Future of Scholarly Communication

Forging an inclusive and innovative research infrastructure for scholarly communication in the social sciences and humanities

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Editors:
Maciej Maryl
Marta Błaszczyńska

Authors:
Karla Avanço
Ana Balula
Marta Błaszczyńska
Anna Buchner
Lorena Caliman
Claire Clivaz
Carlos Costa
Mateusz Franczak
Rupert Gatti
Elena Giglia
Arnaud Gingold
Susana Jarmelo
Maria João Padez
Delfim Leão
Maciej Maryl
Iva Melinščak Zlodi
Kajetan Mojsak
Agata Morka
Tom Mosterd
Elisa Nury
Cornelia Plag
Valérie Schafer
Mickael Silva
Jadranka Stojanovski
Bartłomiej Szleszyński
Agnieszka Szulińska
Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra
Piotr Wciślik
Lars Wieneke

Editorial design and typesetting:
Agnieszka Zalotyńska

Proofreading:
Laurence Taylor

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OPERAS
open scholarly communication in the european research area for social sciences and humanities

OPERAS-P

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Warsaw: Digital Humanities Centre at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences 2021

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Abstract

This report discusses the scholarly communication issues in Social Sciences and Humanities that are relevant to the future development and functioning of OPERAS. The outcomes collected here can be divided into two groups of innovations regarding 1) the operation of OPERAS, and 2) its activities. The "operational" issues include the ways in which an innovative research infrastructure should be governed (Chapter 1) as well as the business models for open access publications in Social Sciences and Humanities (Chapter 2). The other group of issues is dedicated to strategic areas where OPERAS and its services may play an instrumental role in providing, enabling, or unlocking innovation: FAIR data (Chapter 3), bibliodiversity and multilingualism in scholarly communication (Chapter 4), the future of scholarly writing (Chapter 5), and quality assessment (Chapter 6). Each chapter provides an overview of the main findings and challenges with emphasis on recommendations for OPERAS and other stakeholders like e-infrastructures, publishers, SSH researchers, research performing organisations, policy makers, and funders. Links to data and further publications stemming from work concerning particular tasks are located at the end of each chapter.

Executive summary

This report collects together the findings of Work Package 6 (Innovation) of the OPERAS-P project. It provides an overview of the phenomena relevant to the future development and functioning of OPERAS. The report is **robust** (covers a wide range of issues relevant to OPERAS and scholarly communication), empirically-tested (with inputs from 655 participants from 33 countries), and stakeholder-validated (consulted with over three hundred stakeholders).

This report focuses on the future of scholarly communication, trying to define the main challenges it faces and proposing recommendations for systemic changes. **OPERAS** is the main addressee of this report, as it can undertake various activities (in the form of services, tools, training, and advocacy) relevant to other groups. However, in order to achieve real and long lasting change, this report appeals to other stakeholders as well, including **e-infrastructures, publishers, SSH researchers, research performing organisations, policy makers, and funders**.

Each chapter provides an overview of the main findings and challenges with an emphasis on recommendations for OPERAS and other stakeholders. The chapters presented in this report collect together the main findings of the more elaborated task reports that can be found in the OPERAS Innovation Lab community on Zenodo, with associated data stored in a dedicated OPERAS-P collection at Nakala.

Chapter 1 OPERAS governance: community values, scalability, and future challenges. This chapter analyses both the current models of governance implemented by research infrastructures, and the innovative forms of governance in other types of organisations to derive strategies and suggestions on how OPERAS may further develop its shared culture, common identity, and values. The research has shown the need for a strong community-based organisation, **a satisfaction with the current model, and a need for scalability, flexibility, and reflexivity** in the organisation. The main challenges include the **practical assessment of the current model, and keeping decision-making agile and scalable** (including consensus procedures and accountability when growing). This chapter recommends **keeping values at the core of the community, adopting a reflexive attitude towards governance, and allowing digital participation and decision-making,** while **favouring spaces for open innovation. Keeping communication channels open to relevant EU initiatives has also been suggested**.

Chapter 2 Innovative business models develops, collates, and shares information about alternative funding models for open access (OA) books, based on a thorough exploration of the standpoints of two crucial stakeholders in the OA book publishing ecosystem: libraries and publishers. The work revealed the **polarisation of the academic library landscape and the fragmentation and diversity of medium-sized academic book publishing** as well as an **interest in open access book-related initiatives** and **non-BPC models**. The main challenges include the **scarcity of human resources and specific funding**, which coincides with **an overabundance of OA projects**. A lack of **technical expertise** and **existing evaluation systems** are also seen as obstacles. This chapter recommends **recognising regional differences** and **the diversity of business models**, as well as **rethinking evaluation systems, uniting regional hubs, and developing skills in digital publishing**.

Chapter 3 The road to FAIR Social Sciences and Humanities provides the knowledge base together with the views of the community in order to find the most suitable way of achieving the maximum uptake of FAIR principles (making data findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) by the SSH community. The research highlighted **a broad understanding of data** and the need for the **coordination of activities** as well as providing **success stories and examples**. The main challenges include a **low awareness of FAIR and a lack of incentives and rewards**, together with a **diversity of data-related practices in SSH**. This chapter recommends **close consideration of research communities' needs** and the **preservation of domain specificities**, while also **providing coordination, training, acknowledgement, and reward** with regard to FAIR data practices.

Chapter 4 Innovative models of bibliodiversity in scholarly publications provides a theoretical and empirical exploration of multilingualism in scholarly communication together with a conceptual design for a platform prototype for shared translation services at the scholarly communication level. The research showed the **research relevance** of multilingualism, which **enables global interaction with multinational and multidisciplinary research**. The main challenge is to **boost balanced multilingualism** and to **make national production internationally relevant**. This chapter recommends **developing a community-based platform to support scholarly translation** as well as the **amplification, recognition, and incentivisation of multilingual practices**.

Chapter 5 Future of scholarly writing in SSH explores current writing practices in SSH to inform future OPERAS activities on researchers' needs regarding publishing technologies and both ongoing and upcoming transformations of scholarly communication. The main findings include differentiation between **digitally-enabled and digital writing** (and between the scholarly needs associated with both practices). **Innovation is seen as a chance to improve the sharing of ideas with audiences. Novel formats and genres are considered more appropriate for certain content for several reasons: they are liberating, communicative, interactive, and collaborative; and they enable versioning and updating**. The main challenges include the **lack of recognition of novel practices, as innovation is impeded by such factors as quality assessment, prestige, and competencies**. This chapter recommends **developing publishing guidelines with regard to innovative genres, supporting novel communication practices,** and **providing training and targeted services for innovative genres in SSH**.

Chapter 6 Quality assessment of SSH research: innovations and challenges explores the following areas: how excellence and other peer review proxies are constructed and (re)negotiated in everyday practices across SSH disciplines, who is involved in the processes and who remains outside them, what the boundaries of peer review are in terms of inclusiveness, and how the processes are aligned or misaligned with research realities. The main findings include the observation that **peer review is embedded in the broader systems of academic power structures** and **has a crucial role in shaping disciplinary identities in SSH**. Chapter 6 identifies such challenges as **the shortage of evaluative labour, gaining recognition for reviewing records**, and the **reinforcement of existing power structures through peer-review**. This chapter recommends **developing responsible research metrics at the EU level** as well as **coordinated advocacy and training reports by OPERAS and DARIAH**. In terms of the conceptual prototypes of new services, it posits a Book Review Certification Service extension as well as the administration of peer-review records.

The work collected in this report will serve as the basis for OPERAS' activities and its future services. This research will be continued by OPERAS Innovation Lab, led by the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Introduction and methodology

Maciej Maryl and Marta Błaszczyńska

This report collects together the findings of Work Package 6 (Innovation) of the OPERAS-P project, the main objective of which was to produce a robust, empirically tested, and stakeholder-validated foundational body of knowledge regarding phenomena relevant to the future development and functioning of OPERAS. Let us unpack this statement.

The work is **robust** because it covers a wide range of issues relevant to OPERAS, and scholarly communication in general, as identified by previous OPERAS work (esp. white papers). WP6 concentrated on innovation within the various aspects of scholarly communication and the role of research infrastructures (RIs) in this process in order to achieve a better understanding of the rapidly changing scholarly communication environment in which OPERAS operates.

The outcomes collected here can be divided into two groups of innovations, on the one hand, OPERAS' operations, and on the other, its activities. The "operational" issues include ways in which an innovative research infrastructure should be governed (Chapter 1) as well as business models for open access publications in Social Sciences and Humanities (Chapter 2). The other group of issues is dedicated to strategic areas where OPERAS and its services might play an instrumental role in providing, enabling, or unlocking innovation: FAIR data (Chapter 3), bibliodiversity and multilingualism in scholarly communication (Chapter 4), the future of scholarly writing (Chapter 5), and quality assessment (Chapter 6).

The work has been **empirically tested** because it is crucial to address the real needs of the community. Thus, the tasks within the Work Package shared similar workflows, which consisted of a state-of-the art review and soliciting input from stakeholders through surveys, interviews, and workshops. Altogether the research involved 655 participants from 33 countries on four continents (with a focus on Europe, given the aim of the project). There were 57 people interviewed, 134 filled out the surveys, and 464 participated in dedicated workshops.

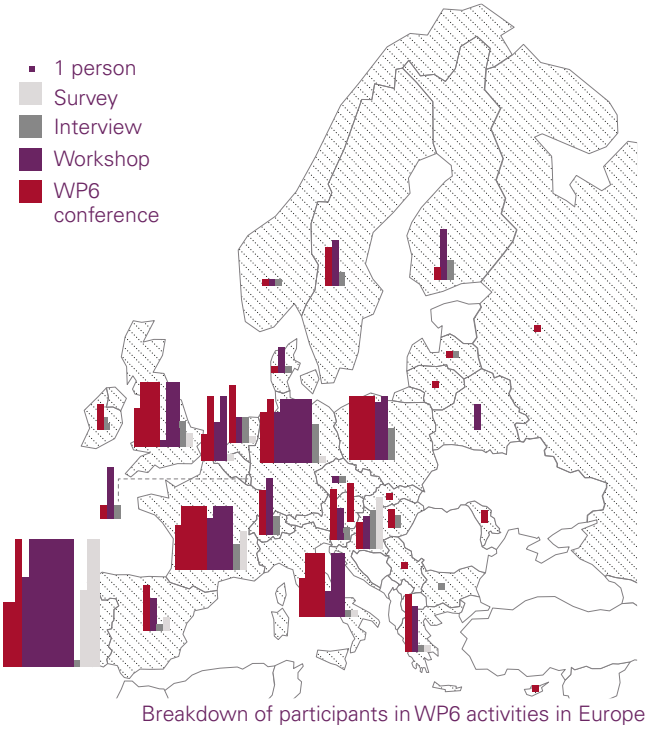
Finally, the outputs are **stakeholder-validated**, which means that the key stakeholder groups (research infrastructures, researchers, institutions, policy makers, funders) were consulted throughout the process.

Preliminary findings were presented during the *Future of Scholarly Communication* online conference (24–26 February). Each task presented its outputs in one of six dedicated sessions, receiving feedback from three invited experts and members of the audience. The event attracted 342 participants from 46 countries all over the world. The feedback gathered informed the final stage of the drafting of the reports and recommendations. A detailed programme is available in this blog post.

655 research participants
57 interviewed
134 filled out surveys
464 attended workshops

342 conference attendees

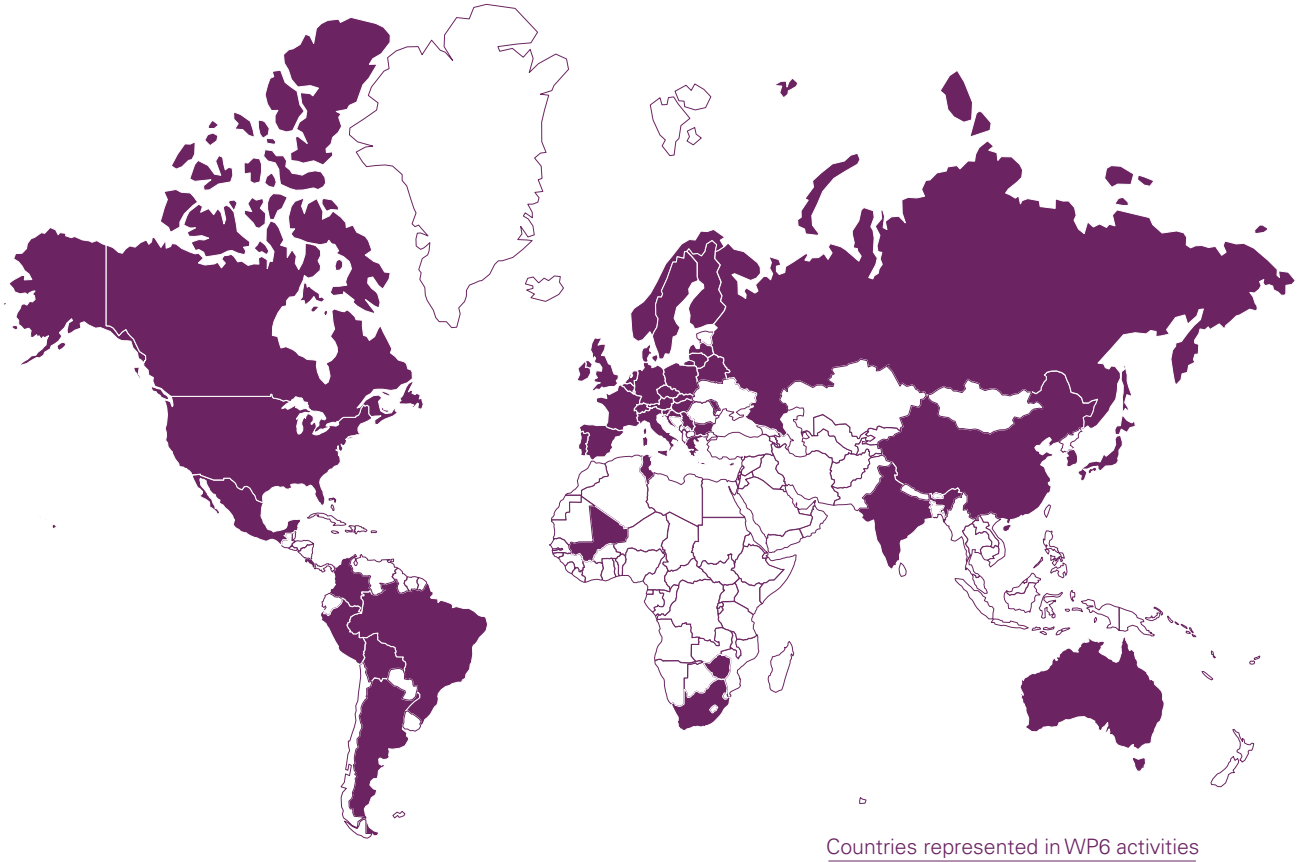
research participants from **33** countries
conference attendees from **46** countries



Breakdown of participants in WP6 activities in Europe

This report focuses on the future of scholarly communication, trying to define the main challenges it faces and proposing recommendations for systemic changes. Each chapter provides an overview of the main findings and challenges with an emphasis on recommendations for OPERAS and other stakeholders (see the next section). Links to data and further publications stemming from the work on particular tasks are located at the end of each chapter. The chapters presented in this report collect together the main findings of the more elaborated task reports that can be found in the OPERAS Innovation Lab community on Zenodo, with associated data stored in a dedicated OPERAS-P collection at Nakala.

The work on this report proved how crucial user research and stakeholder engagement is for our understanding of needs in regard to scholarly communication and ways they may be implemented. This work will be continued as the OPERAS Lab, coordinated by IBL PAN, which will focus on defining OPERAS' responses to actual user needs as well as on envisioning and prototyping new services. Some prototypes have already been developed and conceptualised within the framework of the OPERAS-P project, namely the OPERAS living book, as well as a concept for integrated services for digital scholarly editions.



Countries represented in WP6 activities

Stakeholders

Although the main aim of this report is to provide guidance for OPERAS, a European research infrastructure for scholarly communication in SSH, the recommendations stemming from our work have a wider reach. This is because scholarly communication faces systemic problems and one could hardly expect that changes made just by one stakeholder group (a research infrastructure in this case) would sustainably transform the whole ecosystem. A good example of a systemic issue is the perceived lack of prestige accorded to innovative forms of writing. In order to change this, policy makers would need to provide adequate assessment mechanisms, funders ought to allow such publications to be funded, research infrastructures should provide services and tools for easy publishing, publishers would need to recognise the value of such work and, finally, researchers need to accept them as valid outputs. That is why we address our recommendations to different stakeholder groups, all of whom play important roles in OPERAS' work.

OPERAS is the main addressee of this report, as it can undertake various activities (in the form of services, tools, training, and advocacy) relevant to other groups. However, **e-infrastructures**[1] like publishing platforms, repositories, and digital libraries, are also an important target for these recommendations in regard to addressing the particular disciplinary needs of SSH scholars.

Publishers, especially scholarly-led initiatives, belong to one of the key stakeholder groups as they focus on the publication part of the scholarly communication workflow. **Researchers in SSH** are the main stakeholders in OPERAS, especially digital humanities scholars who may have more advanced needs with regard to publishing their outputs (e.g. linking text with data and code). **Research performing organisations** like universities or research institutes are important because institutional regulations and practices serve as an immediate sphere of reference for scholars.

This report also provides some guidance for **policy makers**, i.e., relevant bodies at the national or European level who shape research policies and may provide top-down support for certain activities. Likewise, **funders** may adjust their schemes in order to embrace and encourage innovation in certain activities.

- **OPERAS**
- **E-infrastructures**
- **Publishers**
- **Researchers in SSH**
- **Research performing organisations**
- **Policy makers**
- **Funders**

[1] The difference between a research infrastructure and an e-infrastructure lies in their disciplinary scope: while OPERAS, as a research infrastructure, focuses on the needs of the SSH community, e-infrastructures such as OpenAIRE or European Open Science Cloud, addresses researchers in different fields.

CHAPTER

01

OPERAS Governance: community values, scalability, and future challenges

Authors:
Valérie Schafer and Lars Wieneke
(C²DH, University of Luxembourg)
Contributors:
Pierre Mounier (EHESS) and Suzanne Dumouchel (CNRS)
Partners involved:
University of Luxembourg and CNRS

Introduction

Task 6.1 of Work Package 6 aimed to analyse both current models of governance implemented by research infrastructures, and innovative forms of governance in other types of organisations, to derive strategies and suggestions on how OPERAS may further develop its shared culture, common identity, and values, and balance the needs of the stakeholders to ensure efficiency and reliability along with the capacity to be open to new models of governance that emerge from the digital environment. The activities within this task were divided into three phases: 1) mapping the state of the art, 2) stakeholder research, and 3) recommendations.

Regarding the state of the art, the diversity of possible approaches to governance explains the abundance of literature, and the impossibility of being exhaustive in a field that is as much a matter of management studies as it is of studies in STS, or the sociology of innovation, or digital humanities, or the information and communication sciences. Therefore, we selected three key topics that mostly gathered together the issues we wanted to explore within this work package: governance and values; research infrastructures, trading zones, and interdisciplinarity; and finally, knowledge commons and P2P productions.

The research on stakeholders was based on a survey and several workshops. The survey was conducted mainly during March 2020 and was disseminated through internal OPERAS-P channels, Twitter, and the OPERAS-P blog. The survey's 25 questions took approximately 15–20 minutes to answer and were framed around the values of OPERAS-P. We received 26 answered surveys overall (24 from OPERAS members, 2 from external respondents).

We co-organised three workshops on the topic of OPERAS governance and, more generally, the governance of research infrastructures. The first was entirely dedicated to digital governance and research infrastructures, and was organised by our team in collaboration with a scientific committee. It took place remotely, due to the COVID-19 crisis, in September 2020.

The second workshop, in February 2021, was part of the OPERAS WG6 workshop, which was also organised online, with this second one being more specifically focused on OPERAS governance and its perspectives.

Finally, an internal workshop lasting half a day in May 2021 gathered together several OPERAS governance stakeholders (members of the executive assembly, scientific committee) to address the most urgent issues and challenges related to the future of OPERAS and its governance.

Within our task we had the chance to meet and to collaborate with several actors in the field of digital governance, notably the co-founders of Meoh, a think-and-do-tank based in Brussels that studies how social trust can inform new models of cooperation and governance in a networked society; and with COPIM (Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs).

Main Findings

A strong community-based organisation

Participants in OPERAS-P show great motivation in contributing to the commons (i.e. cultural resources accessible and sharable by all members of the community), as well as "learning while contributing," and they give importance to the content of discussions. Respect, engagement, trust, and the common good are requirements for their participation as well as common and clear goals and deadlines. There is a need for both community-based values, such as trust and transparency, but also for efficiency and clarity (see, e.g., the results of the survey and last workshop in May 2021). Accountability is also underlined.

The current model, which seems satisfactory

The current model, mixing, for example, an executive assembly and an assembly of the commons, seems satisfactory to members as it allows for poly-centric governance. The latter is based on institutions' representatives, but also on expertise and distributed decision-making. However, at this moment in time it remains a merely theoretical model whose efficiency needs to be assessed in practice during the coming months.

Temporalities are key

Time is as much a question for the individual participants involved in the project (in particular, the time spent working for OPERAS, vs. their own general workload) as it is for the longer temporalities of the project (and in particular, the transition to an association faced with the need for institutionalisation, reliability, and results, but which also wishes to pursue a flexible and creative process).

Scalability and multi-layered architecture

Linked to the previous point, there is a key need for scalability as well as a need for a multi-layered model that may allow, at the same time, innovation and maintenance, and centrality and decentralisation. Hybrid models can exist and cohabit within the same organisation in order to avoid both the risk of amateurism and establishment, and to combine the strengths and virtues of both.

Analysing failures and keeping flexibility and reflexivity

Adjustments are needed within the whole life cycle of a project, while there is also the need for some analysis of the successes and failures. These are the constant needs at the crossroad of governance and management and should also be taken into account in the governance model.

OPERAS in a complex environment

As underlined in our final workshop, OPERAS has to go along with other research infrastructures at the EU level (i.e. with Triple, COPIM, EOSC, etc.) and others. OPERAS will become an important player in this field, and so these adherent responsibilities have to be taken into account.

Challenges

Assessing the designed model

The current model seems satisfactory from a theoretical point of view. It is balanced, multi-layered, has clear responsibilities, and includes several bodies (executive assembly, general assembly, assembly of the commons, scientific advisory committee, coordination team, etc.); but it needs to be assessed over the coming months in order to ensure there is coordination between the layers.

Keeping decision making agile and scalable

With the growth of OPERAS and its institutionalisation, there is a need to combine several cultures, roles, and visions, and, notably, to combine the place of professionals with that of members who are representatives of their institutions.

Consolidation and professionalisation as the main challenges

The professionalisation and consolidation of OPERAS is needed, but should not diminish the requirement for constant innovation, horizontality, and creativity.

Consensus procedures

How can OPERAS keep consensus procedures while growing? When is voting needed? Does OPERAS' growth also lead to a growing number of members and decision makers?

Empowerment

OPERAS will have to ensure that it keeps its structure open and inclusive. It will have to deal with various degrees of availability, levels of involvement, and should ensure that hidden power and excessive bureaucracy can't take hold. Incentives for participants and recognising participation should also be constantly evaluated. At the same time, new members need to find roles and functions within the network that match their abilities and needs.

Accountability

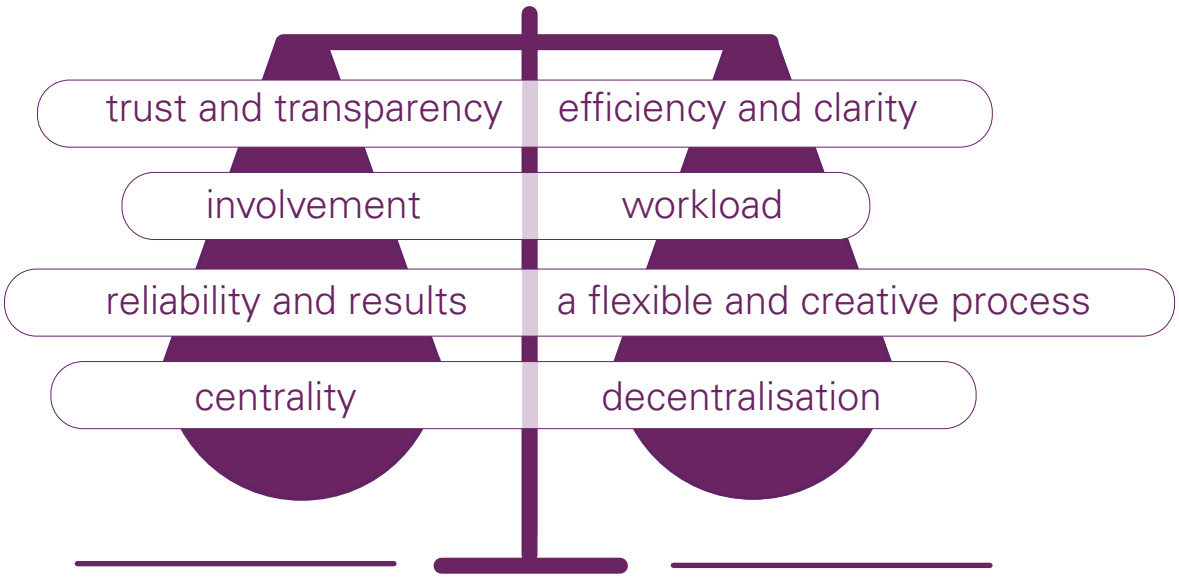
Transparency and trust are key for the development of OPERAS. Its values must also reflect the openness that is at the core of the project. This has to be clear for OPERAS' internal members as well as those who are external, whether they be funders, partners, stakeholders, etc.

Recommendations

Target audience	Recommendation
OPERAS/ Research infrastructure	**Keeping values at the core of the community** Regular updating and evaluation of the code of conduct and guidelines, and the reinforcement of shared values. **Community and the commons** At the heart of OPERAS' reflection, the notion of the commons also poses major challenges and needs to find its place in the governance model while respecting the requirement to comply with legislative and economic constraints, and decision-making processes that must be efficient. As a central value of OPERAS, it needs to be refined in order to become a lever for OPERAS' growth, which must be supported by shared governance. The assembly of the commons needs to be engaged – an engagement plan is needed. **Having a reflexive attitude towards governance** The creation of a WG entirely dedicated to OPERAS' governance to assess progress, strengths, failures, etc. **Allowing digital participation and decision-making** In order to allow all members to participate, a hybrid format (f2f and remote) should be developed that will also permit remote consensus or voting. **Favouring spaces for open innovation** (task forces, working groups) The governance model hybridises both formal groups and more flexible and temporary groups (for example task forces and working groups) that may be more P2P and short-term, and may target a precise interest or goal. Flexible task forces can help maintain innovation while also allowing for a more structured arrangement for daily operations. The success of this model also relies on clear communication and information, with few, but efficient, channels and the regular renewal of roles and mandates. **Coming to terms with the goals of OPERAS** OPERAS understands its main mission in managing and fostering the actions and interests of its constituents, therefore, the governance scheme should clearly highlight the relevance of this task. In reality, the role of the Coordination Team seems to be much more relevant to the overall mission and more coordination between the Coordination Team and the Executive Assembly is needed to distribute management tasks. **Naming and explaining** Some of the terms used in the governance scheme don't match their actual function. For example, the Executive assembly is less of an assembly and much more of an executive team that drives actions within the network. Other functions need clear explanations of their roles and actions to develop a shared understanding and to allow newcomers to quickly understand how OPERAS is organised.
Scholars	**Interacting with research infrastructure** Beyond the need for transparency, trust, and accountability, a communication channel is needed to allow feedback. Scholars should be encouraged to participate in, and to enter into, OPERAS' services in an (inter)active mode that favours their input and requires their commitment. They should accept OPERAS' values, terms of use, etc.
Policy makers and funders	**Answering the need for maintenance, accountability, etc.** There is a need for a clear governance model that allows policy makers and funders to identify the decision-making processes and roles in OPERAS while accepting a hybrid model of governance between institutionalisation and flexibility. **Exchange with the external EU environment** As a key player in the European field, and notably in OA, OPERAS has to work with EU partners such as Triple EOSC, and should, therefore, identify representatives and decision makers that may create bridges.
Institutions (Research)	**Supporting scholars involved in OPERAS** Scholars involved in OPERAS need to be recognised by their institutions and receive some form of incentive for their involvement.
Publishers	**Key players to be heard and represented** The field of publishing is rapidly changing and adapting. OPERAS is a place to discuss and co-shape these changes.

Data and further reading

- The full task report is available OPERAS Innovation Lab community on Zenodo
- Survey data are available at OPERAS-P collection at Nakala.
- The *Knowledge Infrastructures and Digital Governance* report from a two-day workshop held on 7 and 8 September 2020, with the aim of combining theoretical and practical perspectives on issues that are constantly developing as a result of the wide-ranging forms of research infrastructure and challenges facing digital governance.
- Recording of a DGO workshop with Meoh (with 10 participants from 8 nationalities, 8 countries, and 3 continents) on multi stakeholder cooperation during the 21st Annual International Conference on Digital Government Research in June 2020



Balancing the needs of different stakeholders for better governance

CHAPTER

02

Innovative business models

Authors:
Rupert Gatti, Agata Morka, Tom Mosterd
Partners involved:
OAPEN, Open Book Publishers

Introduction

The main objective of the OPERAS-P Task 6.2 (Innovative business models) was to develop, collate, and share information about alternative funding models for open access (OA) books. In order to fulfil this general goal, we wanted to better understand the standpoints of two crucial stakeholders in the OA book publishing ecosystem: libraries on the one hand and publishers on the other. We first investigated the academic library systems in 14 European countries to examine how they were set up and how they dealt with OA books. Second, we had a closer look at publishers and the intricacies of chosen publishing models for OA books as they are applied across the European landscape. In both cases we identified the most important challenges that the examined cases were facing, in the realms of administration, legal issues, infrastructure, funding, among others.

Seeking to understand the academic library landscape in Europe, we conducted interviews with librarians who represented 14 European countries: OPERAS core members (Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and the Netherlands), along with the addition of Spain and the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden). Representatives of each of the analysed countries were asked general questions in the following areas of interest: 1) the general characteristics of library systems concerning e-content and OA publications, 2) the library community and open access, 3) OA book policies, 4) OA book funding, 5) library/scholar-led OA book publishing initiatives, and 6) the integration of OA books with library systems.

Four workshops – including two regional events for the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden) and for Southern Europe (Croatia, Greece, Slovenia), as well as two country-based ones for Germany and Poland – gave us the chance to ask more specific questions about roadblocks, selection criteria, and budget allocations concerning OA book-related projects for the wider group of library representatives. A survey, which participants were asked to complete prior to these workshops, revealed the level of familiarity librarians had with existing OA book publishing initiatives. A set of short reports discussing the main take-aways from each of the workshops was published in the form of blog posts on the COPIM website.

Based on a systematic literature review, desk-based research, and, perhaps even more importantly, on what we heard from the European library community in interviews and workshops, we compiled a report on academic libraries in Europe and OA books, which we have made available to the community as a living document on the COPIM website – it is open to comments (see Data and further reading section for links). It is our intention to add more country-based cases to it in the future.

In trying to gain an overview of existing OA book policies in Europe, we examined over 60 policies, and created a summary of 27 cases that mentioned OA books specifically. We have made this file available to the community as a living document through the Open Access Books Network, to which new cases can be added.

Following the investigation of the academic library landscape, we focused on publishers. We analysed nine Europe-based OA book publishers who used business models that either departed from relying on Book Processing Charges (BPCs) completely or used mixed models in which BPCs were one of several revenue streams. In order to better understand how they worked, we interviewed representatives of these nine publishing houses. We looked at several crucial aspects that would help us both identify common threads and pinpoint the particularities of the applied models. We examined each case according to the following areas of interest: 1) the publisher's general profile, 2) workflows, 3) the business model, 4) sustainability, and 5) challenges. The interviews will be hosted online by the Open Access Books Network and will form the basis of a broader community collated collection of publishers' profiles. New presses will be encouraged to submit their own responses to the template used for these interviews in order to create an open database of business models for OA book case studies.

Three workshops organised for small publishers interested in non-BPC models helped us grasp what challenges they encountered and where they could use help. The first of these workshops gathered representatives of six presses who presented their models, with this workshop attracting a large audience of over 200 registrants. The following two workshops were focused on the three specific business models that the audience of the first workshop was most interested in: the business models of the publishers Open Book Publishers and Punctum Books, and the "Opening the Future" business model.

The work undertaken for Task 6.2 relied heavily on the OA book community's engagement. If it weren't for the willingness and enthusiasm of our partners – the interviewees, the workshop participants, researchers, and librarians – we would not have been able to fulfil our aims. Over the course of the project, we have had the pleasure of working with representatives of over 50 organisations, and we would like to express our gratitude to all of them.

It is nice to have a stable source of revenue. At the same time, I guess it is a problem...

I. Melinščak Zlodi, interview, 16.02.2021

The BPC model treats researchers in a very unequal way, and so that's why we didn't want to adopt it.

L. Kaakinen, interview, 18.02.2021

The main fear was that when we started to publish books open access, we wouldn't sell so many printed books, but this has not really happened.

M. Rudolf, interview, 18.02.2021

Excerpts from interviews on innovative business models

Main Findings

The academic library landscape is polarised

There are deep discrepancies between the members of the examined European countries when it comes to dealing with open access issues. In the Nordic countries, Germany, and the Netherlands it has become one of the pivotal aspects of scholarly communication; institutions are supportive, and there are funding schemes that allow libraries to invest in OA book publishing initiatives. Other regions still struggle with the full integration of OA publications in their library ecosystems: there is insufficient funding, not enough human resources, and little decision-making autonomy at the institutional level and hence little room for experimentation.

Fragmentation and diversity

The considerable longtail of smaller and medium-sized academic book publishers differs in terms of how they are set up, with their structures varying when it comes to areas such as revenue, costs, legal affairs, production, and distribution for academic book publishing. Individually, these presses are uniquely positioned and deeply-rooted within their communities in order to best serve their particular scholarly community. Collectively, they play a vital and key role in realising a transition to open access for books as part of the broader spectrum that is scholarly book publishing.

Interest in open access, book-related initiatives

There is an incontestable interest in OA book publishing initiatives coming from libraries and publishers. The abundance of numerous library associations, which treat open access as one of the critical points of discussion, show the scale and importance of library engagement in open access publishing practices. There is a number of small publishers exploring alternative business models for open access books. This interest is seen as coming both from OA born presses and those thinking about either switching to OA completely or combining OA and non-OA publishing.

Local relevance and impact are crucial

Academic libraries stress the importance of providing metrics that show the impact of OA books at a local level. Local relevance has also been stressed in the context of multilingualism and the importance of recognizing publications in local languages, especially in SSH.

Library and scholar-led OA book publishing initiatives are rare

These initiatives have not (yet) gained momentum in continental Europe. While there are several emerging projects involving libraries, in most cases they are not large scale. Among the pioneers of innovative OA book publishing models are Germany, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. There are also a few examples of projects partially subsidised by national funders. In the majority of investigated countries, however, such initiatives do not exist[2].

Publishers are actively interested in non-BPC models

There is a number of small publishers exploring alternative business models for open access books. This interest is seen as coming both from OA born presses and those thinking about either switching to OA completely or combining OA and non-OA publishing.

One size will not fit all

Discrepancies between library systems across Europe as well as those among publishers operating in different regional circumstances show that it is impossible to find a single EU-wide model for OA book publishing. It is however possible to identify several regional trends and similarities between the examined countries.

Challenges

The scarcity of human resources

Both librarians and publishers reported a scarcity of human resources as one of the main road blocks in developing and implementing OA book publishing initiatives.

Scarcity of OA book-specific funding

We identified only four countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, and Norway) that have OA book-dedicated funds, some at the national level, others at the institutional or funder's level. Of the remaining examined countries such funds do not exist.

OA book-related projects overdose

Libraries reported a certain frustration concerning the multiplicity of existing OA book initiatives, which often operated different business models and offered different services. This plethora of options makes it difficult to make a sound decision as to which project to support and which to reject.

Sources of revenue

Several publishers expressed concern about relying on a single source of revenue when publishing OA books. This challenge has been raised both by publishers who depend on national subsidies and those relying on the BPC model.

Lack of technical expertise

There is a considerable lack of technical skills within both the publishing and library communities when it comes to producing digital books. Both groups reported challenges when dealing with issues of the production and distribution of digital files. This lack of expertise usually results in these parts of the publishing process being outsourced or neglected.

Existing evaluation systems

Existing evaluation systems applied to measure scholars' performance, often do not recognise OA books as a valuable publishing output and discriminate against small-scale OA book publishers.

[2] Other countries, e.g., France, also support large scale OA book publishing initiatives, but not necessarily through university libraries. The United Kingdom, which was not included in this report, is a particularly fertile ground for small-scale OA book initiatives (see, for example, Open Book Publishers).

Recommendations

Target audience	Recommendation
Policy makers	**Recognise regional differences** When creating policies pertaining to OA books, take into consideration specific regional circumstances rather than trying to impose a unified policy, which might work for some, but excludes others.
Policy makers and funders	**Recognise the diversity of business models** When creating policies pertaining to OA books, acknowledge the existence of diverse business models, and provide funding to facilitate innovation.
Research institutions and policy makers	**Rethink evaluation systems** Create evaluation systems that recognise OA books as a valid and valuable publishing output, and reflect on the diversity of publishers to encourage researchers to publish their research in OA and expand their publishing choices.
Librarians and publishers	**Unite in regional hubs** Find organisations interested in OA book publishing that operate under similar regional circumstances as your own, and create local hubs to exchange best practices in OA book publishing. **Pick, choose, and experiment** Stay informed about innovative business models in the OA book landscape, evaluate which of them could work for you, combine different approaches, and create hybrids to find the one that will best suit your particular needs. **Learn to speak fluent digital** Seek opportunities to develop skills in digital publishing and look for partners who might assist you in this process.
OPERAS	**Support knowledge exchange** Facilitate best-practice exchanges in the form of workshops, open databases with case studies, and toolkits in order to create a dialogue within the OA books community and allow stakeholders to learn from each other, especially in particularly challenging areas (e.g. production and distribution of digital books).

Data and further reading

- Interview transcripts and regional workshop survey responses are available at OPERAS-P collection at Nakala.
- Full report on academic libraries and open access books in Europe is available as a static file, and as an open document that the community can comment on.
- The full 6.2. task report is available OPERAS Innovation Lab community on Zenodo
- Series of blog post on regional workshops for librarians:

1. Library Support for OA Books Workshop: the German perspective
2. Library Support for OA Books Workshop: the Polish perspective
3. Library Support for OA Books Workshop: the Scandinavian perspective
4. Library Support for OA Books Workshop: the Southern European perspective

- **Review of existing OA books policies**

A document collating existing funder OA book policies in Europe. The document is open so that the community can add new entries and collaboratively work on updating this database.

- A blog post on a workshop for publishers on innovative business models for books.
- A blog post on a workshop for publishers on innovative business models for books.
- Publishers' case studies database

CHAPTER

03

The road to FAIR Social Sciences and Humanities

Authors:
Elena Giglia, Karla Avanço, Arnaud Gingold
Contributors:
Internal review: Marina Angelaki, Milica Ševkušić
Partners involved:
University of Turin, OpenEdition, IBL PAN
Partners involved (workshops):
University of Coimbra, DARIAH, University of Göttingen

Introduction

The FAIR principles (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability) are a set of foundational guidelines aimed at improving the management of digital scholarly resources for both humans and machines. In considering digital objects as a whole, focusing on data management and reuse, and allowing for cross-disciplinary research, the FAIR principles provide an innovative approach for Social Sciences and Humanities' (SSH) practices. More fragmented, less data-centric, and in some fields, dealing with physical objects, the SSH environment still needs some guidance in exploring the full potential of FAIR principles. As a major component for integrating the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), FAIR principles are also, more broadly, an important tool for open science.

Therefore, OPERAS-P Task 6.3 was aimed at providing the knowledge base together with the views of the community to find the most suitable way to make FAIRification of SSH data possible, using a threefold approach:

- **Speak the same language**

The first step was to focus on the different kinds of data in SSH and the issues arising from implementing FAIR principles via a thorough review of the rich and growing literature about data in SSH.

- **Work with the community**

Through focus groups and workshops, the task engaged stakeholders in unveiling perceptions about FAIR data, the needs of the different communities, and the challenges facing FAIRification regarding various disciplines.

- **Showing the road ahead**

Based on the review and the workshops, the task suggested some directions for OPERAS concerning the FAIRification of data, including FAIRification tool prototypes and measures to further engage the community both in discussions and implementation.

Task 6.3 worked in synergy with parallel activities carried out by the CO-OPERAS Implementation Network (IN) within the GOFAIR initiative, which was aimed at the FAIRification of SSH data and publications. CO-OPERAS IN is coordinated by OpenEdition and UniTo, with the regular contributions from Huma-Num.

Main Findings

Capturing the SSH in transition

FAIR principles, which are essentially digital, mostly data-centric, and oriented towards automated processes, are to a certain point an adequate device for capturing current SSH research practices. The levels of awareness, skills, and engagement concerning FAIR principles characterise, beyond disciplines, distinct communities and reveal the transitional period of the SSH global landscape. To avoid falling into mere opacity, the agnosticism of generic principles like FAIR requires the various communities' specificities to be taken into account.

Everything is data, or could be

Within the FAIR framework, the concept of data is intended to be as universal as possible, including datasets, publications, software, etc. Although accepted in various SSH fields – such as social sciences, history, linguistics, and digital humanities – the notion of data continues to be regularly discussed in the SSH context. The literature review and the research community workshops have also shown ways of integrating SSH's various data types and scientific methods into a coherent digital ecosystem. For instance, it seems possible to make a broad distinction between source and result data, or to consider the well-established processes of resources' curation and the management of the social sciences and humanities as FAIR-enabling practices.

Advocating for FAIR adoption means explaining its benefits

From previous findings, it appears that advocacy for FAIR principles remains the first step when considering the SSH landscape. In order to expand the adoption of FAIR principles within the SSH, it is the principles' final purpose that should be outlined, showing how they increase the quality of research and can integrate even convergent, although pre-existing, practices.

Coordination is key for FAIRification

The various workshops and communications made it obvious that the FAIRification of SSH implied a wide diversity of actors. All the actors involved in the data generation process should also be actors of the "FAIRification-chain": researchers, data stewards, repository managers, librarians, and publishers. Regarding the direct actors of data generation, there is, more specifically, a need to converge on metadata standards, potentially by sharing a minimal metadata set. Coordination at a broader level is also required to ensure a consistent FAIR ecosystem for the SSH. With that prospect, OPERAS intends to collaborate with SSH ERICs Cessda, CLARIN, and DARIAH as well as with projects like SSHOC and EOSC-Pillar.

FAIR stories, examples, and tools need more visibility

SSH researchers feel that there is a lack of recognition when their research relies concretely on implementations of FAIR principles. This poor reward system for researchers making their data actually findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable obviously hinders the research community's engagement with the adoption of FAIR principles. Moreover, this deprives the community

of examples and stories that they could take inspiration from. Through CO-OPERAS IN, OPERAS carried out initiatives to address this issue. First, a blog is currently being established that will offer a common space for discussion and experience sharing. Second, in order to provide guidance for the FAIRification of publications, a major object of SSH research, on-going work will provide a FAIRification toolkit dedicated to publishing platforms.

Challenges

FAIR awareness is still low

General knowledge regarding specific but major aspects of FAIR, such as persistent identifiers, metadata interoperability standards, and open licenses, is very uneven in the SSH environment, if not simply lacking. Given that the acronym is most certainly becoming more widely known, it is obvious that FAIRification requires more than such a superficial understanding. Advocacy efforts and dedicated training are therefore required to increase the level and the quality of FAIR awareness. However, this may also rely on an effort of "translation," adapting the FAIR analytical grid to well-established and functional practices that are convergent with, if not identical to, FAIR principles.

Diversity and complexity of the SSH

As mentioned above, the SSH landscape does not offer a coherent or uniform landscape. However, rather than "fragmentation," we should simply speak, in this case, of the diversity and complexity of the SSH research environment. When it comes to data, the diversity increases immediately because of the various typologies and methods involved. It implies a slight adjustment of the objective: instead of bringing all the SSH communities into a single (and impossible) model, we should look for similarities that could work as hooks – able to connect together all the different parts of a rich and lively environment.

FAIR is not open, but it supports open science

This is a twofold challenge. FAIR is regularly described as distinct from openness; just as FAIR has regularly become the companion of open science policies. The statement "open as possible, closed as necessary," although handy for general presentations, offers unfortunately poor guidance for concrete FAIR implementations. In fact, open licensing allows for reuse in degrees that are not entirely described by the pair "open/closed." This represents the first challenge in terms of communication. Moreover, dealing with humans' creations and phenomena, SSH sources and outputs often include personal information, property rights, or even sensitive data. Reusability, as outlined by SSH researchers, is thus characterized by legal challenges that require specific guidance and expertise.

Incentives and rewards

Another challenge already mentioned concerns the global reward system of contemporary research. Incentives to adopt FAIR principles and rewards for FAIR implementations can only partially rely on research networks and infrastructures. The FAIRness level and quality of research should be part of funders and policymakers' assessment processes.

Recommendations

Target audience	Recommendation
Research performing organisations	**Consider the research communities' needs** in order to align implementation policies with research practices and purposes. **Preserve the domain specificities** regarding data, digital objects, methods, etc., and adapt FAIR implementations accordingly. **Preserve the multilingualism and bibliodiversity** of the SSH environment. **Address the sustainability of FAIR** services to ensure data reuse in the longer term.
Scholars	**Collaborate on common minimal metadata** sets, allowing for cross-disciplinary research and the building of FAIR digital objects.
Scholars and research infrastructures	**Produce an inventory of existing FAIRification tools**, enriched with new tools dedicated to SSH specific objects, such as publications or cultural heritage materials.
Funders and Policy makers	**Acknowledge and reward** FAIRification of data and publications, making them part of the research assessment.
Publishers	**Use the FAIR principles as a grid** to assess the FAIRness of publishing systems, to enhance both content visibility and the quality of publishers' information systems.
OPERAS	**Expand and improve advocacy** by offering both explanations of FAIR principles and examples of FAIR tools and services. **Provide training on FAIR data and metadata** that takes into account the disciplines, data types, and the existing standards' specificities. **Coordinate with other infrastructures and projects** involved in FAIRification to offer consistent guidance to their respective communities.

Data and further reading

- The full report from this task is available at OPERAS Innovation Lab community on Zenodo.
- Reports from the national workshops on Definition of Data for FAIR SSH (in chronological order): Porto (international), Turin, Coimbra, Göttingen, Paris, Brussels (international).
- T. Biro, E. Giglia, "Humanities and Data: for a community-driven path towards FAIRness", March 2020, recording from the Berlin OpenScience conference.

FAIR data in the SSH

Main findings

- A snapshot of the SSH transitional period
- Everything is data, or could be
- Advocating for FAIR adoption means explaining its benefits
- For FAIRification, coordination is key
- FAIR stories, examples and tools need more visibility

Challenges

- FAIR awareness is still low
- Diversity and complexity of the SSH
- FAIR is not open but supports open science
- Incentives and rewards

Recommendations

RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS

- Consider the research communities' needs to align implementation policies with research practices
- Preserve the domain specificities and adopt FAIR
- Preserve multilingualism and bibliodiversity
- Address the sustainability of their FAIR services
- Produce an inventory of existing SSH FAIRification tools

SCHOLARS

- Collaborate on common minimal metadata sets allowing for cross-disciplinary research and the building of FAIR digital objects

FUNDERS

- Acknowledge and reward FAIRification practices

PUBLISHERS

- Use the FAIR principles as a grid to assess publication FAIRness

OPERAS

- Improve advocacy and enhance training for FAIR adapted to SSH
- Coordinate with other infrastructures and projects involved in FAIRification to offer consistent guidance

CHAPTER

04

Innovative models of bibliodiversity in scholarly publications

Authors:
Delfim Leão, with Ana Balula, Carlos Costa,
Cornelia Plag, Lorena Caliman, Maria João Padez,
Mickael Silva, and Susana Jarmelo
Contributors:
Agnieszka Szulińska, Dulip Withanage,
Elea Giménez Toledo, Gimena del Rio Riande,
Ivo Volt, Jadranka Stojanovski, Janne Pölönen,
Jean-François Nomine, Pierre Mounier,
and Susanna Fiorini.
Partners involved:
Coimbra University and OpenEdition, with the collaboration
of the OPERAS Special Interest Group on Multilingualism
(including representatives of the Helsinki Initiative,
Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, ENRESSH,
Association of European University Presses,
Academic Book Publishers, PKP, FORCE11)

Introduction

Given the growing need to strengthen the bonds between stakeholders involved in scholarly communication and multilingualism, this task was directed by a three-fold purpose: 1) synthesise evidence in the literature as to the innovative dynamics of knowledge-sharing and scholarly communication within linguistically diverse scholarly contexts and research networks; 2) have a better understanding of the role of multilingualism within bibliodiversity in scholarly communication through the lens of publishers, researchers, and translators; and 3) present the conceptual design of a future OPERAS Translation Platform aimed at supporting translation services at the scholarly communication level.

Aim of the study

- to prepare a theoretical background to discuss the use of multilingualism in scholarly communication;
- to identify, analyse, and understand the innovative dynamics of working practices and knowledge-sharing within linguistically diverse scholarly contexts and research networks;
- to identify and analyse the motivations behind these practices (questionnaires/focus groups – how tools may answer to needs);
- to formulate recommendations/guidelines for OPERAS and other stakeholders regarding the future implementation of a service aimed at enhancing multilingualism;
- to prepare the conceptual design of a platform prototype for a shared translation service at the scholarly communication level (involving publishers, translators, and researchers).

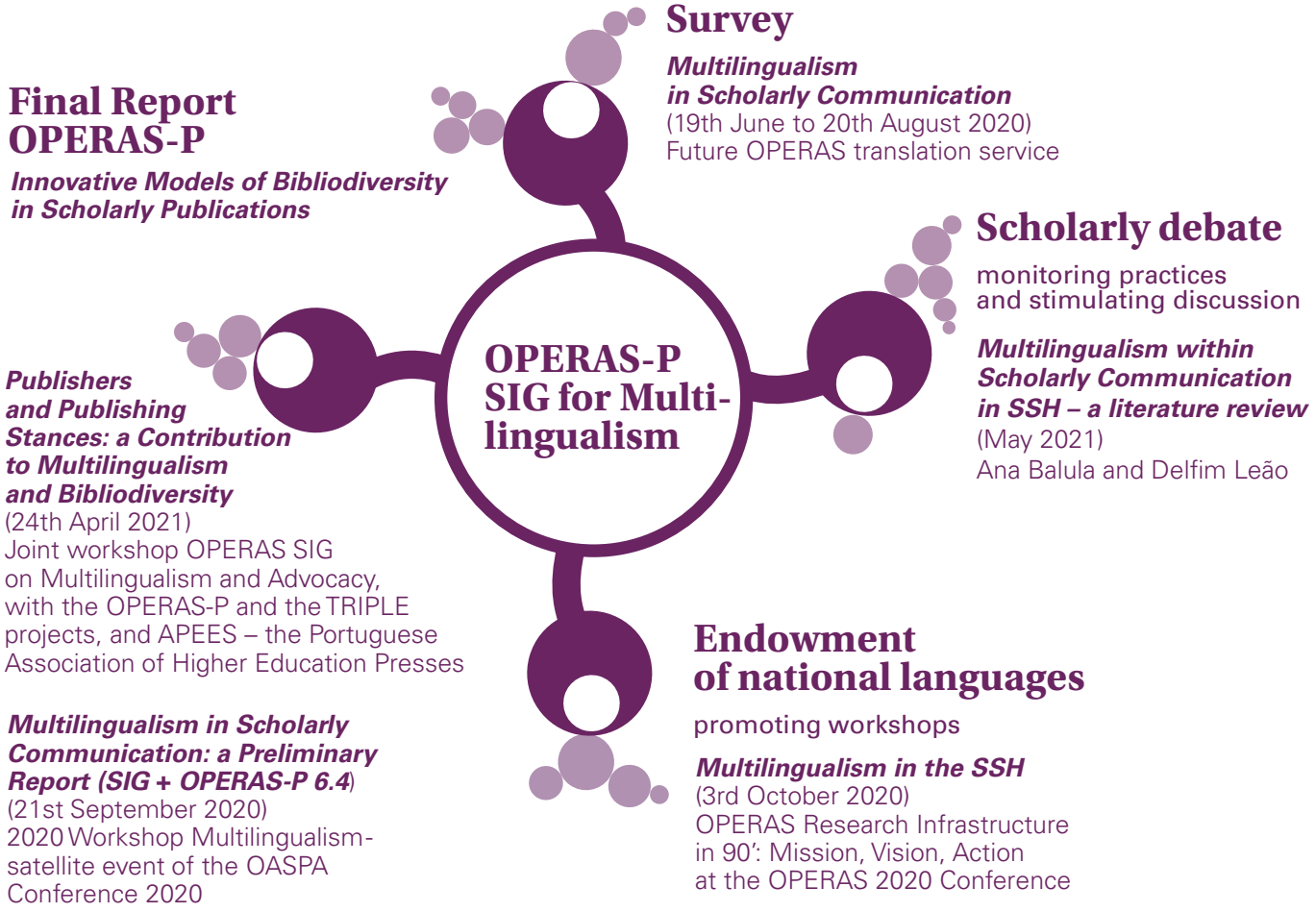
Method and process

Literature review.

The literature review was a qualitative study of an exploratory nature; the method used is in the scope of an integrative literature review, summarising prior research to clarify research trends based on *in vivo* content analysis of the selected corpus. This method follows several stages, starting with problem formulation, which frames the data collection; it is then followed by selection, treatment, analysis, and the final presentation of results. In respect to the problem, the study reflects a gap in the recent literature, namely, identifying factors that influence the dynamics underlying language selection and the use of multilingualism within scholarly communication. The database selected was Google Scholar, and the search terms used were "scholarly communication," "language," and "multilingualism," combined with the Boolean operator "AND." The search, undertaken on 6 April 2020, yielded 152 works. These results were reviewed to exclude duplicates, PhD and Master's dissertations, and works that did not meet this literature review's goals. To be within the selection criteria, the works had to 1) have a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) code, 2) be published in open access between 2019 and 2020, and 3) be written in English, French, German, Portuguese, Italian, or Spanish. This resulted in 12 documents being selected that were then analysed by resorting to qualitative content analysis of the abstract and conclusion sections. Subsequently, the final category framework reflected the corpus codification structure that emerged from the analysis.

Survey *Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication:*

This report presents the main results and an in-depth analysis of the survey *Multilingualism in Social Sciences and Humanities*, which was conducted during the summer of 2020 (from 19 June to 20 August), in the form of an online survey distributed among researchers, translators, and publishers within the OPERAS network and other channels. A total of 359 participants responded to the survey in which they were given a common initial set of questions, followed by their own contribution according to three different perspectives (researchers, translators, and publishers), separate or combined depending on the respondents' profiles. Following the first step of the literature review, the empirical survey led to two main objectives: to collect evidence as to the role of multilingualism within bibliodiversity in scholarly communication, and to contribute to the conceptual design of a platform prototype for community-owned translation services at the scholarly communication level, both involving the needs of publishers, translators, and researchers.



Summary of activities undertaken during the work on the report on Innovative models of bibliodiversity in scholarly publications

Main Findings

In the **literature review,** the **classification of the corpus** regarding the dynamics between multilingualism and scholarly communication in SSH was identified *in vivo* and structured as four categories:

Research relevance

"Englishisation" does not seem to fully address the intended main goals of research concerning information sharing and discussion, or the co-construction of knowledge, for which multilingualism can be an important asset, while promoting inclusiveness and equity among researchers.

Content curation

The possibility of having reliable multilingual research information available definitely contributes to an efficient dissemination of the research (and research data) produced in national languages, as well as contributing to communication among publishers and researchers – thus promoting the development of intercultural, comparative, and/or complementary studies in SSH. In this context, multilingual content curation is crucial.

Reputation

Given that a considerable amount of SSH research is published as monographs and/or in local languages, the use of these databases to evaluate research and establish the researchers or institution's reputations is necessarily fallacious and limited.

Balanced multilingualism in scholarly communication

This is considered to be a **golden breakthrough**, which embraces information-sharing, collaborative knowledge construction, and equity by enabling global interaction with multinational and multidisciplinary research (and researchers), thus mitigating the hurdles underlying static, poor translations while connecting research worldwide.

In regard to the **survey**, the results showed that there was a strong openness among researchers, translators, and publishers in viewing the amplification of multilingualism as an advantage both for fostering international collaborative works and for promoting interculturality, inclusion, and equity; highlighting that,

- a **collaborative system** that uses expertise in specific areas to support and facilitate translations could reduce time consumption, and mitigate the risks of flaws and high prices that may be attached to the translation process;
- and, the **exchange of experiences and specificities**, among researchers who speak different languages but share the same areas of study, has the potential to make a relevant contribution to enriching international collaboration and to make an impact on works.

Challenges

Boosting balanced multilingualism

A scenario that has become increasingly clear during the development of the different phases of the task is that multilingualism must be perceived as a strong manifestation of bibliodiversity, which is particularly important in SSH. This does not preclude the use of English as a communication language, as long as the advantages of using a *lingua franca* do not risk turning it into the *lingua unica* of scientific and scholarly communication. Instead, innovative solutions must be implemented so they have the ability to enhance balanced multilingualism in scholarly communication, in information-sharing, and in collaborative knowledge construction.

Developing a community based translation plaform

The lack of a platform to support translation to different languages is a limitation for the federative nature of OPERAS' consortium.

Conceiving that platform as a social infrastructure

By federating technical knowledge and scholarly expertise, the social infrastructure will stimulate the sharing of tools, methodologies, and practices so that a broad user community can test and scale what is being developed separately by individual partners.

Making national production internationally relevant

The literature review demonstrated that the notion of international publishing is closely linked to the idea of publishing in English in large international publishing houses; however, by putting a broad universe of small publishers and their authors in contact with each other, it will be possible to find an alternative way to internationalise scholarly production, enhance specific catalogues, and relaunch multilingualism as an expression of bibliodiversity, inclusion, and scientific maturity.

Recommendations

Target audience	Recommendation
Scholars	View the **amplification of multilingualism** as an advantage for **fostering international collaborative works** and for **promoting interculturality, inclusion, and equity**.
Publishers	Improve the **scholarly communication landscape** at the **international scale**; helping what usually tends to be considered "national" (the use of local languages) to **become more clearly "international"** (by putting them on the radar of wider networks and within the scope of collaborative interest groups worldwide).
Translators	**Enhance expertise,** particularly when it is combined with **reciprocity,** in order to **stimulate networking** and **improve bibliodiversity through multilingualism.**
Funders and research performing organisations	Advocate for the **implementation of innovative solutions** that have the ability to **enhance balanced multilingualism** in scholarly communication, information-sharing, **collaborative knowledge construction,** and **careers recognition and credit**.
Policy makers	Perceive and value **multilingualism as a strong manifestation of bibliodiversity**, which is particularly important in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities.
OPERAS	**Develop a platform to support scholarly translation**, that is **community based** by boosting the collaborative work of researchers, translators, and publishers, by creating conditions for cooperation and providing information that will enable each scholarly work to identify an **appropriate publisher profile**, a suitable **scientific milieu**, and the **right partnership** in order to disseminate specialised or local scientific production to a wider environment.
OPERAS SIG Multilingualism	Get **directly involved** in studying and promoting the **development of a translation platform** as one of OPERAS' future services.

Data and further reading

- Data related to the survey *Multilingualism in Scholarly Communication* are available at OPERAS-P collection at Nakala.
- Full report from this task is available at OPERAS Innovation Lab community on Zenodo.
- The issue concerning the literature review and balanced multilingualism is further elaborated in: Ana Balula and Delfim Leão, "Multilingualism within Scholarly Communication in SSH – a literature review," JLIS.it 12, 2 (May 2021): 88-98. DOI: dx.doi.org/10.4403/jlis.it-12672

CHAPTER

05

Future of scholarly writing in SSH

Authors:
Maciej Maryl, Marta Błaszczyńska, Agnieszka Szulińska,
Anna Buchner, Piotr Wciślik, Iva Melinščak Zlodi,
Jadranka Stojanovski, Elisa Nury, Claire Clivaz,
Bartłomiej Szleszyński, Kajetan Mojsak, Mateusz Franczak
Contributors:
Interviewing and coding: Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra
Interviewing: Michael Kaiser, Valérie Schaefer,
Vera Chiquet, Mate Juric, and Krešimir Zauder
Case study analysis: Paweł Rams, Katarzyna Jarzyńska,
Renata Rokicka, Izabella Ratyńska, Hanna Kwaśny,
Marcin Wilkowski and Zofia Leśnik
Internal review: Pierre Mounier, Jennifer Edmond
Other: Agata Morka, Magdalena Wnuk
Partners involved:
Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy
of Sciences (IBL PAN), DARIAH-ERIC, Swiss Institute
of Bioinformatics, Max Weber Foundation,
Open Book Publishers, University of Luxembourg
and University of Zadar.

Introduction

The work undertaken in Task 6.5 was aimed at exploring current writing practices in SSH and, thus, will inform future OPERAS activities on researchers' needs regarding publishing technologies, and both ongoing and upcoming transformations of scholarly communication.

In order to address these aims the research team adopted a methodology combining three approaches:

The literature review, presenting our interpretation of the current trends in scholarly communication.

- **41 interviews** with scholars and publishers provided insights into the practices and needs of the actors within scholarly communication with regard to the innovative aspects of scholarly communication. Thirty-two have been transcribed and analysed, and nine have been summarised for further use in research.
- **56 case studies** complement these insights with an analysis of selected innovative tools and services. Some of the insights gained in this study were implemented in **two conceptual prototypes** for innovative services.

The study touches on various dimensions of scholarly communication. First, in order to open-up the study to various materials, we agreed to treat the **"scholarly text"** broadly, not only as a standard, written articulation, but rather as an expression that can employ different media. Second, we prepared working definitions for the main concepts pertinent to the task: **communicating** (the act of sharing a text through various formal or informal channels); **specificity of SSH** (scholarly communication practices in Social Sciences and Humanities that are different from other fields); **writing** (the act of generating a text, understood as the expression of an argument that may use various media, formats, and genres); **collaboration** (collective activities that are undertaken in writing, communicating, publishing, and peer-review); **tools** (the services and software used in the process of writing, communicating, and publishing at various stages of the researchers' workflow); **publishing** (the act of disseminating a text through a formal process, including intermediaries); **innovative forms and genres** (text used by scholars to transmit their argument that are beyond the traditional formats of the journal article, book, report, etc.); **audiences** (the public who engage with scholarly texts and their authors); **evaluating** (the critical assessment of the products of all types of scholarly communication, i.e., writing, communicating, publishing); **innovative forms of peer-review** (peer-review practices that go beyond the commonly accepted forms to address the perceived deficiencies of the system); **academic prestige** (widespread respect attached to certain practices by scholarly communities); and **power structures** (dynamic systems of hierarchy and influence in scholarly communication).

Main Findings

Specificity of SSH

There are differences in scholarly communication between SSH and other disciplines as well as within the disciplines of SSH itself. These concern issues ranging from output genres and the aims of peer-review, to collaboration strategies and funding. The main communication genre reflects the features that are valued most by particular disciplines: in the case of the sciences, this is the timely reporting of facts through journal articles, while the humanities value the depth and breadth of the interpretation conveyed by a monograph.

Digitally-enabled vs. digital writing

Writing is a deeply social and technologically supported activity; with the discovery, storing, curating, and interpreting of research resources being part of the writing process, as each of these activities influences the outcome. We distinguish between digitally-enabled writing and digital writing. Both refer to writing as a textual practice supported by various digital tools, but differ in the degree to which writing harnesses the full potential of digital technology by establishing different kinds of materials, such as data, visualisation, or pictures, in a single output; and in the degree to which the final output differs from the traditional codex format and linear narrative.

The tools supporting writing are chosen according to individual preferences, disciplinary needs, and competences. Adapting the Levi-Strauss approach[3], we distinguish between two types of tool users: engineers and bricoleurs. The engineers are experts in many specialist tools and fluidly switch between them. Bricoleurs, on the other hand, still combine digital practices with analogue, offline ones. Simpler tools are used at the ideation stage of a project, while more advanced tools support more mature stages.

The choice of tool in a collaborative setting is a trade-off between needs and functionalities, and is often a matter of a common denominator between the competences of the team members. It would not be an exaggeration to say that all of our interviewees who write collaboratively have used Google docs for this process.

Innovation is seen as a chance to improve the sharing of ideas with audiences, thanks to technological affordances. Innovation is, then, understood either in terms of **form**, i.e. novel means of communicating ideas, allowing for expression in other media and linking data with text (e.g. computational essays, web books, living books, video essays), or **access**, i.e., providing access to more traditional types of outputs, including grey literature. Innovation is also considered helpful in reaching wider, often non academic, audiences (e.g. blogs, podcasts, videos). Data and software are considered valid outputs of SSH research.

The choice of traditional types of publication is affected by discoverability and prestige. Authors try to choose publication venues based on their expected future discoverability and visibility. They often prefer

[3] Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The savage mind*, Chicago 1966, pp. 17-18. Cf. Antonijevic, Smiljana and Ellysa Stern Cahoy: "Researcher as Bricoleur: Contextualizing humanists' digital workflows". DHQ. 12(3) (2018).

prefer publishing in publications with good quality metadata, in high impact international journals that are indexed in international citation indexes, in the English language, and in reputable monograph series that will attract many book reviews. Articles are considered more practical for communication due to their conformity to metrics and their speed of publication, even though, in the humanities, the monograph continues to confer scholarly reputation.

Novel formats and genres are considered more appropriate for certain content for several reasons: they are liberating, communicative, interactive, and collaborative; and they enable versioning and updating. Open access venues are favoured due to institutional mandates, personal principles or ideologies, speed of publication, and the possibility of reaching a wider audience. Due to problems with visibility for scholarly assessment, early career researchers are more constrained in their choice of innovative forms than established scholars. Many scholars consider the APC/BPC model of open access exploitative, and prohibitive without project funding.

Scholars tend to associate new formats of scholarly communication with the possibility for wider societal outreach, however, they are aware that it often does not correlate with bibliometric impact, and that for many reasons other avenues with high societal outreach are considered inferior by academics.

Editors of journals and commissioning editors for books are considered power brokers in academia, however, their position might now be challenged with the emergence of new platforms for scholarly communication (in particular, based on open, collaborative peer review), which gives more gatekeeping power to the community.

Lack of digital competence keeps many researchers who are experts in their fields from using digital forms of scholarly publication. This is a group of researchers who would be willing to use digital tools and forms of research publication in some form, but do not do so because the "entry threshold" is too high.

The digital environment is open to scholars without technical skills. Many tools and services are currently prepared for non-tech-savvy users from academic circles. Workshops, training, and support services become crucial in making these services accessible and achieving impact.

Tools and service providers aim to create communities around particular projects. They let scholars define, design, evaluate, comment, test, and perform other kinds of activities, which allows them to become co-authors rather than passive end-users.

Challenges

Innovative forms of writing do not yet have an established position in academia. Some respondents had already expected novel solutions from their colleagues and referred to digital outputs (such as blogs or tweets) in their own work, whereas others saw them as undervalued and difficult to cite.

Lack of digital competences impedes the transition to digital forms of publication. Many traditional forms of humanities' outputs have their counterparts in the digital space (e.g. scholarly digital editions and monographs). While these expand the possibilities of a given form and their use in further research, they also require a high degree of digital competence. The competence barrier and associated learning curve often prevents the experts in a field engaging with novel forms.

Innovation is impeded by such factors as quality assessment, prestige, competencies, and a lack of established standards for referencing novel forms. The issue of how to use novel sources in a scholarly text is one of the challenges of 21st-century scholarly writing. These challenges push scholars toward practices of double referencing and double publication, whereby the traditional publication provides prestige for the novel form.

Power structures block innovation. Researchers themselves, and the community more broadly, are recognised as important actors in the SSH scholarly communication landscape. Depending on their approach, they can play the role of guardians of the status quo, or innovation facilitators. Innovative forms of writing could challenge traditional structures, giving more gatekeeping power to the wider readership community.

There is a large gap between the apparent benefits of open access and the present criteria for academic career advancement, and scholars fear that publishing in open access could impair their chances of employment, diminish the value of their CV, or reduce their career prospects.

Popularisation of research is not encouraged by prestige structures despite its high societal impact. Scholars lack clear incentives to engage with wider audiences.

Competence gaps discourage the uptake of tools. Scholars often fail to use tools or services that could be beneficial for their services because they lack the competences to take full advantage of them.

Recommendations

Target audience	Recommendation
Publishers, researches	**Develop publishing guidelines with regard to innovative genres.** This should be done in cooperation with scholars to allow for the publishing of supplemental material, data, and code from a study alongside the text. Publishers should not discourage innovation.
Funders, policy makers, Institutions	**Support novel communication practices, going beyond traditional formats, including data preparation, and publication**. Extend the definition of approved project outputs and provide direct funding for open science practices, e.g., support project members who report data preparation activities, and fund open access publications. **Recognise novel communication forms as valid scholarly outputs and incentivise their use.** The lack of rewards halt innovation, as scholars turn to more "recognised" types of outputs.
Researchers	**Encourage novel types of outputs and recognise the value of innovations in scholarly communication.** Treat digital, innovative formats as "equal" to established genres (books, ebooks, articles) in teaching and referencing. If you have used such a resource (e.g. video clip, blog post or website), you should quote it directly instead of looking for a "traditional" publication where the author may have said something similar. **Offset competence deficits by engaging in team work.** Scholars lacking digital skills should partner with colleagues who are able to take care of technical issues.
OPERAS, RIs	**Provide services that respond to the innovative needs of scholars**, allowing the connections between writing and data to be established (both at a publishing and a discovery level).
Policy makers	**Recognise the variety of roles scholars take up in scholarly communication:** as authors, lead authors in collaborative writing, journal or book editors, reviewers, data managers, or software developers. In each of these roles they perform scholarly activities that often go unnoticed or unrewarded, which, in effect, may discourage researchers from undertaking them.
Scholars	**Make your research available using new channels and try to integrate novel communication skills into your work and teaching curricula.** Teaching new communication tools should be widespread as it concerns a fundamental scholarly activity.
OPERAS	**Provide targeted training in innovative publishing tools and services, tailored to different levels of users.** Lowering the threshold for using novel genres is key to their wider uptake. **Provide integrated, sustainable, and modular services for innovative genres in SSH** (e.g. digital scholarly editions) that can be used by scholars or publishers. Integration may help in the standardisation of novel formats.
Research Institutions / Research performing organisations	**Create policies for open access and data practices, providing clear guidance for scholars.** Do not discourage novel publication practices but rather be vocal about the need for policy makers to recognise them as valid scholarly outputs.

Data and further reading

- Interview transcripts together with the interview scenario and coding scheme are available at OPERAS-P collection at Nakala.
- The full report from this task is available at OPERAS Innovation Lab community on Zenodo.
- The issue of evaluation and peer review is further elaborated in: Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, "Rethinking text, techné and tenure: evaluation and peer review challenges around Virtual Research Environments in the Arts and Humanities". In "Ancient Manuscripts and Virtual Research Environments", ed. Claire Clivaz and Garrick V. Allen, special issue, Classics@ 18 (2021). [N.p.] (*forthcoming*)[36].
- Elisa Nury and Claire Clivaz, with Marta Błaszczyńska, Michael Kaiser, Agata Morka, Valérie Schaefer, Jadranka Stojanovski and Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, "Open Research Data and Innovative Scholarly Writing: OPERAS highlights", Proceedings of the Swiss Data Research Day 2020, Makhlouf Shabou Basma et al. (eds.), *RESSI* 2021, *forthcoming*.
- Maciej Maryl, Marta Błaszczyńska, Bartłomiej Szleszyński, Tomasz Umerle, "Dane badawcze w literaturoznawstwie" [Research data in literary studies], *Teksty Drugie*, 2021, issue 2, pp. 13-44. DOI: 10.18318/td.2021.2.2.
- Elisa Nury, "New models of scholarly writing. DH+ SIB contribution to OPERAS-P", Digital Humanities+ blog, 2021[37].
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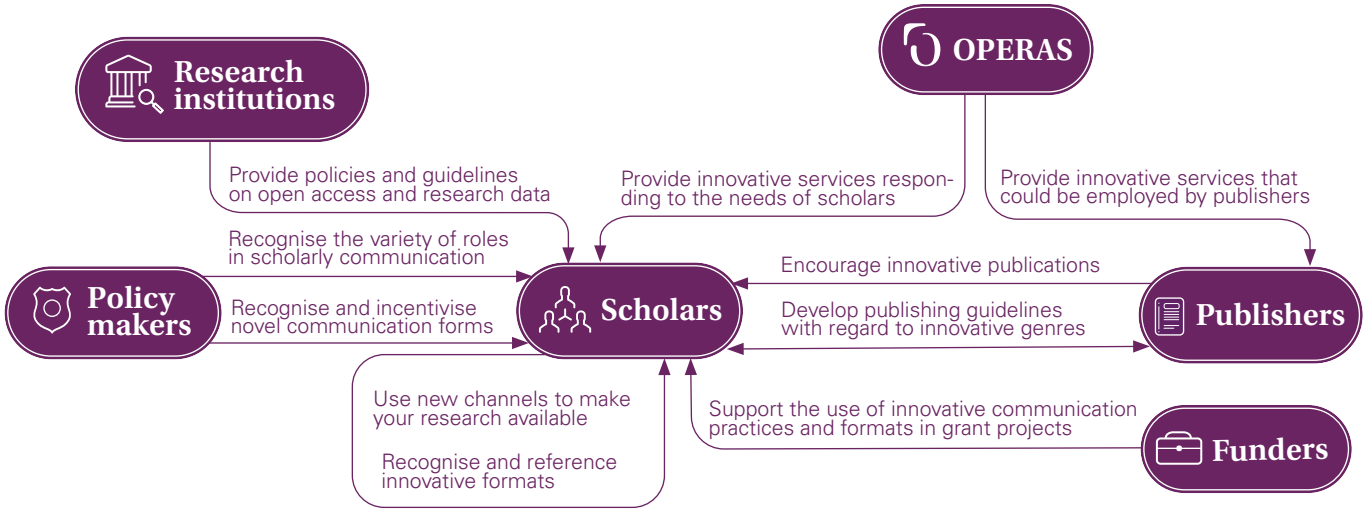
- ">>OPERAS-PL – communication in humanities and social sciences<<: report on the Polish Node meeting" OPERAS Blog[40], 2021.

How to support innovative communication practices among researchers



CHAPTER

06

Quality assessment of SSH research: innovations and challenges

Authors:
Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, Marta Błaszczyńska
Contributors:
Methodology, interviewing and coding: Anna Buchner, Maciej Maryl
Interviewing and coding: Jadranka Stojanovski, Iva Melinščak Zlodi
Interviewing: Michael Kaiser, Valérie Schaefer, Claire Clivaz,
Elisa Nury, Vera Chiquet, Mate Juric, and Krešimir Zauder
Internal review: Jennifer Edmond, Maciej Maryl
Partners involved:
DARIAH-EU (Jennifer Edmond, Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra);
Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences
(Maciej Maryl, Marta Błaszczyńska, Anna Buchner, Agnieszka Szulińska,
Paweł Rams, Mateusz Franczak); University of Zadar
(Jadranka Stojanovski, Iva Melinščak Zlodi, Krešimir Zauder)

Introduction

This chapter aims to present the results of the work conducted in Task 6.6 (*Quality Assessment of SSH Research: Innovations and Challenges*) of the OPERAS-P (*Open Scholarly Communication in the European Research Area for Social Sciences and Humanities – Preparation*) project. The task aimed to better understand the ways in which peer review works in actual SSH practices. In the present report, **we analyse key aspects of peer review that normally remain hidden from analysis**. This work supports the development of relevant OPERAS activities and services by informing them about current trends, gaps, and community needs in research evaluation. This entails **1) teasing out the underlying reasons behind the persistence of certain proxies in the system** (such as the "impact factors of the mind" that continue to assign tacit prestige to certain publishers and forms of scholarship), and **2) the analysis of emerging trends and future innovation in peer review activities within the SSH domain**. This latter comprises two areas: **innovation in peer review workflows** (the different flavours of openness, novel practices, and tools), **and the peer review of digital scholarly objects** (such as digital critical editions, data, software etc.).

The goal of our study was to gain an in-depth understanding of **how the notion of excellence** and other peer review proxies **are constructed and (re)negotiated in everyday practices** across SSH disciplines, **who is involved** in the processes and who remains outside them, **what are the boundaries of peer review** in terms of inclusiveness of content types, and how are the processes aligned or misaligned with research realities. To achieve this, we undertook and analysed 32 in-depth interviews with scholars about their motivations, challenges, and experiences with novel practices in scholarly writing and in peer-review. This input and the encoded and pseudonymised interview transcripts will be shared as open data in a certified data repository (NAKALA) together with a rich documentation of the process so that our interpretations, conclusions, and the resulting recommendations are clearly delineable from the rich input we were working with and that are, thus, openly reusable for other purposes.

Main Findings

Peer review is embedded in the broader systems of academic power structures, commonly referred to as the prestige economy.

There is **tension** between bibliometrics and disciplinary community norms of excellence.

The three most frequently discussed and most controversial **functions** of peer review have been identified as: constructive improvement of scholarly works, gatekeeping, and constructing/shaping disciplinary identities and boundaries.

Gatekeeping and improvement mechanisms are sometimes seen as opposing processes, as **gatekeeping often gives rise to the strengthening of established power positions.**

The shortage of reviewers **opens the door for young scholars to establish themselves as reviewers**. This, of course, does not automatically mean that young scholars have equal opportunities to gain experience in reviewing or enter a gatekeeping position. One's networks and institutional prestige can be a game-changer here. Besides, our respondents repeatedly voiced the need to support PhD students and early career researchers in becoming thoughtful reviewers.

The special "flavours" of **peer review in SSH**, as reflected in the interviews, include:

- Peer review **has a crucial role in shaping disciplinary identities.**
- **Editorial curation is central** to research evaluation, and editors are in an especially powerful gatekeeping position.
- Publication forums are strongly associated with **scholarly networks**.
- Peer review in SSH deviates from its positivist traditions: **quality judgements are situated deeply in smaller epistemic cultures** and, therefore, in many cases, resist the pass/fail approach.
- There is a diversity of scholarly content types, often involving multimedia, that r**emain outside the scope of formal peer review**.

Publishing review texts anonymously alongside publications turned out to be the flavour of openness that enjoyed the most support by our respondents, with some even endorsing it.

The main incentives reported by our respondents were purely scholarly in nature (e.g. advancing one's field, curiosity, chances to contribute to the knowledge commons; the prestige of invitation), rather than monetary or other in-kind rewards (APC discounts, vouchers etc.).

Assessing the quality of scholarship and continuing the discussion around them **is a much more abundant and prevalent activity** than is channelled in formal peer review discourses. It occurs naturally in conference discussions, on social media, in book reviews, including their new media equivalents such as podcasts and literature reviews.

These **spontaneous evaluation practices** are performed with the sole intention of continuing a meaningful scholarly dialogue and advancing one's field.

Challenges

While the act of reviewing is perceived as an important part of academic work, **it is difficult to find ways to administer recognition and likewise gain recognition for one's review record**, especially in the case of traditional, blind peer review.

The shortage of evaluative labour is recognised as the key challenge that the institution of formal peer review needs to overcome. It affects and shapes both the pool of reviewers, publishing workflows (including, of course, the peer review process itself), and the range of scholarship that is eligible for peer review.

The institution of peer review **can reinforce existing power structures** and make it harder for certain scholars to contribute to the community. While editors find it difficult to find good reviewers for their journals, there are groups who are much less likely to get asked to review others' work.

In this drought of reviewers, prestigious, **well-established journals attract more reviewers, not just more authors**. As a result, established proxies of excellence are easily being reproduced. This poses difficulties for the evaluation of interdisciplinary research, and also challenges the inclusion of (born-)digital outputs in formal assessment systems. This goes against the pressing need for re-harmonizing reviewing practices and research realities.

Opening up the peer review processes turned out to be especially challenging in these research contexts, with strong and complex, but not univocal, community resistance against them.

Peer review – challenges to its expected functionality

Recommendations

Target audience	Recommendation
Research Infrastructures, OPERAS	Information management systems that are publicly owned, inclusive, and have a broad range of content types are absolute infrastructural prerequisites for implementing responsible research metrics that are transparent and under the control of research communities and ministries. The current tendency for proprietary, closed systems to gain important positions in delivering research metrics poses a significant threat to transparency and community control. OPERAS has already invested in such transparent, public infrastructure by implementing the OPERAS Metrics Service, a service that enables the transparent tracking of OA book usage. **As a next step, we recommend that OPERAS launch a working group dedicated to responsible research metrics that functions as a European level knowledge hub for experts in charge of implementing research metrics in OPERAS' member countries.** Such a coordinated effort could 1) ensure interoperability across national Current Research Information Systems (CRIS), and 2) could inform future OPERAS services on a regular basis. We also recommend coordinating with ENRESSH along these lines.
Research Infrastructures, OPERAS, scholarly communities	Enabling the citability of all the various kinds of research outputs beyond the research paper is a first step towards these outputs being taken into account for formal assessment. **We recommend OPERAS coordinate with DARIAH on advocacy and training efforts towards a better citation culture in the SSH.**
Research Infrastructures, OPERAS, Publishers	As a trust building instrument, the **transparent but labour-efficient communication of editorial policies and workflows** (including how decisions are made and by whom, what kinds of pre-filtering mechanisms are in place, and the average time frame for publications) **is crucial** to managing expectations for both authors and reviewers. **OPERAS could consider extending the Book Peer Review Certification Service in this direction.**
Research Infrastructures, OPERAS, Policy makers	**Being able to administer one's reviewing record in a publicly owned information management system is an absolute prerequisite for appropriately rewarding peer review activities**. Based on previous experience gained through the Open Access Book Peer Review Certification service, **OPERAS should explore the possibilities of building such an infrastructure**, which operates with the minimum possible administrative costs for both the publisher and the author/institution (Maybe in collaboration with the CRIS system and its various implementations in OPERAS' member countries? Building on previous work on the SSH research assessment within the ENRESSH project could be a good starting point).
Publishers, Research Infrastructures	In an increasingly complex research assessment landscape, where the visibility of automated workflows, knowledge graphs, and scholarly outputs in information management systems play an increasingly important role, publishers need to make sure that their content is findable and accessible not only for humans but for machines too so as to enable citation and usage tracking. Authors cannot be disadvantaged in terms of citations and visibility because they are publishing with smaller publishing houses. **The ongoing efforts of OPERAS to provide support for smaller publishers so they can upscale their workflows to digital and become interoperable with bigger scholarly information systems (e.g. providing help with implementing PID systems, developing tools for converting domain-specific formats to global standards) is of vital importance. We recommend continuing and extending this work**, for example, with an HTML metadata enhancement toolbox that enables publishers to also increase their HTML metadata quality.
Publishers, Scholarly communities	**Encouraging benevolence and constructiveness in the evaluation guidelines of publication venues** could contribute to a healthier and more effective peer review culture. Publication venues awarding **badges** to their top reviewers, not only on quantitative but also qualitative basis, could serve as an incentive for constructive improvement. We recommend publishing venues seek ways **to better connect or channel informal evaluation practices into formal peer review systems**. For instance, inviting authors of review blog posts to upgrade or turn their text into a formal peer review.

Publishers

To ease the burden of gatekeeping, publication venues should consider **implementing a model of peer review similar to Plos One** where the scope of peer review is restricted to checking the integrity of scholarly processes and the soundness of the publication rather than making assumptions about their importance or innovation potential.

Funders, Policy makers, RPOs, Scholarly communities

Research metrics, a) **need to be developed in conversation** with the communities being measured, b) **need to be used for the intention they were designed for**, and c) need to be applied after situations where infrastructure is needed to **support a metric-based approach**
A crucial step towards capacity building would be if all European countries followed Dutch **formal assessment policies, which reward reviewing activities**. Even though we are well aware of the "one size doesn't fit all" golden rule in EU-level research policies, we cannot see any specific contextual issue that would prevent its implementation in a diversity of national contexts across Europe. **We recommend OPERAS further investigate any possible infrastructural or policy obstacles**.

Policy makers, Scholarly communities

Introducing quantitative measures for research evaluation seems to be, to a certain extent, unavoidable so as to enable scholarly works from very different disciplines and regions to be compared. However, to resolve the conflict between research metrics and research realities, both geographical peculiarities and disciplinary communities of practice need to be taken into account in a flexible and multi-dimensional system of metrics. **We recommend further developing the HuMetricsHSS in this direction. Harmonizing HuMetricsHSS's efforts with the DARIAH Impact Working Group would facilitate coordination from the domain-specific angle across geographical regions in Europe and beyond.**

Scholarly communities, publishers

Building innovative peer review practices on top of already established, proven instances of informal evaluation practices rather than designing them from scratch could be taken as an assurance for community uptake.

Data and further reading

- Interview transcripts together with the interview scenario and coding scheme are available at OPERAS-P collection at Nakala.
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- Elisa Nury and Claire Clivaz, with Marta Błaszczyńska, Michael Kaiser, Agata Morka, Valérie Schaefer, Jadranka Stojanovski and Erzsébet Tóth-Czifra, "Open Research Data and Innovative Scholarly Writing: OPERAS highlights," Proceedings of the Swiss Data Research Day 2020, Makhlouf Shabou Basma et al. (eds.), *RESSI* 2021, (*forthcoming*).
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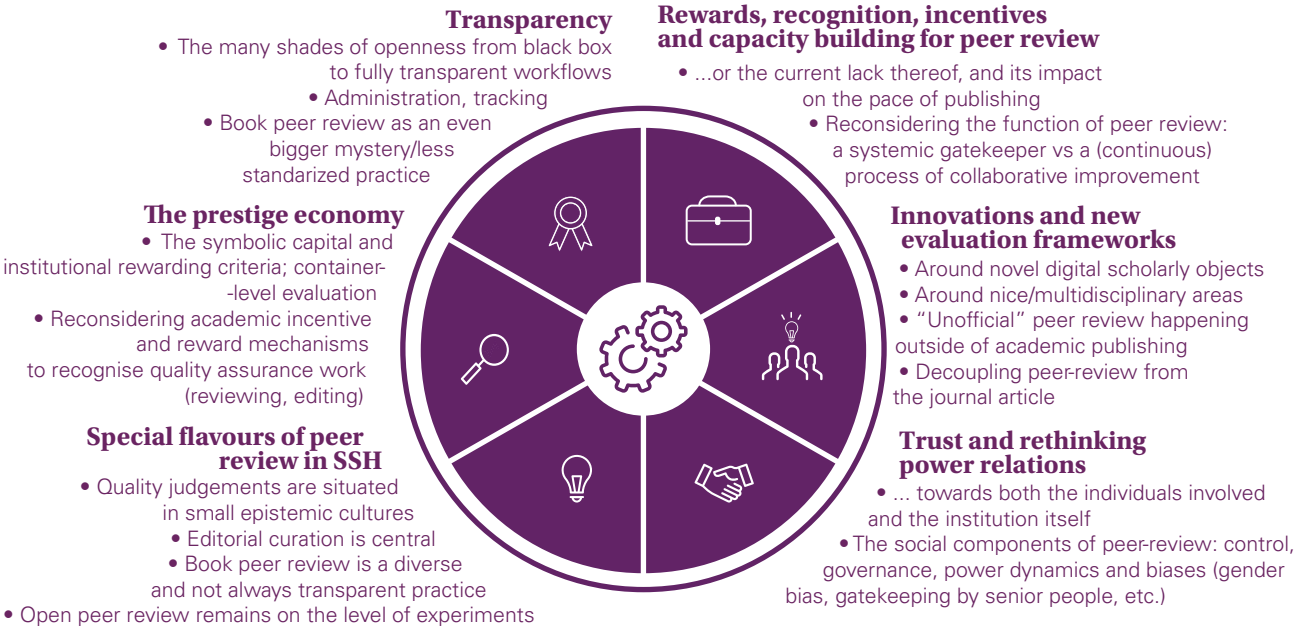
Key areas for the investigation of peer review practices in the Humanities



The Future

(instead of conclusions)

The body of work collected in this report and the associated research outputs from Work Package 6 of the OPERAS-P project lay the foundations for the future development of OPERAS and its services to the SSH community. We are extremely grateful to the almost one thousand people from various countries and stakeholder communities for contributing in various ways to the findings of this report through surveys, interviews, workshop participation, or in other ways. It is thanks to you that the authors of this report were able to keep the findings and recommendations as close to actual community needs as possible.

These outcomes will inform the future work of OPERAS in three major ways. First, they will provide a rationale for further operation, and a background for strategic decisions. Second, they will serve as blueprints for cooperation with various stakeholders and will help to keep OPERAS' offering in close alignment with actual scholarly needs. Finally, they provide rough sketches of novel services as well as a portfolio of concrete activities to be pursued in the nearest future.

This scoping exercise will be continued by OPERAS' Innovation Lab, an initiative spearheaded by IBL PAN, which will carry out research on users' needs and future services. We want the OPERAS Lab to become a space for discussing, envisioning, testing, and prototyping new solutions for the community. This report is just the beginning.