

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

Concessions by the Advocates of Open Access



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- 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