

HOW CAN BRINGING TOGETHER THE WORKFLOWS OF PUBLISHING & PRESERVATION LEAD TO BETTER, LONGER-TERM SOLUTIONS THAT BENEFIT BOTH?:

A Panel with COPIM Work Package 7, the Embedding Preservability in New Forms of Scholarship Project (NYU), and Project JASPER

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Abstract – Rather than preservation and archiving being an afterthought for digitally published works, research is being done to explore how the concepts, processes, and requirements of preservation can be embedded into publishing, especially OA publishing. How might this be integrated further, and what benefits might extend to academics and researchers themselves? Often the difficulties or challenges of preservation result from scholarly research being generated and published without a preservation policy in mind, which can result in the knowledge becoming lost. This has a particularly emphasised effect upon smaller and scholar-led presses, who often do not have the inbuilt resilience typically provided by either a large business model or a memory institution, which can allow for archiving and preservation to occur procedurally. Our panel will consider the workflows involved, potential solutions, and what additional engagement may be necessary to increase awareness among publishers and researchers. COPIM's Work Package 7 engages with complex digital OA monographs and the scholar-led publishing community. The Mellon-funded Embedding Preservability in New Forms of Scholarship project (NYU) embeds digital preservation experts with publishers from the beginning of the publishing process to help them to make choices that result in publications, including very complex ones, that can be preserved at scale. And Project JASPER works with small, independent OA journals to facilitate preservation.

Keywords – open access, digital monographs, digital preservation, archiving, scaling small
Conference Topics – Resilience; Community

I. INTRODUCTION: OA AND MIA?

More and more monographs and articles are published in both a born-digital fashion, as well as open access, so the issue of archiving and preservation becomes more pressing. As has been regularly noted, particularly in the work of Project JASPER and others, high-value resources and important scholarly knowledge can easily disappear from the internet. If a journal or OA monograph press folds and they had no active preservation workflow, the content is likely gone forever.

Laakso's article 'Open is not forever: A study of vanished open access journals'¹ (2021) discusses the shift in responsibility, and the uncertainty surrounding it, for the preservation of born-digital books and articles, which has in part led to the loss of a multitude of articles and monographs. Laakso's study found that in terms of academic journals, 174 OA journals had disappeared from the internet since 2000. Though to date no similar study has been performed for OA monographs, the need for infrastructure is clear: UUK's Open Access Monograph's Group 2019 paper, while only briefly touching upon archiving and preservation, states that "a robust infrastructure needs to be in place to ensure digital outputs are preserved."² The 2017 Knowledge Exchange Landscape study on open access and monographs found that "82% of the interviewed libraries to 'strongly agree/agree' with

the development of a central OA monograph repository for their respective country.”³

II. SOLUTIONS, CHALLENGES & THE “AFTERMATH EFFECT”

Though solutions exist for archiving and preservation, such as Portico, CLOCKSS, and similar services, smaller publishers of both journals and monographs often lack the awareness or resources to participate in some form of long-term preservation. COPIM’s Work Package 7 found levels of inconsistency within the preservation practices of the publishers surveyed in their workshops and interviews, which has a direct correlation to the uncertainty around who is responsible in the digital publishing landscape for preserving the scholarly record. DOAJ, the central hub for Project JASPER, found 7500 journals in their platform with no preservation – evidence that the “long tail” of smaller publishers is more at risk of disappearing. DOAJ is one of the five organisations working together under Project JASPER towards a solution, alongside CLOCKSS, the Keepers Registry, PKP (Public Knowledge Project), and the Internet Archive, to formulate and deploy three preservation options for OA journals with no current preservation in place.

Additional challenges result from what we will call the “aftermath effect” in preserving digital monographs. Most preservation activities, by necessity and overarching practice, occur in the aftermath of publication, which means that it is a retrospective action that must respond to the content already created. With this comes issues with a variety of file formats, software, and the general multitude of content types and methods that have become possible via the lightspeed advance of digital publishing technology over the last twenty to thirty years. These issues become even more evident when examining experimental or complex digital monographs, which may contain embedded audio-visual content, geospatial data, or be created within a specific software or platform, moving beyond the traditional boundaries of a ‘book’ and the more traditional digital format of a PDF.

III. RESPONSIVE RESEARCH: ENGAGEMENT

Responding to these quandaries means engaging with publishers, academics, and publishing-software developers at an earlier stage, to increase awareness of what preservation means and why it is important, and to introduce the

implications of preservation’s limitations and requirements. As well as preservation being a flexible and responsive process, this can allow for publishing and content creation to incorporate and engage with preservation as an essential part of their processes, and allow for preservation to be an extended form of knowledge dissemination and reusability. The Embedding Preservability project, which follows on from the Preserving New Forms of Scholarship project at NYU, will embed four preservation experts with various publishers and their publishing-software developers. This team will directly observe and participate in the technology-decision process and learn the editorial and production workflow at each publisher in order “to identify opportunities for implementing changes that favor preservation during the creation process.”⁴ (Hanson, 2021)

While the work of Project JASPER engages the small OA journal publisher, and Embedding Preservability primarily involves OA publications at small- and mid-size university presses, the smaller or scholar-led open access monograph publisher is where COPIM is positioned. COPIM’s focus is on scaling small and providing further support and guidance for small and scholar-led publishers in order to assure equity in the publishing and preservation landscape. The resource challenges for these small publishers, in terms of finance and staff, but also technology, remain and WP7 is working to develop guidance and solutions to assist these publishers with the archiving and preservation process, as well as advocate for longer term, more centralised infrastructure. Also, the role of the academic researcher is one we hope to more actively involve. While at present the majority of engagement is directed at publishers in order to increase their understanding of the importance in having an archiving and preservation policy, there is definite scope for engaging researchers and academics. What steps could be taken to engage researchers in the processes of preservation and increase awareness? What level of responsibility do researchers have in understanding the future preservation of their work? What might be the best avenues to reach researchers to convey these concepts and engage their participation?

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