University-based open access publishing in Europe: challenges and opportunities in the Humanities

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What distinguishes the Humanities scholarly communication process

- Slower pace in producing publications

- Heavy reliance on books

- Transition from print to electronic much slower

- Heavy use of local publications, reliance on local languages

- Impact more difficult to measure in the Humanities, different value system

- Less or minimal connection of results to monetary economy and much less funding available

- Slower uptake of open access
  - But sweeping recent massive developments

- Most open access institutional initiatives focus on the SSH

A rich OA publishing landscape around the ivory tower

- Corporate Publishers
- National Initiatives
- Large and medium scale institutional initiatives
- Small institutional initiatives
- Independent publishers
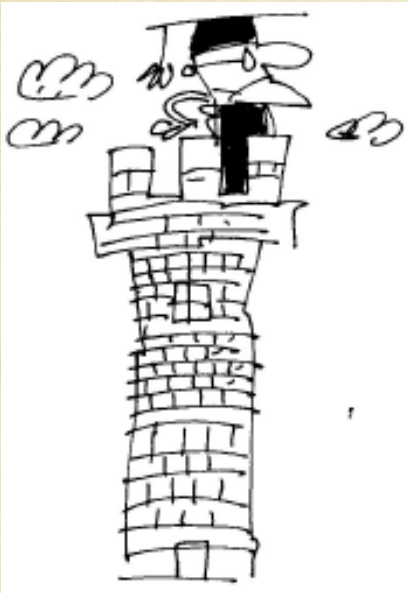
Traits of University-based initiatives

- Initiatives tightly interwoven with open access

- Library initiatives

- Focus on journals, increasingly on monographs

- Open source technology (OJS)

- Institutional funding and/or own resources

- No business models, especially with journal publishing
    - Journals usually outside of the APC system

Some typical examples

- Library-led initiatives at institutional level
    - Numerous large ones in Italy (Trieste), Spain (Madrid), medium ones all over Europe
    - Mostly journals

- Open access university presses within the library (library upress merge or new presses in library)
    - UCL press
    - Goettingen Press
    - Stockholm Press, among others

Opportunities

- To **regain control of the valuation and dissemination** of the scientific information it produces (university and researchers)

- For **innovative experimentation** in open access publishing and open science (researchers, university)

- Actively to participate in shaping an **economically more transparent and fair SC system** and reap benefits (university)

- To **expand standard and set rules for professional evaluation and advancement** (Universities/administration)

- **Assume new and enhanced roles** in the university system (libraries)

Challenges

- **Lack of systematization** in a good part of efforts

- **Fragmentation**: lack of concerted action and systematization across Europe
  - Lack of shared standards, guidelines and practices; business and financing models; possible general lack of collective vision

- **Inability to acquire critical mass**, become visible, usable and attain sustainability

- **Perceived less quality and trust** and thus, less chances to become established (=acquire prestige status) and enter 'systemic' publishing

Need to step up!

○ Coordination at the European level (critical mass, shared infrastructure and services, good practices, develop shared knowledge-base and standards, measurable quality, acquire more funding, experiment more)

○ More research for evidence on practices, on numbers, on economics necessary

○ Involve the researchers and university administration more
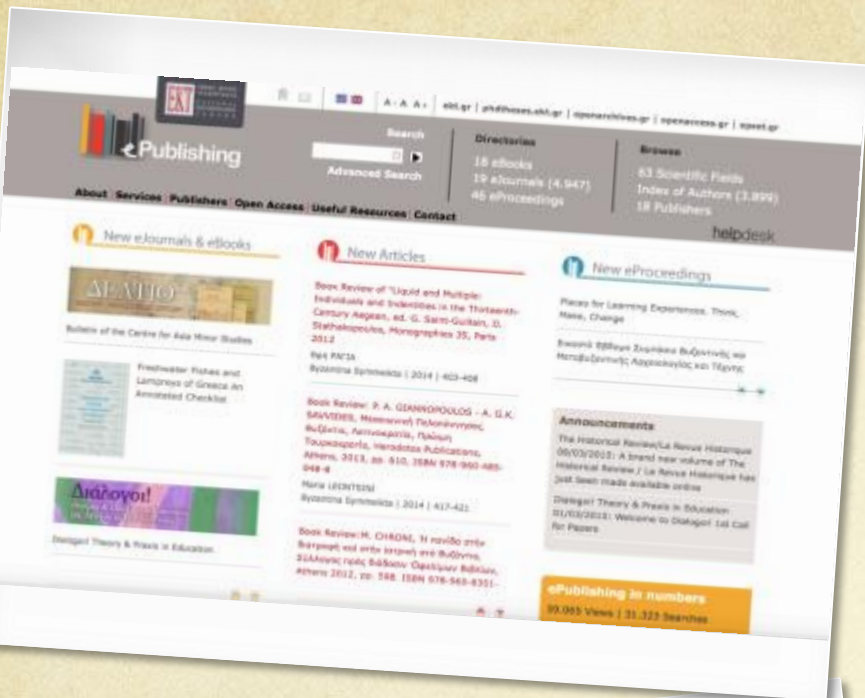
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Thank you!

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