The European Research Council

Furthering Open Access in the Social Sciences and Humanities – A perspective from the ERC

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1) ERC favours Open Access in principle because it enables researchers to reach a wider expert audience.

2) To this end ERC recommends discipline specific repositories; e.g. Europe PubMed Central and arXiv.

3) For SSH, ERC is currently recommending institutional repositories, ideally those that are OpenAIRE compliant.
The Problem

1) Why is Open Access proving to be controversial in SSH circles (especially in Humanities disciplines)?

2) Why in some countries more than in others?
Emotive Objections

1) SSH researchers **not party to the discussions** that have produced the OA strategies that are being implemented

2) All pain and **little or no gain**

3) SSH **not perceived as cause** of publication inflation (journal costs modest)

4) Strong **attachment to printed form** and to literary style

5) **Professional recognition** has always been given to the time dedicated voluntarily by scholars to the editing of journals through Learned Societies

6) **Comfort with existing arrangements**; JSTOR frequently the "repository of choice"

7) Fear in the Anglo-phone world of being **divided from colleagues in US**
Practical Objections

1) Cost issues
   - APC charges
   - Copyright charges for reproduced material

2) Fear of expediting the death of print publication when scant institutional recognition has been given to ‘born digital’ for academic career progression

3) Entrenched importance of scholarly monographs and edited volumes to researchers in many SSH disciplines

4) The preservation of digital-only (and thus of OA-only) material
Prerequisites for an accommodation

1) Conversations between SSH practitioners and promoters of OA to **better understand each others' viewpoints**

2) Abandon the idea that **one size fits all**

3) Support/encourage the creation of **discipline specific repositories in SSH** wherever the scholarly community is ready for such
1) Accept that print publications will continue to be preferred in many SSH disciplines for some years and allow greater flexibility for the embargo period (12 months rather than the usual 6 months)

2) Recognize that there will be some journals in a few disciplines (Art History, Archaeology, Architecture, Musicology) which will continue to present particular copyright challenges

3) Address the question of Preservation and Sustainability and how it can be funded
Concessions by the SSH Community

1) Accept that an **inflation problem** does exist where monographs and edited volumes are concerned

2) Seek, with publishers, to develop a **business model for OA e-books** books, fulfilling the same peer review and editing standards currently accorded to printed volumes

3) Provide greater **institutional recognition** for on-line publications

4) Recognize that in future academic books are likely to be in print form only where they have **commercial potential**

5) Confront the reality that the **scholarly world in the US is sui generis**

6) Recognize a **12 month embargo period** for journal articles as normal in SSH