two of these books, which were highly illustrated books offered at trade discounts, none of the rest had sold more than 500 copies in hardback, even when published in that format only, nor had any of those issued as a dual edition sold more than 500 in paperback (except one that had had the good fortune to be about a Pennsylvania mining town that had recently celebrated its centennial). The prizes here included ones for best books in French history, international labour history, political philosophy, Romanticism, and Old Testament studies.

I was deeply disturbed about what this evidence portended for the future of scholarship in a variety of such 'endangered' fields or, as may happen, subfields within broader disciplines. University presses had indeed survived not only by becoming better publishers but also by strategically changing the 'mix' of their lists, doing more regional books, paperbacks for the course-adoption market (which itself, however, was being significantly impacted by the popularity of course packs and, later, e-reserves), reference books, and the trade books that formerly constituted the 'mid-list' of commercial houses, even fiction. A study conducted by Herbert Bailey, Jr., for the AAUP and the American Council for Learned Societies (ACLS) on *The Rate of Publication of Scholarly Monographs in the Humanities and Social Sciences: 1978–1988* showed, contrary to expectation, that there had been no decline in the number of monographs published by presses during this period. In fact, the number had increased by 51 per cent, principally because most presses had to grow significantly in annual title output in order to achieve operating economies of scale and other efficiencies.[11]

However, this study came too early to pick up what by 1990 had become more noticeable, that presses were no longer expanding at that rate or — as I determined from a survey of the top largest presses in that year[12] — planning to expand in the future, which meant that as the changes in commercial publishing continued to offer opportunities for presses to pick up 'mid-list' titles, their shifting priorities would inevitably lead to some erosion in the publishing of monographs in fields where sales were known to be low. This erosion eventually developed to the point where it finally became noticeable, to many junior and even senior scholars in these fields, that outlets for their scholarly works were difficult to find. And acquiring editors at presses, under pressure from their directors who were themselves concerned by declining subsidies from

parent universities (or, what amounts to the same thing, increasing administrative levies), became ever more anxious to focus on getting the most saleable books, not necessarily the best contributions to scholarship (though we all continued to hope against hope that there would be some correlation between the two). If students planning academic careers were to take such evidence of variation in sales among fields of scholarship seriously, as 'rational actors' doing expected utility calculations, then hardly any would want to take the risk of entering those fields that were being increasingly underserved by university presses. Not only was this state of affairs not fair to individual scholars experiencing such difficulties, but it also augured ill for the healthy and balanced development of scholarship in the future.

## THE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION PROJECT

In the face of such discouraging evidence of declining market support for certain fields, I began to pursue those ideas we had started developing at Princeton to deal with the special problem of 'endangered species' in scholarship. At Penn State, the editorial board of the press had always had at least one member representing the libraries, and it was therefore natural and comfortable to engage librarians in our internal dialogue. It was associate library director Bonnie MacEwan (now head librarian at Auburn University) who became our chief interlocutor in these discussions, which built upon the proposal for an electronic monograph project we had been thinking about at Princeton. Realizing that it was going to be more of a challenge to launch such a project at Penn State than we might have once naively thought, MacEwan and I started pushing for a wider collaborative effort through the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), which was the academic consortium that included the 'Big Ten' universities and also the University of Chicago, which Penn State joined in becoming a member of the Big Ten Conference in 1990.

Already, the directors of the CIC presses were beginning to feel the need to talk about ways these presses could collaborate more to achieve economic efficiencies, and a joint meeting of the directors was convened in Urbana, Illinois, on 24–5 July 1991. The letter inviting the directors to meet was sent by Richard Wentworth of the University of Illinois Press on 7 June, and it announced that Paul Zimmer of the University of Iowa Press would be chairing the meeting. (Among the CIC directors at the

time was Peter Givler, then at Ohio State, who was later to become the long-serving executive director of the AAUP.) It was hoped that everyone could attend, but some could not, and one director, John Gallman from Indiana, wrote on 17 July to express his regrets at not being able to come because he had been called away to represent his press at a special celebration in Russia. Presciently, Gallman even then urged us to focus more attention on how new technologies would be affecting our business, referencing the possibilities for using the then new CD-ROM and doing print on demand (POD) and short-run digital printing (SRDP) with the Xerox Docutech machine, which the National Academies Press had just purchased. 'I really think some of these "electronic" questions are much more pertinent right now,' he argued, 'than trying to figure out whether our traditional markets are changing. Of course, they are changing. They are getting smaller, and there are all of these other technologies coming in to take over.'

This meeting was followed not long thereafter by a call from Roger Clark, the CIC's executive director, for a joint meeting of head librarians and press directors in the CIC. This meeting was held on 21 April 1992 in Chicago and had two main topics on its agenda, as Wentworth described them in a letter to the press directors on 8 April: 'How the new technology is affecting and is likely to affect the operations of university presses and university libraries and how these two divisions of their institutions can cooperate on matters of mutual interest and concern.' I was assigned to lead the discussion of the first topic on behalf of the press directors. As I noted in an undated memorandum to them before the meeting, I had already broached the question of the impact of technology in an 'open letter' I sent to Ann Okerson on 3 December 1991, which got wide circulation among the head librarians of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).[13] I went on to say:

> I can see the day coming when not only some journals but a good many of the more specialized monographs that we have been publishing (and selling only a few hundred copies of) might best be entered in such an electronic archive [referring here to an idea of Chuck Hamaker about 'official' electronic archives that he had outlined in the 4 March issue of the *Newsletter of Serial Pricing Issues*, which I was sending to my fellow press directors] and made available in that way—'on demand,' so to speak, rather than given the full-dress,

> printed-format treatment. And we'll be left publishing the more synthetic and broad-ranging books that we tend to think of as being of 'general interest' now. As the commercial 'academic' publishers like Pantheon, Basic Books, Norton, etc. raise their threshold of acceptable sales, university presses will move into the space they vacate while continuing to serve specialized scholarship by vetting monographs but then 'publishing' them only via deposit in an electronic archive that, eventually, NREN [the National Research and Education Network] can make available to anyone anywhere in the world.[14]

Was this not a direct anticipation of what came to be called 'open-access' publishing? This was nearly a full decade before the Budapest Open Access Initiative brought that term into common use with its declaration of 14 February 2002.[15]

In a memorandum to my staff after the meeting, dated 24 April, I summarized what had been discussed and noted that the 'one concrete proposal for cooperation between the presses and libraries that emerged' was the electronic monograph project. As I described it,

> the idea would be for presses to continue acquiring, reviewing, and copyediting these monographs [in endangered fields], but then, instead of typesetting, printing, and binding them, inputting them into an electronic archive maintained by the CIC consortium, which via links with other computer systems could make these works available to scholars throughout this country and, perhaps ultimately, the world for online use or, if desired, downloading and printing them out via a device like Xerox's Docutech system that is capable of producing bound books one at a time. One major obstacle to be overcome would be the acceptance of such a mode of publication by scholars as equivalent, for purposes of career advancement and tenure, to publication in regular book form; and part of my proposal included involving representatives from the faculty senates of the Big Ten under CIC auspices in ongoing discussions about such a project.

Of interest also was what the CIC librarians had to say about libraries getting into publishing themselves: 'This group of librarians also made a point of assuring us publishers that, despite what some of their library colleagues have been saying, they have no desire to become publishers themselves and displace the presses; they value what presses do and

fully appreciate what we contribute to the process of scholarly communication.'[16]

Not long after the Chicago meeting, I began to engage the Mellon Foundation in discussion of this proposal, and on 30 April 1992, Richard Ekman wrote to thank me for talking with his colleague Rachel Bellow 'regarding a possible experimental project in electronic publishing of book-length monographs,' encouraging us to continue our conversations in the CIC with a view toward eventually making a formal proposal to Mellon.[17] I had tried, while on business in New York City, to set up a meeting with either Bellow or Ekman, and although that could not be arranged, I did see Douglas Greenberg, vice president of the ACLS, who had been writing himself about electronic communications and was very interested in our CIC proposal. I reported on these two contacts to my fellow CIC press directors in a memorandum of 2 July, following the annual AAUP meeting, where Roger Clark had recommended to me as our next step agreeing on what fields we should include in the CIC project. Scandinavian studies, Latin American studies, and literary criticism (or some subfield of it, such as French or German literature) were among the fields we were discussing then. (Other fields were suggested later, including African studies, folklore, and semiotics.) I proposed a subcommittee of Lisa Freeman (Minnesota), Colin Day (Michigan), and myself to work on refining the proposal more. Roger and I agreed that it would be a good idea to get the librarians to appoint a subcommittee of their own, and I wrote to Nancy Cline, Penn State's head librarian who was chairing the CIC librarians' group at the time, on 7 July to make this suggestion.

Meanwhile, working through the Task Force on Scholarly Resources of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) and the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, of which I was a member (and still am), I succeeded in getting LASA to formally endorse the CIC proposal. LASA president Carmen Diana Deere wrote on 30 November 1992 to Deborah Jakubs, as chair of the task force, to convey LASA's support, observing that 'LASA is, indeed, quite concerned with what has been termed "the crisis in scholarly communication". It serves the Association well that members of your Task Force are among those proposing creative solutions to the problems hampering the dissemination of knowledge in Latin American Studies as well as other fields.'[18] As a member of the AAUP Board of Directors, I wrote to Phyllis Franklin,

executive director of the Modern Language Association (MLA), on 16 December congratulating the MLA on its acceptance as an associate member of the AAUP, and I informed her about the CIC project and LASA's endorsement thereof, expressing the hope that the MLA might consider also endorsing it. Her reply on 22 February 1993 indicated her desire 'to learn more about the project you are developing and assist in discussions of the proposal' without, however, mentioning anything about a formal MLA endorsement.[19]

In a letter to me dated 2 February, Colin Day rightly emphasized the need to correct the 'widespread assumption that electronic dissemination is a magic solution to the economic problems' of scholarly publishing, referring to a white paper he had recently written to demonstrate that 'very considerable costs will carry over into this new world.'[20] His challenge provoked me to think more about cost recovery, and, in answering, I further refined the idea I had in mind for the project:

> The way I initially envisioned this system working was for presses to receive full or at least substantial cost recovery for *their* investments from the CIC libraries right at the outset, upon entry of a new monograph into the CIC electronic archive, and then have the libraries over time recover their costs through fees to end-users outside the CICNet. Foundation money could be used to ensure against any loss to presses in the start-up period, by essentially substituting for what the CIC libraries would eventually pay in the post-pilot period; this subsidy wouldn't be visible to 'outsiders'—i.e., anyone but the CIC libraries and presses themselves—and therefore shouldn't have any effect on the public's perception of receiving something for nothing. But right from the start, I agree, some fee structure would need to be set up to charge the end-users outside the CIC in a way that would implant the idea that access to these electronic monographs will have a cost attached to it—and a cost that bears some realistic relationship to the actual costs of running the system. Foundation money would simply be used as 'insurance,' if you will, against any loss by the CIC libraries and presses involved in the experiment . . .
>
> Copyright is important to university presses now because we operate as regular publishers do, depending on our copyrights to ensure an income stream to cover our costs of developing and publishing books and journals. But this dependency is contingent for us in a way that it

isn't for commercial publishers. Consider an alternative scenario for our business. Let's suppose that universities that have presses could enter into an agreement with those that don't to share the costs of running the system of scholarly communication in a more equitable way than is done now. [This was one of the major recommendations of the National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication in 1979.[21]] For any author whose book was accepted for publication at a press, the author's home institution would put up sufficient funds to cover the full production costs, while the parent institution of the press would pay full nonmanufacturing costs. Those universities with presses would still be paying more of the costs of running the system, but not as much as they are now, yet they would continue to benefit from the 'prestige' of having their imprint on their presses' publications and they would own the copyrights in them as they do now. These copyrights would remain valuable under this new system, but only to the extent that rights of various kinds could be sold to commercial entities, whether in this country or abroad (book club rights, translations, serial rights, etc.); and of course they would continue to provide protection against plagiarism and other infringing uses. [In current parlance, the system would involve using the CC BY-NC-ND license.] However—and here is the really radical idea—under this system, if full funding for both manufacturing and nonmanufacturing costs were covered in the manner outlined, the presses could actually give their books away to academic libraries! Copies could still be sold to individuals who wanted particular books in their personal libraries, but perhaps at much reduced prices for buyers who could prove an academic affiliation. This system, in short, would work in a completely different way to recover costs for presses while maintaining the basic advantages of multiple outlets for scholarly works. Planning could be done in a more risk-free environment; a university could allocate to its press each year sufficient funds to cover the costs of publishing x number of books for its own faculty and y number of books for faculty at other campuses. (Costs for publishing books by nonacademics would have to be covered in some other way.) Some of these funds would come from monies that, under our present system, would naturally go to libraries for purchasing books and journals from university presses; there would just be an internal reallocation of funding within universities. But the dependence of presses

> on copyrights would be much reduced; they would not have to be concerned at all for recovering costs for any uses made of their publications, books or journals, within the confines of institutions of higher learning … Universities now effectively are charging each other for a large amount of material to which they own the copyright; this new system would simply rearrange the economics of communicating scholarly knowledge so that most of the costs would be paid up front from basic subsidies rather than from sales at the other end. Then we presses could feel more free to go 'back to basics' (as I urged in my 1991 AAUP talk[22]) and not worry so much about having to publish books that will make enough money to internally subsidize our money-losing monographs. And we wouldn't have to worry, either, about having our publications freely distributed over the Internet; loss of 'control' of copyright in this way would no longer be a concern.[23]

The next meeting to bring CIC library and press directors together occurred in Chicago on 12 December 1994. I summarized the meeting in a memorandum to the AAUP's executive director, Peter Grenquist, on 16 December:

> The upshot of the meeting … was an agreement in principle to launch an experimental project in electronic publishing within the CIC in three areas of the humanities and social sciences: African American studies, classics, and comparative literature. (The selection of classics was tentative, conditional upon determining whether technical problems in transmitting classical languages online can be satisfactorily resolved.) The reasons for choosing these three areas were different, but can be briefly summarized as representing a range of fields facing different challenges and problems—a relatively new field (African American studies), a long-established field (classics), and a field that is threatened with becoming, in publishing terms, an 'endangered species' (comparative literature) … The electronic dissemination will be restricted initially to the CIC universities and will run parallel to print versions of the works included. (The electronic versions may be 'enhanced' with additional materials not included in the print versions.[24]) The experiment is intended to discover how such electronic products are used and what means can be used to provide payback to the presses adequate to cover their costs. The

> wider significance of this project is that, given the size and significance of the CIC group of universities, any success it has will gain a lot of attention and have a suitable 'demonstration effect' on other universities throughout the country. Bob Wedgeworth [head librarian at Illinois] and I have been asked to draft a formal proposal, with the help of Roger Clark and his CIC staff, for presentation to a foundation sometime in the spring.

Working with Roger Clark and his CIC staff, Lisa Freeman, Bob Wedgeworth, and I prepared a draft of a formal proposal under the title 'University Publishing in the Electronic Age: A Cooperative Program of the CIC University Presses and the CIC Libraries' and circulated it for comment on 1 February 1995. In acknowledging receipt of many helpful comments on the draft, Clark declared that 'this project, if carried out successfully, will put the CIC presses and libraries far in front of the university-based electronic publishing movement in this country. No other coalition has the potential to experiment on so broad a base or examine these issues so thoroughly as the presses and libraries of the CIC.'[25]

The next step involved setting up subcommittees to do further work on components of the project: Editorial and Technical; Marketing and Distribution; and Analysis and Evaluation. By 5 May 1995, a draft of a proposal for an initial planning grant was completed. But then progress came to a halt. For many months, nothing was heard from Roger Clark, who much later, on 6 March 1996, sent his apologies for having 'failed to complete the revision of the proposed planning grant,' referring as a partial excuse to various other projects the CIC libraries had been independently developing that, he claimed, 'will contribute significantly to the base that we can offer for a press/library project.'[26] After several more revisions, Clark finally made contact with Richard Ekman at the Mellon Foundation and sent him a draft proposal dated 29 December 1996, providing also a ballpark estimate of $100,000 to $150,000 he thought would be needed to get the project off the ground. In his reply of 14 January 1997, Ekman acknowledged this to be 'an ambitious plan' but offered the following reasons why Mellon could not become involved: first, the kind of preliminary planning the CIC was proposing is 'the sort of activity that the Foundation normally expects applicants to complete before they apply for grants'; second, 'within two years we

expect to have ceased our consideration of large grants in support of projects at the 'implementation stage'; and, third, it was not clear what relationship this proposed CIC project had to 'activities that have been developed by the AAU and ARL' and 'redundant efforts would obviously make little sense.'[27] There is no little irony in this last objection inasmuch as the American Association of Universities (AAU) and ARL jointly issued a 'Prospectus for an Institutionally Funded First-book Subvention' on 12 June 2014 that is nearly identical to the CIC project, but submitted eighteen years later.

Reading between the lines, those of us in the CIC university press community interpreted this letter as a polite way for Mellon to decline getting involved in yet another major electronic project at the time, having already provided funding in 1995 for both JSTOR and Project Muse. In retrospect, it seems clear to us that the long delay in getting the planning grant proposal completed was fatal to the proposal's success at Mellon.

With this rebuff from Mellon, the steam went out of the project altogether. There were a few efforts to keep interest in the project alive, including a spirited talk about the project by Sheila Creth, head librarian at Iowa, at an important conference on 11–12 September 1997 in Washington, DC, on 'The Specialized Scholarly Monograph in Crisis: Or How Can I Get Tenure If You Won't Publish My Book?' co-sponsored by the AAUP, the ACLS, and the ARL. However, the momentum had been lost, and the principals moved on to other business. The final blow came when many of the most active participants retired or left the CIC for jobs elsewhere, among them Lisa Freeman (who moved to Vermont to sell antiques), Richard Wentworth (who retired in 1998), and Roger Clark himself (who retired in June 1999). Thereafter, there ceased to be much interest in having regular meetings of the CIC press directors, let alone joint meetings with the CIC librarians, and none has been held since, to my knowledge.

## ORIGINS OF THE OFFICE OF DIGITAL SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

With the demise of the CIC project, those of us at Penn State who had originally formulated our own proposal for an electronic monograph publishing experiment in Latin American studies went back to the drawing boards and began to rethink how we might take on such a project alone. The press about this time was in a worrisome state financially,

having had its small operating subsidy phased out by 1993 and having gone through its reserves, with debt mounting every year. It was not a propitious time to launch new experiments, but the press's editor-in-chief, Peter Potter (now in this position at Cornell University Press), began to have weekly meetings with Bonnie MacEwan to talk about possible joint press/library cooperation. When matters came to a head a few years later, those talks had progressed to a point where the press and the libraries decided to launch the Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing (ODSP) as a joint venture in the spring of 2005.[28] (By December of that year, the press was merged administratively with the libraries, though it kept its budget separate. As a condition of the merger, the press's accumulated debt was wiped off the books, and an operating subsidy equivalent to what the press had on average been losing annually was restored, with the subsidy to be adjusted upward at the same rate as the general salary pool for university staff was increased annually, since the subsidy was used to pay some of the press staff salaries.)

Among the initial projects of the ODSP were: the digitization of the back issues of the three major scholarly journals in Pennsylvania history (one of which the press published), to complement the digitization of Pennsylvania newspapers in which the libraries were already engaged under an NEH grant; the digitization of important books about Pennsylvania in the Beaver Collection that were in the public domain in a series called Metalmark Books, where a half-dozen titles would be issued each publishing season (as recommended by a committee that included a representative of the Department of History) with the digital texts provided 'open access' by the libraries and POD editions offered for sale by the press, which would share income from sales with the libraries equally; and, finally, a monograph series in Romance studies, offered 'open access' through the ODSP site as well as in POD form through the press's regular sales channels. The press had previously published a series in Romance literature in the traditional manner, but the departure of the main editor to the University of Chicago and lagging sales had led the press to cease publishing it. Later, faculty from the Departments of French and of Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish approached the press about reviving the series in electronic form, with designated members of these departments serving as series editors and advisers, and this impetus helped make the decision to experiment with this field, rather

than Latin American studies (though there was some overlap, of course), easy.

The technical apparatus that made this project feasible was the deployment of the DPubs software, which the libraries had received a Mellon grant to develop further from its initial use at Cornell for the Euclid Project, into a more modular system that could be extended for different types of uses, including the publication of monographs electronically. The press had long admired the pioneering efforts of the National Academies Press (NAP) to make its books available online for free access, beginning in 1994, and our monograph project emulated NAP's, though we did not offer PDFs for sale, just POD editions.[29] NAP mounted its books in low resolution form, which when printed out looked like bad newsprint; printing out was also a laborious process, as a button had to be pushed for every page printed. Our ODSP series motivated potential buyers in a different way: half of the chapters in the book would be mounted in PDF form and could be downloaded and printed out, while the other half could be read only on screen.

Since the POD editions could be ordered as hardbacks or paperbacks, we experimented with pricing them at different levels, with some books having a much wider difference between the hardback and paperback prices than others. It is not clear that this made much of a difference to sales overall, however. The books in the new series tended to sell fewer copies in hardback than the earlier series, but then this older series issued few of its titles as paperbacks at all. In addition, by that time, some libraries had begun to buy paperbacks when they were issued simultaneously with hardbacks, although most of the sales of the books in the new series were probably going to individuals rather than to libraries anyway.

Another challenge that we faced with the ODSP projects, to which others (such as conference proceedings) were added later, was distinguishing between those that were meant to be branded by the press, such as the monograph series, where regular editorial vetting involving peer review occurred, and those that were not so branded (such as the conference proceedings). This is undoubtedly a problem that many libraries becoming publishers will have to face. My hope had been that we could provide 'enhanced' versions of some or all of the books in the monograph series, such as links to online versions of novels in their original

languages discussed by the authors of these books; extended bibliographies; or colour illustrations that would be too costly to include in a POD edition, much in the manner of the Gutenberg-e books. However, other priorities and demands on the ODSP resources have made this a dream to be realized only sometime in the future.

The monograph series continues today, however, so it has proved a successful experiment, and along with experiments undertaken by other presses at California, Michigan, Purdue, and now the new Amherst College Press, plus the important new initiatives from both the AAU/ARL and Mellon announced at the AAUP annual meeting in June 2014, the future for open-access monograph publishing is finally beginning to look like more than just wishful thinking.[30]

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NOTES

1. Budapest Open Access Initiative, http://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/read.
2. Much of this historical background has been adapted from my talk titled 'Thinking Systematically about the Crisis in Scholarly Communication' on 11 September 1997, at the Conference on 'The Specialized Scholarly Monograph in Crisis: Or, How Can I Get Tenure If You Won't Publish My Book?' in Washington, DC, co-sponsored by the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), the American Council on Learned Societies (ACLS), and Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The full talk is accessible at https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/files/sf268537s.
3. Bernard M. Fry and Herbert S. White, *Economics and Interaction of the Publisher–Library Relationship in the Production and Use of Scholarly and Research Journals* (Washington, DC: National Science Foundation, 1975), 61
4. Ibid., 11
5. William C. Becker, 'The Crisis—One Year Later,' *Scholarly Publishing* 4, 4 (1973): 291–302; William C. Becker, 'The Crisis—Is It Over?' *Scholarly Publishing* 5, 3 (1974): 195–210
6. William B. Harvey *et al.*, 'The Impending Crisis in University Publishing,' *Scholarly Publishing* 3, 3 (April 1972): 195–207

7. Becker, 'The Crisis—Is It Over?' 195
8. Ibid., 202
9. Sanford G. Thatcher, 'Latin American Studies and the Crisis in Scholarly Communication,' *LASA Forum* (Winter 1993): 10–14, 12. https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/files/9880vr07g#.VNzBzbDF9q4
10. Sanford G. Thatcher, 'The Crisis in Scholarly Communication,' *Chronicle of Higher Education* (3 March 1995): B1–2, http://chronicle.com/article/The-Crisis-in-Scholarly/85578/
11. Herbert S. Bailey, Jr., *The Rate of Publication of Scholarly Monographs in the Humanities and Social Sciences: 1978–1988* (New York: AAUP, 1990)
12. Sanford G. Thatcher, 'Scholarly Monographs May Be the Ultimate Victims of the Upheavals in Trade Publishing,' *Chronicle of Higher Education* (10 October 1990): B2–3, http://chronicle.com/article/Scholarly-Monographs-May-Be/86546/
13. The letter is accessible at https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/files/9880vr03c.
14. I presented a more formal version of this idea in Sanford G. Thatcher, 'Re-Engineering Scholarly Communication: A Role for University Presses?' *Scholarly Publishing* 27, 4 (July 1996): 197–208 (in reply to Scott Bennett).
15. Budapest Open Access Initiative, http://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/read.
16. Taken from a personal memorandum to the Penn State Press staff [on file with the author].
17. From a letter from Richard Ekman to the author dated 30 April 1992 [on file with the author].
18. From a letter from LASA president Carmen Diana Deere to Deborah Jakubs dated 30 November 1992 [copy on file with the author]
19. From a letter from MLA executive director Phyllis Franklin to the author dated 22 February 1993 [on file with the author].
20. From a letter from University of Michigan Press director Colin Day to the author dated 2 February 1993 [on file with the author].
21. National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication, *Scholarly Communication: The Report of the National Enquiry* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). I discuss the National Enquiry report in Thatcher, 'Re-Engineering Scholarly Communication,' 197–8.
22. 'Back to Basics: Reflections on the Cultural Role of the University Press in a New Age,' presented at a plenary session on Scholarship and Culture in a New Age, AAUP annual meeting, Naples, FL, 21 June 1991, https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/files/9880vr01t.
23. From the author's letter to Colin Day dated 19 February 1993 [copy on file with the author]. Those familiar with Frances Pinter's Knowledge Unlatched initiative will recognize similarities with my proposal, which also involved

libraries in covering part of the costs of initial publication. See http://www.knowledgeunlatched.org/. My idea for sharing costs more broadly among universities, which was a recommendation of the National Enquiry, reappears in the new AAU/ARL, 'Prospectus for an Institutionally Funded First-book Subvention,' 12 June 2014, http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/aau-arl-prospectus-for-institutionally-funded-first-book-subvention-june2014.pdf. In February 1996, I completed an essay titled 'A Nonmarket Solution for Scholarly Publishing?' (https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/files/9880vr155) elaborating on my idea for a dual-track publishing system for university presses, with one of the tracks being the non-market 'open-access' monograph track and the other being the market-based track that presses had traditionally been pursuing. I submitted the essay to Gordon Graham, editor of the British journal about the publishing industry called *LOGOS*, and he politely declined to publish it. Much later, when Frances Pinter approached him with her idea for an 'open-access' monograph project at Bloomsbury Academic, he referred her to my essay, which she found to be inspiring for her own project. We renewed our contact, having earlier been correspondents when I was working for Princeton University Press, and in November 2010 at the Charleston Conference I chaired a plenary session at which Pinter was the chief speaker, talking about her experiment at Bloomsbury Academic. See http://www.libraries.wright.edu/noshelfrequired/2010/11/06/charleston-conference-funding-of-open-access-books/. Later, at a workshop convened by Robert Darnton at the Radcliffe Institute on 30 January 2012 to consider 'Open Access for Scholarly Books: Prospects for a Sustainable Funding and Publishing Model,' Pinter had an opportunity to present her ideas for what later became known as Knowledge Unlatched to a group of some fifty head librarians, press directors, provosts, deans, and other highly knowledgeable people such as Peter Suber. At that workshop, both Paul Courant and I proposed that a simpler alternative approach, not involving the creation of any new procedures or bureaucracy, might be to increase the initial grants already given to tenure-track faculty so that they would be able to cover the costs of publishing their first books. Since universities already compete for the best and brightest junior faculty, we reasoned, universities would be motivated to spend this money, which would be only a small fraction of what universities invest in their faculty over the course of their entire careers. This proposal has now been formally presented in the form of the recently released AAU/ARL 'Prospectus.'

24. By talking about 'enhanced' ebooks, we were anticipating the later initiatives championed in Robert Darnton, 'The New Age of the Book,' *New York Review of Books* (18 March 1999): 5–7, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1999/mar/18/the-new-age-of-the-book/, which with Mellon support became the Gutenberg-e project at Columbia University Press and the ACLS History [later

Humanities] Ebook project involving a dozen or more university presses. I was a member of an advisory committee, including also Colin Day and Ann Okerson, invited by Darnton to discuss the proposal for 'enhanced' ebooks that he wanted to present to Mellon. I discuss the Gutenberg-e project in detail in Sanford G. Thatcher, 'A Post-Mortem for Gutenberg-e: Or, Why Ross Atkinson's Dream Is Still a Dream,' *Against the Grain* 20, 5 (January 2009): 67–72, https://scholarsphere.psu.edu/files/9880vr53k. The reference in the subtitle is to Ross Atkinson, 'Networks, Hyptertext, and Academic Information Services: Some Longer-Range Implications,' *College and Research Libraries* 54, 3 (1993): 199–215, http://dx.doi.org/10.5860/crl_54_03_199, which I brought to the attention of Darnton when we were discussing the future of scholarly publishing regularly while he was serving on the editorial board of Princeton University Press from 1977 to 1981 and afterward. Anyone who reads Atkinson's essay and Darnton's will immediately recognize that the multi-level, multi-dimensional type of document Darnton proposed in his essay was conceptualized earlier by Atkinson in his. This is not to accuse Darnton of plagiarism; he clearly did not remember where he had first heard about this idea. But I have no doubt whatsoever that it came up in our conversations.

25. From a memorandum from Roger Clark to the directors of CIC libraries and presses dated 15 February 1995 [on file with the author].
26. 'Prospectus for an Institutionally Funded First-book Subvention,' http://www.arl.org/publications-resources/3280-aau-arl-prospectus-for-an-institutionally-funded-first-book-subvention—.VDVOTOcQGpS.
27. From a letter from Richard Ekman to Roger Clark dated 14 January 1997 [copy on file with the author].
28. The process of 'learning to work together' that led to the Office of Digital Scholarly Publishing is ably described in Nancy Eaton, Bonnie MacEwan, and Peter Potter, 'Learning to Work Together: The Libraries and the University Press at Penn State,' *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 35, 4 (July 2004): 215–20, http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/jsp.35.4.215. Eaton succeeded Nancy Cline as head librarian at Penn State in 1997 and remained in that position until her retirement in 2010.
29. The early history of the National Academies Press (NAP) 'open-access' project is recounted by NAP's director, Barbara Kline Pope, in this essay in the *Journal of Electronic Publishing* in 1999, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=jep;view=text;rgn=main;idno=3336451.0004.408. A later update to June 2011 is available at http://www.idea.org/blog/2011/06/02/how-did-national-academies-press-make-pdfs-free/. It cannot be emphasized enough how this pioneering effort inspired many others in the university press community to emulate it.

30. The Amherst College Press may well serve as a model for the future, as the NAP venture did earlier. See https://www.amherst.edu/library/press. It is the first press in the United States to adopt the open-access approach fully for publishing monographs in the humanities. (There are university presses in Australia, Canada, and Europe that adopted it a while ago.) I had the privilege and pleasure of serving on the search committee that recommended the hiring of its first director, Mark Edington. Even more recently, on 20 January 2015, the University of California Press (UC Press) announced a new initiative in open-access monograph publishing called Luminous that bears some striking resemblances to the CIC project described here. The announcement read in part:

> With Luminos, UC Press is taking steps to ensure the longevity of monographic publishing while adhering to the same exacting editorial standards for which it has been known for more than 120 years. This entails combining the best of OA and digital publishing with UC Press's rigorous selection and editorial processes to create a wholly new approach to sustainable and affordable monograph publishing.
>
> For authors whose traditional monographs have been relegated to sales of just a few hundred, an open access model offers the potential to exponentially increase the discoverability and readership of their work. UC Press's model also supports rich multimedia content—essential in order to keep pace with new digital modes of scholarship. Luminos shares the cost burden of publishing in manageable amounts across the academic community. For each title, UC Press makes a significant contribution, augmented by membership funds from supporting libraries. Authors will then be asked to secure a title publication fee to cover the remaining costs. Additional revenue from supporting libraries and print sales will help to support an author waiver fund.